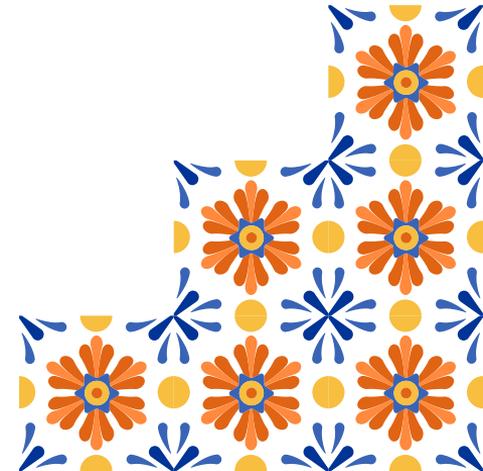




Anti-oppressive practice behind bars?

Rethinking social work with criminalized populations

Dr. Sandy Leotti & Dr. Sarah Lazzari
2021 NOFSW Virtual Conference
June 16, 2021





Welcome and Agenda

1. Why this topic?
 2. What is Anti-Oppressive Practice?
 3. Group Discussion
 4. Is this possible in Prisons?
 5. Example of a program.
 6. Where do we go from here?
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What is Anti-Oppressive Practice?

- Umbrella term for a number of social justice oriented approaches to social work practice.
- Informed by radical, anti-racist, critical, feminist, postmodern, and structural theories (Morgaine & Capous-Desyllas, 2015)
- Core Themes (Baines, 2011):
 - Macro and micro social relations generate oppression
 - Everyday experience is shaped by multiple oppressions
 - Assists individuals while simultaneously seeking to transform society
 - Social work is a highly political practice
 - Empowerment and Participatory Approaches
 - Self reflexive practice and ongoing social analysis are essential components





Limitations of AOP (Baines, 2011; Morgaine & Capous-Desyllas, 2015)



- Complexity of power relations and ambiguity around the concept of power
- “Paradox of empowerment”
- Lack of participant involvement in the development of the approach
- Too theoretical, overly ideological
- Lack of practical examples
- Social control/helping dichotomy





Discussion:

Is it realistic to
implement AOP in
carceral settings? If so,
what might it look like?

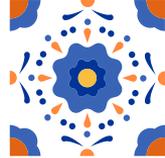


Is AOP possible in prisons?

- **Similar to gender responsive (GR) policies, there are challenges in operational realities in the ability to implement (Hannah-Moffat, 2010; Wilson & Beresford, 2000)**
 - Programs vary within each state
 - Programs vary across each state
- **How we view incarcerated adults: social control/helping conflict (Pollack, 2004; 2005; 2009; 2019)**
 - Are they clients we can support?
 - Can we move away from the “expert” model?
 - Are they risks we need to manage?
 - “Difficult to manage” women
 - Unable to cope
- **Heavily influenced by political climate (Pollack, 2004; 2005; 2009)**
 - CA: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
 - OR: Adults in Custody
- **Social workers are placed between competing ideologies, but can become translators (Delgado, 2001; Pollack, 2019)**



Principles of Capacity Enhancement (Delgado, 2001)



1. All Individuals have strengths
 2. Interventions are rarely linear
 3. The process of service development is crucial.
 4. Must address overlapping identities and oppressions
 5. Interventions must address current needs and future needs
 6. Quality of life must change for both the individuals and the community
 7. Social justice themes must be weaved throughout the intervention
 8. The voices of the participants must be heard
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Peer Support

- Women in Leadership: <https://www.wilecho.org/>
 - Work with
 - Women currently incarcerated
 - Women recently released
 - Dad's 4 Life (Snake River Correctional Institution)
 - [https://www.argusobserver.com/valley life/dads-kids-bond-at-srci-s-annual-day-camp/article_d5f5cb6e-4e88-11e5-ab94-2ffa3c2425a7.html](https://www.argusobserver.com/valley-life/dads-kids-bond-at-srci-s-annual-day-camp/article_d5f5cb6e-4e88-11e5-ab94-2ffa3c2425a7.html)
 - Bi-monthly support group
 - Multiple events throughout the year
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Education

- **Inside Out Prison Exchange Program**
 - <https://www.insideoutcenter.org/>
 - 1st class was in 1997
 - Transformative Education
 - Changing social relationships
- **Walls to Bridges, Canada**
 - <http://wallstobridges.ca/our-story/>
 - Started under Inside-Out in 2011
 - Pollack taught the first class.
 - Pollack (2019)
- **Learning Together, UK**
 - <https://www.ccgj.crim.cam.ac.uk/LT/What>
 - Pilot 2015
 - Gray et al. (2019); Mehay (2017)

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