

**A SENTINEL EVENT MODEL FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR CHANGE
AMONG INCARCERATED, SUBSTANCE-USING WOMEN**

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Over 114,000 women were incarcerated in prisons in 2009, a number representing a 13-fold increase in the past thirty years (1). Over half of female state prisoners are classified as drug dependent (2). This qualitative study investigates if and how incarceration influences a woman's perception of her substance use. We sought to develop hypotheses regarding the interaction of women's cognitive and emotional responses to incarceration and their intention to quit substance use.

We conducted 15 interviews with incarcerated, substance-using women. Interviews explored women's understanding of the severity of incarceration, the role drug use played in the events that led to incarceration and the perceived impact of incarceration on future drug use. Two attribution theories of behavior change guided the interview analysis.

Participants had disparate reactions to incarceration ranging from anger to gratitude because of the opportunity for drug treatment. Most considered drug use to play at least a partial role in their incarceration. Case examples are discussed. Based on results, we developed and describe a preliminary sentinel event model for positive behavior change among incarcerated, substance-using women. This model illustrates the importance of four variables: value (how much one values being abstinent and/or staying out of jail), expectancy (how likely one expects to succeed if effort is applied), causal attribution, and event-related affect.

The sentinel event method (3) is relevant for understanding the experience of women incarcerated as a result of drug involvement. Future testing of the model is planned to provide more effective, targeted interventions to promote change in substance use behavior by emphasizing the cognitive and affective traits that underlie intervention success.

**MORE THAN JUST GENDER:
THE ATTRIBUTION OF GUILT IN SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES**

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Previous research has generally found that men attribute less guilt to perpetrators of a sexual assault than do women, regardless of perpetrator gender. This finding has typically been interpreted as evidence that men identify with the role of aggressor and consequently make defensive attributions that mitigate responsibility for aggressive behavior. To test this assumption, we investigated attributional processes among male and female participants in a research design that varied the gender of the participant, perpetrator, and victim, and assessed

conformity to traditional masculine and feminine gender norms. Our results are generally supportive of arguments that emphasize social-role conformity rather than personal identifications in sexual assault cases. A social-role conformity conception takes into account the multiple traditional gender norms that were found to correlate with participants' sometimes conflicting ideas about sexual assault in this study, whereas an identification interpretation and consequent defensive attributions may not be robust enough to go beyond identification with the role of sexual aggressor.

ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN THREATS AND INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS BY PERSONS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Lino Faccini, Ph.D. and Marie Alezey Saide

The study of written threats and inappropriate communications by persons with an intellectual disability is a neglected field. The current study analyzed three forensic cases of written threats or inappropriate communications. The forensic method of assessing steps along the "path to intended violence" was found to be applicable in analyzing the written threats or inappropriate communications. This approach was effective in helping to derive a threat risk level for violence. The results of the case analyses suggest that the written threats primarily expressed anger and frustration, and the inappropriate communication was acted upon because the person's actions significantly progressed along the path to intended violence. Additionally, the subjects wrote the threats and inappropriate communications in a manner similar to the way they conversed. The subjects were easily identified and known to their targets. Five risk-enhancing and six risk-diminishing features of violence are proposed.

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN JURORS' DECISIONS: EYEWITNESS AGE AND ALIBI CORROBORATION

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The influence of eyewitness age (4, 12, or 20 years old) and alibi corroboration (no corroborator, motivated corroborator, or non-motivated corroborator) on mock jurors' decisions was examined. After reading a mock trial transcript presenting the testimony of an eyewitness who made a positive identification of the defendant and testimony of the defendant's alibi, participants (N = 269, M age = 20.55 years) rated the eyewitness's and the defendant's believability, credibility, and reliability. Mock jurors' ratings of the eyewitness did not significantly differ with age. On the other hand, the defendant was perceived to be more believable, credible and reliable when a non-motivated witness corroborated his alibi than when there was no one to substantiate his alibi. Most notably, the non-motivated alibi corroborator was more likely to elicit not guilty verdicts when it contradicted the testimony of the 4-year-old witness, but not the 12- or 20-year-old eyewitnesses. Implications of these findings will be discussed.