

10 Things to Know About



Women in Prison

The Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) study (2022) had the objective to assess the status and needs of incarcerated women, with a view to improving their rehabilitation and preparing them for re-integration with their families, and in their communities. The eligible sample comprised approximately one quarter of the 63 women at the South Camp Adult Correctional Centre . Here are ten things revealed by the study:

1



In Jamaica, women represent around 5 percent of all adult admissions to correctional facilities.

3



Over two-thirds of incarcerated women had a secondary level education, and some had additional vocational training.

2



The average age of the study's sample of the women prisoners was 40 years old

4



The risk factors for Jamaican women to go to prison include violence in the home, physical abuse, and a first pregnancy before age 18. These trends are observed internationally.

5



Two-thirds of inmates in the sample showed evidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), high rates of separation anxiety, and depression, especially among mothers.

8



There are space inadequacies at the South Camp Adult Correctional Centre facility. Additional space would provide more and better opportunities for rehabilitation, physical activities, and family visits. These help to ensure the women's mental, emotional, and physical health. A designated space for the isolation of inmates with health or behavioural challenges would add to the overall security and safety of the inmates and staff at the Centre. In addition, a purpose-built, suitably staffed pre-release facility would enable the provision of continued rehabilitation and provide an opportunity to prepare inmates for their re-integration.

6



Mental health services in the prison lack capacity. More psychologists and counsellors are needed to identify and assess the mental health needs of individuals, upon entry, and throughout their incarceration. There is a need for more specialist trained forensic psychiatrists and psychologists.

7



Expanded rehabilitation activities would be most valuable to the inmates and help reduce the likelihood of reoffending, and contribute to their successful reintegration to family and communities, improve employability, and enhance formal earning capacity.

9



The existing case management system is insufficient. A comprehensive electronic case management system should be established to help track the facility's interventions with inmates from entry to release and would facilitate follow-up during the probationary period.

10



Despite the limitations at the prison, well organised health services, legal aid, and educational opportunities are available to the women at this facility, and they are utilised.