



Envisioning Justice Solutions, Inc.

*Determining the Programs, Policies, and Services Needed to Rebuild the Lives of
Criminal Justice Involved Men and Women*

Healing Trauma Evaluation Year 1 Findings

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Introduction

Healing Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Women is a six-session trauma curriculum designed for women who have been abused or have experienced trauma associated with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The focus is on the core things needed by trauma survivors: an understanding of trauma, its process, and its impact on both the inner self (thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and values) and the outer self (behavior and relationships). Topics include: the process of trauma, power and abuse, healthy relationships, grounding and self-soothing. The Healing Trauma Program was implemented in three different prison settings in July 2017. Specifically, this program was implemented in the reception center at the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), in the general population at the California Institution for Women (CIW) for C/C and other high need groups, and in the Secure Housing Unit (SHU) at CIW.

Surveys were administered to the Healing Trauma program participants prior to the start of the program and at the conclusion of the program. The pre- and post-surveys included the following scales:

- *Mental Health:* Assessing change in mental health functioning was determined by assessing change in depression, anxiety, other serious mental illness and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
 - Depression and anxiety were measured using two subscales of the self-report Patient Health Questionnaire. The Patient Health Questionnaire 9-item depression subscale measures current depressive symptomology and the anxiety subscale is a 6-item subscale that measures anxiety symptoms felt over the past four weeks. Responses, are based on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 (*Not at all*) to 3 (*Nearly every day*). Higher scores on these subscales represent higher levels of depression and anxiety.
 - The K6 a 6-item brief mental health screening tool, is used to assess participant's overall mental health. Responses, based on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 (*None of the time*) to 4 (*All of the time*), were summed into an overall scale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of mental distress.
 - The *Short Screening Scale for DSM-IV Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* was used to assess the prevalence of 7 PTSD symptoms. Higher scores indicate greater symptomology.
- *Anger and Aggression:* The Buss-Warren Aggression Questionnaire was used to measure different aspects of anger: Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger, Hostility, and Indirect Aggression. Responses, based on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*Not at all like me*) to 5 (*Completely like me*), were summed into an overall score for the whole scale and for each subscale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of anger and aggression.
- *Emotion Regulation:* The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale was used to measure different aspects of emotion regulation: Nonacceptance of emotional responses, difficulties engaging in goal-directed behavior, impulse control difficulties, lack of emotional awareness, limited access to emotion regulation strategies, and lack of emotional clarity. Responses, based on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*Almost never*) to 5 (*Almost always*), were summed into an overall scale. Higher scores indicate greater difficulties in emotion regulation.

Paired-sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine differences for all participants across time for depression, anxiety, serious mental illness, PTSD, anger, hostility, aggression, and emotion regulation. Paired-sample *t*-tests allow us look at change over time per individual, but report the findings for the group. Thus, we do not need to control for other variables (e.g., age or race, etc.) because each person is their own control case and demographic variables will not vary over time. Statistical significance is represented by the “p-value.” This value represents the probability that the observed results would have occurred if the program indeed did not have an impact on the participants. The commonly accepted minimal p-value that represents statistical significance is $p < .05$. Thus, a p-value of $< .05$ means that there is only a .05 percent probability that the observed difference between the pre- and post-test means for an item would have occurred if the program did not have an impact on the participants. Given this extremely low probability, it would be safe to conclude that the observed difference occurred as result of the program having the desired impact on the participant. The following sections presents the findings for each prison setting.

CCWF Reception Center Findings

A total of 319 women completed both surveys between July 2017 and May 2018. The table below describes the mean changes in pre- and post-test measures of mental health, emotional regulation and aggression/hostility issues among those that completed both surveys. Given that all of means declined (improved) from pre- to post-program and given that all of these differences were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, there is overwhelming evidence to support a conclusion that this program is having the desired impact on the women who participate in the program at CCWF.

Description	Pre-Program Mean	Post-Program Mean	% Decrease	Significance
Depression	7.41	4.66	37%	$p < 0.01$
Anxiety	5.24	3.85	27%	$p < 0.01$
Psychological Distress	6.33	4.65	27%	$p < 0.01$
PTSD	5.97	4.22	29%	$p < 0.01$
Physical Aggression	17.26	15.01	13%	$p < 0.01$
Verbal Aggression	11.53	10.47	9%	$p < 0.01$
Anger	14.70	13.41	9%	$p < 0.01$
Hostility	17.41	15.70	10%	$p < 0.01$
Indirect Aggression	12.49	11.25	9%	$p < 0.01$
Emotion Regulation	42.79	39.98	7%	$p < 0.01$

HT participants were asked to rate the HT program on scale from 1 (Very Poor) to 10 (Excellent). The participants gave a mean rating of 9.35 indicating that the participants thought this was a very good program. The findings from the qualitative portion of this evaluation provide further evidence of the positive impact that this program is having on the women. Below are some of the comments from women who have participated in a focus group during this reporting period:

The biggest thing that impacted me was touching root on deeper grounds, as far as my healing goes and things that actually have traumatized me, where I didn't even-- just blocked it out altogether. So I touched basis on those and it just allowed me to grow more. And going forward, definitely it's taught me more patience and to be more tolerant of myself and my own issues as well as others and to realize that, have more understanding, especially when other people are concerned and myself. I think those are my biggest keys.

What I liked about it was that when we get to express ourselves we learn from each other and not only that but when we worked on our packet they went through it with us.

Yeah, it does, it touches on so many different levels in Healing Trauma and I've been in counseling and I've been in recovery, but this does take it to a different level. Things that you don't even realize, you know. So yeah, it's a really, really good class.

I like how there was a connection in regard to trauma that was different, the issue was the same, like everybody goes through something and it affects them in a painful way even though some people trauma was bigger and some was smaller, you still go through the same thing. And then bring it out, they help us bring it out. Some of us don't even know what started it and they tell us to think back, feel back and really dig deep so you can have the healing and it does work. We went in our room and we started talking about, like 'this is what happened' you know and it started healing the minute you sit there and think about it. And the facilitators, they help us and they make us feel comfortable and that's cool

My participation in Healing Trauma has impacted me in a positive way because now I know what I need to do to get out of here and stay clean and not come back here because I'm going to go to other resources that I never even knew existed. So it helped me to open up a little bit, but I know that I need to open up a lot more, I just have to find the right people to do it with.

Healing Trauma has helped me- I was a victim of an abduction less than a year ago and I hadn't dealt with any of that. I had just put it all under the rug and it has taught me how to not ignore it because I just ignored it and thought 'hey, it'll just go away, I don't have to worry about it' how to deal with it and be able to feel the emotions and also just be able to cope so I've learned coping skills and was able to actually talk about it without falling apart.

CIW General Population Findings

A total of 126 women completed both a pre- and post-survey between July 2017 and May 2018. The table below describes the mean changes in pre- and post-test measures of mental health, emotional regulation and aggression/hostility issues among those that completed both surveys. Given that all of means declined (improved) from pre- to post-program and given that all of these differences were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, there is overwhelming scientific evidence to support a conclusion that this program is having the desired impact on the women who participate in the general population at CIW.

Description	Pre-Program Mean	Post-Program Mean	% Decrease	Significance
Depression	7.81	5.60	28%	$p < 0.01$
Anxiety	5.65	4.40	22%	$p < 0.01$
Psychological Distress	6.05	3.88	36%	$p < 0.01$
PTSD	6.61	4.38	34%	$p < 0.01$
Physical Aggression	17.77	14.94	16%	$p < 0.01$
Verbal Aggression	12.35	11.18	9%	$p < 0.01$
Anger	15.99	13.71	14%	$p < 0.01$
Hostility	19.06	15.92	16%	$p < 0.01$
Indirect Aggression	13.14	11.25	14%	$p < 0.01$
Emotion Regulation	42.98	39.09	9%	$p < 0.01$

Healing Trauma participants were asked to rate the program on scale from 1 (Very Poor) to 10 (Excellent). The participants gave a mean rating of 8.75 indicating that the participants thought this was a very good program. The findings from the qualitative portion of this evaluation provide further evidence of the positive impact that this program is having on the women who have participated in this program. Below are some of the comments from women who have participated in a focus group during this reporting period:

I learned that also I'm not alone and that I am worth more than I've always thought I was, and that it's okay to let my yes be yes and my no be no. And healing is a great thing. Letting go of the things that are behind me and reaching for the things that are before me.

Healing Trauma is something that I, personally, myself, wanted and it was very successful. I would not hesitate to take it again if I had to or if I was given the opportunity to.

I thought it was perfect. It was a really good class. And it brought people in the class closer, which is a good thing because it made it comfortable to talk to each other. It was just nice to have someone to talk to instead of saying 'oh, god she's looking at me'.

I liked the group. It helped me open up a little more and kind of get the feel of opening up and coping with what I've been through... and it shows you different coping mechanisms and stuff like that.

For me, I think it was just the lightness of it. I was able to open up a little more, able to talk a little more. It took me a minute but because of the way the program was I was able to talk.

My favorite part was coming. Why because, it was just somewhere different other than just being here, in this prison. It seemed like we were somewhere different to be able to process our problems. It wasn't just like being surrounded by inmates, it was actually like being surrounded by support. The facilitators, they made us, they made me very comfortable. They were always on time.

Now I can do whatever I want to do, before I didn't have confidence but now I know I can, I can do anything, I can accomplish anything, now I have, I don't know, people say when I talk they listen, and I have influence. I can either influence positive or negative so it kind of encouraged me because that's what I want to do, I want to mentor people down the road.

It taught me to open up more and it helped me distinguish what my boundaries and triggers were and instead of always wanting to fight, I learned to talk more instead of being aggressive and wanting to fight.

Healing Trauma was my first group, I wasn't into groups, I felt there were no need for groups; it was nothing to benefit me. Now we have to put in request forms for groups that we're interested in so all the groups have waiting lists now. I'm on the waiting lists for a few groups.

Now I have a thing where when I communicate with people, I don't just think about me. I think about what they're going through, because usually, a lot of people tend to be selfish. 'Me, me, me, me' but then after I realize, I don't know what this person is going through. And certain things trigger people, so I'm more patient, I'm more understanding, and it's just easier for me to communicate now, because I'm looking for both sides, not just my side or point of view.

Healing Trauma SHU Findings

A total of 27 women completed both a pre- and post-survey between July 2017 and May 2018. The findings for the SHU participants show that the means declined (improved) from pre- to post-program. However, these changes were only significant for physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and aggression.

Description	Pre-Program Mean	Post-Program Mean	% Decrease	Significance
Depression	8.85	6.74	24%	p = 0.09
Anxiety	6.37	4.74	26%	p = 0.09
Psychological Distress	5.65	5.08	10%	p = 0.67
PTSD	6.75	5.29	22%	p = 0.20
Physical Aggression	22.59	18.30	19%	p < 0.01
Verbal Aggression	14.89	12.22	18%	p = 0.01
Anger	18.48	16.33	12%	p = 0.03
Hostility	21.67	18.22	16%	p = 0.02
Indirect Aggression	15.59	13.85	11%	p = 0.09
Emotion Regulation	49.50	45.38	8%	p = 0.14

Healing Trauma participants were asked to rate the program on scale from 1 (Very Poor) to 10 (Excellent). The participants gave a mean rating of 9.0, indicating that the participants thought this was a very good program. The findings from the qualitative portion of this evaluation provide further evidence of the positive impact that this program is having on the women who have participated in this program. Below are some of the comments from women who have participated in a focus group during this reporting period:

I learned awareness, I learned like when I see something that was my old, like something that's not normal to, it's hard to explain, it's not right, you know what I mean? I know now that it's not right, so just to recognize and be aware and to just basically be aware. And I can do something different now, I don't have to stay in that place. It's a lot you know?

I learned that I could be a part of a group without being nervous. And I'm not used to being a part of a group, I'm used to being by myself. So I learned how to be a part of a group, I learned how to open up. Trauma-wise I learned that fear, I mean anger is the secondary emotion of fear and love. So with the funnel, the funnel he was talking about, I learned that what I'm really putting in, what's really coming

out is not always what it really is. So I could be, yeah, I could be expressing anger but I'm not really angry, there's a real emotion behind it on the top.

I think that Healing Trauma is one of the better programs that I've been in because the group is small and you get more interaction. There's more interaction, more people are willing to open up because it's a small group so it tends to get to be deeper and people are more willing to share. And once one person shares how deep—once one person shares some deep feelings about what they've been through then it makes you want to also kind of a little bit share and then it gets more and more. Yeah, other groups aren't like that normally. And when they are it's like not real.

My favorite part was coming out and interacting with other people because we are so isolated back here. And it was good interaction and it was like freeing your brain a little bit and you get to talk about your feelings and express yourself. And you grow from the group, it was like communicating with everybody in the group. We really had a group—our group was a real good group. Everybody communicated with each other and really enjoyed the time we spent together in the group and we all look forward to going to group.

The impact that Healing Trauma had on me is it made me want to go to more groups because the group was so enlightening that it really made me want to research other groups and participate in a lot of groups because it was not what I thought it would be boring but it was very, very enlightening so therefore that's the impact it had on me, it made me want to group now.