



# Women in the forensic system with substance use disorders are in need of effective, integrated, and gender-responsive interventions

\* Qualitative findings from interviews and focus groups with forensic service providers

## Methods

We asked **seven** service providers in the forensic system about their thoughts on:

- \* challenges in program development and delivery
- \* strategies to address those challenges
- \* necessary characteristics for gender-responsive programs
- \* advice for training clinicians

## Results

### Challenges

"The parent dynamic between men and women still exists and I just don't know how comfortable vulnerable women would be developing things when they're gonna have things 'mansplained' to them later"

### Strategies

"I think that optimally a closed- group would be ideal. However, if you're trying to solve the problem of how do we engage more women given that we barely have any or enough to make a group, then you might have to compromise somehow."

### Program Characteristics

"We need to look at trauma informed care and at these women's histories and lived experiences and helping them make sense of that, because a lot of them are self-medicating their feelings because of their inability to kind of cope. We tend to focus on generic types of treatments as opposed to taking a more individualized look at some of what these women are experiencing."

### Training Clinicians

"If you're an experienced clinician you can stop in the middle and sort of unpack things as they go along. Whereas... I've worked with...they're just reading through that manual saying 'Sorry we've got the manual here'. They're adhering to the protocols of the manual rather than the protocols of group therapy."



**Conclusions:** Findings suggest that despite administrative and practical challenges, women in the forensic system would benefit from a woman's-only, evidence-based, trauma-informed, integrated and gender-responsive intervention. Moreover, it was emphasized that training clinicians in appropriately responding to women's issues is necessary. We plan to further supplement these findings by interviewing female forensic patients with substance use disorders