

HERSTORY OREGON SURVEY IN CCCF

WE ASKED. The women answered. We have much to learn from what they had to say.

In the winter of 2017 and in the spring of 2018, the Oregon Justice Resource Center's Women's Justice Project and Portland State University's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, with the cooperation of Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF), implemented the HerStory Oregon Survey. We surveyed over 140 women incarcerated in CCCF about their experiences through the criminal process—from arrest to sentencing, from intake in CCCF to their thoughts about their future release from prison.

Julia Yoshimoto, the Project Director and attorney for the Women's Justice Project, has listened to many stories from incarcerated women about their experience with the criminal system. As she heard from more and more women, problematic trends in Oregon's criminal process and the treatment of defendants, incarcerated people, and formerly incarcerated people in Oregon emerged. Julia found that women wanted to share and make their voices heard with a hope to change the system so that others would not have to suffer similar fates. The women's stories and interest in speaking out sparked the idea to find a way for women in CCCF to collectively share their experiences so that Oregon can better understand what is really going on in its criminal legal systems and where reforms, particularly for women, are greatly needed.

With the collaboration and expertise of PSU Criminology and Criminal Justice professor Mark Leymon, this spark of an idea became a reality as the HerStory Oregon Survey. Over the course of eighteen months, Julia with Dr. Leymon drafted, vetted, and

finalized the survey for the women at CCCF. The survey (methodology and substance) was approved by PSU's Institutional Review Board and the Oregon Department of Corrections Research Committee.

The Survey was a paper and pencil survey divided into two parts. Coding for both parts is complete and analysis of the results has begun. To our knowledge, this is a first-of-its-kind survey conducted in Oregon.

Thank you to the women at CCCF who participated in the survey. We thank you for sharing your stories, for your courage, and for your care in changing the system for those who will come after you.

We want to give special thanks to the Oregon Department of Correction and Coffee Creek Correctional Facility for their cooperation and accommodations. We also want to thank our volunteers—members of the Women's Justice Project Advisory Committee, supporters of the OJRC, and

PSU students—who were generous with their time and instrumental in helping us prepare women for the survey, conducting the survey in CCCF, and helping with the results.

Over the course of the following months, we will release a series of short informational sheets with the results. Sign up for our newsletter at ojrc.info. You can also find the informational sheets at: <http://www.herstoryoregon.org/survey-in-cccf/>

The questions in Part 1 of the survey asked women about their experiences in the criminal legal system, for their most recent criminal case, from their arrest to sentencing.

“People take plea deals to get out of county [jail] because in county they can't get the medical & mental health treatment they need without being charged. Upstate they can. Prison should not be a “goal.” Treatment should be the goal.”

WHO PARTICIPATED IN PART 1 OF THE SURVEY?

142

women participated in the survey.

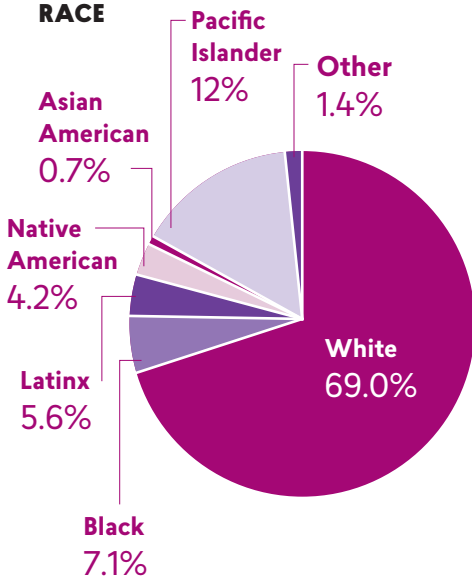
22 of the women went to trial and 120 of the women took plea deals.

AGE

18 **75** **35.71**
YOUNGEST OLDEST MEAN

“I was so confused by the whole situation and wanted to die. I didn’t care what happened to me.”

RACE

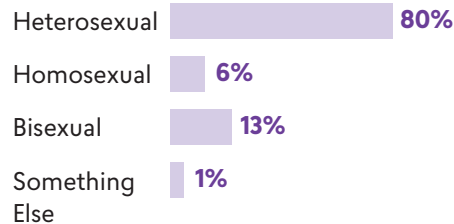


“I had to do what I was told by him, he beat me, threatened me and my children wouldn’t let me leave with both kids, always kept one so I would have to come back, DV was my defense in trial.”

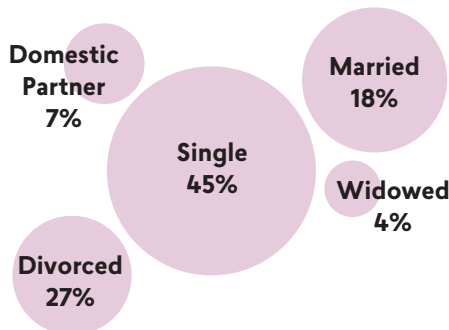
GENDER

141 participants responded. One participant indicated they were “non-conforming” and all other participants indicated that they were female.

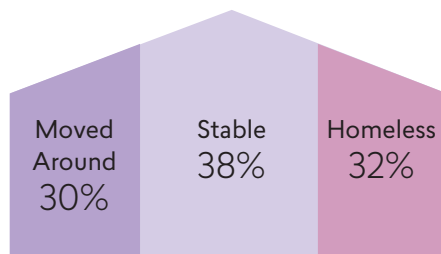
SEXUAL ORIENTATION



MARITAL STATUS



HOUSING STATUS AT THE TIME OF ARREST



NUMBER OF CHILDREN THE PARTICIPANT WAS CARING FOR AT THE TIME OF ARREST

NUMBER OF KIDS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	% PARTIC.
0	71	51.4
1	21	15.2
2	23	16.7
3	11	8.0
4	8	5.8
5	2	1.5
6	1	0.7
9	1	0.7
Total	138	100.00

MONTHS SENTENCED TO PRISON

AVERAGE 82.4, ranging from 12 to 400

Conviction types ranged from drug possession to murder.

STAY TUNED: The upcoming informational sheets for Part 1 of the survey will explore more closely what the women had to say about:

- How their histories of abuse and other traumas affected their intersections with the criminal legal system;
- The influence of drug addiction and symptoms of mental illness on their experiences in the system;
- Their encounters with law enforcement;
- Their interactions with defense attorneys, prosecutors, and judges;
- Their general thoughts about where the criminal legal system needs reform; and
- Much more.