A Qualitative Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study Exploring Lived Experiences of Re-imprisoned Women Transitioning to the Community

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ABSTRACT

Women in the Province of Manitoba are discharged daily from provincial jails back to their communities after an interruption in their lives of anywhere from days to years. Many of these women cycle in and out of jail on a regular basis. This hermeneutic phenomenological study explored the daily lifeworlds of re-imprisoned women during their return to the community. Twelve women (nine Aboriginal, three Caucasian) were interviewed. Analysis of the study themes using van Manen's existentials: temporality, spatiality, relationality, and corporeality revealed the complex multi-systemic issues that affect women's lived experiences. The essence of the women's accounts provides some insight into how the role of intergenerational, personal trauma and accumulated trauma impacted their lived experiences and continues to do so when they re-enter the community. The opportunities and options that women had to make positive life changes were obscured by insidious barriers and challenges impairing their ability to avoid re-imprisonment.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that of the nine million people incarcerated globally every year, the number of imprisoned women—although disproportionately low compared to the number of imprisoned men—is increasing (2013a). Between 2000 and 2013 the number of imprisoned women increased 40% worldwide (Walmsley, 2014). This pattern is reflected in the provincial justice system of Manitoba. According to a 2014 report from the Office of the Auditor General Manitoba, "the average number of adult custody females grew from 78 in 2003 to 199 in 2011, and then to 260 in 2012. This reflected 233% growth over this time period, and a 31% increase in the most recent year" (p. 242).

Underprivileged, socially and economically deprived, and marginalized are the characteristics commonly used to describe imprisoned women throughout the world (WHO, 2013a). In addition, a report titled *Women's Health in Prison* found that many imprisoned women have pre-existing chronic mental and physical health problems prior to their imprisonment (WHO, 2011). Both the Canadian (federal) and Manitoba (provincial) correctional systems mirror these trends (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014; Macdonald, 2016). Moreover, Aboriginal[1] women throughout Canada are over-represented in the criminal justice system relative to their numbers in the general population, even more so than Aboriginal men. For example, in 1996 Aboriginal women accounted for 23% of the adult female inmate population while Aboriginal men accounted for 18% of the adult male inmate population (Finn, Trevethan, Carriere, & Kowalski, 1999). By 2010/2011, Aboriginal women accounted for 41% of the female inmate population while Aboriginal men accounted for 25% of the male

[1] The word Aboriginal, used throughout this study, refers to: "The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian *Constitution* recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people — Indians, Métis and Inuit" (Indigenous and Northern Affairs of Canada, 2012).

inmate population (Dauvergne, 2012). In Manitoba, Aboriginal women comprised more than 85% of women sentenced to provincial jails in 2008-2009; Aboriginal adults overall represented only 12% of the province's population in 2006 (Mahony, 2011).

Adults (men and women) imprisoned under provincial jurisdiction in Manitoba can be sentenced to terms of up to two years less a day; they can also spend long periods in custody on remand while they await their trials (Canadian Civil Liberties Association, 2014). Shorter sentences, denial of bail, and violation of bail conditions along with an increase in the numbers of imprisoned people have resulted in a higher turnover of individuals re-entering the community. This produces a phenomenon known as "the revolving door syndrome" whereby an individual is caught in an alternating cycle of admission and discharge in the criminal justice system (Wilson, Quinn, Beville, & Anderson, 1998). Furthermore, individuals in this population may become re-imprisoned and return to the community more than once in the same year. This trend is known as recidivism[2] or "the rate at which people become re-involved in criminal activity" (Manitoba Justice, 2009, p. 1). Without intervention, women can become trapped in the revolving door syndrome, resulting in a lifetime involvement with the justice system (Maeve, 2001; Ritchie, 2001).

Problem Statement

Women in the Province of Manitoba are discharged every day from provincial corrections back to their communities after an interruption in their lives of anywhere from days to years. Many of these women are at risk of being re-imprisoned. Although many factors are thought to contribute to this circumstance, there is a lack of understanding of this phenomenon as

[2] Not all justice systems calculate recidivism in the same way. In Manitoba, recidivism statistics are reported every three months and reflect the previous two-year period up to that time. The recidivism rate for women offenders in Manitoba is not available due to the Manitoba Justice practice of reporting recidivism rates for all adults with no notation regarding gender (Manitoba Justice, 2009).

experienced by these women. Moreover, limited knowledge regarding the re-entry experience of these women into the community inhibits understanding about how these women perceive and experience life upon re-entry to the community. Little research has been done in Manitoba to explore their re-entry journey.

The federal justice system employs a department of research that investigates all aspects of federal justice. The report, *Community Strategy for Women Offenders*, covers a myriad of factors regarding women's reintegration needs, such as housing, education, reunification with families, and physical and mental health (Correctional Service of Canada, 2012). However, studies relevant to federally sentenced women transitioning to the community have been limited to those conducted by a handful of researchers such as Pollack (2009) and Maidment (2006). Their research highlighted the barriers and challenges experienced by previously imprisoned women when they returned to the community. Both researchers provided recommendations based on their findings for the successful community reintegration of this population.

While there has been a considerable body of literature produced on federally imprisoned women, significantly fewer studies have been conducted at the provincial level. In the province of Manitoba, sociologist Elizabeth Comack has produced a body of work on the criminalization of women, including a 1996 book, *Women in Trouble*, which explores the links between women's law violations and their experiences of abuse. This research centred on women imprisoned in the Portage Correctional Institution, Manitoba's primary correctional facility for women at the time. Outside of Comack's work and the report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991, chapter 13), little research has been done on these topics within the Manitoba context, particularly in relation to the lived experiences of women when they leave custody and re-enter their communities. The purpose of this research project, therefore, was to

address this gap by exploring the daily lifeworlds of imprisoned women during the period of time in their lives when they are transitioning from imprisonment back to their community.

Purpose and Objectives

This study uses a Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenological methodology informed by feminist standpoint and intersectionality theory. The aim of the study is: To reveal how women who have been imprisoned, released to the community, and returned to custody experience their lives during their return to the community.

The primary research question is: How do imprisoned women who have transitioned to the community and have returned to custody experience their lives during their transition to the community? The objectives of the proposed project were to:

- develop a deep understanding of the meaning of the experiences of women who are caught in the "revolving door syndrome" of alternating cycles of admission and discharge from imprisonment;
- uncover the commonalities and differences in the experiences of women re-entering the community after imprisonment;
- consider the impact of race, gender, economic, and sociopolitical factors on the experiences of women re-entering the community after imprisonment; and
- provide an opportunity for women who have experienced re-entering jail after being in the community to tell their stories.

Personal Experience and Pre-Understandings

My interest in the lived experience of imprisoned women transitioning back to the community is based on my 17 years of employment with the Manitoba provincial government as a correctional nurse. Initially, I worked with female and then with male youth offenders. In

2007, I left Manitoba Corrections to practice as a community health nurse in the North End of Winnipeg at a drop-in centre for female and transgendered sex trade workers.

In my professional experience as a correctional nurse, I found that correctional staff and the general public could be biased and uninformed about why individuals return to imprisonment. One example that informs my perspective involved a woman who had been re-imprisoned a number of times. Popular opinion held that she brought all her misfortunes on herself by returning to an abusive relationship. There was a consensus among corrections staff that if she moved away from her partner, she could break the cycle of imprisonment. During a health care appointment, this woman confided that she kept returning to her abusive relationship because her partner threatened her life and the lives of her children if she didn't return to him. This provides an example of how, when judging women's actions, people often base their opinions on their own personal values, histories, and their perception of what they believe their reaction would be in the same situation. The challenges faced by these women are complex with multi-dimensional and multi-layered meanings. I believe that the stories of the study participants will provide new insight into the phenomenon.

My community experience increased my knowledge regarding the life challenges—including addictions, violence, poverty, and homelessness—experienced by marginalized women. These challenges are enormous even without the added stigma and isolation of imprisonment. I found that there were many parallels in the challenges and barriers faced by imprisoned women transitioning to the community and the women with whom I worked in the core area of Winnipeg. Many of the problems faced by imprisoned women often pre-exist before imprisonment and are compounded upon their return to the community. I was privileged to provide holistic care in my community practice and in doing so heard many personal accounts of

the challenges. This first-hand experience increased my resolve to help these women voice their experiences.

Part of the human condition is that, as individuals, we have preconceived ideas regarding the phenomena that are present in our lifeworlds. In qualitative research, there is a tradition of recording our thoughts, ideas, preconceptions, and biases under the heading of pre-understandings, prior to embarking on research (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011; van Manen, 1990). Based on my life experience and my academic knowledge, I have reflected on some of my pre-understandings as I have embarked upon this research project. They are as follows:

- All human beings have multiple and unique ways of "being in the world" and interacting with phenomena.
- Study participants are experts in their own lives.
- Research interviews are conversational, interactive, and emergent to facilitate the expression of the lived experience of participants.
- Giving study participants a voice may result in emancipatory experiences for them for one of the first times in their lives.
- Race, gender, economics, and sociopolitical factors will impact the lives of study participants.

Significance and Knowledge Translation

There is limited research exploring the lived experiences of women who have transitioned to the community between imprisonments. This deficit has contributed to the "revolving door syndrome" of this population in Manitoba and elsewhere. Appropriate resources and supports cannot be as successfully planned or implemented without the documentation of these women's personal stories. By highlighting their experiences, society will gain an

awareness of the problems facing these women and may be moved to initiate changes in response to their plight.

In Manitoba, prior to the February 2012 opening of the new Women's Correctional Centre in Headingley, imprisoned women were held in an overcrowded, century-old facility 100 km from the provincial capital. The new spacious centre is touted as being a state-of-the-art facility with gender-responsive programming and an emphasis on reintegration to the community (Government of Manitoba News Releases, 2012). Changes evolving from the Manitoba government's recent commitment to a gender-responsive approach to imprisoned women provide an opportune time for this research study. The data collected from this research have the potential to impact programming on how imprisoned women are prepared and supported for their re-entry from corrections into their communities. It will give those responsible for programs and resources for imprisoned women a deeper understanding of their needs. I am hopeful that this research project has the potential to empower these marginalized women by giving them an opportunity to voice their experiences.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview for the rationale for this study concerning how women who have been imprisoned, released to the community, and returned to custody experience their lives during their return to the community. The following chapter is the literature review. Chapter Three provides the research methodology and Chapter Four the findings. The last chapter is the concluding chapter that sums up the research and offers recommendations for practice, education and future research.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Imprisoned women are often caught in what is known as the "revolving door syndrome" or a continuous cycle of imprisonment, release to the community and a return to custody (Wilson et al., 1998). Society's view of imprisoned women is plagued by a lack of knowledge (Peternelj-Taylor, 2005). How this group has been studied, who these women are, how they became involved in the criminal justice system, what types of crimes they are charged with, and why they keep returning to custody will be explored in this chapter.

A search of the literature was conducted to access current data on how imprisoned women who have transitioned to the community and have returned to custody experience their lives during their transition to the community. Although a moderate body of literature on imprisoned populations was located, less research was found specifically on imprisoned women. The majority of written material and research studies on this topic come from the United States of America. Canada and Great Britain have produced a lesser amount. The federal system, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), employs a department of research that delves into all aspects of federal justice for imprisoned populations. Some of their research reports on imprisoned women include issues such as suicide/self-harming, evaluation of programming, and needs of this population. In addition, two researchers, Pollock (2009) and Maidment (2006), have conducted studies on federally sentenced women with regard to reintegration challenges. Comack (1996) has conducted the lone research project with imprisoned women in Manitoba.

The following databases were searched: Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Sociological Abstracts, PsycINFO, and EBSCO. Key words "incarcerated women," "re-entry," "re-incarceration," "re-imprisonment," and "community" were used with "AND." The search was limited to English articles with abstracts published from 1985 to 2013.

Criteria for selection included citations from scholarly theoretical or research-based articles from all disciplines with a reference to the key terms. Exclusions were duplicate articles and ones that did not address the concept. Reference lists from articles and books were examined to identify pertinent resources that did not appear in the online search. The grey literature was explored via the search engine Google Scholar. Personal understanding was sought from academic and personal contacts. All articles were read and information relating to imprisoned women transitioning to the community was categorized.

Bringing Criminalized Women into View

In order to understand the plight of imprisoned women today, it is necessary to be familiar with the history of women in the criminal justice system. This section of the literature review focuses on the progression of feminist theory from the second wave of feminism (1960-1970) to the current approaches used in the field of feminist criminology.

Until the late 1960s the criminal justice system focused almost entirely on men (Belknap, 2007; Comack, 2006; Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1988; Smart, 1977). The few women who were in conflict with the law committed crimes that were considered to be of little importance and an anomaly to the accepted female role of the time (Belknap, 2007; Braithwaite, Treadwell, & Arriola, 2005; Comack, 2006; Hannah-Moffatt & Shaw, 2001). The concept of gender had not yet been addressed and the focus was on the biological, hormonal, and reproductive qualities of women that contributed to women's offending behaviours. In other words, early theorists' knowledge was rooted in traditional gender roles.

Moreover, early theorists in the field of criminology either ignored the women, treating them as if they were invisible, or attributed a range of aberrant characteristics and behaviours to them in order to explain the causes of their crimes (Balfour, 2006; Chesney-Lind, 2006; Comack,

1999b; Comack, 2006; Morash, 2006; Renzatti, Miller, & Gover, 2013). Causes of female involvement in the criminal justice system were reported to be limited cognitive ability, weak psychological make-up, aberrant chromosomes/reproductive organs, overactive hormones/menstrual cycles, heightened sexuality, and the inability to measure up to the ladylike behaviours of the white upper echelon (Balfour, 2006; Comack, 2006; Heidensohn, 1996, 1968; Rafter, 1990; Smart, 1977).

By the 1970s theories regarding women's involvement with the criminal justice system shifted focus when feminist scholars challenged the status quo. For example, in her 1977 book, *Women, Crime and Criminology*, Smart marked the beginning of feminist criminology "by pointing out the lack of attention given to women in the field of criminology" (Britton, 2000, p. 58).

As well, some feminists contested the then current theories of female criminal behaviour by arguing that men developed them with the male offender in mind (Gelsthorpe & Morris, 1988). For example, Chesney-Lind (1988) noted that most theories followed the "add women and stir" approach by revising male-centred theories to include women (as cited in Comack, 2006, p. 29). Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988) coined this approach the "generalizability problem" (p. 514). During this time, they also introduced "the gender ratio problem"—the question of why fewer women than men were in conflict with the criminal justice system (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988, p. 515). These standpoints gave rise to a spate of feminist research on the gender gap, examining both male and female offending (Bottcher, 2001; Daly, 1987, 1998; Hagan, Gillis, & Simpson, 1985; Heimer & De Coster, 1999). Although not formally identified, these researchers were starting to look at women and their relationship with the criminal justice system through the lens of gender, race, and class.

In the 1990s the focus in feminist criminology changed from the why and what to attempting to understand women's lived experiences, including pre-imprisonment, imprisonment, and post imprisonment (Cain, 1990). Drawing on standpoint feminism (Harding 1990), feminist criminologists examined the lifeworlds of criminalized women. Recognition of the intersectionality of race, class, and gender was included in this hallmark research, with much of the data coming from the criminalized women themselves (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Gilfus 1992; Richie 1996). This marked a turning point for research about women involved in the criminal justice system.

As well, *Creating Choices*, the 1990 report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, examined the treatment of women imprisoned in federal prisons. One result of this inquiry was the development of gender-responsive programming for imprisoned women. Until the advent of gender-responsive programming, women in the criminal justice system were treated the same as their male counterparts (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003). Using the now large body of evidence-based knowledge about imprisoned women's unique needs, criminal justice systems have instituted new gender-responsive policies, procedures, and programs, and staff have been retrained in gender-responsive approaches (Ramirza, 2012). An example of gender-responsiveness would be developing programs which address women's pathways to imprisonment (such as abuse and addictions) and providing woman-centred services and programs (Bloom et al., 2003). With the opening of the new provincial correctional centre for women in 2012 in Manitoba, the government committed to a gender-responsive environment.

One of the programs adopted from the recommendations of the *Creating Choices* (1990) task force was a community reintegration program. In 2008, Gobeil carried out a research study into the challenges and protective factors of 34 women who had transitioned from the federal

correctional system to the community within the year prior to his study. When he questioned how prepared the women felt with regard to community re-entry, one woman disclosed that the reintegration program in her facility had been stopped. In addition, he noted that a significant number of women reported that they did not feel ready for reintegration. One respondent divulged that prior to release she felt prepared for release into the community yet once released she found the actual experience difficult. This research highlighted the gaps in the programming and services available to women who left jail and returned to the community.

Common Characteristics of Imprisoned Women

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes imprisoned women worldwide as a group of underprivileged and socially and economically deprived individuals living at the margins of society (2011). The typical imprisoned woman is a single mother in her late 20s or 30s with young children (Bloom et al., 2003; Maeve, 2001). She is more than likely a product of a single-parent home or the foster care system and with few interpersonal supports (O'Brien, 2001; Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2008). She comes from an economically disadvantaged background with limited or interrupted education, leading to few vocational skills and a sporadic employment history. Unemployment, underemployment, or low-paying work related to gender inequality may have contributed to this problem (Bloom et al., 2003; Covington & Bloom, 2006; Richie, 2001).

In addition, poor physical health related to no or inadequate health care along with risky/poor lifestyle choices may have resulted in chronic physical illnesses (Dodge & Pogrebin, 2001; Maeve, 2001). She has a history of emotional/mental health concerns such as anxiety, suicidality, harming behaviours, psychological stress, and/or diagnosed mental health illness (Covington, 2007; Louks, 2004; Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2008). There is a high likelihood that

she has suffered from victimization such as emotional/physical/sexual abuse during childhood and adult life (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Gilfus, 1992; Pollack, 2009; Ramirez, 2012). In the United States, imprisoned women are disproportionately women of colour (Bloom et al., 2003; Covington, 2007); in Canada, Aboriginal women are overrepresented in the justice system (LaPrairie, 2002; Mahony, 2011). These characteristics are closely connected to the pathways that imprisoned women take, causing them to become involved in the criminal justice system. Each woman has her own identities and pathways that intersect, form multiple layers, and interconnect to form her personal lifeworld.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an approach that theorizes that everyone has multiple social identities in relation to their race, class, and gender positioning, which cross over, overlap, and combine, impacting whether we live a life of privilege or discrimination (Symington, 2004). This view draws attention to potential biases against individuals experiencing societal imbalances related to race, class, and gender (Symington, 2004). Specifically, the attention to intersectionality is important to this study because of the societal location of the participants vis-à-vis the social imbalances they face in their lives. According to Brewer (1997) various layers of intersectionality—for example, gender plus poverty plus homelessness—do not combine together to impact the individual. Rather they converge, concurrently multiplying each layer (gender x poverty x homelessness) to produce differences and discriminations (as cited in Comack, 2014a, p. 29).

Although, the term “intersectionality” was coined by Crenshaw in 1989, it was the work of hooks (1981) and other feminist scholars of the day who acknowledged that Black women were discriminated on two fronts—being a woman and being Black. Crenshaw (1989) expanded

hook's work on Black women by concluding that intersectionality includes the "multidimensionality" of marginalized subjects' lived experience (p. 139). Over the years, this view influenced scholars to embrace the idea that race, class, and gender exert a combined effect on women's lives (Trahan, 2010). "People's identity lies at the intersection of race, class, and gender and it is the combination of these constructs that often shapes people's experiences with the criminal justice system and other social structures" (Trahan, 2010, p. 1).

Additionally, Comack (2014a) observed that feminist criminologists shifted the focus from claims that women who were in conflict with the law had aberrant personal characteristics or underlying mental health conditions. "Instead the intersecting structural inequality in society—of gender, race, and class—that contour and constrain the lives of women provided the backdrop for understanding women's involvement in crime" (Comack, 2014a, p. 30).

Women's Pathways to Imprisonment

In the 1990s, several feminist researchers conducted studies on the ways imprisoned women became involved in the criminal justice system. This research became known as the pathways literature. Over the next two-and-a-half decades feminist criminologists expanded the pathways perspective by looking at the needs of imprisoned women (see Chesney-Lind, 1997; Gilfus, 1992; Widom, 1988). For example, this literature explored risk factors such as single motherhood, addictions, abusive/violent relationships, poverty, and race (Gelsthorpe, 2004). As well, it demonstrated a link between risk factors and pathways to imprisonment.

Family dynamics. Research shows that many imprisoned women come from one-parent families with absent fathers (Lewis, 2006; Shaw, 1992; Zaitzow, 2003). Snell's study of 10 imprisoned women showed six participants grew up in homes with one absent parent (1994). Furthermore, O'Brien's (2001) research showed that of the 18 participants in her study over half

of them came from single-parent families. As well, Sered and Norton-Hawk's (2008) research found the majority of imprisoned females had suffered from poor intimate relationships with family prior to imprisonment that in some cases resulted in foster home placement.

Researchers reported another family dynamic with regard to a family history of imprisonment. Covington (2007) found that many imprisoned women had at least one immediate family member with a history of imprisonment. As well, Lewis (2006) reported that there is a greater chance of an imprisoned woman versus an imprisoned man having a family member who was imprisoned. In addition, Snell (1994) found that half of her 10 participants had family members who had served a custodial sentence.

Abuse survivors/violence. Overwhelmingly, the literature points to abuse/violence (emotional, physical, and sexual) as a common experience of imprisoned women. Numerous researchers highlighted a chronic pattern of abuse/violence in the lives of imprisoned women, which influenced their pathway to jail (Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Comack, 1996, Johnson &Rodgers, 1993; Parsons &Warner-Robbins, 2002; Shaw, 1992). For example, Comack's (1996) research at Portage Correctional Centre (predecessor to the Women's Correctional Centre) revealed that, "Seventy–eight percent (565) of the women reported that they had been sexually and/or physically abused in their lifetime" (p.37). The Canadian Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (1989) reported that 80% of federally imprisoned women have been victims of abuse/violence. Meanwhile, 23 out of 33 participants in a study by Sered and Norton-Hawk (2008) reported being victims of violence/abuse prior to imprisonment. In addition, Richie's (2001) research reported 60% of her participants declared a past history of physical/sexual abuse.

Physical health problems. The health care for this population is non-existent or inadequate prior to imprisonment and predisposes them to chronic health problems (Covington, 2007; Lewis, 2006; Maeve, 2001; Richie, 2001). For example, Young and Reverie (2006) reported that imprisoned women have a higher incidence of poor health than women who have not been imprisoned. As well, imprisoned women have higher incidence of being HIV- positive and having Hepatitis B and C, and sexually transmitted infections than their counterparts in the community (Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2008; Smith 2006).

Mental health issues. Imprisoned women are more likely to have mental health issues than imprisoned men (Anno, 2000; Grella & Greenwell, 2007; Parsons & Warner-Robbins, 2002; Shaw, 1992). What is more, Louks (2004), in comparing mental health concerns between imprisoned men and women, found that twice as many women reported that they had been seen by health professionals. As well, she found that imprisoned women reported that victimization and bullying were directly related to feelings of depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and suicidal thoughts. Also, Sered and Norton-Hawk (2008) found that in a sample of 33 imprisoned women 19 reported having anxiety, depression, and serious mental health concerns. Furthermore, Ramirez (2012) noted that many imprisoned women suffered from co-occurring disorders such as mental health problems and addictions.

Employment. Imprisoned women tend to have sporadic work records (Bloom et al., 2003; Covington, 2007) and they tend to be either unemployed or underemployed prior to imprisonment (Peternelj-Taylor, 2005; Richie, 2001; Steffensmeier & Allen, 1996; Zaitzow, 2003). For example, in Canada 80% of the women admitted to the federal correctional system reported being unemployed on admission (Jackson & Joyce, 2014). In addition, Scroggins and Malley (2010) noted that while there was high unemployment within this group they also found a

gender gap in wages. Ramirez (2012) reported that, among women and men involved in the criminal justice system, women are more likely to work at temporary, unskilled, under-paid positions. Furthermore, Louks (2004) found that 80% of imprisoned women were previously unemployed or underemployed and for those who were employees, employment lasted less than a year; two-thirds were on social assistance. In Canada, it was noted that non-Aboriginal women have a higher average total income than Aboriginal women (Maidment, 2006).

Race. In the United States women of colour have been found to be overrepresented in the imprisoned population (Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Covington, 2007; Maeve, 2001; O'Brien, 2001; Snell, 1994; Steffensmeier & Allen, 1996). The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics stated, "About 5 out of 1,000 white women, 36 out of 1,000 Black women and 15 out of 1,000 Hispanic women will be subject to imprisonment during their lifetime" (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999, p. 11). In 2003, Bloom and her colleagues reported that 50% of imprisoned women were Black and that Black women were eight times more likely than their white counterparts to be incarcerated, even though Black women only comprised 13% of women in the United States. The picture is much the same in Canada; Aboriginal women are disproportionately represented in federal and provincial correctional systems (Pollock, 2009; Johnson & Rodgers, 1993). For example, even though Aboriginal women represent 1- 2% of the Canadian population, they make up 45% of all imprisoned women throughout Canada (Elizabeth Fry Association of Manitoba, n.d.).

Poverty. Imprisoned women were found to either live in poverty or to come from low-income homes prior to incarceration (Bloom et al., 2003; Covington, 2007; Greenfeld & Snell, 1999; Johnson & Rodgers, 1993; Lewis, 2006; Louks, 2004; Parsons & Warner-Robbins, 2002; Pollock, 2009; Steffensmeier & Allen, 1996; Ramirez, 2012). Due to fiscal restraints imprisoned

women lacked affordable housing prior to incarceration and many were homeless and living in shelters (Johnson & Rodgers, 1993; Peternelj-Taylor, 2005; Richie, 2001). For example, Sered and Norton-Hawk (2008) found that 17 of the 33 women in their study had financial problems and were homeless, living in shelters, or staying with different friends, family and acquaintances prior to their incarceration.

Education. A high number of imprisoned women have limited education (Covington, 2007; Shaw, 1994; Steffensmeier & Allen, 1996). In England, Louks (2004) found 90% of imprisoned women left school at age 16 with a prior history of poor attendance, having been suspended and expelled regularly. In addition, throughout the years Aboriginal people in Canada have been faced with many challenges and barriers in getting the same education that is available to non-Aboriginals. For example, residential schools offered the bare minimum of education, as the students were required to spend most of their day working. Through the next decades, Aboriginal education continued to be hampered by politics until it came under the auspices of the Aboriginal bands. Furthermore, there is an ongoing struggle to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of Aboriginal people (Kirkness, 1999).

Drugs and alcohol. It was found that more women than men were imprisoned for drug-related crime (O'Brien 2001; Snell, 1994). According to a number of researchers imprisoned women were heavy users or addicted to substances pre-incarceration (Bloom et al., 2003; Covington, 2007; Johnson & Rodgers, 1993; Peternelj-Taylor, 2005; Pollock, 2009; Parsons & Warner-Robbins, 2002). As well, Sered and Norton-Hawk (2008) reported that 32 out of 33 of the women in their study said that they self-medicated with illegal drugs "to numb myself" (p. 54). Meanwhile in England, Louks (2004) found that women who used drugs as teens were using

prior to imprisonment as adults. As well, she noted that the use of injected drug in Scotland was higher than in England and Wales for imprisoned women.

Systemic Problems that Impact Imprisoned Women

"Systemic discrimination refers to policies or practices that appear to be neutral on their surface but that may have discriminatory effects on individuals based on one or more Code grounds" (Human Rights Commission of Ontario, 2008). Women stuck in the revolving door of the justice system are impacted by multifaceted varieties of discrimination from the patriarchal government, historical racism, the child welfare systems, and the justice system. Each facet of discrimination has a cumulative effect on the women's lives which results in disempowerment as well as lack of status; thus, their voices go unheard. These women have little knowledge about the justice system; nor do they have money to hire non-legal-aid lawyers. In custody they are impacted by system policy and procedures that were developed for violent male offenders. Historically, there were so few women in the Manitoba correctional system that it has taken a long time for the system to become more gender responsive. When the women leave jail and re-enter the community, they are again subjected to the same discrimination, which is compounded by the stigmatization of having been in jail. Risk factors such as substance abuse and criminal lifestyles can be controlled by the women, but they have no voice or power to effect change in the system.

Social determinants of health. The "social determinants of health" is a term that refers to "the social and economic factors that shape the health and incidence of illness among individuals and groups of individuals (Raphael 2010, p. 10). According to Mikkonen and Raphael (2010) the following are the social determinants of health for Canadians: "income and income distribution, education, unemployment and job security, employment and working

conditions, early childhood development, food security, housing, social exclusion, social safety network, health services, Aboriginal status, gender, race, disability" (p.9). These determinants of health significantly affect imprisoned women by impacting the health status of an individual's life either positively or negatively (Maeve, 2001; Taylor, 1996). Pathways between living conditions (food, housing, etc.) and social structures (race, class, gender) intersect and interconnect to impact the holistic health of individuals, which refers to the mind, body and spirit of an individual. For example, homelessness, poverty, low social economic status, lack of employment and education opportunities are some of disparities that negatively affect the lives of individuals (McGibbon, 2012). McGibbon (2012) highlighted these social structures that make people vulnerable as the "historical, political, social, and economic antecedents of ill health" (p.40). In addition, she conceptualizes that "isms" such as racism, sexism, and classism combine with social determinants of health of oppressed people for a synergistic effect (McGibbon, 2012).

Oppression. Aboriginal women in Canada have been marginalized since the beginning of colonization. Governments, both federal and provincial, have ghettoized them by passing policies and acts such as the Indian Act. They limited their power based on race, gender, and class. According to McGibbon (2012), "while individuals can exert social and cultural power over other individuals, it is structural power in national and global systems over individuals, such as education, governance, law, and health, that cements and sustains oppression across time and across earth's geographies" (p. 24). She posits that the oppression of women is sexism. When people of colour experience prejudice because of their racial background, it is racism. And when sexism and racism intersect they "form a powerful synergy in disadvantaging women of color in

Canada" (McGibbon, 2012, p. 25). Imprisoned women of Aboriginal descent have been further discriminated against because of their involvement in the justice system.

Colonization. For years, the real story of the colonization of the Aboriginal people in Canada has not been disseminated to non-Aboriginal Canadians. The voice of Aboriginal people has been silenced and has gone unheard by the rest of Canada. Many Canadians have false beliefs and perceptions regarding Aboriginal people. The Canadian government, under the guise of being responsible for the Aboriginal population, sought to assimilate the entire population through colonization (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012). In order to achieve this assimilation project Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and his government built regional residential schools to remove the children from the influence of their families and culture. In 1883, Macdonald confirmed this in his speech to the House of Commons:

> When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with his parents who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. (Cited in Ross, 2014, p.6).

Although not all Aboriginal people suffered from traumatic experiences in residential schools, the true extent of how many did and how they were impacted is coming to the fore as residential school survivors tell their stories. According to Ross (2014), "The children in those schools were not simply students. They were prisoners and their captive status began as early as age of five. They were helpless, dependent and lost" (p. 92). The children were separated from their siblings and other relatives; girls and boys were kept apart and many siblings never saw each other during their years at the same school. Boys were indoctrinated with denigrating propaganda about Aboriginal women, which was part of the government's plan to unseat women

from positions of power in the community. The legacy of this intergenerational trauma has been passed down through the generations of Aboriginal people, resulting, for some, in dysfunctional families and communities until the present day (Ross, 2014).

Many children suffered from feelings of abandonment by their parents, poverty, disease, and verbal, physical, and sexual abuse (from staff and other students), as well as loss of their native language, denigration, loss of the spiritual traditions, attachment issues, trust, identity, lack of confidence, and loneliness (Ross, 2014; Gray, 2011). This trauma impacted the lives of these children by resulting in psychological damages such as learned helplessness and complex post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as in the intergenerational transfer of trauma, disempowerment, emotional deprivation, and social-cultural shame. These conditions took place at a vulnerable psychosocial period in the lives of the children. For residential school survivors, this trauma affected their abilities to continue their culture and parent their children. Generation after generation of Aboriginal people have carried this burden, which has had huge effects on their own lives (Ross, 2014).

Many Aboriginal tribes abided by a matrilineal (passed down through the mother) order. Government was aware that women held positions of power in the communities and set out to devalue women and remove them from power (Ross, 2012). Legislation was used to diminish the role of women in Aboriginal society. For example, the Indian Act of 1876 made Aboriginal women chattel of Aboriginal men. When an Aboriginal woman married, she had to leave her home band/community and become part of her husband's community. She was not allowed to own land, and if her husband died or divorced her, she was forced to leave her home (property and shared possessions). In essence, when the shunned woman left the reserve with her children and few personal belongings, she was often plunged into poverty and homelessness. Aboriginal

women were the last to get the vote in Canada (in 1960), as well as the right to hold political office.

From the beginning of first contact, Aboriginal women were diminished by the Europeans. Many colonists held Victorian worldviews and were appalled by the male-oriented work that the women undertook. Aboriginal women dressed simply in order to carry out their work responsibilities in the community. The white settlers considered such clothing to be immodest and unladylike. This led to a change in the perception of Aboriginal women from princess to prostitute (Gray, 2011). These criticisms of the women and their role in the Aboriginal community resulted in their character assassination. The resulting negative perspective of Aboriginal women has continued down through time, negatively impacting Aboriginal women of today. Years later the assimilation project continues to negatively impact the lives of Aboriginal people in Canada today through intergenerational transfer of trauma.

Types of Crimes with which Women are Charged

In 2008/2009, the number of women admitted to sentenced custody in Manitoba was 3,804, representing 8.8% of adults in sentenced custody (Mahoney, 2011, p. 31). Not only do women constitute a small portion of those sentenced to custody compared to men, their crimes tend to differ in nature. The majority of crimes carried out by women are nonviolent (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Johnson & Rodgers, 1993; Lewis, 2006; Maeve, 2001; Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2008). Their crimes tend to fall under two broad classifications: property offences (shoplifting, theft, larceny), and drug-related offences (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Greenfeld & Snell, 1999; Lewis, 2006; Maeve, 2001; Richie, 2001). These property offences are considered to be income-generating offences used to provide material goods for women or their children or to support drug habits (Statistics Canada, 2006; Auditor General of Canada, 2003). A

number of women involved in the criminal justice system are serving time for gender-related crimes, such as survival prostitution (Covington, 2007; Sered & Norton-Hawk, 2008). Carlen (1988) reported that the key difference between female and male involvement with the criminal justice system was that "women's criminal careers were shorter, more limited, and involved less serious crimes that are rooted in financial difficulties" (p. 20).

Returning to the Community

The focus for this aspect of the literature review was to review research on imprisoned women who have experienced leaving imprisonment and returning to the community. Seven qualitative studies (three from Canada and four from the United States) and one quantitative study (USA) were found. All of the research was completed after the year 2000. Many of the researchers commented on the lack of research on women re-entering the community after imprisonment (see, for example, Parsons & Warner-Robbins, 2002, and Pollock, 2009). After briefly describing these studies, the primary findings will be highlighted.

Canadian studies. Pollack's (2009) qualitative study employed an open-ended, semi-structured interview approach to survey 68 women across Canada who had been released from a Canadian federal prison between 2004 and 2006. Findings from this study resulted in recommendations with regard to pre-release programming/planning that could potentially change policy and practice of the women's federal correctional system for the better. In addition, this study sought out the experiences of the women re-entering the community through the lens of "What is helpful and what are barriers to integration" (Pollack, 2009, p. 86).

For example, the majority of women who leave the federal system are on parole in the community for a set amount of time. During this period, the parolee must follow a set of written rules and regularly report to a parole officer. The parole officer's role is to officially supervise

the individual and to support her journey in the community. This dual role sets up a conflict that challenges both the parole officer and the parolee. If the parolee admits to violating any of her parole orders, it is incumbent on the parole officer to issue a warrant for the parolee's arrest and return her to custody. For example, when it comes to addictions, there is no harm reduction perspective and any relapses result in a return to custody. As well, for many parolees the parole officer is the only support she has in the community.

Another concern the participants identified was the overarching parole condition, which forbids parolees from associating with "certain or all people who have a criminal record" (Pollock, 2009, p. 89). This rule prevents the women from connecting or reconnecting with peers who have gone through the same experience as they are undergoing and thus, "women are cut off from receiving and giving support to other women on parole" (Pollock, 2009, p. 89). Acquiring new supports in the community is extremely difficult for parolees. This situation can lead to isolation, lack of efficacious support, and feelings of stigmatism.

In *Doing Time on the Outside* Maidment (2006) used a mixed methods approach to compare two groups of criminalized women (N=22): women who experienced recidivism ("returned to imprisonment within a two-year period of their release") and women who remained free for a two-year period after release (p. 8). Maidment (2006) examined the barriers and problems faced by the women who experienced re-imprisonment after being released from custody. She concluded four main points: 1) that there is a positive correlation between a woman's lifetime "layers of social controls" such as child and family services and social assistance and recidivism (p. 146); 2) that the labels, terms of measurement, and statistics used by Correctional Service of Canada to measure the success of post-imprisoned women are unrealistic as they often depend primarily on statistics as opposed to narrative data regarding the

lived experiences of women transitioning back to community; 3) that many of the women not re-incarcerated in the federal correctional system were "transcarcerated" or interned in community mental health facilities such as psychiatric institutes or group homes; and 4) that gender continues to influence women's pathways to imprisonment (Maidment, 2006).

The third Canadian study involved an arts-based methodology called digital storytelling to examine "the social determinants of health for women post-incarceration with a particular focus on their access to resources and relationship to networks" (Rahim, 2011, p. 1). The majority of crimes that women are imprisoned for in Canada are survival offences such as prostitution and theft. These offences are directly linked to the social structures of our society– race, class, and gender. For example, Rahim (2011) reported that services for post-prison women have been cut, placing this population in jeopardy, and that the women are subjected to "the inequities, discrimination, and the paralyzing effect of poverty women experience, both pre- and post- incarceration" (p. 1). These women face barriers in the community such as ongoing poverty, homelessness, lack of education and employment, and fractured interpersonal relationships with friends, family, and the community as a whole. Rahim (2011) states, "whatever disadvantages the woman suffered before prison she now faces the world with added disadvantage of a prison experience and a prison record" (p. 4).

United States studies. Richie's (2001) study design used an open-ended interview process and a grounded theory data analysis approach to look at the experiences of 42 women of colour re-entering the community and the challenges they experienced during community reintegration. She discovered that the women's needs at this time included programs and services for addictions, trauma services (post-traumatic stress disorder and violence issues), education, employment, housing, physical and mental health, child advocacy, and reunification.

Her findings support the need for wrap-around community programming and treatment services that support empowerment and self-efficacy within this population. In addition, she found that system changes and social reform within the community to which these women inevitably returned were imperative in order to promote successful reintegration of this population (Richie, 2001).

To identify re-entry issues, Maeve (2001) used a participatory action and critical hermeneutic approach with 14 imprisoned women in a southeastern state prior to their release and at two, four, and eight weeks after release. She found that the participants required services for: substance abuse, chronic physical and mental illnesses, managing life stressors, housing, employment/education, and resuming their life roles (mother, significant other, etc.). Maeve (2001) stated that, "The women who participated in this study exemplified the many difficulties that recreate and sustain women's criminal behaviours and concomitant poor health status" (p. 166). She thought that she was going to find stories of how these women successfully re-integrated from imprisonment to the community; what she found, however, was that they were simply "waiting to be caught again" (p. 151).

O'Brien (2001) interviewed 18 women in two different Midwestern states who had successfully transitioned from imprisonment to uncover how they managed reintegration. The participants in her study related the following accomplishments as ingredients for a successful reintegration: "1) finding shelter; 2) obtaining employment/legal income 3) reconstructing connections with others; 4) developing community memberships; and 5) identifying consciousness and confidence in self" (p. 289). She concluded that "the process of successful integration depends on both the woman's developing a sense of self-efficacy and her strategic use of family, correctional, and community resources" (O'Brien, 2001, p. 293).

Parsons and Warner-Robbins (2002) conducted a qualitative study in a community faith-based program for newly released ex-offenders to explore the factors that supported women's successful transition to the community. They found that the main themes that supported the successful reintegration of study participants consisted of a belief in God, rehabilitation from addictions, support groups, church members' visits in jail, helpful family and friends, positive role models, personal determination, having their children in their lives, employment opportunities, helping others, dealing with feelings and past problems, and "the development of holistic health (mind, body, and spirit)" (Parsons & Warner-Robbins, 2002, p.17).

Huebner, De Jong, and Cobina (2010) reviewed records from a state Department of Corrections of 506 women released between 1998 and 2006. Their purpose was to understand how social relationships, imprisonment experiences, and community context intersected with race to influence reintegration experiences and recidivism. They found that 47% of the women in their study returned to custody within eight years (most returned within the first two years). Drug use, returning to pre-imprisonment neighbourhoods, failed family dynamics, and lack of education and employment opportunities were key indicators of failure to remain in the community. The main finding indicated that half of the women were re-incarcerated over the eight-year period.

The common themes across all of these studies focus on the reintegration experience, emphasizing the barriers, challenges, and needs from the perspective of women. The most common findings amongst study participants were financial issues, affordable housing, dealing with previous substance abuse issues, renegotiating relationships with family, children and friends, and lack of education/employment. Many mentioned ongoing mental health issues, past victimization/abuse issues, a lack of self-efficacy, stigmatization, and a general disconnect from

community resources, government systems, and the people of the community. Some discussed the numerous conflicting stressors that overwhelmed the experience of being free. These studies identified numerous solutions and recommendations for promoting successful community re-entry for this population. Overall the women reported that there was a relative lack of success fitting back into their communities due to barriers and challenges they encountered.

Chapter Summary

The role of the literature review in a phenomenological study is to provide context and promote critical thinking. To that end, this literature review provided an understanding of the context of imprisoned women's lives and the numerous systemic factors that have placed them at risk for engaging in behaviours that lead to their imprisonment. It included a review of the current literature on the reintegration of imprisoned women back to their communities in Canada and the United States. Although there was limited research done in Canada, United States researchers provided a more extensive view of the phenomenon. Some of the studies explored the rules for women when they are in the community that often conflict with the realities of their lives, leaving them with limited support and adding to the challenge of the transition.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research design that guided this project. The philosophical framework, theoretical perspectives, and research design are discussed, including their appropriateness for answering the primary research question: How do imprisoned women who have transitioned to the community and have returned to custody experience their lives during their transition to the community? A qualitative research design was chosen in order to provide thick, rich data from a holistic perspective of the meaning of the phenomenon in the lifeworlds of the participants (Frankel & Devers, 2000; Sanders, 1977). The perspectives and methodology enhanced understanding, opened new perspectives related to the influence of gender, race, and class on women's experiences, and contributed to reducing the knowledge gap related to this phenomenon. The following discussion provides the background and rationale for using these approaches.

Philosophical Framework: Phenomenology

The aim of this research study was to understand how imprisoned women who transitioned to the community and have returned to custody experienced their lives during their return to the community. Phenomenology, a qualitative research method that seeks to understand life experiences from the perspective of the study participant, was chosen to ensure the success of this goal. Historically, phenomenology is attributed to the German influences on philosophy. Husserl (1859-1938) is considered the "father of phenomenology" (Koch, 1995). He is credited with introducing the phenomenological framework, which espouses a humanistic rather than a traditional scientific approach. His belief that humans experience their "lifeworlds" through conscious awareness underpinned his philosophy (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000; Koch, 1995). Heidegger, a student of Husserl, developed his hermeneutic phenomenological approach

based on Husserl's philosophy, which focuses on the lived experience of human beings. While Husserl's work centred on a knowledge or epistemological framework, Heidegger's work adopted an ontological or existentialist view (McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2009a).

Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology. The philosophical underpinning chosen to inform and guide this research study is that of Heidegger. As articulated by Husserl, Heidegger critiqued phenomenology as being descriptive and instead adopted an interpretive view of the lived experience. One of the underpinnings of Heidegger's philosophical stance is his belief of "being." To explain this concept, he used the German term "Dasein," which translates to "being there" (Solomon, 1972). He believed that "beings" experienced their lives through their lifeworlds and existed in those worlds by "being-in-the-world" (Warnock, 1970). To Heidegger, "being-in-the-world" meant both influencing the world and being influenced by it. He used the term "throwness" to refer to his belief that "beings" are placed into their lifeworlds by chance and automatically join the social environment and culture of their lifeworlds. They become acculturated and develop the same behaviours and worldviews of their environments (LeMay & Pitts, 2007). Contemporary Heideggerian scholars Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, and Spence (2008) enhanced the definition of "Dasein" as follows: "always/already, constitutively 'thinking': simply being-there in the midst of what is, where all that is melded into an inter-connected oneness" (p. 1396).

Heidegger repudiated Husserl's principle of "bracketing" or consciously disclosing personal pre-understandings or judgments on the research phenomenon in order to keep an open mind during the research process (Draucker, 1999; Laverty, 2003; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). This principle conflicted with Heidegger's concept of "being-in-the-world" and his belief that beings cannot be extracted from their lifeworlds. He proposed that the social

environment/culture that "beings" are thrown into shapes them and that pre-understandings are created during this process (Laverty, 2003). He believed that the researcher was an active participant in the research process and needed to rely on "previous knowledge and understanding," also known as "pre-understanding" (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009b, p. 9). He did not believe that an individual could consciously suspend all thoughts and knowledge regarding a phenomenon; nor did he believe that, conversely, pre-understanding was central to the understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon. Van Manen (1990), who developed research methods based on Heidegger's philosophy, agrees with Heidegger's stance on bracketing. He believes that, "it is better to make explicit our understandings, beliefs, biases, pre-understandings, presuppositions and theories" (p. 47). He stated that, "one needs to realize that forgetting one's pre-understandings is not really possible"; instead, a thorough understanding of one's pre-understandings is necessary to ensure that one remain open to the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014 p. 224).

Heidegger is responsible for the concept of the "hermeneutic circle" that demonstrates "the circularity of play, the temporality of truth, the historicity of language and the coming together of the interpretation and the text" (P. Ironside, personal communication, June 5, 2013). The hermeneutic circle moves from the parts of experience to the whole of experience and back and forth to increase the depth of engagement with, and the understanding of, the texts (Annells, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1983). Van Manen included this concept of "balancing the research context by considering the parts and the whole" as the final step in his "six research activities" (1990, pp. 30-31).

Heidegger rejected the common belief of the day that mind and body were separate entities; he viewed them as one. In addition, he believed that it was important to study an

individual's experience with the phenomenon as it is being lived (Smythe et al., 2008). While Heidegger did not offer his philosophy as a research method (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009b; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011), late 20th century phenomenology scholars produced methodological approaches for this branch of research. From these approaches, van Manen's "six methodological themes" were chosen to guide the research process (1990, p. 30).

Van Manen and hermeneutic phenomenology. Van Manen, a contemporary Canadian phenomenologist, "developed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to human science research and writing" (van Manen, 1990, p. ix). Van Manen specified that his research methodology was written for researchers, inclusive of nurses, pursuing human science (van Manen, 1990). This approach includes a six-point framework to guide hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry (Earle, 2010). According to van Manen, "Phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experiences, hermeneutics describes how one interprets the 'texts' of life" which are embedded in the "research and writing" of the phenomenological project (1990, p. 4).

Using van Manen's six methodological themes, the following chart outlines the research activities for this project (van Manen, 1990, pp. 30-31):

Van Manen's six methodological themes	Research project activities
1. "Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world."	Thinking that leads to development of research question. Conducting the literature review. Composing and describing pre-understandings. Writing the proposal. Recruiting participants.
2. "Investigating the experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it."	Exploring the participants' lived experiences of transitioning from imprisonment to the community and back to imprisonment through in-depth interviews with each study participant.
3. "Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon."	Reflecting on participants' lived experience through data collection and using their lifeworld reflections of lived space, lived body, lived temporality, and lived human relation. Sorting, synthesizing, and interpreting themes.
4. "Describing the phenomenon through the act of writing and rewriting."	Writing and rewriting themes derived from participants. Talking about interpretation.
5. "Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon."	Referring to the research question, purpose, nursing experience, and current literature throughout project.
6. "Balancing the research context by considering the parts and the whole."	Moving from transcript of individual interviews to themes

Hermeneutic phenomenology and nursing. Since the nursing profession is a human science that encompasses the holistic care of human beings, it was inevitable that nursing scholars would be drawn to the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. The integral concept of holism, of conceptualizing and initiating comprehension of the context of the experience, captured Benner's attention (1985). Benner pioneered this research method in nursing and it soon garnered a general appeal in the nursing community (Chadderton, 2004; Draucker, 1999; Smith, 1991). As acknowledged by Edwards:

> The philosophical underpinnings of phenomenological thought are consistent with the values of nursing practice—the uniqueness of the person, the importance of personal discovery and acceptance of life situations, the need for exploration of the meaning of experience, interpersonal relating, potential for personal growth, and use of the self as a therapeutic tool. (2006, p. 237)

Other nurse scholars such as Paterson and Zderad (1976), Parse (1981, 1987), and Watson (1987) utilized this method to provide the infrastructure for developing nursing knowledge in both theory and practice (Smith, 1991). These nurse researchers forged the way for the use of hermeneutic phenomenological methodology in the field of nursing research. By using this approach, nurse researchers move past study of participants' descriptions of their lived experiences to interpretation of the meaning of how study participants experience the phenomenon under investigation (Earle, 2010; Smith, 1991).

Theoretical Lens: Feminism and Intersectionality

Feminist research has the goal of constructing knowledge that will challenge female oppression. There is still considerable ground to be covered in "looking more generally at gendered lives, power relations, and institutional dominance" (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 5). While it is difficult to find a global definition of feminist theory, basic tenets focus on the social and political impact on everyday life with regard to race, class, and gender. Chinn and Wheeler (1985) identified feminism as "a worldview that values women and that confronts systematic injustices based on gender" (p. 74). A feminist standpoint lens informed this research project by considering issues such as gender, disempowerment, and oppression within the criminal justice system and other dominant systems affecting the lived experiences of women re-entering their communities.

The 1999 Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission reported that "There was an overall picture presented of racism, sexism, and violence against Aboriginal women in Aboriginal communities, in wider society and in the justice system." This discrimination reaches back to the colonization of Canada by non-Aboriginals who forced patriarchal and Eurocentric societal rules on Aboriginal people through domination and attempts at assimilation. Throughout Canadian history, the traditional roles of Aboriginal women that had centred on leadership and power diminished. Various government policies further oppressed Indigenous women by discriminating against them based on race, gender, and marital status, the result of which exerted an accumulated negative effect on the lives of Aboriginal women which is still experienced today, especially by those in conflict with the criminal justice system (Gray, 2013; Ross, 2014). Feminism and intersectionality provide a perspective on the multiple ways in which social locations intersect to reinforce social exclusion and oppression for imprisoned women.

Feminist standpoint theory. Feminist standpoint theory focuses on the accounts of the women who experience the phenomenon, producing "feminine knowledge" (Grant, 1993, p. 92). Standpoint feminism legitimizes the research population as the local authority. It provides the starting point for research on their lived experiences, and situates them within contemporary society (Smith, 1997). Harding, a feminist standpoint theory pioneer, stated that "One has to live as a member of an oppressed group or do the necessary work to gain a rich and nuanced understanding of what such lifeworlds are like, in order to think within that group's standpoint" (1990, p. 194). Feminist standpoint theory starts from the "daily lives of the oppressed, exploited, or dominated groups and leads to critical examination of what's wrong and what's still useful or otherwise valuable in the dominant institutions of society, their cultures, and practices" (Harding, 1990, p. 34).

Instead of relying on second-hand information and conjecture, this study focused on how the participants experience their lives during their return to their communities. Feminist standpoint scholars emphasize the need to begin with women's lives "as they themselves experience them" in order to achieve an accurate and authentic understanding of what life is like for women today (Brooks, 2006, p. 53). By combining standpoint feminism and hermeneutic phenomenology in this study, I sought to produce rich, thick data on what it means to be a woman returning to her community after imprisonment.

Intersectionality's implications for this study. This study explores the lived experiences of women who left jail, transitioned to the community, and returned to jail. A lens of intersectionality was used to explore the findings of this study. "Intersectionality is a useful strategy for linking the grounds of discrimination (e.g. race, gender, etc.) to the social, economic, political, and legal environment that contributes to discrimination and structures experiences of oppression and privilege" (Symington, 2004, p. 5). Many of the study's participants come from the margins of our society and have multi-layered lived identities impacted by discrimination and oppression.

The fit between intersectionality and the study is further supported by Collins (2003), who linked historical subjugation to survival strategies used by oppressed groups "to escape from, survive in, and/or oppose prevailing social and economic injustices" (p.325). The women have adapted their behaviours and lifestyles to survive in the world. This phenomenological methodology of the study is supported by Hunting (2014), who posited that research studies where subjects are encouraged to share their lived "experiences of power, discrimination, resistance, and resilience–has been integral in highlighting the differences and commonalities

within and across groups" (p. 4). This study records the intersections of the multiple layered identities of women caught in the revolving door of the criminal justice system.

Rationale for Choosing Approaches

The main purpose of this research project is to understand how imprisoned women who have transitioned to the community and have returned to custody experienced their lives during their return to their communities, and, at the same time, to give imprisoned women an opportunity to have their voices heard. As noted by Delmar (2006), hermeneutic phenomenological research provides a conduit into the lifeworlds of the individuals for the purposes of informing others about their human experiences.

I based the appropriateness of using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach for this project on several reasons. First, the literature review undertaken for this project reflected a limited evidence-informed research in this topic area and, most importantly, it pointed to an absence of data on the Manitoba woman's lived experience when she returns to her community from imprisonment, particularly research that recognizes women as the authority of their experiences.

Second, feminist standpoint theory most closely fit my personal philosophy and experience, and was well suited to situating the research question and the lifeworlds of the study population. Standpoint feminism legitimized the research population as the local authority. It provided the starting point for research on women's lived experiences and situated them within contemporary society (Smith, 1997).

Third, throughout my nursing career, I have maintained a holistic, person-centred practice underpinned by my personal values, beliefs, and philosophical perspectives of society. My personal experiences working with imprisoned women have compelled me to adopt a feminist

standpoint perspective, guiding me to look beyond personal stories to consider the social context of these stories, that is, the history social, economic, political, and economic conditions with which their experiences occur.

Based on the above reasons, I maintain that this combination of Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology and feminist standpoint theory with the recognition of intersectionality provides a strong framework to shape a deeper understanding of the human experiences of imprisoned women re-entering their communities and the societal factors influencing their experiences.

Research Design

The research design consisted of selecting the research sample, identifying the setting, and developing the recruitment steps, data collection methods, and data analysis plans, as well as integrating methodological rigour and ethical considerations into the overall plan.

Sampling approach. A purposive sampling approach permitted the selection of participants who possessed personal knowledge of the phenomenon (Frankel & Devers, 2000; Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Hermeneutic phenomenological research ensures the collection of "information rich" data through recruiting participants who are actively involved with the phenomenon of interest. The information that is the focus of this project was only available from a small percentage of the female population of Manitoba who has experienced transitioning to the community and returning to custody. The Women's Correctional Centre in Headingley houses the majority of women in custody in Manitoba. Therefore, the sample of 12 participants was drawn from this population.

Inclusion criteria. Women recruited into the research project were required to meet the following inclusion criteria: voluntary participation, over 18 years of age, provincially-

sentenced, speak English, and have at least one prior experience of returning to the community after imprisonment. I did not identify specific exclusion criteria, but followed all correctional institution protocols with regard to recruiting the sample.

Participant access. Contact was established with Manitoba Corrections. A written letter (Appendix A) outlining the proposed project along with a written formal request for access to the site and sample was sent to Dr. Trevor Markesteyn (Chief Correctional Psychologist, Community Safety Division, Manitoba Justice) and Ms. Margo Lee (Superintendent, Women's Correctional Centre). Preliminary permission for this research study was granted, contingent on receiving ethical approval from the University of Manitoba. Ethical approval was then granted on January 22, 2015.

Sample size. In his recent book, van Manen (2014) discussed his perspective on the use of sampling in phenomenological methodology. He takes the stance that, "Within a phenomenological methodology, the term 'sample' should not refer to an empirical sample as a subset of a population. This use of the notion of sampling presupposes that one aims at empirical generalization, and that is impossible within phenomenological methodology" (p. 352). However, he does concede that "if it is necessary to use the notion of 'sample' or 'sampling' then it is best to do so with a reference to attempt to gain 'examples' of experientially rich descriptions" (p. 353). I based my decision on sampling on Thorne's advice on sample size (2008). Thorne suggests setting limits by "providing a range and an explanation for why the upper and lower limits have been selected" (2008, p. 96).The average yearly population of the Women's Correctional Centre is approximately 200 women. Based on my own experiences with this cohort and the sample size of comparable published phenomenological studies, I concluded that a sample size of between 6-12 participants was needed in order achieve thick, rich data.

Setting. In Canada, provincial correctional facilities house individuals who have been sentenced to two years less one day**.** In the province of Manitoba, the majority of imprisoned women are held at the Women's Correctional Centre (WCC) in Headingley. This facility, which opened in 2012, is located approximately eight kilometres west of Winnipeg. The centre houses an abundant pool of participants who have experienced recidivism and were able to discuss their lived experiences on re-entering the community after imprisonment. At WCC, the women in the general population are housed in three identical units (Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie), each consisting of a large communal area with cells with bunk beds adjacent to this area. Due to institutional limits I was only able to recruit on two units – Alpha and Bravo. However, the interviews with participants took place in the offices in the administrative corridor leading up to the control pod where the units branched off.

Data Collection Procedures

Steps involved with recruiting. Access to the target population began August 2014 when I contacted Dr. Trevor Markesteyn, who verbally indicated that prior to applying to Manitoba Corrections for access, ethical approval from the University of Manitoba must be secured. On August 5, 2014, access to carry out my research at the Women's Correctional Centre was approved contingent on ethics approval and security clearance. Security clearance was completed in January, 2015. After I was granted ethics approval, I arranged a meeting with Bridget Kozyra, Assistant Superintendent-Programs, to discuss the logistics of the project, to create mutually acceptable guidelines for the implementation of the project within the facility, and to schedule information meetings for the women on each unit. At that time, I provided correctional staff with a poster (Appendix B) advertising the project and informational meetings for each living unit. This poster asked participants to self-identify if they met the inclusion

criteria. In compliance with WCC operational procedure the women were asked to complete a standard form asking to meet with me. I was looking for six to eight in the whole facility. I received six from one unit then later on six more requests came from another unit. Since I had no way of knowing who applied first from the second unit, I decided it was only fair to take all six. And this is how I ended up doing 12 interviews.

I provided an overview of the project to the women during the informational meeting on each of the units (Appendix C). The overview briefed them on the project and explained its purpose, aims, potential outcomes, and the number of participants required for the study. Handouts of the overview were made available for those who wished to have them (Appendix D). All written material distributed to potential participants was written at a grade six reading level. During these information sessions, I advised them of my educational past and correctional and community backgrounds. Phenomenology acknowledges that the research process is a journey in which both the researcher and the participants bring their own perspectives and experiences to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Correctional staff members were informed that the women would be meeting with me but staff would not be privy to what the participants and I discussed during the interviews. Manitoba Correctional regulations prevented me from providing any type of honorarium to the participants or the facility.

General format. Data collection consisted of individual, face-to-face interviews with the participants .The use of in-depth interviews fulfilled van Manen's second research activity, "Investigating the experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it" (1990, p. 30).

All interviews took place at the Women's Correctional Centre in Headingley, Manitoba. The interviews were held in a private room with a glass window on the units where the women who agreed to participate in the study were housed. This location provided a familiar

environment and minimized distractions. A correctional officer was not present in the room; however, continuous visual monitoring via cameras took place. I was reassured that audio recording by the facility did not take place. I reflected on the data collection process using a personal journal and consulted my thesis supervisors regarding any concerns during data collection.

Main interview. A woman-centred conversational approach was used during participant interviews. At the beginning of the initial visit, I engaged with the participant to build rapport and thus contribute to the collection of rich data from potential participants (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Information about the project regarding confidentiality, consent process, cultural concerns and rights of the interviewee, the interview process, and guidelines of the project were reviewed with potential participants. This information was provided in writing and each of the women was given the choice of going through the information with the researcher or reading it by herself. Participants were asked to sign the consent form at this time. Confidentiality was maintained by having each participant choose a pseudonym that was given a number. This number was the only identification on the transcripts. Only one copy of each participant's real name, pseudonym, and number was kept; these copies were locked in a filing cabinet in my home office in a separate drawer away from consent forms and interview data. They will be confidentially shredded by June 2017.

An individual, in-person, semi-structured interview approach was used with the study participants. Demographic information such as age, race, relationship status, and number of children was collected at the beginning of the interview. The rest of the interview consisted of 10 predetermined questions to help participants focus on their experiences of returning to their communities between imprisonments. Broad open-ended questions with conversational probes

were used to encourage participants to share their stories, staying as close as possible to their lived experience (van Manen, 1990). To ensure rich, thick data, the interview guide (Appendix E) was designed to be flexible and to allow women to raise issues and present their experiences in a way that made sense to them. Interviews were audio tape-recorded and a transcriptionist who signed the personal health information confidentiality pledge produced verbatim transcriptions.

Follow-up interview. Participants were asked if they would be willing to meet on a second occasion if questions or concerns arose from their interviews. Permission from each participant for this possibility was included in the consent process. No follow-up interviews were necessary.

Timeline. This interview process took place over two weeks, facilitating the inclusion of a sample of 12 participants. I chose this data collection approach to ensure collection of richly laden information on the lifeworlds of the phenomenon of interest. The one-to-one, semi-structured interviews were used to elicit the stories and views of those who lived the experience, and to provide the data required "to understand or comprehend meanings of human experience as it is lived" (Laverty, 2003).

Study Participants' Demographics. Twelve eligible participants were recruited from the Women's' Correctional Centre in Headingly, Manitoba. Nine women self-identified as Aboriginal (First Nations & Metis) and three women self-identified as Caucasian. Interviews occurred during the month of February 2015 at the Women's Correctional Centre in Headingly, Manitoba. The mean age was 31.5 and ages ranged from 20 to 43 years. Six were in living common-law arrangements and six were single. Six of the participants have children. Four of the women had completed secondary education, while seven attended school until grade nine. In addition, one woman had left school after grade seven. Seven received their income from

Employment and Income Assistance, two had jobs, and three lived off the proceeds of crime. All the women as children had been exposed to adverse childhood experiences and abuse. All of the women identified as having addictions. Eight women disclosed having health problems; five of these women stated that they have mental health illnesses and three that they have physical health problems.

Table 1.0 Participant Demographics

Social Demographics of Women in the Study

Characteristics	n = 12	%
Ethnicity		
Aboriginal (Metis /First Nations)	9	75
Caucasian	3	25
Mean Age yrs.	31. 5	
Marital Status		
Single	6	50
Common Law	6	50
Number of Women with Children	11	92
Education yrs.		
Post Secondary	4	33
Grade		
9 – 11	7	58
> 9	1	8
Income		

EIA[3]	7	58
Job	2	17
Crime	3	25
Adverse Childhood Experiences / Abuse	12	100
Addictions	12	100
Health Problems		
No	4	33
Yes	8	67
Mental Health	5	42
Liver	1	8
Heart	1	8
Chronic Pain	1	8

Study Participants' Imprisonment Experiences. While all of the women in the study had more than one experience with imprisonment, the number of times in custody ranged from two to sixteen (one woman could not remember how many times she was imprisoned). Five stated two to five times, five disclosed six to ten times and one reported 16 times of being imprisoned. Lengths of time being in jail varied from one month to three years with seven doing one to five months, three serving six to ten months, one serving a year, and one serving two-and-one-half years. Average number of times of being in the community between custodies ranged from days to seven years (one woman couldn't remember). One woman was out in the community numerous times ranging from days to one year. For another woman it ranged from weeks to one year. Another it was weeks to two years. One woman stated her average time in the

[3] Employment and Income Assistance Program (EIA).

community was weeks to three years and for another weeks to four years. Four women disclosed that their times in the community ranged from one to six months. And one woman stated her times in the community ranged from 8 months to one year. Reasons for returning to jail involved breaching probation orders for two women; ten of the women re-offended.

Table 2 Women's Experiences with Imprisonment

	n = 12	%
Times in Custody		
16	1	8
6-10	5	42
2-5	5	42
?[4]	1	8
Length of Current Stay in Jail[5]		
1-5 mo.	7	58
6-10 mo.	3	25
1-2 yrs.	1	8
2-3 yrs.	1	8
Average Time in Community Between Custody		
Days – 1 yr.	1	8
Days – 7 yrs.	1	8
Weeks – 1 yr.	1	8
Weeks – 2 yrs.		

[4] Participant unable to recall number of times in custody.
[5] Four of the participants also had more charges pending.

Weeks – 3 yrs.	1	8
Weeks – 4 yrs.	1	8
1- 6 mo.	1	8
8 mo. – 1 yr.	4	33
? [6]	1	8
	1	8
Reasons for Return to Jail		
Breached[7]	2	17
Reoffended	10	83

Data Analysis Plans

Data analysis approaches. An experienced transcriber who took a confidentiality oath transcribed all audiotaped interview data in a timely manner after the interviews in order to allow me to begin the analysis process. To preserve authenticity, the transcriber was instructed to: record interviews verbatim with all noises, expletives, and words included; avoid modifying words; attend to placement of punctuation; and remove identifying information that could violate confidentiality.

Steps. The process of analysis contained the following steps: Step one involved listening to the taped interviews as expediently as possible and ensuring the transcript and recordings matched. Step two involved a general pre-read of each interview followed by a number of re-reads to inform the analysis process. This level of immersion in the interview data fostered intuiting the phenomenon and dwelling with the data (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). What was

[6] Participant unable to recall.
[7] Broke probation conditions and re-arrested.

being said and not being said by the participants in the interviews was explored and scrutinized for the meaning of what was really happening. During the analysis process, van Manen's third methodological step, "Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon," was completed by exploring the participants' lived experience, sorting, synthesizing, and interpreting themes (1990, p.30).

Coding. While reading the interview transcripts, I employed highlighting methods such as underlining, circling, and other markings to denote relevant information. Transcripts were typed with a wide margin on the right hand side. This allowed for the writing of phrases or labels that arose from the underlined data. I made a conscious effort during the coding process to avoid using professional-specific language to describe themes and to understand how any pre-understandings informed the process.

Codes were listed under synonymous groups using an overarching label that reflects the participant's language as extracted from the data. All data bits in each group related to all the other data bits. Information was distilled and consolidated as appropriate with a view to keeping it parsimonious. Data that did not appear to fit the research question were removed, such as the inquiries into the researcher's background. A three-column (fact, label, notes) table was used to sort information. This allowed for sorting, synthesizing, and the interpretation of themes. Next, a summary of information was written as a narrative (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011).

I chose the above method of data analysis in order to capture the meaning of the participants' life experiences of the phenomenon of interest. Immersion in the data allows the researcher to become closer to the information. It promotes the following: making sense of data through comprehension; generalizing the phenomenon by synthesizing; and explaining alternate

meanings of the data through theorizing. The moving back and forth between the data collection and the data analysis was done to support the authenticity of the data (van Manen, 1990).

Who was involved in the data analysis? I was the primary researcher; however, I collaborated with and sought advice from my faculty advisors during the research analysis. I conducted all the research interviews because the sample size was small, this was a learning experience for me, and I have a personal familiarity with the correctional system.

Rigour of Research Design

Van Manen (2014) asserts that phenomenological methodology is often plagued with the inclusion of concepts from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. He believes that phenomenology is unique from other qualitative methods and disputes the application of qualitative concepts "of validation, such as sample size, sampling selection criteria, members' checking and empirical generalizations" (p. 347). He asserts that, "Qualitative research is not well served by validation schemes that are naively applied across various incommensurable methodologies" (van Manen, 2014, p. 347). Therefore, I applied his criteria (2014, pp. 350-351) to validate my study as follows:

Van Manen's Validation Criteria	**Research Design**
Is the study based on a valid phenomenological question?	Yes
Is analysis performed on experientially descriptive accounts, transcripts?	Yes
Is the study properly rooted in primary and scholarly phenomenological literature rather than mostly relying on questionable secondary and tertiary sources?	Yes
Does the study avoid trying to legitimate itself with validation criteria derived from sources that are concerned with other (non-phenomenological) methodologies?	Yes

Trustworthiness and Authenticity of Data

Qualitative research uses the term trustworthiness" or "rigour" to illustrate the quality of a research project. Ensuring trustworthiness and rigour in qualitative research is akin to establishing reliability and validity in quantitative research. "The goal of rigor in qualitative research is to accurately represent study participants' experiences" (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011, p. 48). Rigour is addressed in this study by credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility. This concept refers to the actions a researcher employs in her study to ensure the findings are credible (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). For example, the interview process of this study used open-ended questions and probing for clarification to remain as close to participants' stories as possible (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009a, p. 33). As well, during the data analysis, the first readings of the participants' interviews were done to compare them with the audiotaped interviews and the field notes to verify the accuracy between the transcripts and the recorded interviews. This was done to ensure that the participants' words were captured verbatim.

Dependability. According to Streubert and Carpenter (2011), the principle of dependability is to demonstrate that findings are credible. This was accomplished in this study through the use of a personal journal throughout the project to record and sort out my emotions, thoughts, and feelings about the research project. In order to record my pre-understandings of the phenomenon, the first entry was completed prior to starting the research by journaling my attitudes and biases about the phenomenon of interest. This journal, as well as regular discussions with my research supervisors, supported the dependability of the data.

Confirmability. This criterion is used to illustrate how the researcher reached the conclusion of a study (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). This was achieved throughout the research project through the use of an audit trail (tape-recordings, transcripts, field notes, reflexive journal), which provided transparency and documentation of all thought processes leading to decisions and actions related to the project.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. This requirement was indicated in the consent form, information sheet, and all advertising. I verbally ensured that each participant was aware of this prior to the interview process.

Ethics Review Board approval. An application was submitted to University of Manitoba, Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) for ethical approval. An application for ethical approval was also submitted to the Manitoba Department of Corrections after approval from the university ethics board. The Course on Research Ethics (CORE) on the Tri-Council Policy Statement regarding the ethics of human research was completed and a certificate of completion was obtained (Appendix F). A pledge of confidentiality from the transcriptionist is also attached (Appendix G).

Vulnerability of participants. The participants in this study were vulnerable because they were imprisoned at the time of the interviews and because during the telling of their stories they discussed emotionally painful experiences that may result in uncomfortable feelings. In addition, the vulnerability of this population is reflected in their pathways to imprisonment, which include poverty, victimization, marginalization, and the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. I vigilantly observed the participant for any verbal or non-verbal indications that she was uncomfortable or distressed during the interview. On a number of occasions the women

became emotional when telling their stories, I turned off the recorder and gave them a break so they could compose themselves. I asked if they wanted to continue with the interview and everyone said yes. I reviewed resources that were accessible within the facility with all of the participants, and a written handout if they wanted it. (Appendix H). To ensure that participants were aware of available resources when they transitioned to the community I offered each of them a written list of community supports (Appendix I).

Informed consent. All participants were asked to sign a written consent form (Appendix J). Prior to the interview participants were asked for their ongoing consent. All literature including the poster, information sheets, and consent was written at a grade six level. I read and explained the information contained in the script at each unit meeting. All questions posed by attendees were answered with confirmation sought from the attendees that the concepts were understood. In addition, at the beginning of the individual meetings each participant was asked if she preferred to read this information herself or to have me read it to her.

Confidentiality. Safeguards were put in place to protect the anonymity of all participants. Pseudonyms were chosen by participants and used throughout the research project. All written information on pseudonyms was kept in a locked filing cabinet drawer, which only I could access. All relevant research data—including consent forms, transcripts, completed demographic forms, and audiotapes—were stored in locked filing cabinet drawers in my home office when not being used in the analysis process. Transcripts and consent forms were kept in separate locked drawers. Access to materials was limited to my committee co-chairs and me. The materials will be stored in my safety deposit box for seven years before being confidentially disposed. Participants were advised verbally as well as in writing with the consent form that if a disclosure of child abuse was made during the interview process that I would be legally obligated

to report the disclosure to the authorities. No such disclosures were made. All participants were asked if they would like to receive a summary of the research findings.

Chapter Summary

The research design constructed for this study consisted of a Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenological methodology informed by a standpoint feminist perspective that recognizes the centrality of intersectionality in the women's experiences. In-depth, personal, unstructured, conversational interviews were employed as the means for data collection. Van Manen's research activity of "reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon" (1990, p.30), using the lifeworld reflections of lived space, lived body, lived temporality, and lived human relation, was used to analyze data by sorting, synthesizing, and interpreting themes. Trustworthiness was established through application of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) standards of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of a hermeneutic phenomenological research study, the purpose of which is to reveal how imprisoned women who have transitioned to the community and have returned to custody experience their lives during their transition to the community. It explores and interprets the interview data provided by 12 women who have personally experienced this phenomenon.

The research strategies used in this analysis focused on van Manen's third and fourth methodological themes. In other words, "Reflecting on the essential themes, which characterize the phenomenon" and "Describing the phenomenon through the act of writing and rewriting" (van Manen, 1990, p. 30-31). These research strategies guide the study findings through the lens of van Manen's four existential themes: 1. temporality (lived time); 2. spatiality (lived space); 3. relationality (lived human relations); and 4. corporeality (lived body). He believes that these existentials "belong to everyone's life world—they are universal themes of life" (van Manen, 1990, p. 302). These existential themes are used as a structure to present women's experiences with transitioning to the community and returning to prison.

1. Temporality

Heidegger (1962) believed that temporality is essential to being and without it there would be no being. This belief was supported years later by van Manen, who posited that "lived time is also our temporal way of being in the world" and that "the temporal dimensions of past, present, and future constitute the horizons of a personal temporal landscape" (1996, p.104). These dimensions of past, present, and future are interconnected and have an accumulated effect on our lives. They are not compartmentalized but flow into one another as we pass through the

ages and stages of our lives. Thus, perceptions of past, present, and future have overlapped into the present moments and ways of being of the women in this research study.

As noted by van Manen, "Lived time (temporality) is subjective time as opposed to clock time or objective time" (1996, p.104). Individuals can experience time irrespectively of the 24-hour clock as they live that time. Lived or phenomenological time is measured subjectively and can slow down, stand still, or seem never ending. "The existential theme of temporality may guide our reflection to ask how time is experienced with respect to the phenomenon that is being studied" (van Manen, 2014, p.305). In this study of the lived experiences of imprisoned women during their transition to the community before returning to custody, temporality is explored through their past, present, and future experiences, and how they experienced time in their lives in particular circumstances.

The past. We all have a past made up of lived experiences that "somehow leave their traces" on us and influence our present and future (van Manen, 1990, p.104). The women recalled that during times of imprisonment they reflected on past experiences that impacted their fears and uncertainties regarding their return to the community, times of homelessness, having no safe place to go, and life in residential schools. They also reflected while in prison on past successes that gave them hope. These themes are discussed below.

"Nowhere to go." Women lacked both a safe home in the form of a physical shelter and an emotional place of safety. For some women this experience occurred upon release from jail and was reminiscent of past childhood adversity. Having nowhere to go upon discharge was disconcerting for the women. Upon leaving jail and returning to the community women often experienced a problem finding secure, safe, and affordable housing. In my opinion, based on my nursing experience, imprisoned women often lose their accommodations while they are in jail if

they are unable to continue to pay for rent on their accommodations. In addition, they often lose their possessions either through theft or their landlords may dispose of them. This leaves them not only homeless but without any possessions when they leave jail and return to the community. As well, because of their imprisonment and/or involvement with drugs and alcohol, they frequently are not welcome at the homes of family or friends. Their experiences of homelessness, a time of having nowhere to go, threaten their survival in the community.

The women recalled times of past releases when they were uncertain where they would find the basic human needs of food and shelter. They were often overcome by these fundamental needs of survival, which took precedence over their release plans and mandated correctional conditions (rules). Unfortunately, the options—survival sex, selling drugs, or living with unsuitable peers and strangers—were often dangerous and compromised their chances of successful integration into the community.

While in jail, the women often felt ambivalent about being released. They were excited and hopeful about gaining their freedom but also felt frightened, isolated, and unsure about how they would manage in the community. As well, some felt overwhelmed and confused as to how to make positive changes in their lives. Too many times, the women's stories illustrated that the time after release is not set up for success. This is reflected in Destiny's description of her experience when leaving jail and returning to the community:

> *Like, if I have nowhere to go, the best place to go is on the street to get some money and then go to a house where the drugs are. As long as you have money or drugs you're welcome almost anywhere.*

In addition, Kashlyn recalled her circumstances the last time she was released to the community: *"I was staying in Winnipeg. I had no shelter, nothing. I was just totally on my*

own." She managed by finding some women who let her stay with them; however, during her time with them Kashlyn was pulled into the world of survival sex in order to meet her basic needs of shelter and belonging.

Cheryl, an extremely well-informed woman with regard to community services and programs, stated that every time she left jail in the past, she was homeless and often ended up living on the streets or falling back into her old life of using drugs and survival sex. She shared the story that she ended up dealing drugs (resulting in her current sentence) on the advice of her dealer who told her that if she continued to work in prostitution, her *"body is going to give out."*

In this time of having nowhere to go, women had limited community resources and supports and thus often did not want to leave jail. Cheryl shared this story about a woman who was soon to be released from jail to the community. *"I'm just thinking of one girl just recently, just, like, crying that she had nowhere to go and she'd rather stay in jail."* Women leaving jail and returning to the community often share a common problem: poverty. When the women had limited financial resources, they turned to what they perceived as their only available options, risky criminal behaviours.

In reflecting on the past, the experiences of having nowhere to go were rooted in childhood trauma experiences, which were described as a time when the women previously experienced homelessness, insecurity, and fear. Women identified that their childhood home was not always a safe place and for some the best option was to flee. For many of these women, childhood was a time where major problems of housing, safety, and security existed and which, unfairly, they, as children, were left to solve. The harrowing experiences that these children faced in their childhood and youth influenced and defined their life course and present experiences.

For example, Nina and Vicki each shared their separate stories about how, as children ages 12 and 13, they left home to escape abuse and violence. They left their reserve communities and came south to the city in search of a safe place; however, both ended up homeless and living on the streets. As children they were trying to break away from a life of abuse but found that life on the streets had its own hazards.

Nina described running away with her younger sister to the city from her abusive home on the reserve because they were both being sexually abused. Nina was 12 and her sister was 11. *"Finally, just running away after I found her rocking back and forth in the bush. She was crying. Scared to go home. I told her, 'We won't go home.'"* In the city, Nina and her sister ended up living on the streets, including living in the tunnels of a major hospital. During this time of their lives they had to take responsibility for meeting their own basic needs, an unfair task to be placed upon children.

Vicki shared a similar story of running away from childhood abuse. She became homeless when she ran away from her home on a northern reserve to the city at the age of 13 due to *"the drinking, the drugging, the violence, the verbal abuse, everything. I didn't know that was where the real trouble was going to be."* While on the streets, Vicki found people who wanted to *"help"* her; they put her out on the street to make money for them by engaging in prostitution. At first the young teenager didn't know what was really happening, but as soon as she understood, she ran away from the "john" she was with and refused to prostitute herself. She found a way to pacify this group by making money for them through shoplifting. For Vicki, this criminal activity provided her with the skills to survive and meet her safety needs. As Vicki said, *"I chose to shoplift. It was easier. It was safer. I can sell my goods and get what I want faster instead of selling my body."*

These two poignant stories illustrate the women's struggles as children in situations of childhood trauma and having no safe place to go, which led to homelessness. The time of experiencing nowhere to go often emerged in childhood and was repeated upon release from prison.

"It was terrible going to those schools." A common thread in the lives of the participants was the effect of intergenerational trauma on their families. Intergenerational trauma is an accumulation of past traumas, including the residential school experience of Canadian Aboriginal peoples. It is linked to the stress, lack of well-being, poor social outcomes, and fractured family dynamics experienced by Aboriginal people today (Bombay, Matheson & Anisman, 2014). In Canada's past, Aboriginal children were removed from their families at a time of critical childhood development and were sent to state-run residential schools (Ross, 2014). These children suffered from feelings of abandonment by their parents, poverty, disease, as well as verbal, physical, and sexual abuse (from staff and other students). Several women noted that their grandparents were residential school survivors, and through their stories they illustrated their fractured family dynamics.

One woman, Vicki, personally attended two different residential schools over three years. Beginning at age 11, she attended the first residential school for one year and, at the age of 12, attended the second school for two years. Vicki shared her feelings about this experience:

> *It was terrible going to those schools. My mother sent me, me and my sister, to those schools and she just left us there. We didn't come home at all during those years, we stayed there and, you know. It was just, terrible.*

Vicki went on to reveal that she harbours animosity against her mother for sending her to a residential school. In addition, Vicki shared that she believes she used drugs and alcohol *"to*

deal with the trauma of childhood abuse and the residential school experience." She added that she is afraid of attending programming because she fears being re-traumatized by her past:

> *They're going to ask me like a lot of questions that I don't want to answer because it just brings up a lot of bad memories through my childhood. And it could be due to all this, this, all this trauma and everything and drug, abusing these drugs and alcohol could be from my residential school days and being abused when I was younger.*

While she disclosed this information to me, Vicki's body took on a smaller, closed appearance. It was a visual reminder of how this past experience continues to influence her life in multiple dimensions.

A time of testing. Women serving provincial sentences (two years less a day) who are found guilty of a crime can receive a custodial sentence, probation (community supervision) or a combination of both. Probation is basically a time of testing for those in conflict with the law where they are expected to live by pro-social rules (personal communication from Mark Newman, December 7, 2015). Each probationer is given rules that are legally binding and are supervised in the community by a probation officer to whom they must report on a regular basis. The pro-social rules they must live by are frequently opposite from how they have lived their entire lives.

During meetings with their probation officer, women are required to report on their current circumstances and how they are complying with the rules. Some of the common conditions the women shared are: not entering certain areas of the city, remaining drug and alcohol free, and respecting no-contact orders with people who have a criminal record. Many of these conditions restrict the options open to women when leaving jail and returning to the community. Family and friends to whom they should be able to turn in times of need often are

on the woman's no-contact orders either because of their criminal records or because the areas of the city in which they live are restricted to the probationer. As well, probation conditions can limit their employment opportunities; for example, because they cannot get work or return to a job as a server if alcohol is sold on the premises. Not following probation orders can result in a breach of those orders, which may result in the individual being arrested and charged with a new offence.

One of the women, Destiny, talked about probation conditions that have been part of her release in the past, which she believes are *"sometimes ridiculous"* and not conducive to helping women successfully re-enter their communities:

> *The restrictions they put on that is, like, you can go into Main Street and this way or McPhillips in this way so you can't be in this one little area. But that's where my home neighbourhood was. Like, okay, I stepped foot on my door and I breach.*

As well, Destiny disclosed that during a previous probation period she believed that she had breached her conditions and that her probation officer would have issued a warrant for her arrest. This was a stressful time in her life because she was always looking over her shoulder, fearful of being re-arrested. Destiny stated that she wanted to take some community programming that could be beneficial to her; however, she did not dare try to access the programming because she worried that the agency would know about the warrant and would turn her in to the police. Destiny said, *"If you had breached your probation and have a warrant … you're scared the agency will turn you in."*

Another woman, Mizzlovely, shared how difficult it is to change how you live your life in order to abide by your probation conditions when you return to the community. She noted,

"I've been coming in and out of jail since I was 12 like. This place is like it's like coming home. Probation, probation brings us back. Probation is hard."

During this time of testing, women identified a lack of comprehensive resources and supports in the community to help mentor and guide them in their return to the community. They found it difficult to access supports such as safe, secure, and affordable housing, as well as programming, treatment, and job training opportunities. Cheryl reflected on the challenges women have when they return to the community from jail, such as having to use male-dominated instead of women-only community treatment programs, and the difficulty of getting a job or applying for a practicum/apprenticeship when one has a criminal record. As well, there is the problem of the red tape that women have to go through in order to access income through the Employee Income Assistance (EIA) program when they leave jail. Due to the waiting times between application submissions and receiving money, many women who leave jail with no money are immediately plunged into poverty. In addition, it is difficult to get a job when leaving jail because major retailers and hotels require criminal record checks and will not hire anyone with a criminal record. Some jobs may also require a valid driver's licence, which many of the women do not have. During this time of rules and testing, all of these challenges have a cumulative effect on the women, making successful transitioning from jail to the community arduous, if not almost impossible.

Reflections of hope. The women reflected on past times of success that brought them hope. Although these small times of success may not seem significant to mainstream society, they were meaningful to women who had limited success in their lives. These small successes provided a time of hope and increased self-efficacy. Their reflections brought them back to a time when they were able to believe in themselves and their chances of success.

For Marie, this time of hope was at a community resource fair held in the jail where agencies, treatment centres, and employment service providers had displays and the women were allowed to talk to employment service providers and collect information for returning to the community. She received helpful information about an apprentice opportunity from staff from Apprenticeship Manitoba. She stated that she didn't know anything about the program until then and, as far as she knew, many of the other women had not heard of it either. She said that she was giving serious consideration to applying for an apprenticeship when she is released. It gave her hope that she could have a chance of turning her life around when she returned to the community from jail.

Some of the women described the success they experienced in attending counselling at women's agencies in their communities. Kashlyn recalled that it was helpful to attend community drop-in programs, saying, *"Going to women's places like Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and stuff like that helped me."*

Other women such as Vicki were successful in receiving help with their recovery from community counselling:

> *I was able to go to foster counselling in … They were an agency where you can talk to the counsellors there and they'll refer you to whomever they think that you might need to help you recover from a lot of the stuff that I've been through.*

On the other hand, Freema had a positive experience in her community when she found help from an unlikely source in getting a job:

> *What helped me with that situation too, though, was really high-up cops. I had been in that town for years and years since I was a little girl before I was even doing crime.*

Like, they backed my play and vouched for me. And I didn't even know until after the fact.

A common thread amongst the women was surrounding themselves with family and friends who did not use drugs or alcohol because they were trying to stay clean and sober. Terraleigh shared her story of success in the community when she had found "*a partner in staying sober"* during one of her returns to the community:

I kind of stayed far away from downtown, like, with a friend and he was kind of, he was a clean person. He didn't do drugs. He didn't drink. He did go to AA. Um. He took me to one of them and, you know, like, I kind of just felt like as if, like, this is what I should be learning while, while my stay with him.

Marie felt hopeful about her future after viewing a video about a woman who had been caught in the revolving door of the justice system but later turned her life around and became a public speaker.

She was taught that she's a nothing. Her mom was a crack head. …. She comes to jails and talks to them about her life story. I think that is what, something like what we need here. We need that, that. And in that way, those girls would say, "Hey, I do have a chance." Yeah. Someone that has been in jail. Who have been where we were.

The past experiences and memories of being destitute and traumatized as children were significant aspects of crucial times in the women's lives that continued to impact the present and the future and were minimally offset by small successes and glimmers of hope for a new way of being.

Some of the women reflected on how they needed to take responsibility for their past behaviours and lifestyles. Marie shared her perspective:

I was so mad because I blamed everyone else. I didn't blame myself. It wasn't me, it was them. It was all of them. But really, in reality, it was me. It's just, I, I don't know. I put myself into that lifestyle. And I put myself into living at that girl's house. I could have moved and I didn't so [it] was my fault.

Two of the women discussed how their lifestyles and behaviours were influenced by the choices they made in life. They believed that ultimately everyone is responsible for themselves.

The present. Our present is in the here and now. Our past and future intersect and impact our present. "My now always immediately becomes my past, while what has not been becomes my present and quickly my past" (Austin, 2013, p.86). The present for the women in this study consisted of: doing time in prison, reflections on possibilities for a different life, and the revolving door described as "putting on the same shoes."

Doing time. Time took on a unique meaning for the women and was measured in how many days they had been in prison, and how many days until they got out of prison. It meant following mandated daily routines and predetermined routines over which the women had no control. Time in jail provided women a time for thinking about changes needed in their lives in order to escape the revolving door of justice. It was a time of waiting; time ticked by slowly or stood still. Their lives were in limbo with one day melting into another. Living in the moment was often stressful due to uncertainty and fear of the unknown. It provided the opportunity to be introspective of their situation and ponder matters that were important to them.

Nina confided that while doing time her thoughts were on her children. Child and Family Services had custody of her children. The last time she was released from jail, she was restricted from seeing her children. She was so overwhelmed that she believed returning to jail was better than staying in the community. Doing time allowed her to stop risky behaviours and it provided

her with a place of safety and structure where she could deal with the issue of the custody of her children. She shared her feelings about this situation:

> *Yeah. And it just seems like I just want to come back because I've got nothing for me out there like. Yeah. That's why I came back. .... I got out December 15th. Christmas sucked so I came back.*

Marie focused on her need to find a job when she returned to the community. She has a university education and a certification from a community college, and she has held good jobs in the past. She needs to make money to pay off $68,000 in restitution for her crime. However, she fears that the stigmatization of having a criminal record will limit her chances of finding a well-paying job:

> *I think it's they judge you on your stuff. Like, I think some places, um, you know, maybe give you the 50/50 chance. .... "Yeah, okay, yeah, maybe we'll give that person a chance." But most places, people will see on your record, "Oh you got assault" or how long the record is. They judge you .... "They already screwed up their life. .... Why do I want them working with me," you know? ... It's just, that's my fear of I'm not going to be able to get a job.*

Putting on the same shoes. For many of the women, their experiences of coming in and out of jail can be compared to the metaphor of putting on the same shoes when they leave jail that they wore to jail. The women in this study had experienced being imprisoned multiple times, ranging from two to sixteen times, and they identified with being caught in the revolving door of the justice system. Many of them shared the same pathways to imprisonment such as poverty, race, victimization and substance abuse. However, once they experienced imprisonment they became caught in the revolving door of cycling in and out of jail.

Some of the women who showed insight into their own behaviour talked about not knowing any other way to live than the lifestyle that had led to their imprisonment. Women stated that this was all they knew and to move away from that was out of their realm of options. In some ways they were caught in a time of stagnation, where even if they had good intentions they slipped back into the circumstances that lead to re-imprisonment.

Freema supported the theme of the need for change by using the metaphor of shoes to sum up her thoughts on why many imprisoned women get caught in the cycle. She said she thought women were caught in the revolving door because they put on the "same shoes" when they leave jail that brought them to jail:

> *Every girl that I've met here has gotten out several times and came back. Sometimes, like, within days. The longest, like, maybe a couple of weeks or a month. Cuz they were doing the same things I did. Going out and just putting on those same shoes that they came in with. Cuz when you put them on, it just depends how you're going to wear them that day. I just left, put on my same pair of shoes and it was not even like I was gone.*

Cheryl shared her personal experience of "putting on the same shoes" that brought her to jail the last time she returned to the community:

> *Most [of] the people in here just want to like get out and do the same thing over. It's just a vicious circle, right? I'm back on the street, to hooking, back to, like, whatever. Like, the last time, the last one, I got out of jail on 27th of December. On 31st of December I was still standing on the corner, hooking without sleeping or eating.*

Marie was honest with herself and the interviewer when she discussed her risk of becoming re-involved with the justice system when she returned to the community:

All I know is crime. So the chances I'm going to relapse are high compared to if I go and get some more help. So when I get out, I could say, "Yeah, yeah, I'm going to do better. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this." But in reality, I'm going to go back to my friends because that's all I know.

For some the drive to return to old friends and lifestyles after leaving jail predestines them to return to situations and behaviours that lead them into conflict with the justice system. However, some return to their former circumstances because it is all they know and, with limited options, it presents the easiest choice in a time of uncertainty and stress.

During the interviews the women presented their perspective of the revolving door. Interestingly, while they saw their peers as caught in the revolving door, most did not see themselves in that light. They believed that even if they had the same risky behaviours as the other women, they would escape the likely consequences of their behaviours. They did not seem to connect that going out and repeating risky behaviours will not get them the results they want or hope for. One woman expressed the thought that many of the women have no plans to change, and that by making no changes to how they live their lives when they return to the community, their lives are on pause. It appears to me that time stands still for them, waiting until they get out and they can push "play."

According to Kashlyn it is easier for the women to step back into their old lives than to change. She stated, *"I don't even know why these ladies don't see it, right. Like, it's because it's, it's easier to fall into your own behaviours than to learn new.*

Cheryl expressed an opinion echoed by other women that some women in jail are only concerned with meeting their immediate needs for self-gratification upon release with no concern for the consequences. Cheryl observed that some women plan on partying—"*even before they*

see their kids"—and when they return to the community they just don't care: *"I just hear so many girls just going to get out and do the same thing. They don't care about coming back."*

Several women explained how they believe that for most of the women the inevitable (going back to previous behaviours) will happen when they leave jail and return to the community. Marie's perspective was very pessimistic, indicating that there was no point in trying when returning to the community because there was no hope of success:

> *But the majority of those people that get out come back. Like, 90% of the people come back. Everyone. Like, a girl right now in another unit, she got out, like, two weeks ago to go to a program. She's back. Another girl, she got out to a program not even a week. She's back.*

Marie also offered her opinion that the women may be institutionalized due to their numerous admissions and, for some, lifelong problems with justice:

> *I figure … they've been in jail for so long and they must have just thought they can go back to their ways of partying and doing whatever. …. They're institutionalized….. There are lots of things they can do to help themselves. It's just that they don't think they're strong enough to do that, to help themselves.*

Vicki added a sombre insight to this theme when she shared an incident all the women talked about. One of the women who left recently passed away from an overdose of street drugs:

> *A lot of the ladies did leave from here and ended up back here, like, not even a week. Some of them didn't, walked out those doors and two days down the road they hear they're gone. Passed away from a drug overdose.*

Kerry agreed that many of her jail peers just wanted *"to get out of there and pick up their life where they left off."* However, she also highlighted that she believed it was time for the

women who did not want to return to their old routines to change. But she also believed that many of her peers in jail did not want to change:

> *Ninety percent of these women are setting themselves up to come back already and they haven't even left. Like, you'd be sitting there talking … "And I'm going to go meet up with my friend and we're going to have some drinks and we're going to go and party. Going to try this. Going to do a couple of lines and pop these pills. Oh, I just want to have some fun and go get laid and – "You know what I mean? Like. … it's already happening to where they're, it's a cycle.*

Changing shoes. While in jail the women were removed from the risky lifestyles that they were involved with on the streets. Time in custody allowed them to reflect on their behaviours, thinking, and actions that brought them to jail. After a time of reflection, some were able to move to a time of intentions to change. These women talked about decisions that they made for their return to the community.

Destiny came to the realization that she has to take charge of her future and find a treatment program that she could access on release. She believed that she needed such a program to change the trajectory of her life. However, the process for her was frustrating; she was involved in a system that she had trouble navigating. She tried two programs. One wouldn't take her if she was in jail and would not let her apply until she was released. Another program was not answering the phone and had criteria regarding admission, including medical assessments and immunizations, which she did not have. Destiny submitted an application to a third place. However, she had not heard back from the program at the time of the interview. She had been phoning to find out the status of her application with no results.

While in jail, Marie decided that she needs to go to a halfway house or treatment program that teaches life skills when she returns to the community. She realized that her current friends were a negative influence on her and that she needed to surround herself with positive, pro-social, stable people:

> *I need to be with other women that can help me as a group. Budget, go out to school or find a job or just get back into the community. I need to be with people that I don't know. And I can't go back to my friends and if I do, even go see my friends, say hi or whatever, I can't do that until I'm stable into what I need to do. Otherwise I will go back into crime.*

While in jail, Destiny developed self-awareness of her risky behaviours and what she has to change in order to succeed when she is released:

> *Like, I want to be, I need the structure of a program but I need to be more independent, like, where I can go to school and kind of do my own thing because I want to finish my schooling. And I've been working on it through here a little bit and I only got a couple more credits that I need.*

Destiny believed that she could mitigate her risk by trying *"things a bit differently."* She revealed that she was successfully attending a faith-based relapse program and was starting to understand the faith part of it:

> *I'm doing this other program in here right now called Finding Freedom. … I'm starting, like there's a bigger part of me that's starting to believe it. He teaches that you need to fill your life with God. So time to try things a little bit differently.*

During her imprisonment, Kerry started to recognize her pattern of behaviours that kept her trapped in the revolving door:

It's just the cycle. I'm starting to see that now. On release, I met my aunt and we went to a casino and had a beer right away. And the next day I went to work. So it was just like switching all over again. Always back. I'm thinking maybe if you show me or helped me figure out that I was going through a cycle and, yeah, I probably would have thought differently.

Many of the women expressed that they become anxious and depressed because they have time to think and realize the reality of their situation. Cheryl stated that she hears *"girls crying here because they get out with nothing. Like, they don't have shoes … the only thing they have is what they came in with."*

The future. The future as a dimension of time is linked to our past and present. The women displayed a dichotomy of experiences when contemplating their future. Some wanted to resume their old lives while some felt the need for change. Contemplation of their futures resulted in plans for changing past behaviours in order to be more successful in the community. However, the complexities of finding safe, secure, and affordable housing, appropriate programming, and a viable income left them ambivalent about the future.

Good intentions. Through introspection, some of the women had examined their past and present behaviours and identified what actions they needed to take when they returned to the community in the future. Some of the women intend to terminate pre-jail friendships and relationships in order to achieve successful future reintegration to the community. These women also identified their families, friends, and communities as being affected by the Indian residential school (IRS) experiences and other historical traumas that resulted in intergenerational trauma, affecting the level of support the women had.

Meanwhile, Mizzlovely, who had severed all ties with her family due to past abuse issues, came to the conclusion that she will need to find programs and a mentor to *"guide"* and *"encourage"* her in the community in order to enhance her chances of success:

> *In order for me to change, I got ta go out there and look for programs myself. And like, and help, to have them help guide me. I know what to do. .... I just need somebody there to encourage me there.*

Destiny's intent to exclude her mother from her life when she leaves jail was impacted by her past and present. Destiny realized that her relationship with her mother had been unhealthy due to her mother's addictions. She accepted that someone she would normally turn to for help was really a negative influence on her and that she planned on *"letting go"* of this unhealthy family relationship when she transitions from jail to the community:

> *It's my mom. I used drugs with her. And it's going to be hard to go, to go to her house. So that's going to be another big challenge. It is kind of letting go. I need to let her go for a while when I get out to fix myself, right.*

Vicki, who identified her peers as a barrier to her future goals, believes that she is ready to make the required changes when she transitions to the community—even if it means changing her peer group:

> *I got to start trying to change my people that I surround myself with. Period. I gotta look for friends that could help me, for instance, sponsors. Go to Alcohol Anonymous meetings. Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Like, I really have to want this, for this to work. And I really do want this, so.*

Change is scary. Although the majority of the women had good intentions and hope for their future when they return to the community from this custodial sentence, some feared making

the changes they knew they needed to make. These fears kept the women trapped in their self-destructive behaviours and made it unlikely that they would move forward to a different future.

Cheryl discussed her fears of having to rely on her *"sugar daddy"* (an older man who gives her a place to stay and money when she is in the community). She has an ongoing, ambivalent relationship with him. He puts money in her jail account, but she does not have enough to pay for the treatment program she wants to attend. If she can't get into the program, she will be homeless. She does not want to get re-involved with her sugar daddy, but identified her dilemma:

> *I don't got shoes. I don't got a job. ... I don't got a place to live. I don't got nothing. Like, I don't have panties. I don't have. Everything that I have, like, that is at my sugar daddy's house, I'm not going back there to get it.*

Kashlyn was afraid of herself and of not being able to make the changes she needed in the future to be successful in the community. She shared that while she had been locked in jail she had not used any substances; however, she feared going back to a life of addictions and survival sex when she is released to the community from jail. She expressed fear that when freed of the restraints of prison, she won't be able to control her behaviour and will revert to her old behaviours:

> *Like, how am I going to, how am I going to feel when I get out there, like, you know? Like, I want to be locked in a room and, you know, like, I'm not locked in here anymore. There's, like, drugs and alcohol available, like, at any time. .... And I don't know, just really scary, like, you know. Like, I don't want to be ending up and going back on the street and working cuz not the life I want.*

Kerry also worried about her future and the changes that she needs to make when she returns to the community. She feared that not making the change to pro-social behaviours and lifestyle when she leaves jail this time may result in being a grandmother and still being in jail:

> *And I think if I go back to the same routine it's just going to, I'm going to do something worse and end up in here for years. And I don't want that. .... I don't want to be a grandmother in this jail. You have to want to change and not want that routine, you know. Well, change is scary.*

2. Spatiality

Space is unique in that it is all around us. The spaces we experience influence how we experience our lives. It allows us to understand the world as we live in it and how it impacts our lives. Space can be objective or subjective and is affected by mood, emotions, and geography. The connection between ourselves and our world is concealed from others but occasionally we reveal glimpses to ourselves and others (Austin, 2012).

The concept of physical space is easy to imagine; however, felt space as discussed by van Manen is a more difficult concept. This type of lived space affects our thoughts, emotions, and feelings that we act out by our behaviours. According to van Manen, “In general we may say that we become the space we are in" (1996, p. 102). Space also provides individuals with a vantage point from which they can examine their lives, orientate themselves, and contemplate the future (Austin, 2012). The exploration of lived space in the lives of the participants reflects van Manen’s hope that, “The existential theme of spatiality may guide our reflection to ask how space is experienced with respect to the phenomenon that is being studied” (p. 305). The women in this study who have left jail, transitioned to the community, and returned to jail have

experienced different spaces such as jail, house arrest, and the community in diverse physical and emotional ways.

Locked spaces. Jail provides a space for reflection, contemplation, and reviewing events. Some of the women have found their direction and grown while others have stagnated, placing their lives on hold while waiting to be released. This stagnation has hindered self-awareness and growth. Locked spaces bring changes in physical and social spaces. There is no control over the people who share your space, staff included. Feelings of loss of control can manifest due to the restricted physical boundaries and institutional restrictions. Urban locked spaces are different than northern locked spaces. Even though northern locked spaces may be closer to the woman's home community, there is no guarantee that she will receive communication and visits from her family. Meanwhile, urban locked spaces have more programming and services to offer the women. However, the women have no input into which staff they can access for support.

Space for reflection: "Little light bulbs would go off in my head." Being confined in jail allowed the women a break from the competing demands (finances, housing, drugs, and social groups) of their pre-imprisonment behaviours and lifestyles. It provided them with a safe space to contemplate making changes in their lives. According to one woman, *"Jail is a good time to work on problems."*

Since all the women had been imprisoned before, they were aware of the daily rhythm of life in the jail, including the opportunities to participate in programming. A theme relating to programming emerged in the majority of the interviews: finding the program that could provide them with the knowledge and tools they needed to succeed in the community. They shared their perspectives on programming and gave their opinions on changes needed. In the experience of many of the women, programming evoked change; however, they had to be open to change.

Terraleigh shared how her success in one program at Women's Correctional Centre (WCC) helped her find comfort in the Bible and motivated her to seek out more programming, "*I did AA [Alcoholics Anonymous]. AA helps me. Church helped a lot. I read the Bible a lot. It did help spiritually and emotionally. I've been taking Finding Freedom and, and, um, looking into getting Teen Triple Parenting."*

Kerry shared a common theme expressed among the women when she talked about why she did not take programs during her previous imprisonments: *"I just didn't think that I needed it. I was in denial, I guess."* After this statement she became quiet, and then she shared that in retrospect she realized that programming could have helped her recognize that she was caught in a revolving door. In addition, Kerry contemplated the changes she had experienced during this imprisonment at WCC by participating in programming. She was beginning to believe in herself, along with a higher power. "*I'm doing this other program in here right now called Finding Freedom. .... [L]ike. there's a bigger part of me that's starting to believe it. It teaches that you need to fill your life with God…. But if you believe in God you're not going to go relapse."*

Meanwhile, Destiny reflected on how programming helped her by giving her new skills that she was not aware she had until she used them, saying, *"For me it's like having those tools. I don't know that I carry them. But then once I use them, it's like, 'Oh hey I learned that in my program.'"*

Freema expressed her belief that the programs she has taken while confined in jail have given her insight into her behaviours, risk factors, and warning signs of reoffending. She shared how she was able to apply the lessons of this programming to her own behaviours, saying, "*Little light bulbs would go off in my head and I've been like, 'I fucking did that. I did that. And that's why I'm here.' And then I would share my experiences."*

Freema also shared an anecdote to indicate how this space for reflection provided her the opportunity to participate in programming and develop skills to deal with interpersonal conflict. Before she related the incident below she shared what she had learned in a recent program. *"One of the tools in my program is you don't have to dislike somebody, you can dislike the way they act and their behaviours."* This event she then described had occurred prior to our interview during a conversation with a correctional officer who said to her, *"I don't care if you guys don't like me."* She described what happened next:

> *I was standing there staring at him. And I was so annoyed and I could feel myself burning up. My eyes are watering. Then I just put my hand up, I was like "So-and-so it's not that we don't like you," I said. "It's the way you act and behave around us that is what we don't like." I said, "I could honestly admit to you right now I'm not saying I don't like you. I don't like the way you treated me."*

Freema expressed that she was proud of how she had handled the conflict and how she successfully used the tools she had been taught. Freema added that without that knowledge, she never would have considered any other reactions to her problems except anger. She compared how she reacted to the correctional officer's comment with how her old self would have handled the situation:

> *I can't take credit for that, all of that because [if] it wasn't for me doing these programs I would be like, "You know what? Fuck you. You piece of shit. Don't come here and start calling these girls down." Like, that's what I would've done. When I left I was still upset. Like, I was still doing my, I was doing breathing techniques all the way because I didn't want to cry. Like, I learned a lot of grounding techniques in the programs and I always go back to those when something like that happens.*

Terraleigh was astonished at the changes in her abilities once she opened herself up to participating in WCC programs. She believed that by participating in programming she received the help she needed to make changes in her thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours. She contrasted how she lived her life in the past with how she felt she has changed:

> *Like, totally, not totally different person but I'm becoming a different woman. And it's amazing. It's amazing how I took all the opportunities to get self-help. To get caseworker help. To get booklet help. To just listen. Instead of saying, "Oh no, I know that," you know. And, it's changed me. Because, I was a party girl. I was. I did anything at any time. I was crazy. I didn't give a shit about anyone. If they got in my way, I would fight them. I would. And I would just go back to drinking my drink after that, you know, like nothing happened.*

Kashlyn agreed that participating in programming had helped her to make changes to her life. She shared a belief that was common among the women: having access to programs that started in jail and continued in the community would provide more support for them when they transitioned to the community.

Marie also recommended the need for programs that bridge jail and the community. She gave an example of programming that she was attending while in jail that reached out to the community. It gave her hope that the changes she was making in jail could continue:

> *There's a program here called Stride. … [T]hese ladies that do it, they, you know, talk about their week and their counselling. And we just sit there and we talk about everything. Any problems you have. And they have, on the outside, they have a coffee house where they can all meet after. So when you get out of jail, you can go and meet with them. I think something like that would be good because it's a whole bunch of*

people that I met here in jail and then when I get out I think I'm going to continue to go because it's just positive supports that I need in my life. Like, I didn't have no positive supports.

Some of the women talked about how, aside from formal programming, there are self – help workbooks available through the caseworkers. These workbooks are based on the programs that the jail offers the women, such as drug and alcohol self-assessment, and family or marital problems. Two of the women presented opposing views on using the workbooks.

Terraleigh had a positive perspective on how using the workbooks that she obtained from her caseworker provided positive outcomes for her. She identified the subjects that she was working on in order to make changes in her life: "*I am doing like workbooks and stuff like changing habits and a lot of relapse prevention and victim awareness and, substance use."*

Conversely, Destiny shared that, in her view, the way that the workbooks were made available to the women from their caseworkers without any follow-up support could result in serious emotional damage. "*Some of those workbooks … are okay, like, for some women, but these guards don't know our backgrounds and where we are from. So they don't know what kind of workbook's going to open up wounds."*

Space of stagnation: "You learn how to do more crime when you come to jail." The women in the study discussed how being in a locked space such as jail affected them and their peers. Many of them did not want to move forward and were content just passing the time while they were imprisoned. They commented that these women put their lives on hold, more or less, when they came into this space; they endured their forced confinement, and were simply waiting for the time when they could pick up their old lives.

In Cheryl's opinion, the programming in jail is lacking when it comes to addictions and mental health care. She expressed her belief that Alcohol Anonymous (AA) meetings are not effective because the same volunteer comes from the community for each meeting, and after a while everyone has heard her story over and over, whereas in the community different people speak at each meeting. Cheryl advocated that the women would benefit more from having a Narcotics Anonymous (NA) group instead of an AA group. She believed that imprisoned women need rehabilitation opportunities while they are in jail, which she did not think were readily available. She provided a glimpse of the inner life of jail when she shared her perspective of why certain programs have not been successful in the jail. She identified that there are reasons other than a desire to change why some women in WCC attend programming. She stated that some of them sabotage programs for their own agendas. *"That's why it is so hard for life programming here because of those girls, they want control."* As well, Cheryl presented a unique opinion that all programming is geared to Aboriginal women, leaving other cultures with little or no culturally targeted programming.

In addition, two of the women shared their feelings about deficits in the school program. They highlighted the fact that when they had made the decision to make changes in their lives by continuing their schooling, they met barriers in terms of jail policies. Marie stated that she had wanted to upgrade her math but her request was denied because she had already graduated from high school before coming to prison. Meanwhile, Kashlyn talked about her goal to finish her high school credits and her long wait to do that, saying, *"Yeah. Takes a long time to do, like, them to come and see me. I'm, I'm pretty sure, like, sure think that will help me."*

Meanwhile, Marie shared her belief that being in a locked space with peers who are in conflict with the law teaches the women how to be a criminal, thus maintaining her place in the

revolving door: *"You come to jail. You talk to these girls and you know what you do? … [I]t's like a school for criminals. You learn how to do more crime when you come to jail."*

Northern locked spaces. Two women shared their past lived experiences of being imprisoned in northern correctional facilities. Nina related that when she was locked in a northern jail, the jail was overcrowded with 38 women housed in poor living conditions. In addition, they were only allowed two-and-a-half hours a day out of their cells. She also stated that she had had to make her own plans for leaving that jail.

In addition, Mizzlovely stated that there was no programming or help when she was in the northern space. This contrasted with her situation in an urban jail where she was getting the help that she needed. *"No, there wasn't at all. No. No. No, they never help me at all, actually. Not like, not like right now, they're trying to help."*

Caseworker lottery: "It's the luck of the draw." The women share their locked spaces with the correctional staff. Out of all the staff, the caseworker that they are assigned on admission has the greatest impact on their lives in this space. This caseworker is a Correctional Officer Level One and is responsible for helping the woman with her rehabilitation needs. From the women's perspective, a good caseworker is available on a full-time basis, sensitive to their needs, and supportive of their plans and goals. A commonly voiced perspective was that it is the "luck of the draw" whether a woman gets a helpful caseworker or not.

Marie shared her perspective about part-time caseworkers versus full-time caseworkers in the jail. Women's access to a part-time caseworker is limited compared to a full-time caseworker based on the number of hours they are available to the women. Speaking about her own experience with her caseworker who is part-time, Marie said, "*I asked her, you know, and I*

need this, this, and this. But I don't get it for a month." As well, Marie shared some of her experiences with jail caseworkers and their lack of knowledge about community resources:

> *Yeah. There it's not consistent. Like, they'll say, "Oh you'll get out and you'll go see this person. Oh, I'll go send you to this person." But they don't know for sure. It's not a set thing. And there's no rule and it's no, whatever.*

Correspondingly, Kashlyn commented on her case manager's lack of availability by saying, *"She's pretty helpful. But she's not always here."*

Specifically, Destiny noted that programs could be hard to access without a caseworker to actively help you, which is what happened to her during her last imprisonment. She said that her last caseworker *"basically did what he needed to do."* Moreover, she stated having a helpful case manager this time was making a difference by helping her with her goals and plans for returning to the community:

> *Sometimes you get the case manager that is lazy and doesn't want to do nothing. I got lucky with my case manager. She helped me out a lot. A lot. She takes the time every day to come and get me to make phone calls.*

Asia shared a past experience with caseworkers when she was imprisoned in a northern correctional space. She commented that although there were caseworkers in the facility, they were not around as much as the women would have liked: *"There was but you hardly seen them [case manager]."*

Marie expanded on this theme of the caseworker lottery when she shared the prevailing philosophy about who the women get assigned as their jail caseworker. She stated that the jail policy is that a woman is not allowed to change her caseworker:

It's the luck of the draw. And then there are caseworkers that are part-timers and they don't even help. Like, my friend, she's never even see him. Like, once a month he comes by, you know. And yeah, you can't change your caseworker.

Locked spaces in the community: "I felt I just wanted to run away and from my house arrest." One of the sentences that can be given out by the judge when an individual appears in court is home arrest in the community. This type of sentence confines an individual to her home in the community under the supervision of a probation officer. People who are given house arrest are mandated to follow a set of pro-social rules directed at their behaviours and lifestyles. Individual personal circumstances are taken into consideration and they may be given approved time to go to school, work, or programming. Outside of those times, they must stay in their homes. In general, they are allowed four hours a week to be away from their home on personal business. If they wish to leave their home outside of the allowed hours, they must receive permission from their probation officer.

Three of the women interviewed had spent time in the past confined to their home spaces on house arrest. Two of the women, Marie and Kerry, were under house arrest in the city, while Asia was under house arrest on a northern reserve.

Marie stated that she was successfully halfway through her house arrest when disaster struck. She was a victim of a home invasion targeted at her roommate, who had gone out of town for a few days. Marie stated that when the police arrived everything was in chaos and the police decided to transport her to the office of her probation officer. The outcome was that since she was out of her home without authorization, her probation officer breached her, which resulted in a new charge and being taken to WCC to finish her home arrest sentence.

For Kerry, house arrest a few years ago was successful. She left the reserve and took an apartment in the city and enrolled in secondary education. She was allowed to leave her home for classes and to attend support groups as well as have four hours a week for personal time. She passed her two-year college course and had no problems with her house arrest. However, her problems with the law recurred when she returned to her reserve.

Asia discussed her experience of being sentenced to home arrest on her northern reserve for 15 months. After receiving the sentence, she planned out how she would handle being locked in this space. She planned to focus on her children, husband, and house. A probation officer who controlled whether she could leave the house administered her home arrest. She did not receive any programming, visiting professionals, direction, or support. She couldn't take her children out of the yard. She was not allowed to attend her brother's funeral. Although her charges were connected to addictions, she received no treatment for addictions. There were many programs available in the community; however, she was neither referred to them, nor qualified for some of them such as pursuing her high school diploma. Because she lived on her husband's reserve and not her own, she was not eligible to partake of any of the programs or resources offered on the reserve.

At first, Asia was happy to get house arrest and return to the community. She accepted being detained in this space and was full of hope that she could handle this confinement. She managed to follow the sanctions placed on her for approximately halfway through the sentence. She endured having no supports, programs, or time away from the house. However, her anxiety, anger, isolation, frustration, and loneliness became too much to tolerate and she turned to the only way she knew how to deal with these emotions: drugs. While using drugs, she started

sneaking out of the house at night. A neighbour who saw her reported her to the authorities. The police arrested her and she was returned to jail:

> *I was so happy to go back. And I felt I was going to do it that time. Like, nothing was going to happen. So they gave me another chance and I was very happy also … very upset because I had to go back to all that. But it was, I guess it was mixed emotions … I knew what to expect but I didn't know the days to come were getting harder and harder and I started to get crazy. I felt so alone all the time. I felt frustrated … I felt I just wanted to run away and from my house arrest or not care about courts, nothing. I just felt like giving up everything. I felt, yeah, I just, nobody cares why should I care? Watch everyone walking away out of the window. Sitting there looking out the window. I felt so, like nobody cared about me, nobody gave a shit I was very frustrated all the time. Every day. Stressed out, frustrated, angry. So I started to use.*

Returning to the community and marginalized space. Leaving jail and returning to the community spaces was on the minds of the women interviewed. All of the participants in this study had been released from jail and had returned to custody on at least one occasion prior to this imprisonment. In fact, many of them had multiple experiences of transitioning to the community. The women's lived experiences were impacted from living in borrowed community spaces that were often uncertain, unsafe, and disadvantaged.

Uncertain transitional spaces: "Just a lot of bad things happen along the way." Most of the women noted that they were unable to return to their own space when they left jail. They described previous experiences of transitioning from locked spaces in jail to unknown, borrowed, marginalized spaces in the community. Their plans, goals, and hopes were tempered by fears of inadequacies, failure, and slipping back into their old ways.

Kashlyn expressed ambivalent feelings about transitioning back to the community. She is frightened of failing again by slipping back into her old ways, but at the same time she wants to move forward and make changes in her life:

> *But it's just that I'm scared, like, you know. What if I'm going back to the same situation…? You know what I mean? What if I'm going to go back and drink? What if I'm going to go back and do the drugs I did before? Like, you know, I don't want to be doing that stuff. … I want to be stable. I want to be able to do stuff that I never did before. Like, that I never learned. Like, I want to teach myself these things that I didn't even got taught. Yeah, it's like really scary this time.*

Even though Mizzlovely was fearful of returning to her previous unsafe, marginalized community spaces and resuming her old lifestyle, she had resigned herself to this future:

> *I'm scared to like go back into the same lifestyle as I was but they don't, I don't have nowhere else positive to go. Like I, I just, I don't know. I'll probably just go get another, go rent another hotel for a week again and start where I stopped off. Get bored and then go back selling drugs*.

Terraleigh spoke of her fear that returning to her previous life in a small town would be impossible: she believed that no one would hire her because they all knew that she was imprisoned on drug charges. "*Because in that town I know everyone. I am known in that town. Is impossible for me to get a job."*

Kerry discussed her fears about returning to her community space on the reserve when she leaves jail. She worries that she will be caught in the same old "dramas" on the reserve and will have problems interacting with the community because she believes that people are probably unhappy with her past behaviours when she was working in her family's business:

> *There are a lot of issues on the reserve and there's people that are high on different things and people stealing. I don't know, just the people just on reserve, totally different way of living I think. Because of the whole other world on the reserve, because people just act any way they want because they don't know any better. Yeah, reserve life, because you know everybody. It's safe because you know everybody. Caught up in whatever drama is on the reserve. And plus you live in a fishbowl. And we're on reserve and we can pretty much act the way we want to act.*

Vicki shared her fears of being in community spaces by talking about how people she knows from the streets are no longer alive. She said, *"Ah, I've met so many people in the streets. A lot of them right now are not around today. They either overdosed or were violently killed and, you know, just a lot of bad things happen along the way."*

Marie believed that she knew what she needed in her community space in order to make changes to her lifestyle; however, she feared what will happen if she comes into contact with her peer group in that space. She feared getting re-involved with the justice system and missing out on a chance to be successful in the community. She described the space that she needed:

> *I need to go into a halfway house. I need to be with other women who can help as a group. Budget, go to school, find a job, or just get back involved with the community. I need to be with people I don't know.*

Uncertain spaces of treatment: "Screw this, okay, I'm leaving." Women discussed addiction treatment in the community after leaving jail and prior to being returned to custody. They recalled their problems of applying for the programs and their past experiences of failing to complete live-in treatment community addictions programs. Even though some of them attended these programs for a number of months, successful completion of the programs remained

elusive. This outcome appeared to have two separate effects on the women: not finishing the program impacted their self- esteem, but their partial successful gave them hope for completing treatment in the future. They shared their perspective of how they experienced their lives in those spaces and why they were unable to stay in those spaces.

Many of the women noted that addiction treatment centres were often spaces of physical restriction, judgments, and barriers, which presented when they applied to the program. For example, Destiny shared how she tried to get into a treatment centre and was turned down when she asked for the application form to be sent to jail. She wanted to have a place to go when she got released, but *"she [woman at treatment centre] basically just said, no, wait until I get out. So I was like, okay screw that one. I was like, that lady seemed very judgmental."* Destiny added that she had left messages with two other treatment centres from jail but never connected with either one.

Vicki also discussed her frustrations with trying to get accepted into an addictions program in the community. In addition to submitting a written application, applicants were required to complete some medical tests. She was having difficulty accessing these tests in jail; a labyrinth of processes had to be initiated to complete the requirements of the application. Lack of follow-up from the treatment centre, the jail, and Vicki complicated the situation. Vicki finally gave up on getting into that centre.

Cheryl shared her considerable experience with treatment centres and resources in community spaces. She noted how some community treatment centres don't work for women who have been in the sex trade, especially when a program relies on "tough love" confrontation. She said, *"I even heard other agencies say it's not a place for women that have been in the sex*

trade to go to because of the way they shame people and put them on the hot seat and shit like that."

A number of women disclosed personal experiences with an agency known for their confrontational approach to addictions. The program at that agency has a structure supported by rules and regulations which the women perceived as too harsh and rigid. The rules are based on pro-social behaviours which are antithetical to the behaviours the women had learned on the streets. This set the scene for many potential conflicts between the women and centre staff.

For many of the women these spaces in the community did not meet their expectations of what the women thought life would be like out there. They envisioned a safe, nurturing atmosphere where they would receive the help they needed. Kashlyn shared her expectations of a treatment environment:

> *Like, I kind of thought it was, like, you know how you get your kids and then you're, you get to visit them and whatever, that kind of thing. I thought I was going to get more than that. … . I thought I was going to learn this thing, like, you know. It's, there's not that much, like, they helped me with. They helped me to be patient.*

Unfortunately, that was not the reality of her situation. Kashlyn shared her lived experience and her difficulties trying to follow the rules and the centre's procedures. Although she admitted to breaking the rules of this treatment space, she saw the consequence as being too punitive:

> *It's just, you know, like, it's like they're pushing you and pushing you … too hard that you just give up…. Because they're just constantly … giving you write-ups for something you didn't. … And it's like how are you teaching us when you're just in our faces? …. Like, consequences. You can't use the phone. You can't do this. For something I didn't even do. You know what I mean? I made one little mistake and it's just like, you know,*

you're put on the spot. I even got, like, I had to make an essay for lying in manipulation. Well, I did manipulate someone but not badly but I was just like, you know what I mean. Yeah, and then I got my status taken away from there.

Living in the restrictive space of some community programs was difficult. Vicki managed to accept the philosophy, the program rules, and consequences until she finally reached her limit. This point came when she broke some rules and faced the penalty of having to start the program over from the beginning, during which time she would again be restricted from receiving any kind of contact with the outside world for 30 days.

Well, it's like very work-based, right. Like, I understand their philosophy is to keep you busy. Keep you busy and keep you busy because if you're bored, you're going to relapse … You're up early. You have basically no time for yourself and I didn't like it. But I just stayed for as long as I could handle it because I had to. Not because I wanted to…. And then they're really strict there …. Kept giving me punishment because of my behaviours. I was okay, whatever, eh. And then they made me restart the whole program so it was kind of like, screw this, okay, I'm leaving. And I left.

Nina completed six months of a 12-month community addictions program but found this treatment space unbearable when her children were permanently taken away from her by the court. She left the treatment space and turned back to her previous lifestyle for solace.

3. Relationality

According to van Manen, relationality "is the lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them" (van Manen, 1990, p. 104). This applies to relationships between one human being and another. These relationships illustrate how an individual is connected to their world (van Manen, 2014). People need to connect with others

and share world experiences to develop a sense of belonging and understanding of their place in the world.

According to Munhall (2012) "relational life worlds are the bonds or connections to self and others in the world. While each of the life worlds has a specific focus, they are connected" (p.150). The interpersonal relationships of the women in the study are complex and often problematic. The majority of these women come from dysfunctional and abusive backgrounds. Family relationships are fractured and put these women at risk of becoming involved in the social welfare and criminal justice systems. They seek out relationships with people who have had the same experiences because it is comfortable and they can socially navigate within those parameters.

Turbulent family ties. "Family, particularly parents and guardians provide the first experience of being cared for (or not cared for) and set the stage for how each person will experience caring for others" (Austin 2012, p.138). In mainstream Canadian society, family is generally an expected source of assistance with housing, finances, and emotional support. However, for women leaving jail and returning to community this might not be the case. The majority of the women interviewed described turbulent and conflicted relationships with family. Family dynamics revolved around discord related to unresolved issues, histories of trauma, and dysfunctional parenting. This left the women in a position where they could not count on family for support. Some needed to avoid their families in order to maintain sobriety and a healthy lifestyle.

The women experienced a lack of physical comfort from their parents as noted in one woman's comment, "*I think if I had my mom and dad as a bigger support and not trying to do in*

such a tough love. …. Sometimes you just need someone to hold you and say, 'It's going to be okay.'"

This woman, Terraleigh, blamed her mother for a family decision that resulted in her having to leave the family home:

> *Me and my dad are so alike, so alike that we just, bump heads. …. [I]t's driving my mom nuts and makes my mom say like, it's either me or him that gotta go. And I'm usually the one that has to go and I don't think it's fair, because they have my daughter, for them to make that decision.*

Terraleigh's self-awareness was minimal as she took no responsibility for the situation or for being separated from her daughter.

Marie, who grew up in an affluent family, expressed her need for emotional support and positive physical contact from her parents. She rebelled as a teenager because she never felt that her parents cared about her. She said, *"Like, I just didn't get the support I needed. No one would be there…. [T]hey didn't care, you know, I just got yelled at. I didn't get that love and support."* She especially felt the need for boundaries and she longed for expressions of love from her father, which were never given. She had manipulated her father for money to buy drugs when she was living in another city by telling him she needed the money for rent three different times. Each time she bought crack. However, the fourth time she asked for money, her father said "no." Marie said of that experience, *"That's what I need. I need someone to say 'no'…. I need him to just speak up even though he doesn't want to completely cut me off and make me do it from scratch."* At the same time, she talked about how her father had visited her in jail and had provided financial support to her but had been unable to display that he cared for her. She had been unable to push aside her hurt at his inability to provide physical comfort. She recalled that

"*I tried to give him a hug. You don't want to give me a hug. So I don't know what the hell's going on?"* However, she was able to abandon these feelings when she discovered her father was going through a health crisis. "*He was coughing and …. Finally, they took him to the doctor and they found out that he had pneumonia but that was okay and they did a scan thingy for him and found out he has cancer."* She expressed remorse that she was imprisoned and not able to be near her father during this period in his life.

This regret was reflected by many of the women when they expressed how difficult it was to be separated from family, especially during family crises. They felt helpless, powerless, and isolated from their families due to their imprisonment. Relationships with parents were complex as they involved not only conflicts but also aspects of caring and support that were meaningful to the women.

Marie recalled her ambivalent thoughts about her relationship with her mother. During her troubled adolescence, while living in a group home she was hospitalized with a blood clot in her leg and was feeling scared and alone during this time. During this experience she harboured hopes that her parents would take her back home on her release from hospital, *"And I still have a lot of resentment for my mom because I thought for sure she was going to take me back home and she didn't."* Conversely, Marie was able to recall other times in her life when her mother was supportive and nurturing:

> *You know, I'm standing there. "You're a failure as a criminal. You keep getting caught," she says, "but you'll never be a failure as a mom."* And my mom says, *"You'll never, you're not a bad mom. You made bad choices. And you can correct those. But there's no point in punishing yourself every day for the crimes that you've committed because they're done already."*

Painful parenting. Several of the women revealed a lack of pro-social parenting that they received from their own parents. Many were of Aboriginal descent and grew up in homes affected by intergenerational trauma due to the legacy of the Indian residential schools and colonization. Traditional parenting skills had been disrupted and no new teachings were given in their place. The rupturing of family relationships led to dysfunctional, negative parenting roles being passed down through the generations. Parents who did not know any other way of life influenced their children to follow this path. This led to many of the women experiencing unstable, traumatic, and disadvantaged childhoods where their developmental and basic needs were not met. For the women, these family environments do not represent the type of support that will be beneficial to them when they leave jail and are endeavouring to successfully integrate into the community.

For example, Bernadette shared how her father influenced her criminal behaviours by supplying her with illegal drugs at a young age. She said, *"Me and my dad started smoking crack ... when I was 15, together."* This launched her on her shoplifting career. Bernadette's father suggested that her cousin, who was a proficient shoplifter, take Bernadette with him and give her the first lesson. Her father even offered to babysit her children. "*My kids are there. But my dad said, 'I'll watch them.'"* This dysfunctional parenting affected Bernadette's worldview about her self-worth and influenced her childhood development. She related that she suffered from unresolved pain and hurt from these relationship dynamics with her father, which led to lowered expectations on how she should be treated by society. However, she was able to partially understand why he kicked her out of the house when she was 13 years old. She shared her current insight into her past behaviours:

I guess he was sick of just the way I was living. I had a boyfriend. I would sleep over at his place and, you know, I was going to school but I was skipping school there. I was going to some of my classes. And my dad, I don't know, he just didn't, he didn't like it.

As the years pass, relationships between parents and children change and ambivalence becomes a factor. Bernadette shared her own ambivalence when her father apologized last year to her for his treatment of her she was young:

He goes, "I'm sorry my girl but I didn't love you when you were younger…. I'm sorry," he goes, "but I do love you now." …. He didn't know how to be a dad. I was his firstborn child. …. You know, it did hurt still.

Mizzlovely's anguish was palpable when she discussed her relationship with her mother. It was clear that she had never experienced a stable, caring, supportive relationship with her mother. Instead, her mother's behaviour ostracized her, leaving her with a sense of being shattered. She said, *"My mother, she always tells me that I'm lying. …. And that nobody ever wanted me and then like it hurts but … it doesn't surprise me because, like, she neglected me all my life."* This disclosure during her interview had a physical effect on Mizzlovely. I could see the pain in her eyes as she partially turned in her chair and shook her head to indicate that discussing her family was too painful for her. While most women still had emotional connections to their families, intergenerational trauma hindered their families' abilities to assist them upon transitioning back to the community.

Changing sibling connections. Three of the women expanded on their family dynamics with their siblings and how they supported each other in times of difficulties. Freema was remorseful because she was imprisoned and unable to be a support to her sister during her

sister's recent health problems from giving birth. However, she recently reconnected with her sister and was hopeful of an improved relationship between them.

Marie and her sister recently mended their relationship that was disconnected due to Marie's criminal involvement. Marie said, *"I just recently started talking to my sister because she, again too, my family's all, you know, good. Not into the drugs."*

Kashlyn recalled how she had received support from her sister and brother after she left a residential treatment centre. She had been upset with the centre because they did not notify her that her son had been admitted to the hospital the previous week. By the time Kashlyn learned of it, her son was already back in the care of Child and Family Services and was well, but Kashlyn felt betrayed by the centre, and left. Although her subsequent meeting with her brother and sister took place in an unhealthy context (drinking alcohol together), Kashlyn found solace with her siblings:

> *So I just took off from the treatment centre and I flipped out. I went and found my sister and brother at the hotel…. [W]e started drinking. And I was crying. …. And my sister was like, "Well, you know, you should be, should be proud of yourself at least. Like you know what I mean? At least you tried. Don't cry and give up now."*

Toxic relationships with partners: "The whole seven years of our relationship has been around meth." Although over half of the women counted themselves as single at the time of the interviews, they revealed a need to have intimate relationships. However, the social circles within which the women travelled often resulted in them forming alliances with partners who also had poor relationship role models and histories of past unhealthy relationships. As a result, many of the women reported unstable, abusive, co-dependent relationships with boyfriends, husbands, and common laws partners. In addition, none of these partners had been able to make

any significant changes resulting in a healthier relationship. Unfortunately, the majority of these partners were embroiled in a life of crime, drugs, and violence, which increased the risk of the women getting re-involved in criminal behaviours.

Nina discussed her long-term relationship with the father of her seven children. He was a prominent gang member caught in the revolving door of the justice system, and had never been around to support her in raising their children; she felt like the gang meant more to him than her and their family. Each time he had been in prison, she had waited for him and hoped it would be different when he was released, but nothing ever changed. At the time of the interview, she continued to have mixed feelings for him but recognized their relationship was stagnant and she had moved on to another boyfriend:

> *Cuz my baby daddy is 38 now. Longest he's been out is seven months since he was 17. I still love him and everything but he's just too into his gang. Don't get me wrong. I love him …. It's kind of hard to say if I really do love him right now because if I really loved him then I wouldn't have fell in love with this [other]guy, right?*

Nina's facial expression was sad and she became somewhat emotional when she shared these feelings; however, she became more relaxed and happy when she discussed her new boyfriend. Nevertheless, this new man in her life engages in criminal behaviour and does not live by the pro-social rules of society. Her past unhealthy, stagnant relationship has impacted Nina's perspective of intimate interpersonal relationships. For her, the fact that her new boyfriend had been with her for six months, had not left her, and tried his best to support her gave her hope for this relationship:

> *Past six months and he's still there. And he's, like, I had warrants for how long. I had a warrant before for, like, half a year and he's the one that turned me in. Yeah. He's the*

one who said, "If you don't deal with them, you're never going to get your kids back." He has a warrant too. And he said, "I'll turn myself in if you turn yourself in." So he did.

Likewise, Marie had an ambivalent seven-year turbulent relationship with the father of her child. Both of them had cycled in and out of jail at different times and the one left in the community had usually cheated on the one locked up. She was aware that this was a toxic, stagnant relationship that is based on their addictive behaviours. Marie said that when she is sober, she knows the relationship needs to change, but she felt it was impossible to move past their co-dependency:

> *It's just back and forth between him and jails and then when he got out December 22nd of … 2014, I, we decided we were going to be together again. And then four days later I breached and came back [*at this point Marie got teary but did not want to stop the interview*]. No it's okay. He was in jail…. I can't keep doing this back and forth thing. He's going to get out and then we're back together and then we're doing crime and I'm back in. And he's back in. The whole seven years of our relationship has been around meth, except for when I got pregnant and we got clean…. [T]here's no trust between me and him and, like, our relationship's garbage.*

Most of the women were in unstable, chaotic relationships that made it difficult to change their circumstances. Because of their life situations, their circle of male acquaintances had similar problems. Marie shared a moment when she felt a glimmer of hope that things could change; however, the changes never materialized beyond the contemplation stage:

> *So I started using needles…. [W]hen I couldn't find my vein I'd be like, you know … [H]e never shot up, right. So he'd like take the needle from me and he'd just hold me, you*

know what I mean. And he said he wants to be there for me and we were going to go to rehab together….

Substitute family: Precarious acquaintances. While estranged from their families, many of the women found a substitute family among their peer group in the community and in jail. However, a number of women shared a lack of trust in others, both in jail and on the streets. Jail relationships tend to be superficial because of this lack of trust. Sharing your innermost thoughts, secrets, and plans can easily backfire. Your information can become fodder for gossip or, even worse, may get back to the correctional officials. As Destiny shared, "*I really don't like to talk to the ladies here because we are in jail and everyone's for themselves…. [T]hey say something that might go back and say something to one of the guards."*

In addition, Destiny was not feeling secure in her relationship with her street friends since she had been in jail; they had ignored her. She had not received any communication from them and when she called them they did not answer the phone. She was upset that she had trusted in their friendship and they had let her down, and she had started to re-evaluate these friendships. She said, *"I can't even get a hold of them... But out there, if they need something, I was there."*

Conversely, Mizzlovely shared how her street friends in the city have become her family and only support since she ran away from her dysfunctional northern family at the age of 12:

I lived at friend's house. That's how I met with so much friends out here. And I got myself into the wrong crowd…. My family pushed me away and that's the reason why I, I don't call my family. My friends on the streets are my family. That's all I know.

However, Marie talked about what she anticipates will happen when she reunites with her friends on the street when she returns to the community, saying, *"So when I get out, I could say,*

'I'm going to do better. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this.' But in reality, I'm going to go back to my friends because that's all I know."

Mizzlovely shared how her foster mother had provided her with support, and she also talked about her supports in the community:

> *She adopted me when I was a teenager and then from there, I, she ended up being my foster mom because Child and Family Services approved it…. That woman meant a lot. If I never met [name] I probably would have been in jail for murder.*

My kids is all I got. The number of children the women had at the time of the interviews ranged from one to seventeen. Some of the women relied on family or friends to care for their children while they were in jail. Others had lost temporary or permanent care of their children to Child and Family Services. Interestingly, in all cases the women had responsibility of the children; no fathers were caring for the children when their mothers were in jail. During their separations from their children, the children acted as anchors for the women who worried about their well-being and the challenges of remaining connected to them. Child and Family Services were seen by the women as the enemy and they worried about their children's safety due to recent high profile cases of children in care who had been abused and even killed. Much of their distrust of Child and Family Services came from their own experiences with the system.

Many of the women reflected on how their prison time had impacted their relationship with their children when they had been caught in a repetitious cycle of making poor decisions and toxic intimate relationships. Mizzlovely had lost her children to her in-laws because of her lifestyle. This event had caused her to increase her risk-taking behaviours. She shared her emotional state at the time, saying, *"I just lost it. I let myself go after my kids."* Even though she

had managed to negotiate visiting rights, a return to custody had resulted in losing her children permanently:

> *Like, my in-laws took my kids from me and they didn't let me see my kids for a whole year. I just started getting visitation this summer…. But instead, what they did to me, they went behind my back and they took me to court. And then they didn't let me have custody of my kids because I was incarcerated at the time.*

Women experience overwhelming losses when they lose their connections to their children either through imprisonment or by having them taken into care when they are in the community. The women expressed great love for their children. Due to poor parenting role models, lack of support, and the drive to meet their own immediate needs (which often revolved around drugs and criminal activity), the women compromised their relationships with their children. They tried to balance their parenting with their risky lifestyle and it ended badly for them and their children. Mizzlovely shared her perspective of how devastating it is for a mother to be separated from her children. However, she exhibited no self–awareness of how her decision to participate in an unhealthy lifestyle had impacted her ability to be a good parent:

> *That's my weakness is my kids. And if they tell me that I can't see my kids, that's a weakness. Like, no mother doesn't want to hear that. Like, it hurts a mother too, like, that they're, like, for, like, not letting them to see them…. [F]or me it hurts me because, like, my kids is all I got. All I have to live for. That's the reason why I'm still alive today is cuz of my kids.*

Although Marie was heartbroken because she had been imprisoned for many years of her child's life and therefore had missed many developmental milestones, she took responsibility for her separation from her child and shared how it is her child who suffers:

> *We have like the most, most beautiful two-years-old that I could ever see…. She's the one who suffers through all of this because like I've been in and out of jail since she's been 8-months-old, you know. I saw her first steps … in jail, this facility. And her first words to me were in a jail facility.*

Marie remorsefully admitted that her behaviour in returning to her co-dependent relationship with her partner and drugs had resulted in her losing contact with her daughter:

> *I ended up going back home to my daughter. Then [name of] boyfriend called me. And that's where it went downhill from there. And then we relapsed and then I started selling drugs and lost my car, lost my daughter.*

Nina became teary when she talked about her children, saying, "*My, my little people need me."* However, her numerous imprisonments due to risky behaviours and lifestyle jeopardized custody of her children. Usually, she was able to find a friend or relative to look after her children while she was in jail. During this arrangement she could maintain her connections to her children with visits and phone calls. Upon each release, she would pick up her life with her children. However, prior to coming into jail this time, Nina wasn't able to find anyone to care for her children. Consequently, she had to place them with Child and Family Services. She said, *"I had my kids every time I was in jail. Just that this time I had no one to look after them. I had no choice but to call them."* She worried that, as a consequence of her actions, she will have problems reconnecting with her children on her upcoming release.

Conflicted relationships with justice officials. Some of the women shared their experiences with officials in the justice system. Because of their background, unhealthy lifestyles, and distrust of authority, these women perceived justice staff as not having their best interests at heart.

For example, Marie had a great deal of mistrust for the legal system. From her perspective her lawyer was not helpful; in fact, she blamed him for her home arrest sentence. Although home arrest in the community is perceived by most as a better sentence than imprisonment, Marie did not believe her lawyer represented her properly. She lamented the conditions of her sentence, saying, *"Can't drink. Can't do nothing. Leave your home. You know, you have to report to PO. You will get four hours a week of free time to do whatever you want."*

As well, Asia had had a rocky relationship with the legal system and her probation officer while on house arrest on her reserve. She explained that there had been a lack of information from the court or its representatives regarding her terms of house arrest. She felt she could have used *"some kind of information on what to do in times like that but I wasn't given enough."* She also perceived her relationship with her probation officer as problematic. He did not visit, and his phone calls were short. Often, his phone mailbox was full; if messages were left he seldom returned them. She was allowed some office visits but had to get a pass from him before she left her house. She perceived him as powerful but unsupportive. She stated, *"It was my PO who said, 'You can't do this. You can't do this.' He was the like my God."* She needed a pass from him to go anywhere off of her property and he did not issue them very often.

In addition, Destiny shared her experience of repeatedly being arrested by the police for breaching her probation orders for being in a part of the city that she was forbidden to enter. The problem with this order was that her home was in that forbidden area. If she could not go back to her family's house she would be homeless. She had a poor opinion of the police from this experience, saying, *"There are some asshole cops where no matter what your excuse may be they're going to arrest you because you're breaching."*

There appeared to be a lack of trust between the women and the justice officials, which created difficult relationships and circumstances and hampered any positive change.

4. Corporeality

"Corporeal life worlds or embodiment refer to experiencing the phenomenon as it is lived through one's body" (Munhall, 2012 p. 372). Mind, body, and spirit cannot be separated and become embedded in our lived body.

Embodiment of negative and positive psychological reactions can be manifested physically in our bodies through facial expressions, posture, and our general health. However, the body does not always show on the outside what is happening on the inside. According to Mate (2003), the healthy equilibrium of our lived body depends on our psychological, emotional, and physiological statuses. According to van Manen, human beings are always "bodily in the world" and unconsciously, through our bodies "we both reveal something about ourselves and we always conceal something at the same time" (1996, p. 103).

Our bodies can be impacted by external factors such as lifestyle choices and buried traumas. As seen in this study, the manifestation of lived trauma and violence has affected the women's bodies inside and out. Heavy substance abuse, self-harm (cutting and suicide attempts), and the toll of domestic violence have left the women with visible and invisible scars.

The violated: The bodily experience of women returned to jail. According to Van Der Kolk (2014), our body and brains are changed when exposed to physical, mental, and emotional abuse, which is internalized in our body, mind, and spirit. All the women disclosed incidents of past abuse in their lives perpetuated by either family members or partners. This trauma took the form of physical, mental, or sexual abuse—or a combination of these types of abuse—in childhood and, for some, continuing into adulthood. The women were physically and

mentally scarred from this abuse. The study interview guide did not have a direct question about abuse; however, it came out in the social-demographic questioning. Many of the women were reticent to talk about their past/current traumas and only disclosed in the demographic information that they had suffered from abuse in their lives. One woman shared the perspective of many of the women when she remarked that she was afraid of opening up about that period in her life because of the closed doors that it would open. One of the reasons disclosed for this belief was that help and counselling for abuse/trauma is non-existent or minimal both in jail and in the community. The lifestyle of the women reflected an ongoing theme of violence such as domestic fights, fights with other women, gang lifestyles, survival sex, and assaults on their bodies.

Accumulated trauma. Physical, sexual, and emotional trauma have become embedded physically, mentally, and spiritually in the body and minds of the women. They bear the scars of abuse in the form of post-traumatic stress disorders and delayed emotional development. Their abuse disclosures were minimal; however, their body language indicated that they did not want to reveal any more information about this time in their lives. Nina shared that she ran away from home at age 12 with her 11-year-old sister because of the sexual abuse both of them were experiencing in their parental home. She did not share any more about her childhood sexual abuse experience.

As Mizzlovely briefly mentioned being sexually abused by an uncle and physically abused by her grandmother, she stated that her family did not believe her when she told them about the abuse, and, for that reason, she ran away from her home. At the time of the interview, she remained estranged from her family. As well, she shared that she had recently been reliving the trauma and had been having flashbacks of the abuse.

As well, Kashlyn revealed that she was abused at age 5 by her cousins, saying, *"Yeah, like, my cousins and whatever used to do a lot of things to me."* She also talked about how she was bullied at school, got into fights, and skipped school, which resulted in physical abuse from her mother. She disclosed that the culmination of this abuse resulted in self-harming and suicide attempts (hanging). She said, *"A couple of times, I almost died."*

Marie spoke of the physical and emotional abuse she and her siblings received at the hands of her father. She found his verbal abuse the most difficult to take. She said that her father frequently said to her, *"You're stupid, just stupid."*

Many of the women had experienced domestic violence. Freema shared how her ex-partner physically and emotionally abused her, eroding her self-esteem, *"because he did so much stuff to me but then he blamed me for him doing it."*

I can't handle this feeling. Some women spoke of the other legacy of accumulated buried trauma, which manifests in negative emotional health. Problems such as anxiety, lack of self-efficacy, anger, disempowerment, abandonment, and loneliness plagued the women. They revealed that anxiety was a huge part of their lives. They were overcome by angst about how they were going to manage their future. They feared that they would not be able to handle themselves when they were released from jail and returned to the community. With the combination of their previous lifestyles and their emotional baggage, a number of the women were afraid of returning to lives of drugs and alcohol.

For example, Mizzlovely discussed how hard it was for her on a previous occasion to fight her anxiety upon her release from jail. She had a panic attack when she was getting a ride to a community agency. Her flight instinct won over her actions and she jumped out of the moving car into the street in order to find some drugs to calm her down. She said she felt *"like I*

can't, I can't handle this, this feeling. And then I was like, I want to stop this but I can't handle it. I have to go and have a shot." On that occasion, her anxiety skyrocketed and the community became a scary place for her during her panic attack when she felt she didn't fit in, *"I don't know. When I get out, I am fucking scared, man. I am away too fucked up."*

Similarly, Kashlyn shared how her anxiety was increasing as she approached her release date:

> *Like, even now that I know when my release date is, I'm still sad. But it's just that I'm scared, you know. What if I'm going back to the same situation? Like, what if I am going back and do the drugs like before? Like, you know, I don't want to be doing that stuff.*

Nina shared how anxiety and depression had been her constant companions for as far back as she could remember. When she was first diagnosed she was given prescription medication that worked for a while until she became addicted to it. She required higher doses to calm her anxiety down. She started to buy extra pills on the street to meet her needs. She did not link her anxiety and depression to her past traumas but shared that she believed her emotional struggles were connected to her partner's cycling in and out of jail. She explained that she also felt her anxiety and depression were due to the strain of being a single mother to her children and taking sole responsibility for the household.

Cheryl, who had transitioned back to the community many times before, revealed that because of her behaviours on past releases, she was worried about her impending transition to the community. She had taken programs, attended AA, and had a release plan, but she was feeling very anxious about the reality of what may actually happen. While in the community on other occasions, she had experienced overwhelming emotions to use street drugs.

Loss of control and disempowerment was a common emotion for some of the women during their imprisonment; it led to emotional distress cumulating in violence and anger. Freema shared that this disempowerment caused anger, which she had a problem controlling. She confided that it sometimes resulted in lateral violence. She was relieved when she was able to leave the anger behind and move on. She said, *"I was mad when I came in. Like, I was angry for a couple times I was here because you don't have control….. That's what it is, is control, right. And now I just want to better myself."*

Cheryl and Marie recalled how they, too, passed through the emotions of anger and disempowerment related to lack of control when they returned to jail. However, both of them shared that through the passage of time they were able to leave those feelings behind and move forward.

Feeling abandoned. Throughout the interviews, I caught glimpses of an underlying theme of how the women felt isolated and alone. A combination of facial expressions, words, and body language gave me a sense of this emotion; however, it was quickly concealed again. A signal would pass from them to me that this was an area that they were not able to pursue and they wanted the interview to move forward. However, two of the women, Asia and Mizzlovely, revealed some of these emotions in their dialogue. Throughout her story of house arrest, Asia talked about how she felt trapped in her home; while her children, husband, and peers kept on living their lives, she was unable to participate in her life outside her home. On numerous times she felt viscerally that "*nobody cared how I felt."*

In addition, the roots of Mizzlovely's feelings of abandonment and loneliness were located in her horrendous childhood with her family. She expressed that being alone is an emotion that she has adapted to and that she has come to prefer:

Yeah. They never really cared cuz I was abused and sexually, sexually abused when I was a kid. Yeah. I was alone all my life and I'm not scared to be alone. You know, I like being alone. I like it. Because no one can tell me what to do. No one can, like, take away that feeling that I, like, when I'm alone, you know. Like, I don't know, it's not hard to be alone.

Legacy of trauma: Addictions and substance misuse. Van Der Kolk's book, *The Body Keeps the Score,* hypothesizes that when someone has suffered from trauma such as abuse and violence they do not feel safe. They handle a plethora of traumatic emotions by shutting them off or ignoring them. "They learn to hide from their selves" (2014, p.97). The women discussed how substances dampened the arousal feelings and memories with feelings of numbing out and getting high. Mizzlovely explained that most of the women (herself included) used illegal substances as a form of self-medication to treat the legacy of buried trauma. She stated, "*I'm not trying to use this as an excuse or anything, but I'm just, like, the reason why were on drugs is cuz this is how we cope with our mental issues."*

One woman, Vicki, talked about her excessive drinking and how she believed it was related to her *"residential school days and being abused when I was younger."* She had tried numerous programs and treatment programs but had not overcome her addiction.

Asia disclosed that when she was on house arrest for drug dealing she *"started up drugs and went back on because I didn't know what else to do with myself."* She added that she was bored and frustrated about not being able to leave her home, without permission, for 18 months. She shared that her coping mechanism to use drugs to lessen the impact of her emotions resulted in a renewed addiction:

I have very bad, I have a history of use, of being addicted to cocaine, weed, alcohol, and pills. And I stop for a while. And then this, I'm not saying it's, I'm blaming this but it's part of it, I may not be able to cope with my feelings the way I should've been. But then it went to the point to where I was getting addicted again, and I needed it and I wanted it to cope with that day.

Many of the women commented on their imprisoned peers and their use of drugs and alcohol. Mizzlovely stated, *"There is not one sober woman in, who's going to come here? …. Like, maybe like there's 10% of women that are just sober from the streets."* She added that the women in the 10% were not imprisoned for drug and alcohol offences but for white-collar crimes.

Asia expanded on this theme with her belief of why this population abuses substances:

Because that's all you've known, it's all you've known and some of them do it for enjoyment. Some of them do it for the pain that they remember. And some of them just do it because they can. And I think the majority of women who do it is because they can't, they don't want to remember the things that have happened to them. And there's maybe almost as many women want to forget things. Little bit less of women who just want the party life. They can be helped but I am saying they don't want to be.

Vicki talked about the risk of overdosing that the women who leave jail and return to the community face if they go back to drugs:

Like, I know a few of the girls here that left and now they're deceased and it is scary because that's just, saying that, you know. I figured they must have, they have been in jail for so long and they must have just thought they can go back to their ways of partying and doing whatever. And they just took too much.

Many of the women revealed that they had been using drugs and alcohol since their early teens. For example, Terraleigh disclosed that she had been addicted for 13 years. She started drugs at age 12, by 13-years-old she was into cocaine, and at age 14, she was using meth. She went to rehab for the first time at age 14. Similarly, Kashlyn stated that she was addicted to alcohol in her teens and that her mother was a crack head.

One of the older women discussed how she was beginning to experience the physical effects that her years of abusing drugs and alcohol were having on her body. She shared this insight:

> *Yeah. I could be dead right now. I could be, um, like I said, I'm sick right now. And I know it's due to all the drinking and the drugging. Not looking after myself. And it just kicked me right in the – And it's, scared because you need your body, you know. Like, you gotta look after your body to survive. And if you don't got that, then it's, you're in a bad situation.*

Chapter Summary

Chapter Four presented the findings of the study as examined through the lens of van Manen's four fundamental existentials: temporality (lived time), spatiality (lived space), relationality (lived human relations), and corporeality (lived body). All four existentials interpreted the lived experience of how 12 women who have been imprisoned experience their lives upon return to the community. Lived time or temporality interpreted these lived experiences through the lens of the past, present, and future. Lived space (spatiality) reflected both the outer and inner worlds of the women and how both environments have interpreted this lifeworld. Lived relations (relationality) revealed the women's relationships between themselves, family, and community with regard to their lived experience of returning to the

community. Lived body (corporeality) shared how the experiences of the women have lived on in their bodies and contributed to how they have experienced the phenomenon. Although all four existentials are unique and can stand alone, at times they intersect with and influence each other, and therefore cannot be always be separated (van Manen,1990).

Chapter Five: Concluding Chapter

As set out at the beginning of this thesis, the aim of the research study was to reveal how women who have been imprisoned, released to the community, and returned to custody experience their lives during their return to the community. The purpose, therefore, was to explore the daily lifeworlds of imprisoned women during the period of time in their lives when they transitioned from imprisonment back to their community. At the beginning of my research, I identified four objectives to guide the research. These objectives will be reviewed in order to affirm whether they have been met. Where they were not met, I will provide an explanation as to why not.

Study Objectives

1. To develop a deep understanding of the meaning of the experiences of women who are caught in the "revolving door syndrome" of alternating cycles of admission and discharge from imprisonment. I believe that this objective was met as my comprehension of the lived experiences of the women cycling in and out of jail was enhanced by the research. However, I was not able to attain a complete understanding of the long-reaching psychosocial and physiological effects these experiences had upon their lives. In order to achieve that level of understanding I would have to have lived their experiences.

One of my key understandings is that the women wanted to exit from the revolving door—to get out of jail and stay out of jail. They wanted to live a life of their own choosing. However, the problems and competing demands of life in the community were overwhelming for these women. My understanding deepened when they shared their pathways to jail—such as addictions, abuse, broken families, mental health issues, lack of employment, poverty, and limited education—and how the same pathways awaited them upon their discharge from jail.

The women also shared their vulnerabilities about these issues and how they knew that they needed to make changes in their lives in order to avoid slipping back into their pre-imprisonment lifestyles and behaviours. This was made clear to me by a metaphor one of the women used regarding "putting on the same shoes." By wearing the same shoes when she leaves jail that she wore when she came to jail, she explained, not only limited her options but preordained that she would continue on the same destructive path and that nothing would change.

I came to understand that change was a scary proposition for the women. Change was multifaceted as it incorporated fear of the unknown, fear of failure, fear of not being able to change, fear of going back to old routines, and fear of being overwhelmed. I found that the women were surprisingly ambivalent about leaving jail and returning to the community, which negated my stereotypical view that imprisoned women would hate both jail and the people who worked there. In contrast, jail provided a safe space, giving the women a physical and mental reprieve from their pre-imprisoned lives. They told me that jail gave them an opportunity to be sober and free of personal responsibilities and to slow down the chaos in their lives; in jail they had the chance to evaluate their needs and plan how to meet those needs. The women shared that when it was time to return to the community, they experienced ambivalence, with feelings ranging from excitement at obtaining their freedom to fears of entering unknown, marginalized spaces.

The main challenge that stood out in the women's narratives was that of homelessness. Their primary need was for permanent, safe, affordable housing that would meet their physical and emotional needs. The women were not just looking for shelter; they were looking for a home that would provide them with an opportunity to control their physical/social environment as well as a foundation on which to build their self-efficacy. "Home as both a metaphor and a

physical place of being is crucial to human well being" (O'Brien, 2001, p. 289). In my research I learned that having a home has pragmatic purposes. It provides the women with an address which enables them to receive EIA payments and identification documents such as a Manitoba health card and a driver's licence; an address is also a requirement for their probation officer and Child and Family Services worker. The women told me that a home address is a primary step toward getting their children back, getting a job, shaking off the stigmatization of homelessness, and appeasing justice workers. Interestingly, the other elements of basic human needs were seen as insignificant compared to housing. For example, poverty was seen by the women as a challenge that they could easily meet on an interim basis by using their survival skills of prostitution, selling drugs, or stealing. Prior to this I saw shelter as another unmet basic need; now I see the psychological importance of what it means to have a home of one's own.

From my past experiences with this population I knew that these women loved their children deeply and wanted to have them in their lives. The women I interviewed told me that they all wanted to be good mothers to their children, and that they loved their children. I believe that these narratives conflict with a common societal belief that women caught in the justice system do not care about their children. The women told me how their past experiences of poor parental role modeling, poverty, addictions, and adverse childhood experiences are barriers to successfully transitioning to the community. The women believe that government agencies use their past behaviours and lifestyles to distance them from their children. This distancing from their children causes anxiety that negatively impacted their ability to lead healthy, productive lives.

This dialogue with the women helped me understand how they feel about being caught in the revolving door of justice. And how "putting on the same shoes" when they leave jail that they

came to jail wearing complicates their already limited choices. As well, it reinforced for me how their histories of trauma impacted their life paths.

2. To uncover the commonalities and differences in the experiences of women re-entering the community after imprisonment. In reflecting upon this objective, I believe that the data indicated many similarities as well as reflecting differences.

Commonalities As the participants told their stories it was evident that they experienced common backgrounds such as poverty, homelessness, victimization (emotional/physical/sexual abuse), destructive intimate partner relationships, few interpersonal supports, fractured family dynamics, and addictions. Their backgrounds share much in common with other criminalized women, as documented by researchers such as Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004), Gilfus (1992), Pollack (2009), and Ramirez (2012).

As a nurse who has worked in the correctional system, I was surprised by the fact that none of the participants self-identified as having infectious diseases and/or bloodborne pathogen illnesses such as Hepatitis C or Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This may have been because they did not want to reveal these stigmatized health concerns, or they were free from these diseases, or it was not an important factor in that moment in time as their infections were controlled in jail.

The commonality of self- identified mental health concerns did not surprise me. Although only four of the women disclosed mental health issues in the demographic information I collected, I found more instances of this problem during the full interviews. I discovered that the reality for women suffering from the mental health consequences was that these consequences were related to the legacy of trauma and abuse. This legacy was revealed in lifelong symptoms caused by their trauma histories such as panic attacks, anxiety, depression,

anger, negativity, irritability, and lack of focus. Although during their interviews the women worked to conceal these symptoms, they were revealed through the women's narratives and body language.

Another commonality among the women was their children. All but one of the women had children. The children were either living with family or in the care of Child and Family Services. The love the women had for their children was evident in their non-verbal behaviours in the interviews. They all wanted to be good mothers and did not want to lose their connections to their children. However, despite this love, when the women left jail and returned to the limited options in the community, they often repeated the behaviours that had led to past child apprehension. I learned that the health and welfare of their children was a significant part of their lives.

With regard to personal trauma and abuse, I was surprised to learn that 100% of the women suffered from adverse childhood experiences such as sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. I had formerly thought that the number would be high, but I did not think it would be that high. The women in the study were not asked to share their stories of trauma, but within the unstructured interviews, these stories were often alluded to in their narratives. The women in this study did not want to share their stories of abuse because of the fear of re-opening their wounds and the stigmatization they felt that comes with being abused. My perception from the interviews was that these lived experiences were embodied by the women and that they have continued to bear invisible physical and emotional scars, disrupting the homeostasis of their mind, body, and spirit.

All of the women self-identified as having addictions and using substances to combat the pain from their legacy of trauma. This confirmed my perceptions of addictions and substance

misuse amongst this population. Substances were used as a coping mechanism as a way to manage painful memories.

What surprised me was the self-awareness of the women when it came to their addictions. They all had hopes and good intentions of defeating this problem. The women wanted to be free of addictions. The prevalence of drug use amongst this population is supported in the literature (see, for example: Huebner, DeJong, & Cobina, 2010; Maeve, 2001; Maidment, 2006; O'Brien, 2001; Parson & Warner-Robbins, 2010; Pollock, 2009; Rahim, 2010; and Ritchie, 2001).

Differences. The main difference between the women is their race/ethnicity. Nine out of 12 participants self-identified as being of Aboriginal descent (five Métis and four First Nations). Three of the women self-identified as Caucasian. This demographic is consistent with the disproportionate number of Aboriginal women imprisoned in Canada as a result of the ongoing effects of colonization (Elizabeth Fry Association of Manitoba, n.d.).

The difference between Aboriginal and Caucasian women was that Caucasian women did not have the impact of the historical trauma (Indian residential schools (IRS) and effects of colonization). Only one of the participants who self-identified as Aboriginal attended IRS; however, the other eight women told of their lives being impacted by the IRS through their familial and community experiences. Bombay, Matheson, and Anisman (2014) concluded that intergenerational stress proliferation (parental stressors impacting children's stress), fractured families, histories of abuse, and reliance on addictive substances are carried through into the present for Aboriginal people. The women's narratives expanded my understanding of historical intergenerational trauma issues related to colonization and the IRS experiences of the Aboriginal people in this province. This understanding not only occurred on an intellectual level but also an

emotional level that remains with me whenever I consider this topic. The broader issues of colonization, such as the unsuccessful historical attempts of assimilation, continue to impact Aboriginal people physiologically, psychologically, behaviourally, and socially (Fisher, 2005).

3. To consider the impact of race, gender, economic, and sociopolitical factors on the experiences of women re-entering the community after imprisonment. In my opinion I only partially met this objective. Prior to completing this research study, I had reflected on the role of social structures such as race, gender, economics, and sociopolitical status had on the lived experiences of women when they left jail and re-entered the community.

Interestingly, I found that the women were not aware of the larger sociopolitical picture and did not share any views of being treated unfairly by the system. However, from their narratives a picture of systemic discrimination was evident. The justice system sets the women up for failure when they are imprisoned. The women lose power and control over their lives. They lose their children, their connections to their communities, families, and extended families. They lose their possessions and material goods. And they are made homeless. When they are released from custody back to the community, they are faced with the challenge of having to re-acquire the resources that they need to survive, such as money, housing, jobs, and possessions. The criminal justice system expects women returning to the community to abide by rigid rules and heavy expectations with limited tolerance for any deviation.

For me, coming from a white, middle-class, professional life of privilege and not having lived their experiences restricts the depth of my awareness. What stood out for me was that the women easily accepted the fact that if they were short of money when they left jail that they could easily make some through prostitution, selling drugs, or shoplifting, all of which put them at risk of returning to jail. They also shared that returning to their marginalized neighbourhoods

is a risk factor; however, most were ambivalent about it because that is where their family and friends live and it is a familiar environment. Previous studies have shown that women leaving jail and returning to their neighborhoods are confronted with major challenges that put them at risk for re-involvement with the correctional system (Maeve, 2001; Ritchie, 2001).

All the women supported having more gender-responsive programs and treatment centres in the community. The impact of gender stood out when they told me about their turbulent intimate partner relationships, which resulted in them feeling powerless and accepting violence as part of the relationship. Another fact that stood out for me in the interviews was that only two women discussed racism, and they presented opposite views. An Aboriginal woman felt she encountered racism in jail from the correctional system and its staff, while a Caucasian woman felt all of the jail programming discriminated against Caucasians because of the emphasis on Aboriginal content. The fact that there are a disproportionate number of Aboriginal women imprisoned in Canada can also be interpreted as a form of systemic racism.

4. To provide an opportunity for women who have experienced re-entering jail after being in the community to tell their stories. Although I believe that this objective was met in this research study, I am also aware that the women have many more stories to share. I found that I had a visceral reaction to each woman's story. These women wanted to tell their stories to me in the hope that the telling of their stories may help other women in their circumstances. Also, they hoped that it might give correctional workers and government officials insight into their needs. Some of the women spoke of their dreams of writing books about their lives; however, they did not articulate any reasons for wanting to take on such projects. When I think about the interviews and the women who participated in them I re-experience the connection I made with each woman, and I feel privileged. Their stories enriched

and nurtured my understanding of human beings. It is my hope that their stories will enhance the understanding for those who read this thesis.

An interesting perspective that was not included in the findings of the study was that many of the women discussed their hopes and goals of getting involved and helping others in their community. Some women wanted to help other women in their communities, while one woman wanted to train dogs to help people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I believe that the more imprisoned women's voices and stories are heard, the more society will come to understand—and learn from—their lived experiences. I hope that this awareness will bring a shift in how this population is viewed and how to meet their needs.

Study Pre-understandings

I have reflected on the pre-understandings that I made before I embarked upon this research project in terms of whether or not my pre-research pre-understandings were correct.

1. **All human beings have multiple and unique ways of "being in the world" and interacting with phenomena.** Through the use of hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology, I believe that this pre-understanding is true. The interviews of the women reinforced the pre-understandings that every individual has a unique way of "being in this world" and cannot be placed into stereotypical groups. Each woman's pathway to jail, experience of leaving jail, re-entering the community, and returning to jail are unique.

2. **Study participants are experts in their own lives.** This pre-understanding was confirmed because the women displayed great knowledge and insight into their life journeys that brought them to jail, along with an awareness of the changes that they needed to make in order to escape the revolving door of justice.

3. Research interviews are conversational, interactive, and emergent to facilitate the expression of the lived experience of participants. This pre-understanding was supported by the feedback I received from the women at the end of the interviews. Although I only met each woman for a one-time interview, I believe that I was able to engage and connect with them. Some of the feedback I received from the women was that the interview atmosphere was respectful and that they felt they were heard. They told me that they felt comfortable in the interview and enjoyed talking about their lived experiences in relation to this phenomenon.

4. Giving study participants a voice may result in emancipatory experiences for them for one of the first times in their lives. Throughout the interviews, the women supported this pre-understanding. The women were excited to participate in the study. They expressed that this was the first time they shared their stories in such a relaxed and open manner. They felt I was a safe, neutral person and they could say what they wanted without fears of being judged or facing repercussions. The women told me that they felt validated by being able to share their stories and that their voices will be heard in a different strata of society.

5. Race, gender, economics, and sociopolitical factors will impact the lives of study participants. This pre-understanding was validated. Race, gender, economics, and sociopolitical factors were woven throughout the women narratives.

Cumulative Trauma

The overarching theme of cumulative trauma is woven through the lives of the women in this study. It affects every existential of their lives-temporality (lived time), spatiality (lived space), relationality (lived relations), and corporeality (lived body).

Intergenerational trauma in the form of historical and personal trauma—or a combination of both—impacts the lifeworlds of the women in this study. I found that intergenerational,

historical, adverse childhood experiences and personal traumas intersected, creating multiple forms of oppression for these women. What stood out for me was that the characteristics the women revealed in the telling of their stories closely matched Washa's (2013) observations, "Adult survivors of childhood sexual assault may develop PTSD symptoms and frequently exhibit interpersonal problems, depression, substance abuse, identity problems, isolative behaviours, mistrust, low-self esteem, anxiety and poor insight" (p.5).

In her book, *Women in Trouble* (1996), Comack noted the prevalence of trauma and violence in the lives of imprisoned women. In addition, she linked childhood abuse to imprisoned women's conflicts with the legal system. Many of the studies referenced in my literature review support this finding (Huebner, DeJong, & Cobina, 2010; Maeve, 2001; Maidment, 2006; O'Brien, 2001; Parson & Warner-Robbins, 2010; Pollock, 2009; Rahim, 2010; Ritchie, 2001).

Intersectionality

This study illustrated how the intersectionality of social dimensions such as race, class, and gender has impacted the lives of these women before, during, and after imprisonment. I found that the women who wanted to make lifestyle changes are hampered by social/systemic barriers that intersect (patriarchy, colonialism, and poverty). For example, most of the women leave jail with no money and are forced back into relationships or situations where they are powerless and dependent. When the women leave jail these formidable barriers can be insurmountable even though they want their lives to change. The existential themes (temporality, spatiality, relationality, corporeality) of the lived experience of the women during their transition to the community before returning to custody intersect and overlap. These multiple-layer identities are revealed through the women's own narratives. For instance, one of

the characteristics I noted during the interviews was the fact that the women appeared to be stuck at an age of maturity that was lower than their chronological age. I was able to understand the reason for this phenomenon from research that indicates that childhood abuse is directly related to neurobiological effects that have a permanent impact on an individual's psychosocial behaviours during their lifespan (Anda, et al. 2005; Danese & McEwen, 2012). In addition, when the women were telling me their stories, I began to see an interconnection between their social dimensions such as race, class, and gender and their personal challenges such as unemployment, low education, stigmatization, unhealthy relationships, racism, substance/alcohol abuse, homelessness, and poverty.

The number of imprisoned Aboriginal women in this study (9 out of 12) is a reflection of the effects of historical, intergenerational and personal trauma. In the province of Manitoba, "45% of Aboriginal women make up the overall prison population, and are estimated to represent 90-99% of the population in some provincial jails, even though Aboriginal women only make up 1-2% of the Canadian population" (Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba, n.d.).

Although the three non-Aboriginal women in the study did not believe that they were stigmatized because of their race, their stories nonetheless reflected discrimination based on gender and class. "As a consequence of their multiple identities, some women are pushed to the extreme margins and experience profound discriminations…" (Symington, 2004, p.2).

The adverse childhood experiences and trauma that women intimately experienced began with broken family structures in childhood and continue on in later relationships. For many, trauma occurred in the formative years of the women's lives. I wasn't surprised by their lack of trust but I was surprised by the extent of it. During the interviews, the women displayed sadness about the fact that they could not bring themselves to trust people or the organizations that were

supposed to help them. As a result of the impact of gender, class, and race oppressions, the multi-layered experiences of the women in the study multiplied and intersected throughout their lifespans.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist standpoint theory honours marginalized women's sources of knowledge. It is not a perspective but a stance of the marginalized (i.e. their expression of their experiences) on what challenges they have when they leave jail, transition to the community, and return to custody. Feminist standpoint scholars emphasize the need to begin with women's lives "as they themselves experience them" in order to achieve an accurate and authentic understanding of what life is like for women today (Brooks, 2006, p. 53). The findings of this study revealed rich thick data on the lifeworlds of these women as described in their own words. Instead of relying on second-hand information and conjecture, I focused on how the participants experienced their lives during their return to their communities.

A reflective journal was kept during the interview process in order for me to be aware of my thoughts and position. An awareness of my position within the structure of society was pre-understood (white, middle-class, educated, professional female) as were the differences between myself and the women in this study. As a nurse, I have practiced in the correctional system and in the community with marginalized women, some of whom were recently released from prison and who were working on the streets. I wanted to hear about the women's life experience and learn from their authentic knowledge in an attempt to understand their lifeworlds. Because of my past work history, I had some degree of understanding of the facts related to this population; however, on reflection I saw that my ability to understand was limited by my social status. During the interviews, the raw emotions of the women as they told their stories made my heart

ache. For a brief moment in time I connected with the interviewees as a woman and a mother. It was this sense that heightened my feelings of empathy and humility. I felt privileged that the women entrusted their stories to me and I wanted to share their voices. The women often faced challenging circumstances upon discharge that were revealed in this study by the women themselves, and their voices identified serious pitfalls in their journey to attempt to make positive change.

Research Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the difficulty of trying to grasp a woman's life story in one interview. Multiple interviews would probably have resulted in thicker, richer data. However, phenomenology methodology recognizes that the researcher will capture the lived meaning as shared by the participant at one point in time. Another limitation was that the participants who agreed to be interviewed may have had greater self-awareness of the need to change their behaviour and lifestyle than those who did not volunteer. Therefore I may not have spoken to women who had a different lived experience.

As well, the differences of race and class between myself and the participants may have impacted some of the women's narratives. Because I was a non-Aboriginal woman speaking with mainly Aboriginal women, there is the possibility that racial differences may have prevented a full understanding of the women's lifeworlds. Furthermore, my own social location of being white, educated, middle-class, and professional may have had an impact on some of the women's comfort level while being interviewed by me. In addition, what the women shared during the interviews is what I presume they were willing to share with me at that point in time.

Research Strengths

The main research strength was that the data collected was from the standpoint of the

women in the study. A qualitative phenomenological approach was appropriate for this research project in order to provide the individuals impacted by the phenomenon of leaving jail, transitioning to the community, and returning to custody with an opportunity to share the meanings of their lived experience.

Recommendations

The findings from this research study highlight a number of important implications not only for nursing practice, but for all health care practitioners (HCPs) as well as those working in the criminal justice system. These recommendations include the following:

Recommendations for nursing and other HCP practice. Women who have left jail and returned to the community need to receive comprehensive, holistic health care assessments and care during all health care interactions. This is especially important since the legacy of trauma in this population often manifests itself in adulthood in the presentation of multiple health problems such as liver disease, mental health issues, and digestive problems. As such, the health care needs of these women should be prioritized with direct access to a personal physician, health care support team, and specialists. While access to personal physicians is a barrier for everyone in our communities, stigmatization and marginalization jeopardize the members of this population from finding nurturing, gender-responsive, non-judgmental, client-centred caregivers with whom they can build long term trusting relationships.

A comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing this population would allow HCPs to expand their health assessment to include social determinants of health, to be aware of how these deficits impact the women's lives and chances for success in order to make the appropriate referrals to address these needs. At the very least to be aware f how these deficits impact the.

Clinics and community agencies need to join forces with the provincial correctional system to better meet the needs of this population in the community, such as permanent, safe, affordable housing, halfway houses, financial support, and interrelated jail/community programming. A therapeutic community team approach targeted at this population would better address the physical, psychosocial, and spiritual needs of this population.

Recommendations for nursing and other HCP education. Education of all HCPs (doctors, nurses, therapists, and social workers) and students should include the impact of the social determinants of health, trauma, and the intersectionality of race, class, and gender on the lifeworlds of this population. These women are faced with overwhelming, complex, and competing demands that influence ability to take care of their health and wellness (Washa, 2013).

Providing HCPs with education of imprisoned women's life circumstances, backgrounds, and unique needs will give them a better understanding of women who have been imprisoned; it would also potentially engender in imprisoned women a better sense of trust in the health care system. As well, it will provide HCPs with an understanding of the major stumbling blocks to change that are located externally to imprisoned women: poverty, homelessness, and lack of accessible career and educational opportunities related to their position in society. In essence, this education will inform HCPs of the substantial resources that are needed in order to launch and maintain women on a new path.

Training in a non-crisis management program would facilitate the interpersonal interactions between these women and HCPs. The legacy of trauma, stigma, and marginalization experienced by women often emerges as frustration, anger, and impatience. HCPs need to be

able to handle this behaviour in a professional, calm manner. HCPs need to be astute and not take these interactions personally but provide the same support and caring as they do for their other patients.

Education is required; this includes trauma-informed care, which includes an awareness of cumulative trauma experiences, inclusive of historical/intergenerational and personal trauma. This education would include the impact of adverse childhood experiences where maltreatment of children produces multiple psychological, physiological, and sociological effects on the health and wellness of survivors (Edwards et al., 2003). In addition, education on organizing trauma-informed health care principles and practical resources is crucial for HCPs to help women achieve success, particularly when women leave jail.

Recommendations for government, health care facilities, and community agencies. The criminal justice system should adopt a more comprehensive approach in the way they transition women back to the community. This approach needs to be focused on the women's immediate needs such as housing, financial support, treatment programs, and long-term trauma counselling, being sensitive to the enduring effects of race, gender, and class.

All staff in these agencies and the justice system should receive trauma-informed care education and gender-responsiveness training. The principle tenets of both trauma-informed care education and gender-responsiveness training should become core values in delivering care and become integrated into policies and procedures.

All agencies and the government should work together to form a supportive network and resources for women transitioning from jail to the community. The resources should include safe and affordable housing or other safe places to stay on release, financial support, seamless programming that transitions from jail to the community, education, and job skills training.

Educated government advocates and mentors should be provided to help the women negotiate meeting their needs in the community (e.g. Child and Family Services). Agencies should expand long-term, women-centred treatment programs that meet the needs of women when they leave jail and return to the community. They should also establish more long-term treatment programs focusing on healing victims of trauma and abuse.

In addition, the justice system and community agencies should review the supports and services available to women leaving jail and returning to northern communities to determine if these are adequate and likely to help the woman to be successful.

Recommendations for nursing research. This study only encompassed those women who were imprisoned. Additional research could be done with women who are currently experiencing life in the community after imprisonment—including those who have made a successful transition. More research is required on the psychosocial impact of women leaving jail and returning to the community and its effect on the well-being of women trapped in the "putting on the same shoes" cycle of recidivism in order that more effective health care and community resources can be developed.

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Appendix A: Access to Population Request

"How Imprisoned Women Experience Transitioning to the Community"
A Thesis Research project

Researcher: Donna Blair-Lawton, RN, BN, Graduate Student, Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba, Donna.Blair-Lawton@umanitoba.ca
Supervisors: Elaine Mordoch, RN, PhD, University of Manitoba, Elaine.Mordoch@umanitoba.ca; Wanda Chernomas, RN, PhD, University of Manitoba, Wanda.Chernomas@umanitoba.ca

My interest in the lived experience of imprisoned women transitioning back to their communities is based on 17 years of employment with the provincial government as a correctional nurse. Initially, I worked with the women at Portage Correctional Centre (1989-1994) and then with male youth offenders at Agassiz Youth Centre (1994-2007). In 2007, I left Corrections to practice as a community health nurse in the North End of Winnipeg at a drop-in centre for female and transgendered sex trade workers. It was a combination of these experiences that led me to this research project. The objectives of the proposed project are:

1. To develop a deep understanding of the meaning of the experiences of women re-entering to their communities after imprisonment;
2. To uncover the commonalities in the experiences of women re-entering the community after imprisonment in order to distil the essence of their experiences;
3. To consider the impact of race, gender, and economic and sociopolitical factors on the experiences of women re-entering the community after imprisonment; and
4. To provide an opportunity for women who have experienced re-entering the community after imprisonment to tell their stories.

Summary of Project:

BACKGROUND: Worldwide the number of imprisoned women is growing, a trend also reflected throughout Canada (World Health Organization, 2011). Globally, these women are: underprivileged, marginalized, experience historical and current personal trauma, have pre-existing mental and physical conditions, and can expect minimal treatment for mental health problems within the prison system (World Health Organization, 2011). Little is known about the lived experiences of these women when they transition from the correctional system to their communities. This research study will reveal how women who have been imprisoned experience their lives upon return to their community.

METHOD**:** The qualitative study design is a Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenological research design informed by standpoint feminist theory. Approximately 10 women at the Women's Correctional Centre will be recruited on a voluntary basis. Recruitment will be done in each living unit through the placement of posters and group information meetings. Women interested in being interviewed will be able to arrange a meeting time with the researcher through the unit staff. The study will proceed once the research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Ethics Review Board at the University of Manitoba.

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in a Study

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
Faculty of Health Sciences

Invitation to Participate In A Study

Donna Blair-Lawton, a Master's in Nursing Student from the University of Manitoba, is seeking to interview 6 to 8 women who left jail, returned to the community and have come back to jail. The main purpose of this research project is hear the stories of these women and to give them an opportunity to have their voices heard. I hope you will consider sharing your thoughts and experiences in an individual interview (approximately 1 hour) with the researcher.

To qualify for the study you need to meet the following criteria:

You:

- want to volunteer
- are over 18 years of age
- have received a provincial sentence
- speak English (no interpreter will be provided)
- have had at least one prior experience of returning to the community after imprisonment.

Your decision to participate is voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential. Everyone involved in the project: the researcher, the woman who types the interview and the researcher's supervisors have signed an oath of confidentiality. All information will be kept confidential.

You can sign up for the study by filling out a green request form and placing it in the box on your unit. The researcher will be available to answer questions during group presentations, which will be scheduled for each living unit or after I leave you can request a meeting with me by filling out a request form.

Research Supervisors: Dr. Elaine Mordoch and Dr. Wanda Chernomas (Faculty of Nursing). Researcher supervisors will not know who participates and will examine only de-identified information collected by the researcher.

Appendix C: Script for Project Overview for Potential Participant

The following script was used at the beginning of each interview to provide the participant with information about the researcher, the interview process, participants' rights, confidentiality and available resources:

> My name is Donna Blair-Lawton, I am a nurse and I am doing this research project as part of a university degree (Masters of Nursing). I am looking for 6 – 8 women for my research project. My past nursing experience includes working as a nurse at the former women's correctional centre in Portage la Prairie for six years and 11 years with youth corrections. For the last eight years, I have worked in a community health centre in the north end of Winnipeg including four years in a women's drop in centre. The combination of these experiences led me to my research question about how women experience their lives when they leave jail. I want to give women who have been imprisoned an opportunity to share their story with others in the hope that it will provide information and knowledge to (help people, particularly health and social service providers, understand women's experiences upon return to the community. This information has the potential to improve services for women returning to the community.
>
> The interview will take about one hour of your time if you decide to participate. I will audiotape the entire interview. It will be more like a personal conversation than an interview. I want you to be familiar with your rights as a participant during this process.
>
> 1. You have the right to decide to participate or not participate in this without consequences.
> 2. You have the right to end the interview at any stage.
> 3. You do not need to answer any question with which you feel uncomfortable.
> 4. You can decide any time before, during or after the interview that you do not want any or all of your interview to be included in the final project (if you decide this after I leave, you can contact me through the unit manager).
> 5. You have the right to **confidentiality**. Outside of the fact that you met with me, none of the staff will know what we have talked about, except: **if you tell me about any current child abuse then I am required by law to report it to the authorities**. The woman who types the interviews does not know your name and has also signed an oath confirming that the interview data is kept confidential. My supervisors from the university will only see the written copy from the typist of what you said during the interview (so they can help me with processing the information).They will not have access to your real name. The report of the findings from the study will not contain any information that would point to you as the person interviewed.
> 6. You can choose a made up first name that will be used instead of your own in the written findings of the study.
> 7. If talking about your experience causes you to feel anxious or upset during or after the interview, please let me know. I have a list of people who are available for you to talk to at Women's Correctional Centre (your caseworker, a mental health nurse,

the cultural worker, the chaplain, or a psychologist or doctor). I also have a list of resources in the community that you can access on release. Please feel free to ask me for these lists at the end of the interview.

That is all I have to say for now. Do you have any questions or concerns?

Appendix D: Information Handout for Participants

The interview will take about one hour of your time if decide to participate. I will audiotape the entire interview. The type of study that I am doing is called Hermeneutic Phenomenology – I want to hear about your experience as you lived it (seeing that time of your life through your eyes). It will be more like a personal conversation than an interview.

I want you to be familiar with your rights as a participant during this process.

1.You have the right to decide to participate or not participate in this project. If you decide not to participate there will be no consequences and this decision will not affect your status and rights while imprisoned or your release plans. If you decide to participate you will retain your right to withdraw at any time without consequences as stated above.

2.You have the right to end the interview at any stage.

3.You do not need to answer any question with which you feel uncomfortable.

4.You can decide any time before, during or after the interview that you do not want any or all of your interview to be included in the final project (if you decide this after I leave you can contact me through the unit manager).

5.You have the right to confidentiality. Outside of the fact that you met with me, none of the staff will know what we have talked about, except: **If you tell me about any current child abuse then I am required by law to report it to the authorities.** My supervisors from the university will only see the written copy from the typist of what you said during the interview (so they can help me with processing the information), they will not have access to your real name. The report of the findings from the study will not contain any information that would point to you as the person interviewed.

6.You can choose a fictional first name that will be used instead of your own in the written findings of the study.

7.If talking about your experience causes you to feel anxious or upset during or after the interview, please let me know. I have a list of people who are available for you to talk to at WCC (your caseworker, a mental health nurse, the Cultural Worker, the Chaplain, or a psychologist or doctor). I also have a list of resources in the community that you can access on release. Please feel free to ask me for these lists at the end of the interview, if you so wish.

Appendix E: Interview Guide

The purpose of this interview is to hear about your life experience(s) when you left jail and returned to the community. I have some general questions that I would like to ask which may help guide us through the interview. But I am mainly interested in hearing your story in your own words. To begin with, I am going to ask you some background information about yourself, which will help me in understanding the overall findings of the project.

Social Demographics:
Can you tell me how old you are?
What is your relationship status?
Do you have children?
What is your ethnic or cultural background?
What was the last grade you completed in school?
When you are living in the community, what is your usual source of income?
Have you ever done volunteer work? If so what and when?
Do you have any health problems?

Prison Experience:
How long have you been here (WCC)?
How many times have you been in custody?
Probes: When?
Where?
Why?
Approximately how long were you in the community between imprisonments? What happened in the community that resulted in your return to custody?

Primary Interview Question:

1. I am interested in your experience of being released from custody and returning to the community. Please think about this experience(s) and describe for me in as much detail as you can what it was like for you.
   Probes: What stood out for you in that situation?
   Can you describe how you felt about that?

Secondary Interview Questions:

1. While you were in jail what helped you prepare for returning to your community?
   Probes: What programs / services were helpful?
   What supports or people helped you to prepare for your return?

2. What plans if any did you make for after your release?
   Probes: If you had plans, how did they help you when you went back to the community?
   If you had no plans, how do you think having a plan might have helped you when you went into the community?

3. What help did you receive from community agencies with your return?

Probes: Was there a difference between what help you thought you were going to get and the help you received? Tell me about it.

4. Please tell me more about how hard or easy it was for you to re-enter your community?
   Probes: What kind of feelings did you have while in jail about returning to the community?
   How was your experience(s) of returning to the community? Was it different or the same as you thought it would be? Why?

5. Looking back at the time you were in the community between being released and returning to custody, what were your main challenges/barriers and successes?
   Probes: What worked?
   What didn't work?

6. What supports would have helped you to remain in the community?

7. What advice would you give women transitioning from jail to the community?

8. What advice would you give Manitoba Corrections about what women transitioning from jail to community needs are?

What else would you like to tell me about your experiences?

Debriefing:

Check in with how the participant is feeling; remind her of the resources available at the WCC and in the community. Provide the written lists of resources if she so wishes.

Appendix F: Certificate of Completion

PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS
Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE

Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Donna Blair-lawton

has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)

Date of Issue: **31 August, 2011**

Appendix G: Confidentiality Agreement with Transcriber

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
Faculty of Health Sciences

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT WITH TRANSCRIBER

Research Project Title: "How do imprisoned women who have transitioned to the community and have returned to custody experience their lives during their return to the community?"

Researcher: Donna Blair-Lawton
University of Manitoba
Faculty of Health Sciences
College of Nursing

"I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all digital audio recordings and documents received from Donna Blair-Lawton related to her Master of Nursing research project.

I agree to:

1. ensure all study-related digital audio recordings and materials in my possession are stored in a safe, secure location not make copies of any digital audio recordings or transcripts
2. not reveal the name of any participant that I may accidently discover during the audio transcription process of participant interviews.
3. delete all electronic files containing Donna's study from my computer hard drive and any backup devices at the end of the data transcription.
4. return all digital audio recordings and study related documents to the researcher.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the digital audio and / or files to which I will have access.

_____

Transcriber's Name (printed) Transcriber's Telephone Number:

_____

Transcriber's Signature: Date (month/ day/ year):

_____ _____

Student Researcher's Signature: Date (month/ day/ year):

Appendix H: List of Resources: People you can talk to in Women's Correctional Centre

List of Resources: People you can talk to in Women's Correctional Centre

- your caseworker
- a mental health nurse,
- the cultural worker
- the chaplain,
- a psychologist
- a doctor
- a clinic nurse

Appendix I: List of Resources

List of Resources:

Places in the Manitoba communities to find someone to talk to:

Central Region

South Central Committee on Family Violence	204-325-9800
Portage Family Abuse Prevention Centre	204-239-5233
Manitoba Justice – Domestic Violence Support Services	204-239-3378

Eastman Region

Eastman Crisis Centre (Agape House)	204-346-0028
Manitoba Justice – Domestic Violence Support Services	204-345-9752
Survivor's Hope Crisis Centre Inc.	204-753-3150

Interlake Region

Interlake Women's Resource Centre	204-642-8264
Lakeshore Women's Resource Centre	204-768-3016
Nova House (Selkirk)	204-482-1200
Manitoba Justice – Domestic Violence Support Services	204-785-5213

Parkland Region

Parkland Crisis Centre	204-638-9484
Swan Valley Crisis Centre	204-734-9368
Manitoba Justice – Domestic Violence Support Services	204-622-5080

Norman Region

Snow Lake Centre on Family Violence	204-358-7141
The Pas Committee for Women in Crisis (Aurora House)	204-623-5497
Manitoba Justice –Domestic Violence Support Services	204-627-8483
Women's Safe Haven/Resource Service	204-681-3105

Thompson Region

Thompson Crisis Centre	204-778-7273
Toll Free	1-800-442-0613
Manitoba Justice –Domestic Violence Support Services	204-677-6368

Men Are Part of the Solution (MAPS)	204-778-6040

Winnipeg Region

Alpha House Project	204-982-2011
Couples Counselling Project	204-790-7221
Men's Resource Centre	204-415-6797
Toll Free	1-855-672-6727
Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre	204-477-1123
kwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.	204-987-2780
Toll Free	1-800-362-3344
Immigrant Women's Counselling Services	204-940-2172
Nor'West Co-op Community Health Centre	204-940-2080
North End Women's Centre	204-589-7347
Osborne House	204-942-3052
Spirit of Peace Program (Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc.)	204-925-0300
The Laurel Centre Inc.	204-783-5460
Manitoba Justice – Domestic Violence Support Services	204-945-6851
Wahbung Abinoonjiiag	204-925-4610
Wolseley Family Place	204-788-8052
Women in Second Stage Housing (WISH)	204-275-2600
A Woman's Place: Domestic Violence Support & Legal Services	204-940-6624

Westman Region

Brandon Access/Exchange Service	204-729-8115
Samaritan House Ministries	204-726-0758 204-727-1268
The Counselling Centre – Men's Program	204-726-8706
The Women's Resource Centre	204-726-8632
Toll Free	1-866-255-4432
Manitoba Justice – Domestic Violence Support Services	204-726-6515
YWCA of Brandon – Couple's Program	204-571-3680
YWCA Westman Women's Shelter	204-727-3644

First Nations Shelters in Manitoba

Mamawehetowin Crisis Centre, Pukatawagan	1-866 432-1041
First Nations Healing Centre, Koostatak	1-800 692-6270
Jean Folster Place, Norway House	204-359-4400
Wechin Waskigan Crisis Centre,	204-565-2548

Shamattawa

Winnipeg Resources for Aboriginal Women Encountering Violence:
Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin
P.O. Box 1056
Winnipeg, MB R3C 2X4
Phone: 204-987-2780
Toll Free: 1-800-362-3344
To support Aboriginal women and their children end family violence, by offering shelter during crisis and nurturing hope, change and empowerment for tomorrow.

Native Women's Transition Centre

105 Aikins Street
Winnipeg, MB R2W 4E6
(204) 989-8240
The Native Women's Transition Centre provides long-term safe housing to Aboriginal women and their children who are struggling to make life changes and escape violence.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

McGregor Neighbourhood Site	Anderson Neighbourhood Site	Spence Community Care Site
363 McGregor St.	318 Anderson St.	443 Spence St.
Winnipeg, MB R2W 4X4	Winnipeg, MB, R2W 1E5	Winnipeg, MB R3B 2R8
(204) 925-0340	(204) 925-0349	(204) 925-0348

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre offers a number of culturally relevant prevention and support-based programs and services to Winnipeg's Aboriginal community. Essentially, we respond to any identified need and work with the community to create appropriate supports at each of Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre's three neighbourhood sites.

Resources for Women in Conflict with the Law:
Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba (EFSM)
544 Selkirk Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 2M9
Phone: 204-589-7335
Toll Free: 1-800-582-5655
We provide advocacy, access to resources and support to women who are at risk of becoming or have been involved with the criminal justice system. Some of the issues our clientele struggle to overcome are addiction, poverty, mental health issues, marginalization, racism, long-term effects of residential schools.

Appendix J: Participant Consent

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
Faculty of Health Sciences

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

Research Project Title: "How do imprisoned women who have transitioned to the community and have returned to custody experience their lives during their return to the community?"

Researcher: Donna Blair-Lawton, RN BN
University of Manitoba
Faculty of Nursing
Email: Donna.Blair-Lawton@umanitoba.ca

Supervisors: Dr. Elaine Mordoch and Dr. Wanda Chernomas (Faculty of Health Science, College of Nursing

Committee Members: Dr. Lynn Scruby (Faculty of Health Science, College of Nursing) and Dr. Elizabeth Comack (Faculty of Arts, Department of Sociology)

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Regardless of whether you accept or decline to participate in this study, confidentiality will be maintained. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information

What is the purpose of this study?

This research study is part of my university requirements for a Masters of Nursing degree. The main purpose of this research project is to hear the stories of women who have left jail, returned to the community and have come back to jail. I want to give women who have been imprisoned an opportunity to share their stories with others. I hope that the study will provide information to people who have never had this experience and potentially improve services for women in these circumstances. The type of study that I am doing is called Heideggerian Hermeneutic Phenomenology – I want to hear about your experience as you lived it (seeing that time of your life through your eyes).

What will be expected of me as a participant?

You are being asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview (of approximately 90 minutes long) and to share your experience through your own eyes of that time of your life when you left jail and returned to the community and came back to jail. You will be asked to sign this consent form which indicates your decision to participate in the interview and the study.

What will be the benefits and risks of participating in this project?

Although there are no direct benefits for you, being able to discuss your experience may be a worthwhile for you. The findings of this research study will provide correctional officials and community agencies with important information and may produce changes in how women are helped with returning to the community.

Talking about your experience may cause you to feel uneasy or upset during or after the interview, if this happens please let me know. If this happens during the interview, after checking with you, I will turn off the recording machine and we will take a break. You can decide to stop the interview, reschedule, or continue. If you wish to continue, I will turn the recorder back on. If you wish to reschedule, we will do so. If you wish to stop and not continue with telling your story, we will do so. At any time during the study, you may request that all your data be removed from the project (until the thesis is published). Any digital recordings will be deleted and written data will be confidentially shredded. I have a list of people who are available for you to talk to at WCC (your caseworker, a mental health nurse, the Cultural Worker, the Chaplain, a psychologist or doctor). Request for these services can be made by filling out a green request form and placing it in the box in your unit. I also have a list of resources that are available upon your release to the community. At the end of the interview, I will take a few minutes to debrief and check how you are feeling. I will offer you written copies of the resource list at that time.

Confidentiality

All documents pertaining to the study will be treated with the strictest confidence. Data you provide through your interviews will be kept in an encrypted file in a password protected computer account on the researcher's personal computer in her home office. Your name will not appear on any data collection forms. Only the researcher will have access to your real name. The woman who types the recording of the interview will not know your name and has signed an oath of confidentiality. She will remove any identifiers heard on the recording such as names and places when she types out the interview. The written copy of your interview will be given a number and this number will be used on all written copies of your interview instead of your real name. You can choose a made up (fictional) first name that will be used instead of your own and it will used in all written findings of the study. My supervisors from the university who have also signed an oath of confidentiality will only see the written copy from the typist of what you said during the interview (so they can help me with processing the information); they will not have

access to your real name. The report of the findings from the study will not contain any information that would point to you as the person interviewed. Any quotation from your interview will be examined to ensure no identifying information was inadvertently provided. Access to materials will be limited to the researcher and her committee co-chairs. If what you said during the interview is written in a research report, the name you gave yourself will be used. All relevant research electronic and hard copy data including consent forms, transcripts, completed demographic form and audio recordings will be stored confidentially. Hard copies will be stored in a locked drawer in the filing cabinet in the student researcher's home office when they are not being used in the analysis process. Electronic data you will be kept in an encrypted file in a password protected computer account on the researcher's personal computer in her home office. Hard copies of transcripts and consents will be kept in separate locked drawers in a filing cabinet in the researcher's home office. Hard copy data will be destroyed by a confidential shredding process and audio recordings and electronic data files will be deleted by June 31, 2017.

Dissemination of results

The research project will be written up in the form of a thesis which will be published on the University of Manitoba's online library in My Space. Presentations will be made at academic conferences and to community groups. Journal article(s) will be written based on the thesis and its findings. All data will be reported in aggregate. No individual data will be reported.

You will be asked if you wish to receive a summary report of the study findings. If so you will be given the choice of receiving the report by email or the postal system. You will be asked to provide contact information for which ever method you decide upon and the report will be sent to that address by December 31, 2015.

Consent to participate

I understand the information given to me and I am willing to participate in this study. I understand that all data obtained as part of this study will be kept confidential and that I will not be identified in any reports or publications. I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

I understand that my signature on this form indicates that I have understood to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and that I agree to participate as a subject.

And that in no way does this waive my legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. I know that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions I prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. I understand that I am free to ask for clarification or new information throughout my participation in the study.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

You may contact my research supervisors from the Faculty of Health Sciences, College of Nursing: Dr. Elaine Mordoch and Dr. Wanda Chernomas if you have any questions or concerns regarding this research project or the student researcher.

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions. If you decide not to participate there will be no consequences and this decision will not affect your status and rights while imprisoned or your release plans. If you decide to participate you will retain your right to withdraw at any time without consequences as stated above.

Further information

If you have any questions about this project or your participation please contact the researcher, Donna Blair- Lawton through submitting a request on the green request form and place it in the box in your unit. The program manager will arrange for you to speak with Donna.

Consent:

I have read this consent form. I have had the opportunity to discuss this research study with Donna Blair-Lawton. I have had my questions answered by her in a language I understand. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I believe that I have not been unduly influenced to participate in the research study by any statements or implied statements. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form after signing it. I understand that my participation in this study is **voluntary** and that I may choose to withdraw at any time. I freely agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that information regarding my personal identity will be kept confidential, but that confidentiality is not guaranteed.

By signing this consent form, I have not waived any of the legal rights that I have as a participant in a research study.

I agree to be contacted for future follow-up in relation to this study, Yes ____ No ____

Participant signature_____ Date _____

(day/month/year)
Participant printed name: _____

Results: A summary of the results of the study will be made available to participants (by December 31, 2015). Please initial here if you would like to receive a copy of the summary _____

If so, how would you like to receive it? : email _____ Postal system_____

Contact information:

_____

_____