

# ANNOTATED TRAINER'S GUIDE

Training Module **1**

An Introduction to Sexual Abuse Behind Bars

# Training Module 1: An Introduction to Sexual Abuse Behind Bars

**Length:** 60-90 minutes

## Objectives:

- Understand how public perceptions of sexual abuse behind bars affect survivors
- Identify how everyday life in detention affects survivors' healing
- Explain the importance of an advocate's role in an incarcerated survivor's healing

## Materials:

- Module 1 PowerPoint slides
- Excerpt from “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver” (video)
- “My Name is Joe” (video)
- Yarn Exercise handout
- Common Experiences handout

## How to Use This Guide<sup>1</sup>:

This guide is intended to support the material presented in the PowerPoint presentation for the training entitled “An Introduction to Sexual Abuse Behind Bars” (Module 1). The left column has a copy of each slide in the presentation; the right column has instructions on how to present the slides. The italicized text contains directions for the trainer. The text not in italics is a sample script.

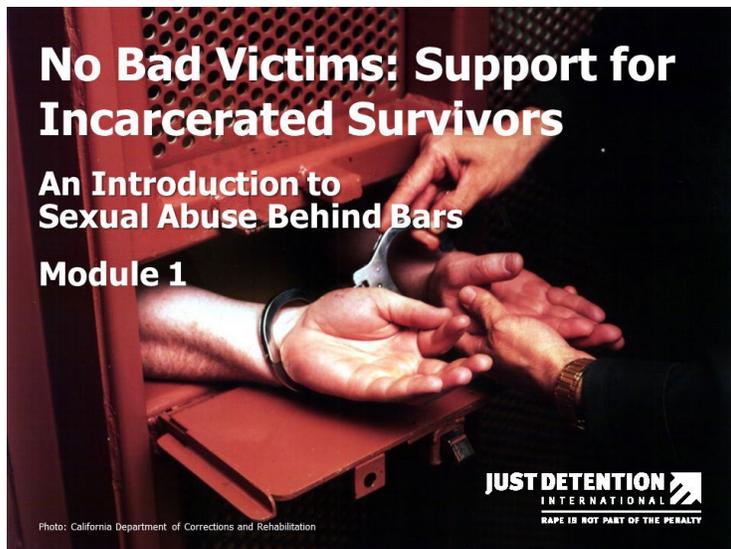
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Slide contents

Trainer’s Narrative/Notes

Slide 1: Title slide



- *[Welcome participants enthusiastically and set a positive and energetic tone for the training.]*
- Just a quick note on language. We will use the terms “victim” and “survivor” interchangeably during this training.
- Also, the terms “inmates,” “prisoners,” “residents,” and “detainees” will be used interchangeably to refer to incarcerated people. The term “residents” usually will refer to youth.

Slide 2



- We will begin with an overview of the training session and by taking some time to introduce ourselves.
- *[Give a brief, two-to-three sentence introduction to develop a connection and establish credibility with the audience. Introduce yourself, your current work, and background, and describe why this training is important to you. Ask participants to do the same.]*
- *[Review the agenda.]*
- During Module 1, we will discuss how societal perceptions of sexual abuse in detention and of prisoners as a group. We will also discuss the prevalence of sexual abuse behind bars and how incarceration affects prisoners in general and survivors of sexual abuse in particular. This module also covers the role that advocates can play in helping survivors heal.

Slide 3

## Objectives

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### By the end of this session, you'll be able to:

- Understand how public perceptions of sexual abuse behind bars directly affect survivors
- Identify how everyday life in detention affects a survivor's healing
- Explain the importance of an advocate's role in an incarcerated survivor's healing



- By the end of this session, you will be able to:
- Understand how public perceptions of sexual abuse behind bars affect survivors.
- Identify how everyday life in detention affects survivors' healing
- Explain the importance of an advocate's role in an incarcerated survivor's healing
- You are encouraged to ask questions throughout the training. It will be more interesting if we hear from you. Each of you has expertise to share. We also would like to note that sexual abuse in detention is not an easy topic. It can be painful and distressing to talk about. We will be sharing difficult information, and we encourage all of you to take care of yourselves as you participate today.

Slide 4

## Public Perceptions of Sexual Abuse in Detention



- We are going to start off with a video and discussion that will help us to examine common public perceptions about prisoners in general and survivors of sexual abuse in detention specifically. You are all well aware of how rape culture can facilitate sexual violence in the community. We want to look now at the role of rape culture in shaping perceptions of prisoners and of sexual abuse in detention.

Slide 5

## Last Week Tonight with John Oliver

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- First, let's watch this short video from the television program "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver."
- Please note that there is some language in this video that may be offensive to some people.
- *Play from 2:23-4:48 of the following video link:*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Pz3syET3DY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Pz3syET3DY)]

Slide 6

## Please share your thoughts about:

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1. The fact that Sesame Street developed a segment about a child whose parent is incarcerated.
2. The montage of clips from shows joking about prisoner rape. Can you think of other examples? What are your thoughts about how prisoner rape jokes intersect with rape culture generally?

- *[Ask participants to respond to the prompts at the slide.]*
- *[Give participants one minute to think about the question before asking someone to answer.]*
- *[Ask participants if they have other reactions to the clip.]*

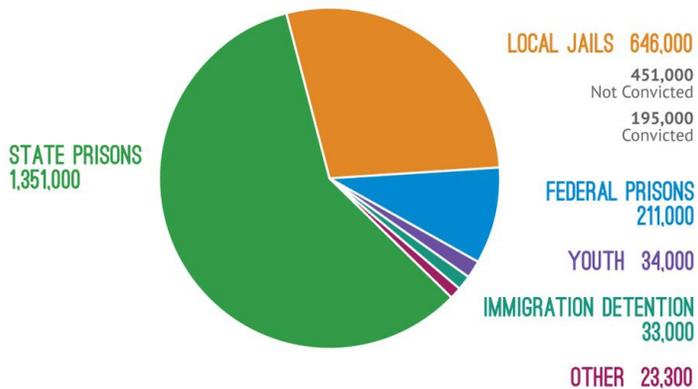
Slide 7



- Now let's talk about who is actually incarcerated in the U.S.
- As of 2014, there were more than 2,224,400 men, women, and children in US prisons and jails ([www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus14.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus14.pdf)).
- The U.S. incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. ([www.prisonstudies.org/world-prison-brief](http://www.prisonstudies.org/world-prison-brief)).
- There are over five million people on probation and parole in the U.S. ([www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus14.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus14.pdf)). This is important to note because the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards, covered in detail in Module 4, also apply to community confinement facilities, which house many people on probation and parole, and because people who are on probation and parole are still under the control of a corrections or law enforcement agency.

Slide 8

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE LOCKED UP IN THE UNITED STATES?



Data sources can be found at [www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2016.html](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2016.html)  
Graphic by Just Detention International

- Most people who are incarcerated are held in state prison.
- *[Review data on the slide.]*
- Note that the overwhelming majority of people who are in local jails have not been convicted of a crime.
- *[For a more detailed version of this chart that includes information on the reasons that people are held in each type of facility, go to: [www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2015.html](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2015.html).]*

Slide 9



**THE MAJORITY OF PRISONERS ARE:**

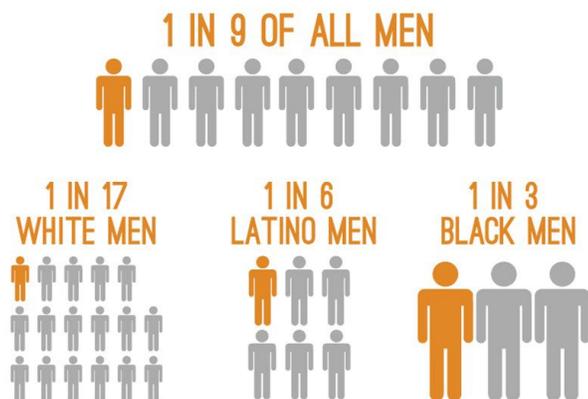
- Men
- Black or Latino
- Convicted of nonviolent crimes
- Parents of minors
- Facing mental health problems

Sources:

- Mass incarceration in the U.S. has had a damaging and disproportionate effect on communities of color and low-income communities.
- There are many more men than women who are incarcerated; roughly 93 percent of U.S. federal prisoners are men ([www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics\\_inmate\\_gender.jsp](http://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_gender.jsp)).
- While the number of people in detention overall has grown tremendously since the 1980s — by approximately 500% — the increase in numbers of women behind bars has outpaced that of men. The number of women in custody has grown by more than 700% since 1980. Fortunately the overall number of people behind bars in the U.S. has decreased slightly during the past several years ([www.sentencingproject.org/publications/trends-in-u-s-corrections](http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/trends-in-u-s-corrections)).
- More than 60 percent of the people in prison today are people of color.
- Roughly 60 percent of people in federal prisons are there for drug and immigration-related offenses.
- Among all incarcerated men and women, more than half are parents; 1 in 43 children has a parent in prison ([www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/publications/inc\\_incarceratedparents.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/publications/inc_incarceratedparents.pdf)).
- More than half of all prison and jail inmates have mental health problems ([www.bjs.gov/content/pub/press/mhppjpr.cfm](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/press/mhppjpr.cfm)).

Slide 10

**LIFETIME LIKELIHOOD OF IMPRISONMENT**



Source: Glaze & Herberman (2013), *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2012*. Original design concept by The Sentencing Project. © Just Detention International

- As was mentioned earlier, men of color are incarcerated at much higher rates than their white peers. Let's take a look at what that means.
- Black men are six times and Latino men are two and a half times more likely to be imprisoned than white men.
- If current trends of incarceration continue, one in three black men born today can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime.

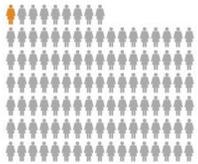
Slide 11

## LIFETIME LIKELIHOOD OF IMPRISONMENT

1 IN 56 OF ALL WOMEN



1 IN 111  
WHITE WOMEN



1 IN 45  
LATINA WOMEN



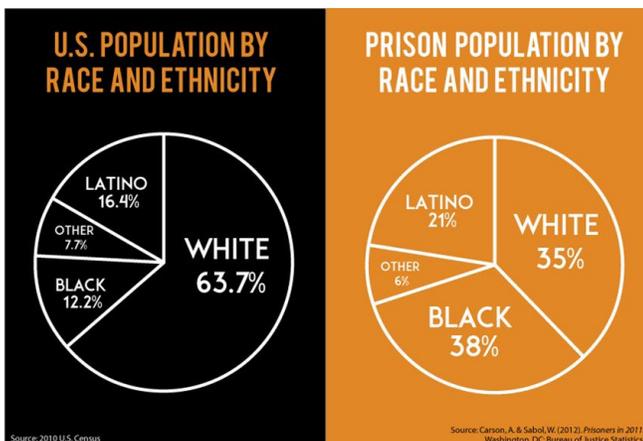
1 IN 18  
BLACK WOMEN



Source: Glaze & Herberman (2013), *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2012*.  
Original design concept by The Sentencing Project. © Just Detention International

- Women of color are incarcerated at much higher rates than white women, with black women being locked up at higher rates than Latina women, who are, in turn, locked up at higher rates than white women.
- Another thing to note is that since 1980, the number of women in prison has been increasing at a rate 50 percent higher than men since 1980.
- Native Americans are incarcerated at a rate 38% higher than the national average, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) ([www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/aic.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/aic.pdf)).
- Native American youth are three times as likely as white youth to be held in juvenile detention ([www.sentencingproject.org/issues/racial-disparity](http://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/racial-disparity)).

Slide 12



- This chart compares the race and ethnicity of the prison population with the race and ethnicity of the country as a whole.
- You'll see that the chart shows that black and Latino people make up a disproportionate percentage of the prison population.

Slide 13



- Let's move now to talk about the sexual abuse in detention — specifically the dynamics of this abuse, and the common myths and misunderstandings that surround it.
- You are all familiar with some of the myths and stereotypes surrounding sexual assault and sexual harassment, and how they can lead to victim-blaming and the silencing of survivors.
- Advocates have made tremendous progress in dispelling harmful misconceptions about sexual violence in the community. But there is a great deal of work left with regards to sexual abuse in detention.
- Think back to the video we watched earlier. Comments like “Don’t drop the soap” and jokes about putting disgraced politicians in a cell with “Bubba” remain common on TV, in movies, and on social media. What is especially startling is how often these jokes go unchallenged.
- Do you think that the fact of these jokes are so ubiquitous matters? Why?
- *[Raise the following points: these jokes silence and shame survivors; create an environment where sexual abuse in detention is accepted as inevitable; ignore that sexual assault is a crime; imply that rape is sometimes acceptable and that some people deserve it; make it harder to hold perpetrators and corrections facilities accountable.]*

Slide 14



- *[Facilitate a discussion on the common myths they hear about sexual abuse in detention and then have them practice debunking them in small groups or with a partner. Below are a few examples.]*
- 1. Sexual abuse is a joke.  
Sexual abuse is serious and it's not something to take lightly, no matter where it occurs or who the victim is. If we, as a movement, believe that there is never an excuse for sexual violence, that no always means no and that no one ever deserve to be raped, then we must take all incidents of sexual violence seriously.
- 2. Sexual abuse is part of prison life.  
Sexual abuse is not an inevitable part of prison life, any more than any other human rights violation is inevitable. We are talking about abuse that is happening in government institutions — the places that are funded by our tax dollars and over which we have more control than other spaces. Research backs up the assertion that sexual abuse in detention is preventable. In its nationwide survey of inmates, the BJS found that, some facilities had very low rates of sexual abuse. We know prevention is possible.
- 3. Sexual abuse only happens to men in prison.  
Anyone can be targeted for sexual abuse or sexual harassment. Both men and women can be abused, and both men and women can be perpetrators.
- 4. Sexual abuse only happens between prisoners.  
It's easier for many people to talk about sexual abuse by inmates against other inmates. It's uncomfortable to confront the fact that government employees commit such heinous abuse against the people in their custody. If we are going to end sexual abuse, we have to understand it, and that means acknowledging that about half of the abuse of adult prisoners is committed by staff and nearly 80 percent of the abuse of youth detainees is committed by staff ([www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112.pdf); [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svjfry12.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svjfry12.pdf)).

Slide 15



· [Ask participants to refer to the “Yarn Exercise” handout which can be found here: <https://goo.gl/R4l5fv>. Read instructions from handout, which can be found here: <https://goo.gl/vjsiZ8>]. [Here are some additional talking points to help you facilitate the discussion:]

1. Many times survivors’ loved ones, just like in the community, blame the survivor for what happened to them. They may do this because they are not familiar with the dynamics of sexual abuse, because it is too hard to accept that their loved one was harmed, or because they believe that sexual abuse is part of the punishment for breaking the law.
2. Within the culture of corrections, where inmates tend to be seen as manipulative and untrustworthy, and where officials adhere to a code of silence, sexual abuse and sexual harassment are sometimes not taken seriously. Many times the violence is minimized, framed as a “lover’s spat” or a “catfight,” and is not responded to as serious violence.
3. Staff may also accuse inmates of making up stories about sexual abuse to get their way, and take actions – like placing a victim in segregated housing – that look and feel like punishment.
4. Advocates are a part of the community at large and are exposed to the same societal messages as everyone else. There are some advocates who believe that some inmates – particularly those convicted of sex offenses or other violent crimes – deserve abuse or don’t deserve the same help as other survivors. For some advocates providing services to incarcerated survivors can seem to present an ethical dilemma because they are used to seeing all prisoners as perpetrators.
5. Remember that serving all survivors, including incarcerated survivors, is consistent with the core idea, widely held and proclaimed by sexual assault services providers, that there are no “bad victims,” and that no one deserves to be sexually abused. In the community, rape crisis centers do not run background checks on survivors, because someone’s criminal history is generally irrelevant. If a survivor is incarcerated, what we know for sure is that they were arrested and that they may be particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse.
6. As an advocate, it is important to recognize how everyone is affected by harmful myths and stereotypes about sexual abuse in detention. It is equally important for advocates to be the ones out in front, insisting that rape is never acceptable and all survivors deserve support.
7. Self-blame is a common feeling among all survivors of sexual abuse. An incarcerated survivor may blame themselves, and this feeling is only exacerbated by the culture of corrections, where inmates tend to be treated as less than human and deserving of punishment and violence. It is even worse when a survivor has internalized these beliefs about themselves.
8. Note the advocate who says their funding does not cover services for felons – while this was never entirely true because only Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds were restricted, it is important to note that the VOCA rule restricting funds was removed, effective August 8, 2016.

Slide 16

## In Her Own Words

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“The way we perceive it is that society treats or handles and deals with us in the manner in which they do because they are unaware of the facts and realities of incarcerated life. They only know the myths and notions about prison life as inaccurately communicated by television, news, radio, movies and so-called documentaries.”

— Jordan, survivor of sexual abuse behind bars

- This slide shows a quote from a survivor named Jordan.
- *[Ask if any participant would be willing to read the quote aloud.]*
- Remember that incarcerated survivors also know how people on the outside see them; they are aware of the jokes and misinformation that is spread about survivors and about life in prison. Remember that incarcerated survivors are less likely to reach out for help, if they think that you will perceive them negatively.

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Slide 17

## Prevalence of Sexual Abuse in Detention



- Now, let's move on to look at the prevalence of sexual abuse in detention.

Slide 18

## Pop Quiz

**What percentage of prisoners report being sexually abused over a 12-month period?**

- a. 4%
- b. 2%
- c. 25%
- d. 10%



- *[Read the pop quiz question from the slide.]*
- How big of a problem is sexual abuse in detention, and does it warrant attention from the government as a whole, corrections facilities in particular? What about from advocates?
- *[Facilitator's can note that, in addition to sexual abuse in detention requiring attention as a human rights and public health issue, sexual assault is illegal in every state and sexual abuse in detention is a violation of international human rights law and the 8th amendment of the constitution.]*
- In the video clip, John Oliver states that four percent of prisoners reported being sexually victimized. Let's break that down.
- In its inmate surveys, the BJS has found that just over four percent of state and federal prisoners, just over three percent of jail inmates, and just under ten percent of youth stated that they were sexually abused in a twelve month period ([www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112.pdf)).
- These findings are percentages. What about the actual number of people who are sexually abused overall?

Slide 19



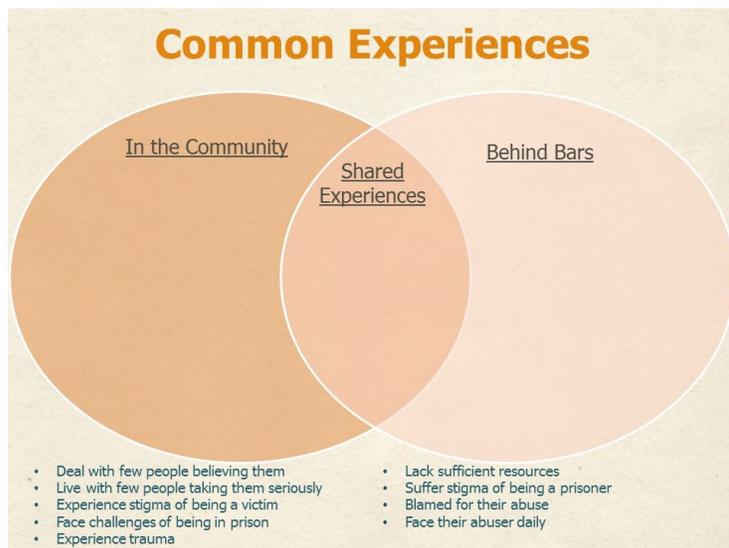
- According to an estimate by the lead researcher at the BJS, roughly 200,000 people are sexually abused in U.S. prisons and jails each year. Note that this figure represents the number of people, not incidents. Many of the 200,000 people were abused more than once.
- *[Trainer tip: If someone challenges the BJS statistics, do not get into a debate about them. You can share that the BJS conducted three separate surveys — each of which reached many thousands of prisoners — and the findings were consistent. You can acknowledge the rates of sexual abuse are difficult to measure in any setting. Reinforce the point that sexual abuse behind bars is widespread and is just as serious and deserving of attention as sexual abuse in the community, on military bases, and on college campuses.]*

Slide 20



- When we talk about survivors of sexual abuse in detention, who exactly are we talking about?
- They are mothers, students, elders, fathers, workers, children, friends, and siblings.
- Prisoners have the right to be safe from sexual abuse. And if you do know an incarcerated survivor, their safety matters to you, and to all of us. Most incarcerated survivors are released from prison, jail, or youth detention facility, and return to the community.
- These are just a few of the faces of people who have experienced sexual abuse in detention.

Slide 21



- [Ask participants to refer to the Common Experiences handout, which can be found here: <https://goo.gl/m8GSLd>.]
- Divide the group into pairs, so that every person has a partner.
- Give participants five to seven minutes to complete the activity.
- Review the list of experiences at the bottom of the handout. Complete the Venn diagram by writing down the differences and similarities between survivors in the community and survivors behind bars.

Slide 22



- After the allotted time has elapsed, ask participants to share what they discussed in the group, and specifically ask about the experiences they listed as shared.
- [Thank the participants who report back to the group.]
- As you can see, the only differences between survivors behind bars and survivors in the community is that incarcerated survivors face the stigma of being a prisoner and the everyday challenges of being in detention.

Slide 23

**In Her Own Words**

**“A prisoner is told what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and where to do it. After a while, you no longer think for yourself, and in some ways, you lose the ability to do so. So while you are dealing with all of the emotions of a rape, you add to it the aspect of being a prisoner when it happens. This makes you think it is your fault, because no one cares what happens to you because you are just a prisoner, and you begin to question it yourself.”**

— Jan, JDI Survivor Council

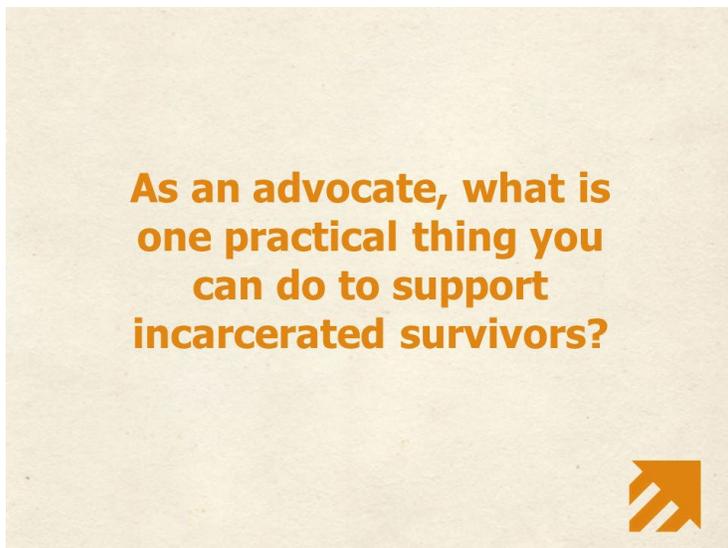
- The “Common Experiences” exercise illustrates how survivors behind bars must overcome unique challenges in order to get help.
- Incarceration itself presents obstacles to healing — obstacles survivors in the community do not face.
- Daily life behind bars can be very traumatic. Prison can be repetitive and boring, while also frightening and dehumanizing.
- Here, we have a quote from Jan Lastocy, a member of JDI’s Survivor Council and Board of Directors. [Read the quote.]
- Similar to Boa and Martin, Jan describes how she lost part of her humanity while in prison. Does Jan’s quote remind you of how survivors in the community describe their feelings? What are your thoughts about the emotional toll of having to cope with the trauma of sexual abuse while living in prison?

Slide 24



- Advocates can play a vital role in empowering survivors of sexual violence — even survivors who are incarcerated.
- What are some of the reasons you think that rape crisis advocates are an important resource for incarcerated survivors? *[Make sure the following points are raised:*
- *Survivors often feel isolated and typically don't have access to other confidential services.*
- *Prison life is so difficult for survivors that advocates can make a huge difference through simple actions, whether through their physical presence at the facility or by responding to calls and letters from incarcerated survivors.*
- *Many survivors of sexual abuse in detention are also survivors of sexual abuse in the community who may have never received any support or help, underscoring why access to services in detention is so vital.*
- *Most incarcerated survivors are released, bringing all of their trauma back to their communities. If they can get help on the inside, they are more likely to be healthy when they leave.*
- *You are the experts in helping survivors heal. Incarcerated survivors, like survivors in the community, rely on quality services to heal.]*

Slide 25



- *[Read the question on slide and ask for volunteers to share their responses.]*
- *[Record the responses on a flip-chart or whiteboard.]*
- Thank you for sharing your thoughts. *[For more practical tips on how to support survivors to empower themselves, see Module 4: The Basics of Providing Services to Incarcerated Survivors.]*

Slide 26



- We're now going to watch a video called "My Name is Joe" to help us explore in a bit more depth the issues and challenges that incarcerated survivors might face. This video highlights the important role of advocates.
- Survivors of sexual abuse behind bars experience trauma in the same way as survivors in the community — but there are some differences. When watching the video, please keep in mind how Joe's response to his assault compares to the response of survivors you have worked with in the community. Also pay attention to his advocate's strategies, and how they were helpful to Joe.
- [Show video which can be found here: <https://goo.gl/PqbpUy>.]

Slide 27



- [Read the question on the slide and write the responses on a flip-chart or whiteboard.]
- [Facilitate a discussion about the responses. Make sure the following points are raised:
  - Call him by his name.
  - Treat him like a human being.
  - Tell him it wasn't his fault.
  - Validate his feelings.
  - Validate his experience .
  - Believe him.
  - Respond to him with compassion.]
- Some advocates believe that they don't have the necessary experience to help incarcerated survivors, and, by extension, that attempting to work with this group of people may even do harm. Think about what Joe said about Jessica, years after she helped him. What helped Joe the most in is his healing was that his advocate said his name, told him it was not his fault, and believed him. These are simple yet powerful things that you would do for any survivor.

Slide 28

What was similar about Jessica’s work with Joe and the work you do with other survivors? What was different?

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES



- Now let’s take a moment to reflect on what is similar, and different, between Jessica’s work with Joe and the work you’ve done with survivors in the community.
- *[Divide the group into pairs and have them discuss similarities and differences.]*
- *[Allow time for participants to report back to the group; thank them and then move on to next slide.]*

Slide 29

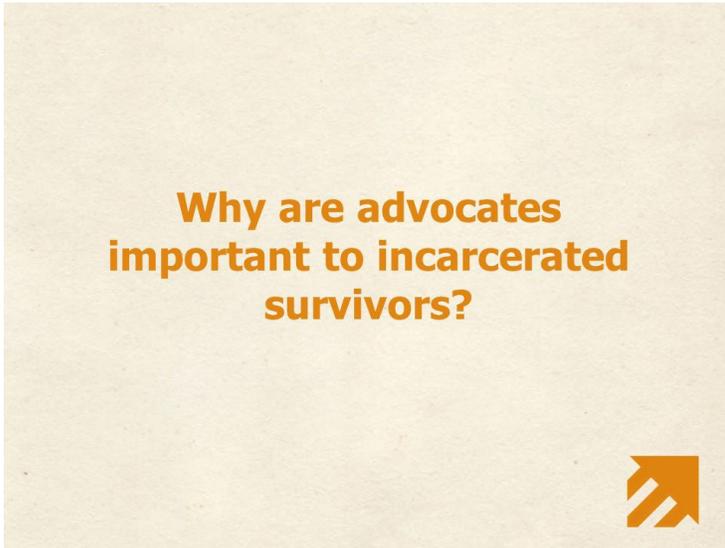
### Survivors Behind Bars

SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
Feelings like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-blame</li> <li>• fear</li> <li>• trauma</li> </ul>	Primary communications through letters
	Limited ability to seek out support



- *[Facilitators, use this slide to go over the answers the group shares. Note any similarities or differences that are the same as on the slide and those that are not noted on the slide.]*
- *[Reinforce that the differences in what survivors need is more about logistics than about survivors’ healing process.]*

Slide 30



- One of the hopes of this training session is to increase your understanding of the importance of advocates for survivors behind bars.
- With that being said is there a volunteer that would like to share how they would respond?
- *[Ask for a few volunteers and thank them for participating.]*

Slide 31



- *[Ask if there are any final questions.]*
- This concludes Module 1: An Introduction to Sexual Abuse Behind Bars.
- *[Thank everyone for their participation. Share your own feelings about the training, highlighting the positive aspects. Let people know where they can find additional resources and that you will be available for follow-up discussion.]*