

# Incarcerated women's trauma exposure, mental health, and potential points for prevention and intervention

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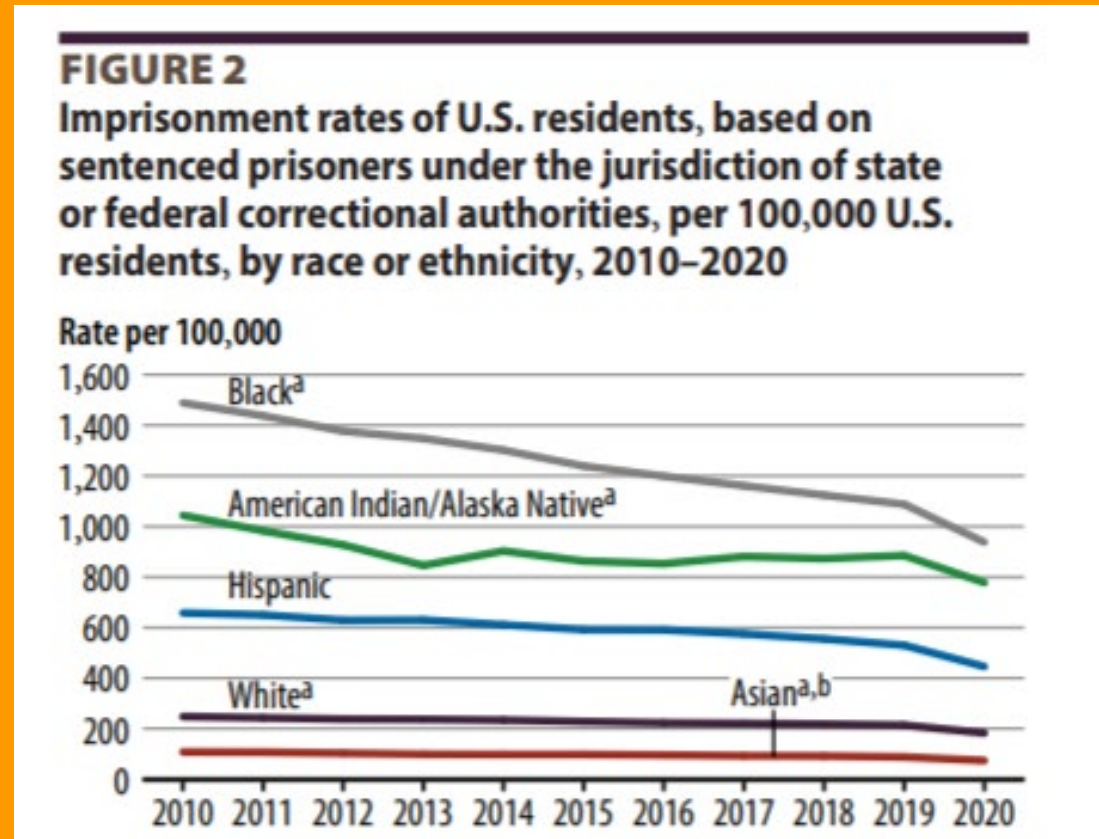
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# Incarceration in the US

- The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that prison populations declined 7% to 31% in 2020 with a total population of 1,215,800.
- The US incarceration rate is 358 per 100,000 residents.



BJS report Carson, 2021

# Incarcerated Women

Women accounted for 6.7% of prisoners and 12.7% of inmates in jail in 2020.

Systems and facilities are not set up to identify and respond to women specific needs or risks

**TABLE 1**  
**Prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities, by jurisdiction and sex, 2010–2020**

Year <sup>a</sup>	Total	Federal <sup>b</sup>	State	Male	Female
2010	1,613,803	209,771	1,404,032	1,500,936	112,867
2011	1,598,968	216,362	1,382,606	1,487,561	111,407
2012	1,570,397	217,815	1,352,582	1,461,625	108,772
2013	1,576,950	215,866	1,361,084	1,465,592	111,358
2014	1,562,319	210,567	1,351,752	1,449,291	113,028
2015	1,526,603	196,455	1,330,148	1,415,112	111,491
2016	1,508,129	189,192	1,318,937	1,396,296	111,833
2017	1,489,189	183,058	1,306,131	1,377,815	111,374
2018	1,464,385	179,898	1,284,487	1,353,595	110,790
2019	1,430,165	175,116	1,255,049	1,322,256	107,909
2020	1,215,821	152,156	1,063,665	1,132,767	83,054

BJS report Carson, 2021

# Intersections of trauma/adversity, mental health, and incarceration

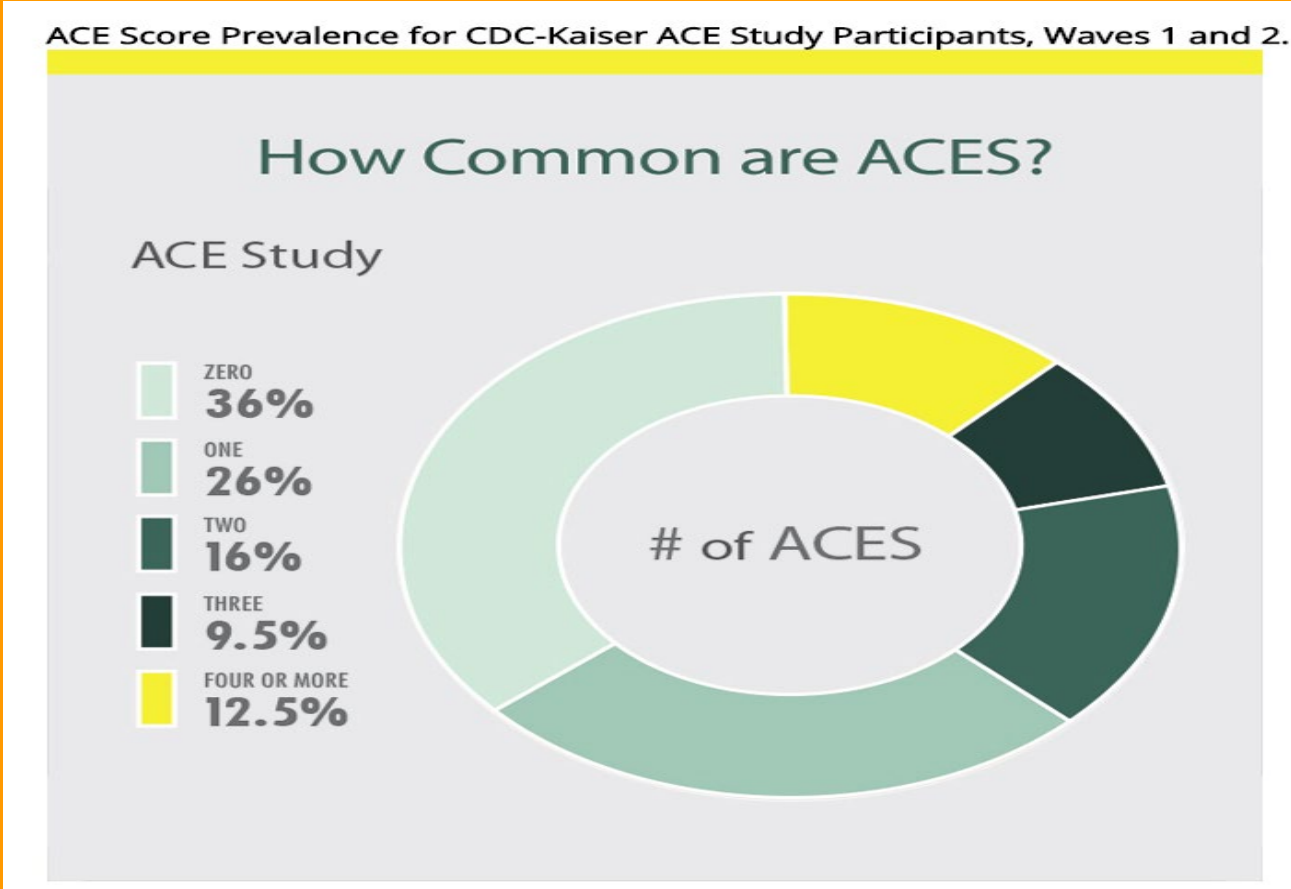
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Women who were abused or neglected as children are twice as likely to be arrested as adults than nonabused women (Widom, 2000).

In a large scale survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, jailed offenders with mental health problems were more likely than offenders without mental health problems to have served three or more prior sentences (James & Glaze, 2006).

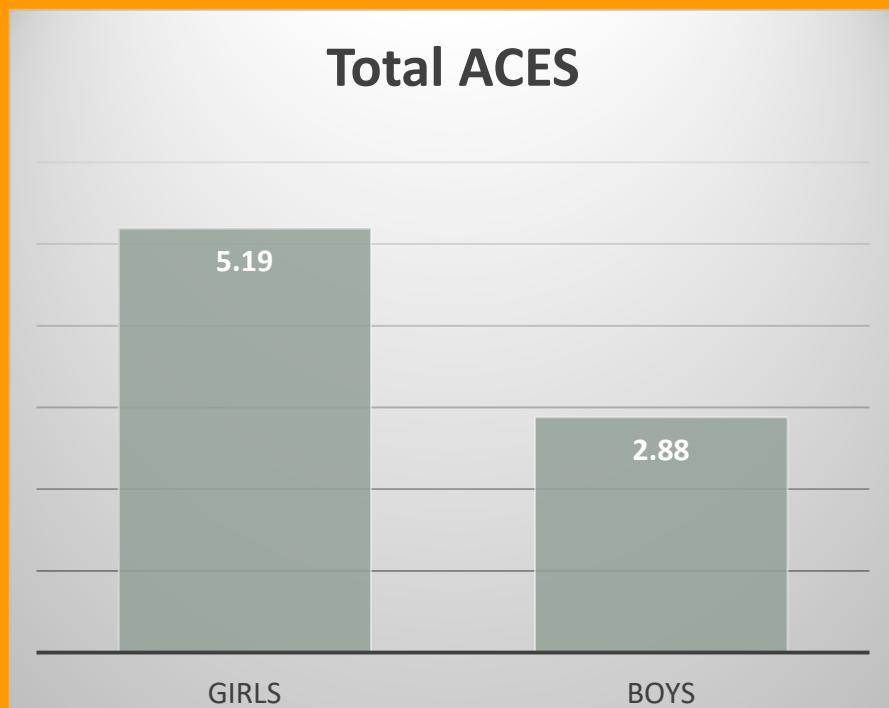
In a large sample study, with samples of over 4000 men and women in prison, psychological impairment was the strongest predictor of subsequent recidivism (Messina et al., 2006).

# Trauma Exposure in the general population: ACES

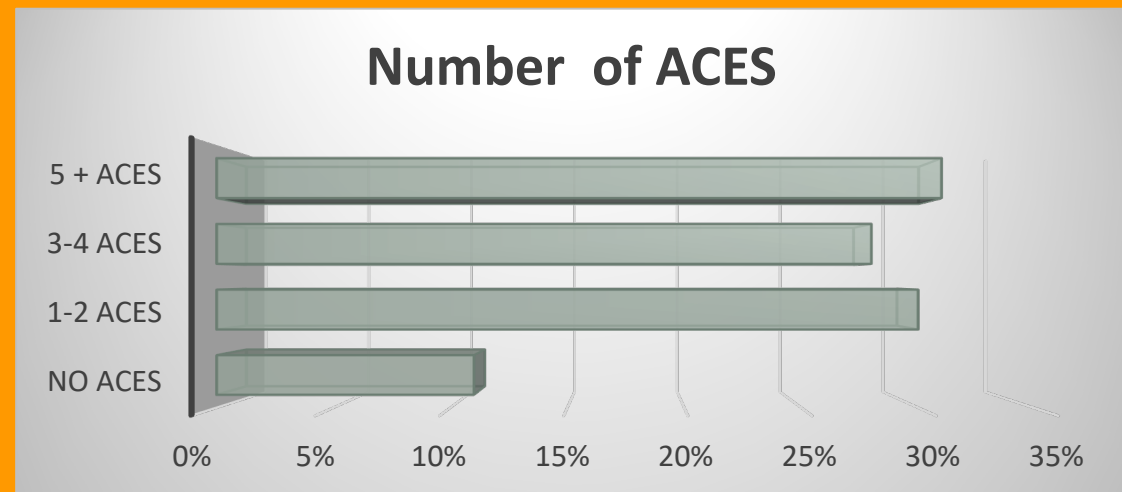


# SE Idaho Juvenile Detention Center ACES STUDY: 2016-2019 (N = 314)

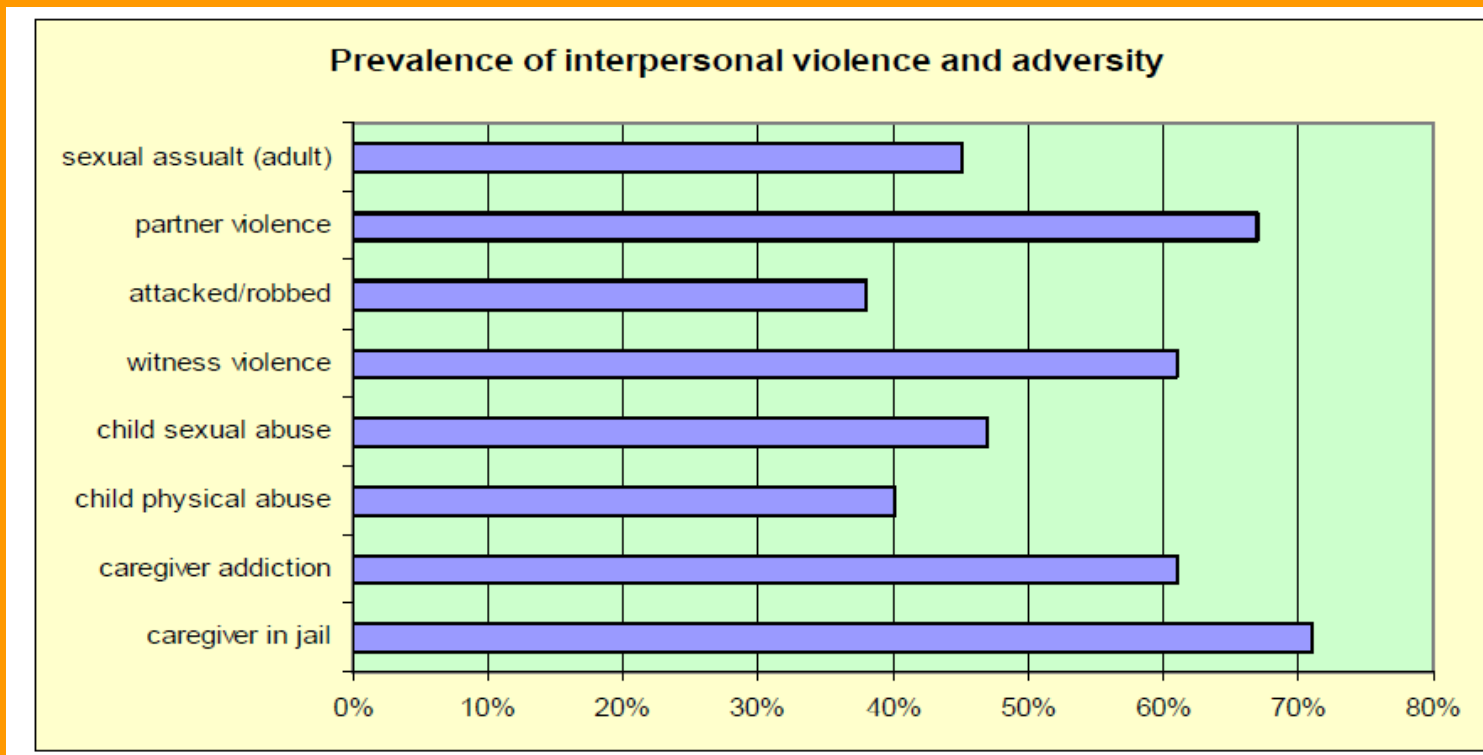
Total ACES M = 3.54



“A greater level of child welfare involvement and maltreatment exposure (particularly sexual abuse and multi-type maltreatment) was found for justice involved girls, relative to boys.” Scoping review- Badawi et al. 2021



# Violence and adversity exposure in women in jail (N=491)



**Trauma and mental health were associated with onset of crime. Caregiver violence were 9x as likely to run away as teens;**

**Partner violence were 4x as likely to engage in sex work and 2x as likely to deal drugs;**

**Witnessed violence were 2x as likely to commit property crimes or assaults and 9x as likely to use weapons;**

**Substance use disorder were 7x as likely to get DUIs and 6x as likely to engage in sex work.**

# Enola

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*The police officer took me to the hospital, and I was there all night. And they had a rape counselor there and gave me an exam. ... The police took the report down, and then they took me back to school, and I just wanted to forget about it. I couldn't deal with it no more, so I just—I stopped talking to the police, and I stopped taking the calls from the counselor. I didn't want to talk about it. I just quit school and came back. I told my family I got beat up, because when I came back, I had a big scrape, and I had a black eye, and my lip was swollen. I just told them I got in a fight and I got in trouble for my drinking.*

Enola was a 38-year-old American Indian woman serving a 1-year sentence for a DUI and parole violation. She estimates she has been in jail or prison about 20 times. She first experienced sexual abuse at age 6 and reports multiple experiences of sexual violence and partner violence throughout her life.



# Marta

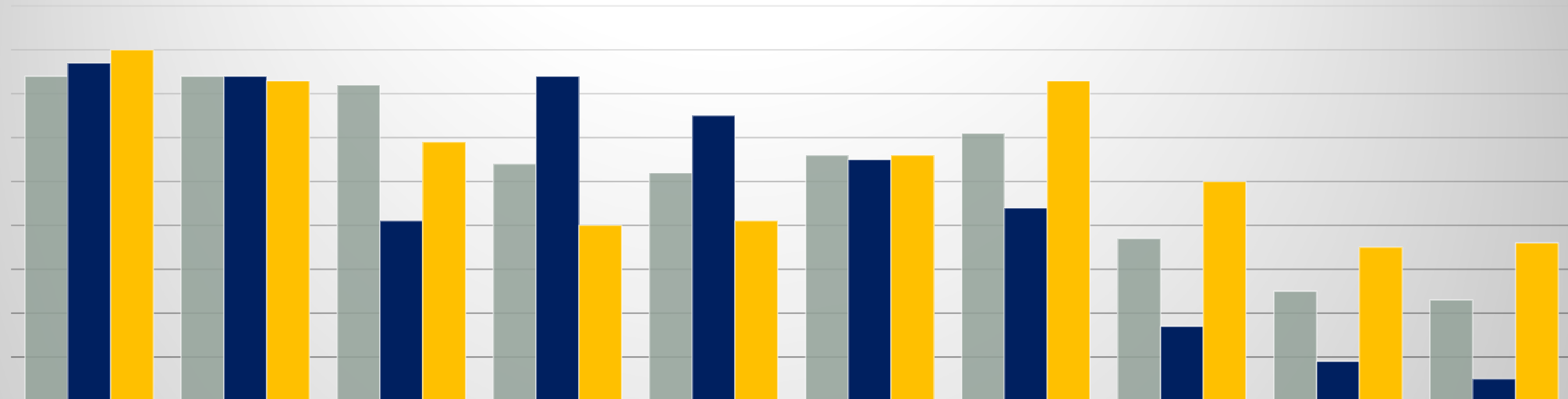
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*My parents were very, very abusive, and I have a problem with that ... I have a fighting problem. It takes a lot to get me mad, and you've got to keep egging it and egging it and egging it before I actually do something, but I do act out physically, which is not good, and I think that that has a lot do with the way I was brought up.*

Marta is a 23-year-old Latina woman serving a 12-month prison sentence for parole violation. She was previously incarcerated for 36 months. She had a baby just as this prison sentence started, and she wants to participate in this treatment program because she has heard it is good. She wants to talk about things that have been hurtful to her so she can get over them. There are a lot of people depending on her. Marta uses prayer and working out to cope, but it is not enough. Marta reported having problems cutting down her drinking when things get really stressful.

# Men and women's violence exposure in a jail sample (N = 250)

## Interpersonal: Physical and sexual violence

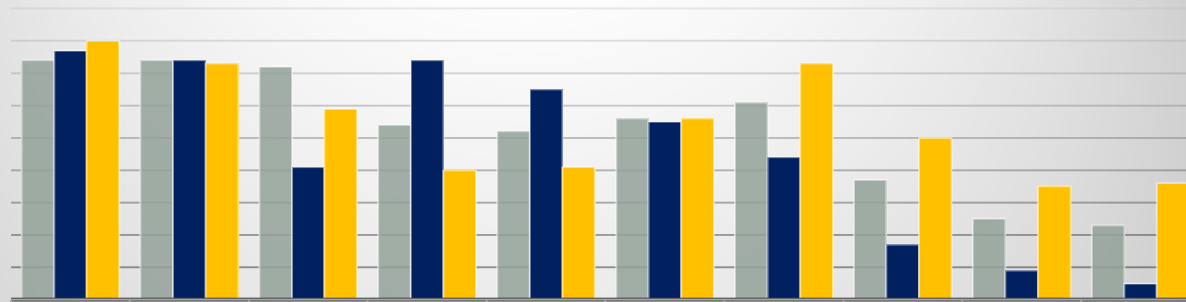


	Child witness	Adult witness	Stranger attack	Child physical	Adult physical	Sexual harassment	Child sexual	Child rape	Noncon touch	Adult rape
■ Total	74%	74%	72%	54%	52%	56%	61%	37%	25%	23%
■ Men	77%	74%	41%	74%	65%	55%	44%	17%	9%	5%
■ Women	80%	73%	59%	40%	41%	56%	73%	50%	35%	36%

■ Total ■ Men ■ Women

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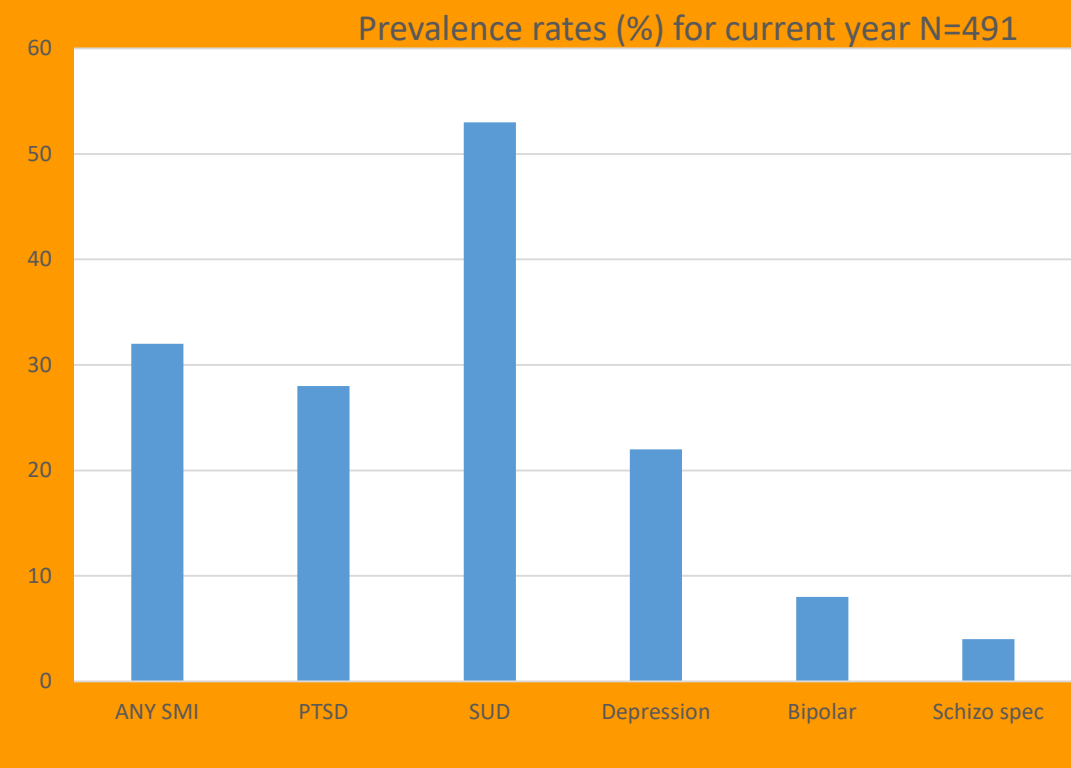
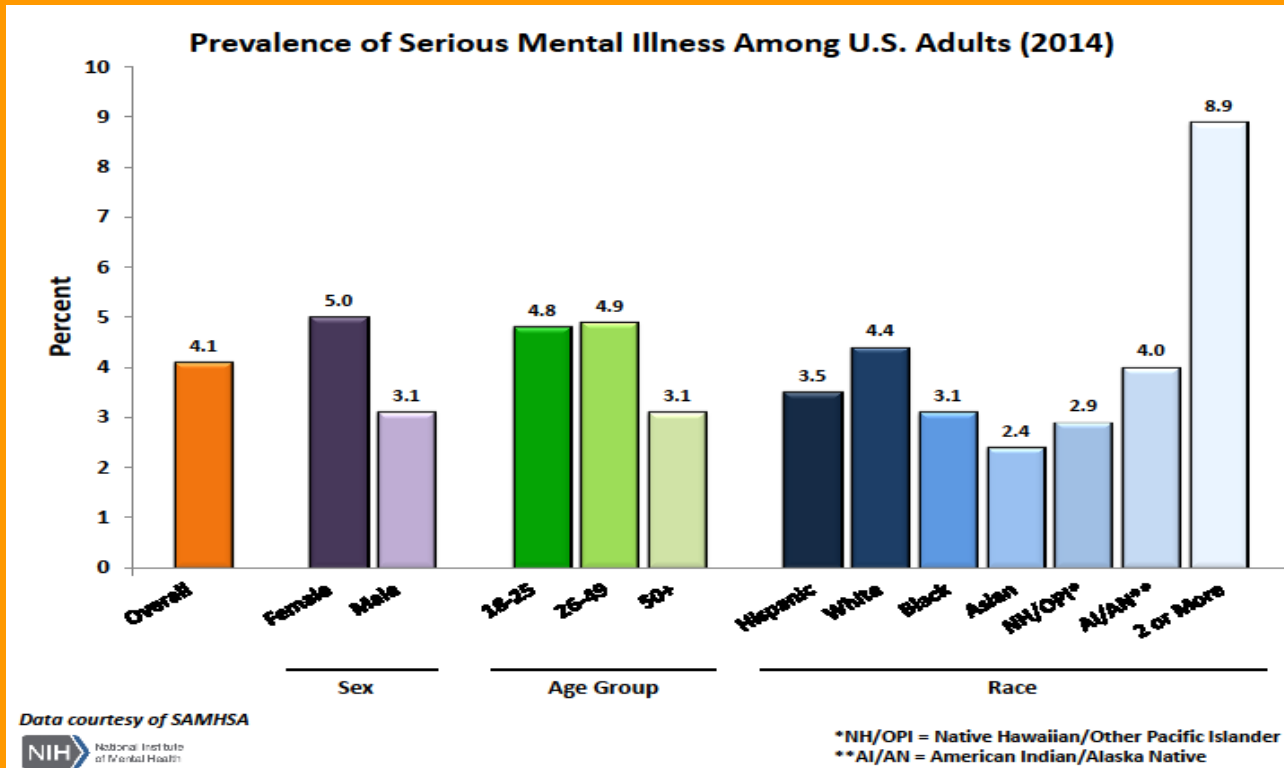
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60% of these women and 45% of the men met cut off for PTSD and about 80% women and men substance use.

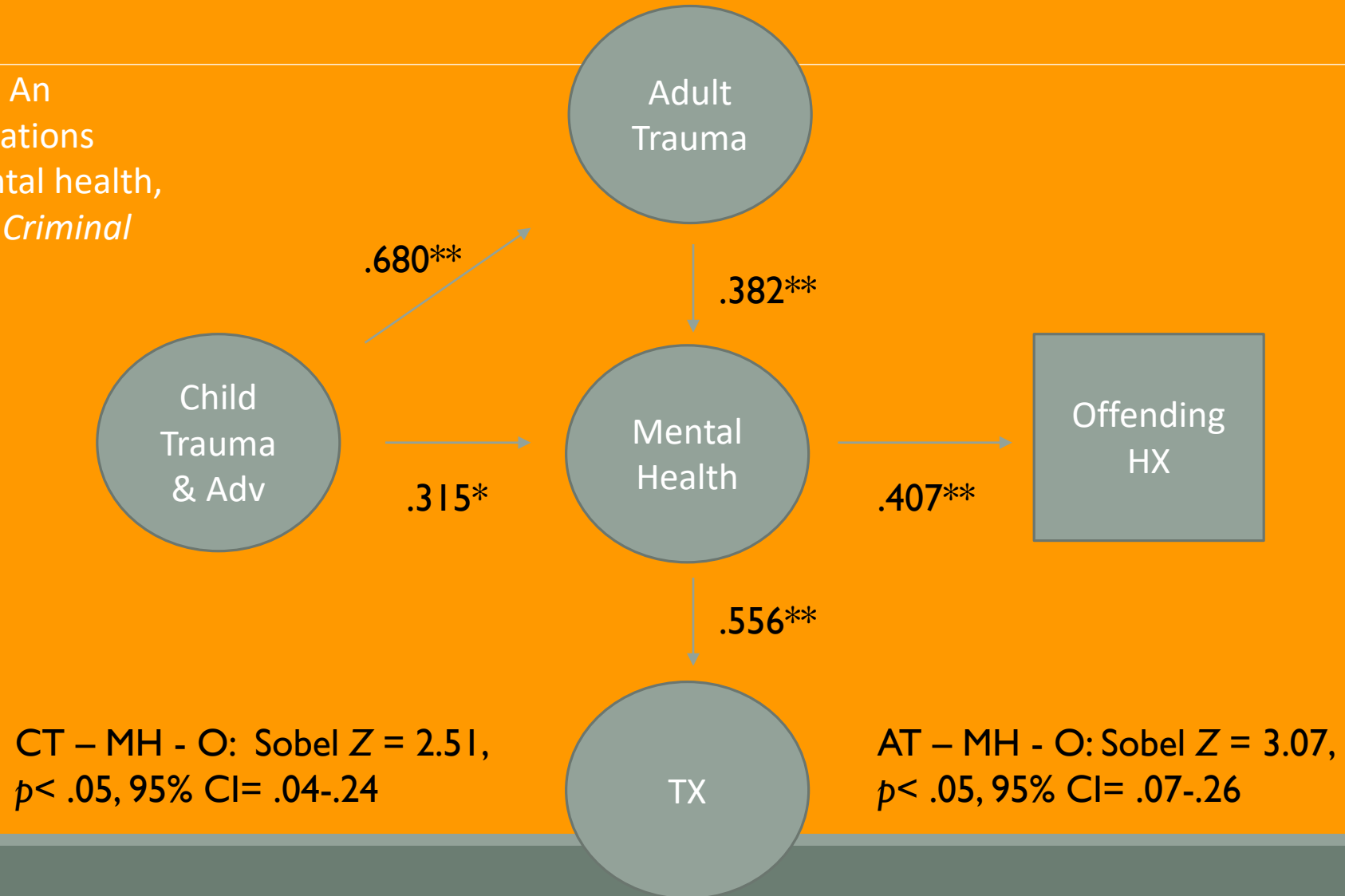
Lynch et al. (2014). A multi-site study of the prevalence of serious mental illness, PTSD, and substance use disorders in women in jail. *Psychiatric Services*, 65(5), 670-674

# Mental Health



# Victimization, mental health, and offending

Lynch, S. M. et al. (2017). An examination of the associations among victimization, mental health, and offending in women. *Criminal Justice & Behavior*.



# Summary & implications

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System involved youth and adults have high rates of mental health problems and traumatic exposure

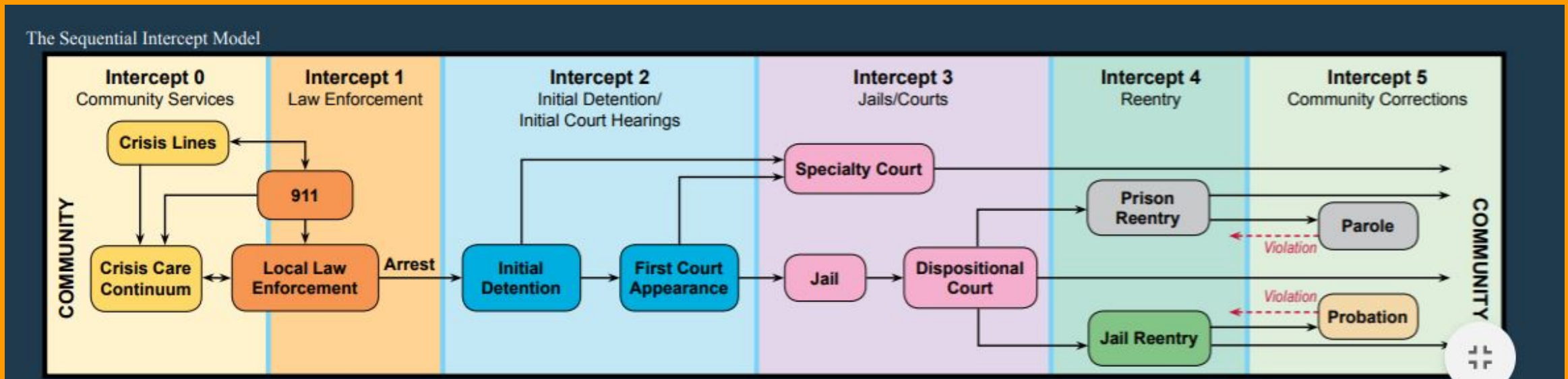
Both interpersonal violence exposures and mental health problems are associated with repeat offending

The majority of women offenders are non-violent offenders.

Services and assessment processed are needed to

1. decrease entry into the legal system
2. identify points of intervention and needs (risk/needs assessment)
3. develop alternatives to incarceration and provide effective services

# Changing our processes: Sequential Intercept Model



# Intercepts 0 and 1: Contacts before entry into the legal system.

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Many first contacts with the legal system center around a crisis

- ❖ Use of hot lines and warm lines (specialists available for specific hours)/texting services: use of de-escalation prior to involving law enforcement
- ❖ Specialized law enforcement and dispatch responses (training to recognize traumatic distress, mental health and substance use)
- ❖ Use of crisis centers and services for assessment and short-term treatment
- ❖ Law enforcement assisted diversion for low level drug offenses or sex work (alternative to incarceration)
- ❖ Statewide coordinated training and commitment to ending racial profiling (YWCA, 2017)- collection of data to allow examination of demographic data for calls, arrests, and detentions
- ❖ Use of warnings and cite-and-release



SOS



# Intercept 2 & 3: Initial detention and alternatives



- ❖ Bail reform or elimination unless financial considerations are only types of conditions that will assure appearance in court (American Bar Association)
- ❖ Risk and needs assessments
  - ❖ Risk assessment broader than criminal history, e.g., public safety assessment (age, convictions, pending charges, previous failure to appear)
  - ❖ Mental health and substance use disorder assessment
    - ❖ Gender Informed Needs Assessment (housing, education/employment, trauma, mental health, parenting) use to connect women to services
- ❖ Specialty Courts (mental health, drug, homelessness, veterans, girls courts) - participate in services to have sanctions reduced or eliminated, requires specialized staff and dockets. Issue of cost to participant.
- ❖ Community led restorative justice, community custody/home visitation programs (Sered & Johnson, 2019)