

Moving On



A Program for
Women Offenders

CHAPTER

1

Program Description

Moving On is an intervention program designed specifically for women who are involved with the criminal justice system. The overarching goal of this program is to assist women to mobilize and develop personal and social resources that mediate the impact of risk for future criminal behavior. This program is open-ended and can be offered on an individual or group basis to women who are detained or living in the community.

Program Philosophy and Guiding Principles

MOVING ON ascribes to two philosophical and overlapping tenets. First, Moving On is a gender-responsive program that is based on theory and research concerned with women. Second, the overarching goal of the program includes the reduction of criminal behavior as well as increasing the health and well being of women, their families, and the community.

The development of MOVING ON was influenced by three complementary approaches- Relational Theory, Motivational Interviewing, and Cognitive-Behavioral Intervention. Relational theory suggests that the social, emotional, and behavioral problems faced by women can often be traced to disconnections or violations within relationships, whether in their families, with personal acquaintances, or in society (Miller, 1986, 1990). The goal of intervention is to increase the capacity for women and facilitators to engage in mutually supportive, empathic, and healthy relationships. The program works intentionally to assist women to build healthy connections by: (1) creating an environment that is supportive, respectful, accepting, and challenging; (2) introducing women to new options and opportunities and, (3) giving women the opportunity to make meaningful and responsible choices.

In addition to relational theory, the development of this program was influenced by Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

(CBT). MI was designed specifically to increase intrinsic motivation, while CBT provides women with the opportunity to build personal resources and coping strategies. Both methods have demonstrated efficacy in decreasing the risk for criminal justice involvement, increasing life satisfaction, and addressing trauma.

Consistent with these theoretical models, MOVING ON is delivered in accordance with the following guiding principles:

Principle #1: Relational. Moving On recognizes the centrality of relationships in facilitating the personal growth and development of women and staff working with women. The program is facilitated in a gender-responsive, respectful, and empathic style and women are encouraged to reciprocate this approach.

Principle #2: Strengths-Based. Moving On is based on the underlying premise that all women entering the program have strengths and resources that can be mobilized to solve problems and mediate the impact of risk. An emphasis is placed on identifying protective factors and strengths and building on these throughout the woman's involvement.

Principle #3: Trauma-Informed. We believe that in order to deliver Moving On in an environment that is both safe and relational, facilitators and staff working with women outside of the program must have a good understanding of the circumstances that bring women to the criminal justice system. Many of the women entering Moving On have histories of sexual, emotional and physical abuse. This means that to deliver this program staff must receive training in identifying the triggers and responding to trauma.

Principle #4: Respectful of Differences. Facilitators of Moving On are encouraged to remain responsive to culture, learning style and emotional, social, and cognitive development by ensuring that the content and delivery of materials is respectful of differences.

Principle #5: Enhance Motivation and Self-Efficacy. To build intrinsic motivation and increase the self-efficacy women need to have opportunities for success. This program provides them with ongoing and achievable challenges that are continually reviewed, reinforced, and updated.

Principle #6: Build Formal and Informal Supports. One of the overarching goals of Moving On is to assist women to build social capital through connections with individuals and social networks that are

reciprocal and mutually supportive. Throughout the program resource information is shared and explored. In addition, women are provided with the skills necessary to build healthy relationships, to develop new interests, and to access resources and services.

Principle #7: Provide a Framework for Continuous Services. Moving On was designed to focus on an array of needs identified by women across personal, family, vocational, and community domains. It provides women with the opportunity to begin the process of self-awareness and discovery. Facilitators are encouraged to use the program as a bridge or catalyst to introduce women to additional mainstream services.

Principle #8: Work Collaboratively to Establish Program Outcomes. We believe that the active and collaborative involvement of women is critical to ensure desired outcomes. Intervention strategies are introduced to assist women to identify personal goals and to set the agenda for the program. The primary tool used to document the strengths and personal goals is the PORTFOLIO. Each woman uses information from the sessions to build a portfolio which reflects their vision of success in four domains- personal, family, vocational, and community.

Principle #9: Evaluation. A complete assessment package was developed to monitor the impact of Moving On across several targets. The use of pre-post assessment and client-centred performance outcomes help to ensure that women have input into the delivery of the program, that they are benefiting from the program and that contributions can be made to the Evidence-Based Practice literature.

Program Delivery

One of the signature features of this program is that it is open-ended to permit continuous intake. The program can be shortened or extended at the discretion of the facilitator in order to accommodate variations in length of stay or supervision as well as, the unique needs of individual group members. The program is appropriate for delivery to women ages of 18+.

MOVING ON is made up of seven distinct modules. Module 1 and 7 are provided on a 1:1 basis while Modules 2-6 are delivered in a group format. Each of the group modules consist of 5 sessions with approximately 2 hours of program content. There are a total of 25 group sessions which can be delivered in 5 weeks for women who are incarcerated or spread out over a 13 to 25 week period for women in the community.

The group modules are organized around a specific theme that is delivered on a stand-alone basis. This means that after completing Module 1, participants can enter the group at Session 1 of whatever module is being taught. The facilitator can also introduce modules in whatever order is desired to ensure that participants with less time in the program can complete those elements of the program that they need the most.

Program Description

A snapshot of the program is presented in Figure 1 followed by a brief description of each module:

Figure 1: Program Snapshot

TOPICS	DELIVERY
Module 1: Orientation	1:1
Module 2: Listening and Being Heard	Group
Module 3: Building Healthy Relationships	Group
Module 4: Expressing Emotions	Group
Module 5: Community Connections	Group
Module 6: Making Healthy Choices	Group
Module 7: Transitions	1:1

Module 1: Orientation [1:1 Delivery]

The orientation phase is designed primarily to listen to the women in an effort to engage and then motivate them to participate. During this segment, women are given the opportunity to explore their strengths and challenges during an initial assessment. Once the assessment is complete the facilitator provides feedback and the woman is encouraged to develop personal goals that are revisited and explored throughout the program.

The primary goals of this segment include:

- Provide the women with a description of the program.
- Establish a safe and relational environment.
- Administer the pre-program assessment.
- Provide women with the opportunity for self-discovery.
- Begin to identify strengths and some of the challenges that women face across four domains- personal, family, community and, vocational.
- Share a summary of the assessment results with the woman to increase self-awareness and to build commitment.
- Encourage the women to develop a “collage” representing their personal vision of success.

- Explore and establish personal goals across personal, family, vocational, and community domains.
- Begin to work on a portfolio that outlines strengths and resources across the four domains.

Figure 2: Tasks and Schedule for Module 1

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Program Description	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Orientation to the Program” • Review program goals and the structure of the program • Establish terms of participation • Review and sign program contract
Assessment	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the assessment process • Administer all assessment measures • Score the assessments • Interpret and integrate results
Feedback	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback • Begin to identify priority targets for change
Personal Change Plan	90 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the PORTFOLIO • Develop a collage- Vision of Success across four major life contexts: personal, vocational, family, community • Establish personal goals and challenges within each role

MODULES 2 - 6: [GROUP FORMAT]

The design of this program permits a number of unique implementation options to accommodate delivery in both institutional or community settings. For example, in institutional settings we recommend that the program be delivered in 2.5 hour blocks 2-5 days per week. In community settings the program can be delivered two times per week over the course of 14 weeks. Each session is subdivided into three distinct parts:

- Part I: Exploring
- Part II: Discovering
- Part III: Reflecting

PART I: EXPLORING

Exploring is a 30-minute segment designed to provide group members with the opportunity to process information, enhance skill transfer and practice, and assist in building self-efficacy. Similar in design and function to a “check-in”, this segment is a ritual that is offered before the formal presentation of new materials. Group Reflection consists of 3 activities that are introduced at

various times in the module (Figure 3 provides a brief overview of this segment).

Figure 3: Tasks and Schedule for Module 2-7, Part I: Exploring

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Welcome	Optional 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new participants • Review group guidelines
Personal Change Plan	Session 1 & 5 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and review • Reinforce and update personal goals
Reflection Log	Session 2,3, 4 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss strategies to address real-life experiences and challenges.

- 1) *Welcome* [Optional - 10 minutes]: *Moving On* offers a continuous intake so it is possible that new participants will join the group at the beginning of each Module. Safety and support are a critical component of the program and therefore new members should be welcomed, introduced, and provided with the opportunity to review group guidelines.
- 2) *Review Personal Change Plan*: During Module 1: Orientation Phase the women participate in a number of activities designed to increase awareness of strengths and challenges faced across four major domains- personal, vocational, family and community. After receiving feedback and working on a collage to develop a Vision of Success, the women are encouraged to develop a personal change plan based on their hopes for the future. A review of the personal change plan is undertaken during Session 1 & 5 of each Module.
- 3) *Reflection Log*: The Reflection Log is designed to provide women with a record of accomplishments. It was designed to encourage women to discuss real-life experiences and to share pleasant events as well as to use problem-solving strategies to resolve significant challenges. This tool is reviewed at the beginning of Sessions 2, 3 and 4 of each Module.

PART II: DISCOVERING

Discovering is the largest segment of each session and is designed to introduce information and provide opportunities for skill acquisition. It is typically offered over 90 minutes and the material is organized around 5 major themes that are summarized below.

Module 2: Listening and Being Heard

Given the crucial role that relationships play in the lives of women we feel that it was critical to devote a significant amount of time toward the enhancement of social and interpersonal skills. The overarching goal of this module is to provide group members with a number of effective communication skills that

will help them to initiate and maintain healthy relationships. A snap-shot of Module 2 is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Snap-shot of Module 2

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am listening
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing my wants and needs
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saying "No" • Dealing with Pressure
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking the sting out of criticism
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win-Win: The Art of Negotiating

Module 3: Building Healthy Relationships

"I would have done anything for him. I did do everything for him.... There were times when he treated me so badly- I really thought about leaving him... But you don't know how much I loved him... " (Colleen, age 31))

One of the most powerful predictors of criminal justice involvement for women is an unhealthy romantic relationship and/or friendships. Anecdotal accounts from women suggest that in order to maintain a relationship some women will participate in the commission of a crime despite strong beliefs that criminal behavior is "wrong". When charged with violent crimes, women are more likely to know the victim than men. Primary victims include children and acquaintances that are seen as a threat to a significant relationship.

In Module 3 the women begin to assess and explore their intimate relationships and friendships. They are asked to define a healthy relationship and to explore the impact of unhealthy relationships and domestic violence. A snapshot of this module is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Snap-shot of Module 3

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring My Relationships
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Do I Really Want in a Relationship?
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships- What I Can Do Without
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the Decision To Leave
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What I Bring to a Friendship

Module 4: Expressing Emotions

"I try not to feel anything- it's just easier that way..." Andrea

"I get so angry that I don't even know what I'm doing- it feels good at the time but then I have to repair the damage and that's not something you can always do... I've lost a lot of friends... and sometimes my children are scared of me." Leslie

Module 4 focuses on expressing and celebrating emotions. Throughout this segment the facilitators are encouraged to demonstrate the important role that emotions play for both survival and to enhance overall well-being. Many women have learned to suppress their feelings in response to social expectations or to protect themselves from the risk of harm from others. Women also learn to "stuff" their emotions because it is just too painful, scary, or unacceptable to feel them. When they try to ignore or suppress their emotions they run the risk of health-related problems or reacting to conflict and stress in impulsive or destructive ways.

In this segment the participants look closely at emotions and how to express them. A number of cognitive-behavioral strategies are introduced to assist women to express and celebrate their emotions. A snap-shot of this module is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Snap-shot of Module 4

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring Emotions • What Happens When you Feel?
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacting to the Outside World
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to My Inner Messages
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging Harmful Self-Talk
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating Emotions

Module 5: Community Connections

In this module an emphasis is placed on addressing real-life challenges in three important life contexts- family, vocation, and community. Participants are encouraged to identify and then build supports that will assist with an array of family needs. For example, some of the women entering this program are mothers who will require information on pregnancy and parenting. Participants may also request an array of family intervention services including access to social assistance or counseling to address trauma, loss, etc.

In addition to family, this module focuses on increasing awareness of vocational, employment and educational opportunities. Lack of vocational achievement is a strong predictor of difficulties throughout the life span and characterizes one of the greatest obstacles for females who enter and return to the criminal justice system.

The final context that is explored in this segment is the community. Research suggests that for many women a sense of involvement and connection in community-based activities can help to build competencies and foster the development of important social and physical skills. Women will be asked to explore their own communities in order to establish a sense of what, where, and how they can begin to connect. A snap-shot of this Module is presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Snap-shot of Module 5

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Family
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Challenge
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Career: What I Want and What I Can Do • Career Challenge
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Community: Leisure and Finances
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Challenge

Module 6: Making Healthy Choices

In this module, women are given the opportunity to expand their personal resources by focusing on three areas that may lead to ongoing health and emotional problems: (1) Drug and alcohol use; (2) Sexual activity; and, (3) Body image. For a snap-shot of this module see Figure 8.

Figure 8: Snap-shot of Module 6

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging Common Myths and Stereotypes
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to Love My Body
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What About Drugs?
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combatting Stress
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's All About Me

PART III: REFLECTING

During the final portion of each session the group members are given time to reflect. They are encouraged to integrate materials and information discussed during the session and to add to one or more of the major content areas of their Portfolio: Personal, Family, Vocation, and Community.

Module 7: Transitions [1:1 Delivery]

Module 7 is delivered on a 1:1 or a small group basis to ensure that participants are prepared to transition into the community or to deal more effectively with community supervision. During this segment the participants complete a number of tasks. See Figure 9 for a snap-shot of Module 7.

Figure 9: Snap-shot of Module 7: Transitions

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Program Review	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give the women the opportunity to provide feedback with respect to the program process and content• What was most and least helpful?
Post-Assessment	Varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administer all post-assessment measures.• Score the assessments.• Interpret and integrate results
Achievements	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide feedback• Review and celebrate successes
Maintenance Plan	40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify high risk situations• Explore strategies and resources to prepare for future problems• Identify targets for future intervention• Goodbyes