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Research Brief

Marriage while Incarcerated: Characteristics and Relationships of Partners

(A Preliminary Analysis)

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Research Brief

Marriage while Incarcerated: Characteristics and Relationships of Partners

(A Preliminary Analysis)

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Marriage while Incarcerated:

Characteristics and Relationships of Partners

(A Preliminary Analysis)

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Correctional Service of Canada

November, 1996

Executive Summary

A study of inmates married while incarcerated was initiated by the Chaplaincy service of the Correctional Service of Canada. The study was undertaken to assist Chaplaincy in designing programs to address the needs of inmates and their spouses. The data collection, using interviews and a semi-structured questionnaire, and an initial report were completed under contract by David Appavoo (Appavoo, 1995). The current report presents results of analyses using the 36 inmates in the Appavoo study who were or are planning to get married while incarcerated.

The current marital relationship tended to be: (a) between spouses who were in the same age category or were older than the inmates, (b) between spouses with similar marital histories to the inmate, (c) mainly less than one year or over three years in duration, and (d) predominantly (58%) involving current spouses who were related to the institution (staff, volunteer, volunteer visitor). Approximately half of the couples met while the inmate was incarcerated.

Inmates and their spouses were similar in terms of the number and duration of previous relationships and spouses were either in the same age category (42%) or were older (33%) than the inmates. These results do not support the belief that women who marry inmates are young and inexperienced.

The majority of couples (78%) had children from previous relationships, and 42% of couples had at least one child under the age of 19. The number of children and specifically, the number of children under the age of 19 has implications for the needs of the couple.

An examination of the characteristics of the inmates and the spouses in this study found that: (a) the majority (56%) of the inmates were serving life sentences, (b) the majority of inmates and spouses reported completing secondary school, (c) one-third of the spouses were currently unemployed and, (d) one-third of spouses had an income below $12 000. These findings reveal that the financial situation of these couples may also be an area in

need of support. Furthermore, since the majority of inmates are serving life sentences their reintegration into the community may require additional assistance.

The majority of inmates receive visits or are in contact with some members of their own or the spouses' family, or with friends from the community. Contact between inmates and their children from previous relationships was infrequent since approximately two-thirds of inmates were not visited by their children. Most (97%) of the inmates had participated in institutional programs, while over two-thirds (69%) of inmates had been involved in institutional chaplaincy programs. This information suggests that these inmates have many sources of support, both formal (institutional and chaplaincy programs) and informal (family and friends), that are being utilized.

The inmates expressed a need for support from the institutional and chaplaincy programs. Specifically, they appear to hold the belief that formal sources of support for the marriage are essential and that institutional programs that would prepare them for reintegration into the community are necessary. This information may be useful in designing institutional and chaplaincy programs to assist couples who are married while one of them is incarcerated.

Acknowledgments

Considerable effort was expended by David Appavoo in collecting the data used in this study. His considerable effort provided the data base used for the study. The chaplains in the region contributed by recommending inmates for inclusion in the study. In addition, the chaplains and other CSC staff members assisted in arranging interview schedules to accommodate the inmates and spouses. Finally, we would like to thank the offenders and their spouses for participating in the interviews and for completing the questionnaires used in the study. Without their participation we would not have the information presented in this report.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate prison marriages that were entered into after a male inmate's incarceration. The issues to be examined include:

- inmate's and current spouse's previous relationships;
- the current marital relationship;
- the inmate's perceptions and opinions about marriage and family relationships;
- support systems for the marriage and the family;
- the influence of chaplaincy and other institutional programs on the marriage; and
- the inmate's perceptions, suggestions and recommendations for the various chaplaincy and institutional programs.

The data were gathered using a questionnaire developed and administered by Appavoo (1995). The data set includes the responses of 36 federally sentenced males who had been married while incarcerated (32 subjects) or were planning to marry while incarcerated (4 subjects). The non-random availability sample used for the study limits the generalizability of the results, however there are sufficient findings in the results to make a contribution to our understanding of issues associated with inmate marriages. Appavoo collected, coded and performed preliminary analyses on the data. He is responsible for sample selection, questionnaire development, and production of the data set.

Methodology

The data used for analysis were collected through the use of a semi-structured questionnaire which was constructed by Appavoo (1995) following initial interviews of two to three hours with several inmates and their spouses. Interviews were arranged by the institutional chaplains at various facilities in the a region in Canada. The questionnaire was administered by Appavoo during a second or third meeting with the inmate. The administration of the questionnaire required approximately one and a half to two hours. A copy of the questionnaire was given to the inmate to follow while the researcher read the questions to the inmate and recorded the responses. For more complete details of the data collection the reader is referred to Appavoo (1995).

Of the over 60 federally sentenced male inmates and some of their spouses who were interviewed only 52 completed the questionnaire. The number of subjects included in the analyses was then further reduced to 36 as the scope of the research was narrowed to include the respondents who were married or were planning to marry while incarcerated. Respondents were incarcerated at one of several institutions or were on day parole in one administrative region. The institutions ranged from minimum to maximum security.

Methodological Problems

Approximately 25 subjects in the sample were selected by the institutional chaplains while the remainder volunteered after becoming aware of the study. Therefore, the sample is highly selective and not representative of the entire population of inmates who have marital relationships while incarcerated. Only a small number of spouses completed the questionnaire therefore, these cases were not included in analyses. All spousal information was provided by the offenders.

Cautions in Interpreting the Data

The reader is cautioned that the generalizability of the results are limited by the small and non-random sample, and the lack of validated spousal information. However, this research provides a snap-shot of issues associated with this group of inmate marriages. In addition, the findings from this study can provide background information for those working with inmates contemplating marriage and for policy issues where no other data are available. This research should be viewed as a preliminary investigation to assist future research about inmate marriages.

Results

The results are presented in six sections. The first section presents a description of the sample and the second section presents inmates opinions and perceptions of marriage and family relationships. The third and fourth sections describe relationships: the third previous relationships, and the fourth the current marital relationship. The fifth section summarizes the familial contact and other informal support systems, while the sixth details the information about institutional programs and formal sources of support.

Descriptive Information

An examination of the current marital relationship (Table 1) indicates that 89% (32) of the sample was married in prison, and another 11% (4) planned to be married while incarcerated. Of the 89% of offenders who were married while incarcerated 44% (14) were married in prison but were dating or in a common-law relationship prior to incarceration while the remaining 56% (18) met and married their spouse while incarcerated.

While approximately half (17) of couples met at a bar or through a friend, just under half (16) met at a CSC institution. The remaining respondents were in a common-law relationship prior to incarceration. Further, the current spouses' relationship to the institution is important. In total over half of the spouses were associated with the institution either in the capacity of a staff member (28%, 10), volunteer (6%, 2), or volunteer/ visitor (25%, 9) while the remainder (42%, 15) of spouses had no association with the institution.

Analysis of the duration of the current marital relationship indicated that 36% (13) of couples had been in the current relationship for under one year, 19% (7) were currently in a relationship lasting one to three years, 39% (14) of couples were in a relationship of over three years in duration, and the remaining 6% (2) had been living common-law prior to incarceration. The majority (85%, 11) of short relationships (less than one year)

were reported for relationships where the spouse had an association to the institution while only a minority (15%, 2) of the short relationships were with someone not associated with the institution.

Table 1: Characteristics of the current relationship

When couple met	Frequency	Percent
Prior to incarceration/ married in prison	14	38.9
During incarceration/ married in prison	18	50.0
Not yet married, plan to marry	4	11.1
Total	36	100.0
Where couple met		
Bar/ friend	17	47.2
CSC institution	16	44.4
Common law prior to incarceration	3	8.3
Total	36	100.0
Spouses' association with the institution		
Staff	10	27.8
Volunteer	2	5.6
Visitor with volunteer program	9	25.0
No association	15	41.7
Total	36	100.0
Length of relationship		
Less than one year	13	36.1
One to three years	7	19.4
Over three years	14	38.9
Common-law prior to incarceration	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0

Attributes of previous relationships of both the inmates and the spouses are examined in Tables 2 and 3. In the next few paragraphs, previous relationships will refer to previous marital or common-law relationships. In total only 17% (6) of inmates and 33% (12) of spouses had no previous marital or common-law relationships. For inmates, 33% (12) had one relationship, 19% (7) had two previous relationships, and 30% (11) had three or more previous relationships.

Of the inmates that had previous relationships, 41% (27) of the inmates reported that their previous relationships lasted less than two years, 35% (23) had previous relationships of two to five years in duration, and 24% (16) had relationships lasting over five years.[1] The duration of previous relationships may have implications for the stability and longevity of the current relationship.

Based on the responses provided by the inmates, with respect to the current spouses' previous relationships 33% (12) had no previous relationships, 22% (8) had one previous relationship, 22% (8) had two previous relationships, 17% (6) had three or more previous relationships while the remaining 6% (2) were missing data. However responses to other questions reveal that the two spouses with missing data had between one and three previous marriages. In terms of the duration of the current spouses' former relationships (of the spouses who had previous relationships) it was found that 24% (10) had relationships lasting less than two years, 36% (15) had relationships of two to five years in duration, and 41% (17) had relationships lasting over five years. Therefore, in general, spouses appear to have fewer and lengthier previous marital or common-law relationships.

---

[1] These results are based upon multiple response questions (i.e. more than one response is possible for each question). Therefore, the frequency of responses (count) is greater than the number of cases. Results based upon multiple response questions must be viewed carefully since the percentages are based on the number of responses not the number of people responding.

Table 2: Number and duration of inmates' previous relationships

Number of previous relationships	Frequency	Percent
No previous relationships	6	16.7
One previous relationship	12	33.3
Two previous relationships	7	19.4
Three or more previous relationships	11	30.5
Total	36	100.0
Duration of previous relationships (Multiple response)	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Less than two years	27	40.9
Two to five years	23	34.8
Over five years	16	24.2
Total	66	100.0

Table 3: Number and duration of spouses' previous relationships

Number of previous relationships	Frequency	Percent
No previous relationships	12	33.3
One previous relationship	8	22.2
Two previous relationships	8	22.2
Three or more previous relationships	6	16.7
One to three previous marriages[2]	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0
Duration of Previous Relationships (Multiple response)	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Less than two years	10	23.8
Two to five years	15	35.7
Over five years	17	40.5
Total	42	100.0

Information regarding the number of children the spouse and the inmate have along with the combined number of children is presented in Table 4. The number and ages of inmates' and spouses' children are important in three ways. First, children can be a source of support for a marital relationship or, conversely, a source of criticism. Secondly, children (especially non-adults) may have an impact on the financial situation of the couple. Third, because of the dependency of non-adult children on the parents for guardianship, a large amount of commitment is required by both parents for their children's care. In total 58% (21) of the inmates and 64% (23) of the spouses had at least

[2] Additional analyses indicated this missing data actually referred to spouses who had one to three previous marriages.

one child from previous relationships. In respect to ages of inmates' children, 31% (11) of inmates had non-adult children (children aged 1 to 17 years), while 34% (12) had adult children. Of the inmates who had non-adult children 73% (8) had one to two non-adult children, while the remaining 27% (3) had four non-adult children. Of the inmates who had adult children, one-half (6) had one or two adult children and another one-half (6) had three or four adult children.

Based on the inmates' responses, 32% (11) of the spouses had non-adult children, while 38% (13) had adult children. Of the spouses who had non-adult children, 91% (10) had one or two non-adult children, while the remaining 9% (1) had three non-adult children. Of the spouses who had adult children, 92% (12) had one or two adult children, and 8% (1) had three adult children.

In total, 78% (28) of couples had at least one child between them. The mean number of children from previous relationships per couple was just over 2. Forty-two percent (14) of the couples had non-adult children and 55% (18) had adult children. Of the couples with non-adult children, 64% (9) had one or two non-adult children, while 36% (5) had three or more non-adult children. Of the couples with adult children, 56% (10) had one or two adult children and 44% (8) had three or more adult children. Whether or not the inmates and/ or the spouses are custodial parents of their children, however, is unknown. Further, it is not known how many children originate from the current relationship.

Table 4: Number and ages of inmates' and spouses' children

	Age of children (adult/ non-adult status)	
Number of inmates' children	**1-17 years (non-adult)**	**18 years and older (adult)**
No children	24 (68%)	23 (66%)
One or two children	8 (23%)	6 (17%)
Three or more children	3 (9%)	6 (17%)
Number of spouses' children		
No children	23 (68%)	21 (62%)
One or two children	10 (29%)	12 (35%)
Three or more children	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Number of couples' children		
No children	19 (58%)	15 (45%)
One or two children	9 (27%)	10 (30%)
Three or more children	5 (15%)	8 (24%)

Demographic information for the inmate and the spouse is presented in Table 5. Demographic information includes the security level of the institution in which the inmate is being incarcerated, the age of the inmate, the type of sentence the inmate is serving, the number of years before parole review, the previous occupations the inmate has held, and the educational level of the inmate. Further, data concerning the spouses age, current occupation, educational level, and current income is provided.

The inmates were incarcerated in one of six federal institutions or were on day parole. Approximately, 58% of inmates were at medium security institutions, 13% were at

minimum security institutions, 17% were at the maximum security institutions, and 12% were on day parole.[3]

The type of incarceration and the number of years before parole eligibility were assessed and are presented in Table 5. Interestingly, more than half (56%, 20) of the inmates were being incarcerated for life sentences. Of the remaining inmates, 28% (10) were non-lifers, and 17% (6) were on day parole. Of the inmates that were not currently on day parole, over one-third (40%, 12) were eligible for parole review within two years, another third (37%, 11) were eligible for parole in two to eight years, and the remaining inmates (23%, 7) were not eligible for parole for more than eight years.

Table 5: Sentencing information

Type of sentence	Frequency	Percent
Life sentence	20	55.6
Determinate sentence	10	27.7
On day parole	6	16.7
Total	36	100.0
Years Before Parole Eligibility		
Less than two years	12	33.3
Two to eight years	11	30.6
More than eight years	7	19.4
On day parole	6	16.7
Total	36	100.0

[3] These are estimates based on the full sample of 52 cases which included inmates who were married prior to incarceration.

The former occupation of the inmates and the current occupation of the spouses, which has implications for the marital situation in terms of financial stability, is presented in Table 6. Using a multiple response question, the inmates were requested to detail their former occupations. Twelve percent (7) stated that they had a previous occupation as a professional, 7% (4) reported having sales or clerical work experience, 27% (16) reported trades as a former occupation, 13% (8) reported being owner/operators, 32% (19) reported working as labourers, 7% (4) stated that they had been students, and 3% (2) reported being unemployed. The reported former occupations of inmates is not consistent with former occupations of the general population of inmates and therefore the accuracy of reporting former occupations is suspect.

The current occupation of the spouses was also assessed. According to the inmates' responses, 38% (13) of the spouses hold professional positions, 44% (15) hold occupations in the sales, trades and clerical fields, and 18% (6) were labourers.

Table 6: Inmates' and spouses' occupations

Inmates' Former Occupations (Multiple response)	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Professional	7	11.7
Sales/ Clerical	4	6.7
Trades	16	26.7
Owner Operator	8	13.3
Labourer	19	31.7
Student	4	6.7
Unemployed	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0
Spouses' current occupations	Frequency	Percent
Professional	13	38.2
Sales/ Trades	15	44.1
Labourer	6	17.6
Total	34	100.0

In terms of employment opportunity, educational level is an important consideration. Table 7 presents the inmates' and spouses' educational levels. Of the inmates, over one quarter (28%, 10) had not completed secondary school while 22% (8) had completed secondary school or obtained secondary school equivalency via GED, and the remaining 50% (18) reported having some post-secondary education. These educational levels are somewhat higher than is observed in the general inmate population. In terms of the spouses' educational level, 11% (4) were reported to have not finished secondary school, 25% (9) were reported to have completed secondary school, and 64% (23) of the spouses

were reported to have some post-secondary education. From this information, it appears that the spouses are somewhat more educated than the inmates. Further, the information regarding the occupations appears to reveal that the spouses have higher status occupations than the inmates.

Table 7: Inmates' and spouses' educational level

Education	Inmate	Spouse
Below grade 8	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Between grade 8 and 10	9 (25%)	3 (9%)
Grade 12	5 (14%)	9 (25%)
GED	3 (8%)	N/A
Post-secondary	18 (50%)	23 (64%)
Total	36	100.0

The distribution of the ages of the inmates and the spouses are presented in Table 8. Inmates aged 21 to 35 comprised one third (12) of the sample, while the remaining two thirds were either 36 to 45 years of age (47%, 17) or 46 or more years of age (19%, 7). The age of the current spouse as reported by the inmates was also examined. Similar to the inmates, the current spouses aged 21 to 35 comprised just over one-third (36%, 13) of the sample of spouses, however the ages of the remaining spouses were represented in a different manner than the inmates: 28% (10) of the spouses were aged 36 to 45 years while 36% (13) of the spouses were aged 46 years and older. Therefore, it appears that more spouses are in the age category of 46 years and older than the inmates.

Table 8: Inmates' and spouses' ages

Age	Inmate	Spouse
21 to 35 years	12 (33%)	13 (36%)
36 to 45 years	17 (47%)	10 (28%)
46 years and over	7 (19%)	13 (36%)
Total	36	36

Opinions and Perceptions about the Marriage Relationships

The inmates' opinions regarding the family and marriage has an important role in defining the current relationship. A scale designed by Appavoo (1995) originally contained 39 items reflecting opinions and convictions concerning the family, marriage and their interactions within the community. Some of the items were dropped due to repetitiveness, unclear wording, or poor loading in factor analysis leaving 16 Likert-type items for analysis. For all items, higher values represent greater agreement with the statements. Some items were reverse coded to insure all items were scored in the same direction. The response to five of the items were analyzed individually and the 16 items were analyzed to create two subscales.

Five items were chosen for analysis to determine if the inmates would endorse extreme opinion items concerning the marriage and the family. From the analysis of the items detailed in Table 9, it appears that the majority of the men have high respect for their spouses, do not endorse statements that are degrading to their spouses, and appear to intend to maintain a long term relationship with the current spouse.

Table 9: Inmates' opinions

Item	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
If I do not like my spouse's behaviour even after warning her, I will discipline her both verbally and physically	33 (97%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
I would like to make sure that my spouse's wishes and deep desires are fully respected, even if it would mean foregoing some of my pleasures and dreams.	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	31 (91%)
If my spouse does not conform to my desires and direction, I will divorce her	28 (82%)	5 (15%)	1 (3%)
A husband has a right to demand obedience and conformity to his wishes by the spouse and children	32 (94%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
If I am not satisfied , I should have the right to take up relationships with other women	28 (82%)	2 (6%)	4 (12%)

Sixteen of Appavoo's (1995) items were factor analyzed. The first factor, entitled "Egocentrism" consists of nine items which account for 34% of the variance in the sixteen test items. This factor included items that reflect a clearly egocentric or self-centred point of view. The second factor labeled "Desire for family control" includes seven items that account for an additional 13% of the variance. The presence or absence of pre-marital or marriage counseling appears to have a relationship with these two factors ($t(32) = 1.76, p = .09$) where inmates who had participated in pre-marital or marriage counseling appeared to be less egocentric and less desirous of control over family than those who had not participated. It is important to note, however, that it is impossible to discern whether the inmates' participation in these chaplaincy pre-marital or marriage counseling programs caused these inmates to become less egocentric or less desirous of control over the family or if the inmates who were less egocentric and less desirous of control over the family were attracted to pre-marital or marriage counseling.

Age is also an important factor to consider in reference to egocentrism ($F(2,31) = 5.02$, $p<.05$). Specifically, the inmates aged 21 to 35 had significantly lower (less egocentric) scores than the 36 to 45 year old inmates. The inmates in the 46 and older age category had scores between the two extremes. Therefore, the 36 to 45 year old inmates were the most egocentric while the 21 to 35 year old inmates were the least.

Previous Relationships

Since past behaviour is often the best predictor of future behaviour, previous relationships of the inmate provide some valuable information which could point to the durability of the current relationship. Again, previous relationships refer to previous marital or common-law relationships. Information regarding the inmates' last four marital or common-law relationships was compiled. For the purposes of this report the first and the most recent previous relationships will be discussed. Tables 10 and 11 present information regarding the age of the inmate and the former spouse at the time of the relationship. Of the inmates who had previous relationships, 44% (14) were 18 years of age or under at the time of their first relationship, while 56% (18) had been between the age of 19 and 40 at the time of their first relationship. Fifty-two percent of the inmates' first former spouses were under nineteen years of age at their first relationships, while 48% (14) were between the ages of 19 and 40. Eleven percent (4) of the inmates had not had previous relationships.

Table 10: Inmates' previous relationships: ages at first relationship

Age at First Relationship	Inmate	Inmate's spouse
Under 19 years	14 (40%)	15 (45%)
19 to 40 years	17 (49%)	14 (43%)
No previous relationships	4 (11%)	4 (12%)

In reference to the inmates' most recent previous relationship (see table 12), 16% (5) were between the ages of 15 and 18, 62% (19) were between 19 and 30 years of age, and 23% (7) were 31 years of age or older at their most recent previous relationship. An assessment of the ages of the most recent former spouses found that 17% (5) of the most recent former spouses were 15 to 18 years of age, 48% (14) were between the ages of 19 and 30, and 34% (10) were 31 years of age and older. A crosstabulation of the inmates' age at the most recent previous relationship by the age of the inmates' most recent former spouses revealed that 79% (23) of the inmates had been involved in relationships where the spouse was within the same age category as themselves, only 3% (1) were in a relationship with a woman younger than them and 17% (5) were in relationships with women older than them.

Table 11: Inmates' previous relationships: ages at most recent previous relationship

Age	Inmate	Inmate's spouse
15 to 18 years	5 (14%)	5 (15%)
19 to 30 years	19 (54%)	14 (42%)
31 years and older	7 (20%)	10 (30%)
No previous relationships	4 (11%)	4 (12%)

Table 12 presents information regarding the duration of inmates' most recent previous relationships. Of the inmates who had previous relationships 39% (12) had a most recent previous relationship that lasted two years or less, 35% (11) had a relationship of two to five years in duration, and 26% (8) had a relationship lasting over five years. This information regarding the most recent previous relationship appears to be very similar to the information on the duration of all previous relationships (see Descriptive information section).

Table 12: Duration of inmates' most recent previous relationship

Duration	Frequency	Percent
Less than two years	12	34.3
Two to five years	11	31.4
More than five years	8	22.9
No previous relationships	4	11.4
Total	35	100.0

Information on where the inmate met his most recent former spouse was also collected. Just over one-third (35%, 12) met their former spouse at a bar, restaurant, dance or community function, while 41% (14) met at work or school, and 12% (4) met through a friendly introduction or met "on the street". The remaining 12% (4) of inmates did not have any previous relationships.

The reason for the dissolution of the inmates' most recent previous relationship is also of value. Of the inmates who had relationships previous to the current relationship, 35% (10) responded that the most recent previous relationship dissolved due to personal or spousal unfaithfulness, another 35% (10) stated drugs or violence as the reason for the termination of the relationship, 14% (4) reported that the commitment was only a casual one, and 17% (5) reported incompatibility or incarceration as the reason for the split. For information regarding attributes of the inmate's most recent previous relationship see Table 13.

Table 13: Attributes of inmates' most recent previous relationship

Where inmate met most recent former spouse	Frequency	Percent
Restaurant/ bar/ dance, etc.	12	35.3
Work/ school	14	41.2
Friendly introduction/ street buddy	4	11.8
Not applicable- current is first relationship	4	11.8
Total	34	100.0
Reason for Dissolution		
Unfaithfulness	10	31.3
Drugs/ Violence	10	31.3
Casual commitment	4	12.5
Incompatible/ Incarceration	5	15.6
Not applicable- current is first relationship	3	9.4
Total	32	100.0

A crosstabulation of the number of previous relationships the inmates had by the inmates' age are presented in Table 14. The pattern that seems to be emerging from these data is that as the age of the inmates increase so does the number of previous relationships.

Table 14: Number of inmates' previous relationships by inmates' age

Number of inmates' previous relationships	Inmates' age		
	21 to 35 years	36 to 45 years	46 years and older
No previous relationships	4 (67%)[4]	2 (33%)	0 (0%)
One relationship	4 (31%)	7 (54%)	2 (15%)
Two relationships	2 (22%)	4 (44%)	3 (33%)
Three or more relationship	2 (25%)	4 (50%)	2 (25%)

Another crosstabulation procedure was performed on the number of previous relationships the inmates had by the relationship of the current spouses to the institution. As noted previously, over half of the inmates (58%, 21) had current spouses that were somehow related to the institution while 42% (15) had spouses that were in no way related to the institution. Of the inmates that had married women that had some relationship to the institution, 14% (3) had no previous relationships 24% (5) had one previous relationship, 33% (7) had two previous relationships and 29% (6) had three or more previous relationships.

A statistically reliable difference in the spouses' marital history between the current spouses who were associated with the institution and the spouses not associated to the institution was found (χ^2 (1)=4.21, p<.05). In total, 57% (20)[5] of the spouses had some relationship to the institution and 42% (15) of the spouses had no relationship to the institution. Of the spouses who had some relationship to the institution 15% (3) had no previous relationships and 85% (17) had been previously married or common-law. In

[4] Values in parentheses refer to row percentages

[5] The mismatch between inmate and spouse data on this issue is caused by one missing case in the spouse data.

comparison, 53% (8) of the spouses that were not associated with the institution were involved in previous marital or common-law relationships and 47% (7) of the spouses not associated with the institution had no previous relationships. It appears, from this information, that spouses associated with the institution were more likely to have previously been involved in marital or common-law relationships than women not associated with the institution. Table 15 presents this information. Furthermore, the spouses associated with the institution are divided into staff and visitor/ volunteer categories in Table 15.

Table 15: Number of previous relationships by spouses association with the institution

	Spouses' association with the institution		
Number of inmates previous relationships	**Staff**	**Visitor/ Volunteer**	**No Association**
No previous relationships	0 (0%)[6]	3 (27%)	3 (20%)
One relationship	4 (40%)	1 (9%)	8 (53%)
Two relationships	3 (30%)	4 (36%)	2 (13%)
Three or more relationships	3 (30%)	3 (27%)	2 (13%)
Spouses previous relationships			
No previous relationships	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	7 (47%)
Previously married or common-law	9 (90%)	8 (80%)	5 (53%)

A comparison between lifers and non-lifers on the inmates' marital history revealed a significant difference between the two groups of inmates ($\chi^2(1)=5.76, p<.05$). In total 70% (14) of the lifers had previously been involved in marital or common-law

[6] Values in parentheses refer to column percentages.

relationships while 30% (6) had not. In contrast, all of the non-lifers (100%, 16) had previous relationships. Therefore, a larger percentage of non-lifers had previous relationships than the lifers. Additionally, the lifers and non-lifers differed on the number of previous relationships that they had. Table 16 presents the comparison between lifers and non-lifers on the basis of number of previous relationships. In general, the lifers appear to be primarily represented in the two extremes: either having had no relationships or three or more relationships. In contrast, the non-lifers were almost entirely represented in the one or two relationships category. This relationship between number of previous relationships and sentence type was not effected by the age differences between the two sentence type groups. It is important to note that lifers' opportunity to engage in marital or common-law relationships may have been limited due to the amount of time they have been incarcerated.

Table 16: Number of inmates' previous relationships by sentence type

	Sentence Type	
Number of inmates' previous relationships	**Lifer**	**Non-lifer**
No relationships	6 (30%)	0 (0%)
One or two relationships	8 (40%)	14 (88%)
Three or more relationships	6 (30%)	2 (12%)

Current Spouse

Several items concerning the current spouse were collected including her income and employment status and her residential location. In addition several comparisons between inmates and spouses were made.

The spouses' income and employment status were assessed. According to the inmates' responses, in total one-third (12) of the spouses were unemployed, with the remaining

two-thirds (24) employed. The income of the spouses were divided into three categories. Fully, one-third (12) had a current income less than $12 000, while 42% (15) had a yearly income between $12 000 to $30 000, and 25% (9) had an income between $30 000 to $60 000.

The residential location of the spouses' and the visiting problems that they may face were also assessed. In total, over half (53%, 19) of the spouses were reported to live close to the institution at which the inmates are being incarcerated, another 25% (9) reportedly live at a distance from the institution, while the remaining 22% (8) were reported to either live with parents or live with the inmate since the inmate is on day parole[7]. If the spouse is distant from where the inmate is being incarcerated it presents a problem for visits between husband and wife. Distance was one of the responses available to spouses when asked about the problems they face in visiting their husbands.

Problems the spouses' face in visiting their husbands are presented in Table 17. Based on the inmates' responses, 26% (9) responded that distance was causing problems for visiting, another 3% (1) reported transportation as a problem, 6% (2) reported problems with their family understanding and accepting the relationship, 9% (3) reported work schedule interference, and 6% (2) reported that as a former employee of the institution they felt harassed. Over half (51%, 18) of the spouses reported no visiting problems. Of the 29% (10) of spouses that were previously employed (or continue to be employed) by a correctional institution only 20% (2) reported feeling uncomfortable or being harassed for visiting their husbands at the institution.

[7] The distance at which the spouses who live with parents is not available.

Table 17: Visiting problems

Visitation problems facing spouses	Frequency	Percent
Distance	9	25.7
Transportation	1	2.9
Family does not approve	2	5.6
Work schedule	3	8.6
Harassed by institutional staff	2	5.7
No problems	18	51.4
Total	35	100.0

A series of crosstabulations were performed in order to determine the relationship between various attributes of the inmates and the same attributes of the spouses. The age relationship is an important one since one concern about women who marry inmates is that they may be inexperienced women. If this assumption were true, one would expect that inmates would be likely to marry women younger than themselves. In reality, according to the data presented in Table 18, only 25% (9) of the spouses are younger than the inmate while 42% (15) of the spouse were in the same age categories as the inmate and 33% (12) were in an older age category than the inmate. The ages of the inmates and the spouses have previously been presented in the descriptive information section but Table 18 compares the inmates' with the spouses' ages.

Table 18: Inmates' age by spouses' age

	Spouses' age		
Inmates' age	**21 to 35 years**	**36 to 45 years**	**46 years and older**
21 to 35 years	6 (16%)[8]	4 (11%)	2 (6%)
36 to 45 years	7 (19%)	4 (11%)	6 (17%)
46 years and older	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	5 (14%)

Another way to test this assumption about the spouses is to examine the association between the inmates' marital history and the spouses' marital history. The individual information concerning the inmates' and the spouses' marital history was presented in the descriptive information section while Table 19 details the direct relationship between the inmates' and the spouses' previous relationships. In total, 83% (29) of the inmates and 71% (25) of the spouses have had previous marital or common-law relationships. Of the inmates who have had previous relationships, 76% (22) of their spouses have also had previous relationships while 24% (7) have not had previous relationships. Of the inmates who did not have any previous marriages or common-law relationships their spouses were equally divided among those who had (3, 50%) and had not (3, 50%) had previous relationships.

Table 19: Inmates' marital history by spouses' marital history

	Spouse previously married or common-law	
Inmate previously married or common-law	**Yes**	**No**
Yes	22 (76%)[9]	7 (24%)
No	3 (50%)	3 (50%)

[8] Values in parentheses refer to total percentages.

[9] Values in parentheses refer to row percentages.

The duration of the inmates and the spouses most recent previous relationships are compared in Table 20. According to the table, the majority of spouses whose most recent previous relationship was more than two years had married men whose most recent relationship was similar in duration. These results concerning presence or absence of previous relationships and duration of previous relationships reveal that in general spouses and inmates have similar previous relationship histories.

Table 20: Duration of inmates' most recent relationship by duration of spouses' most recent relationship

	Duration of spouses' most recent relationship		
Duration of inmates' most recent previous relationship	**Never married**	**Less than 2 years**	**Over 2 years**
Never married	3 (27%)[10]	1 (17%)	0 (0%)
Less than 2 years	1 (9%)	3 (50%)	5 (38%)
Over 2 years	7 (64%)	2 (33%)	8 (62%)

The lack of support for the view of spouses as being inexperienced or vulnerable is further supplemented by several comparisons based on the differences between couples containing spouses associated with the institution and those not associated. A comparison on the basis of the spouses association or lack of association to the institution on spouses' current age was performed. In general, women in each age category were approximately equally represented in association or lack of association to institution categories with the exception of the 46 years and older spouses. Specifically, 77% (10) of women aged 46 years of age and older were associated to the institution while 23% (3) had no association

The age of the spouse when she met her current husband was also assessed. Women aged under 20 years of age when they met their husbands were totally represented in the no

[10] Values in parentheses refer to column percentages.

association category (3) while the women 46 years of age and older when they met their husbands were totally represented (7) in the association to the institution category. Overall, on the basis of this information displayed in Table 21, the spouses' current age and age at the time they met the inmates was older for women related to the institution than for those unrelated to the institution.

Table 21: Spouses' age by relationship to the institution

	Spousal relationship to the institution	
Spouses' current age	**Associated**	**Not associated**
21 to 35 years	6 (46%)[11]	7 (54%)
36 to 45 years	5 (50%)	5 (50%)
46 years and older	10 (77%)	3 (23%)
Spouses' age when met inmate		
Under 20	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
21 to 35 years	7 (44%)	9 (56%)
36 to 45 years	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
46 years and older	7 (100%)	0 (0%)

Table 22 presents the distribution of spouses' age by whether or not the spouse has had any previous relationships. For the current spouses, the likelihood that they had been involved in previous relationships increased with age. For more specific information refer to Table 22.

[11] Values in parentheses refer to row percentages.

Table 22: Spouses' marital history by spouses' age

Spouse previously married or common-law	Age of spouse 21 to 35 years	36 to 45 years	46 years and over
Yes- previous relationships	8 (62%)[12]	7 (70%)	10 (83%)
No previous relationships	5 (39%)	3 (30%)	2 (17%)

In summary, the inmates and spouses appear to be similar to one another in terms of their marital histories. Although a large proportion of the spouses were the same age as their respective husbands the spouses associated to the institution tended to be older while those not associated tended to be younger. The assumption that women who marry inmates are inexperienced, vulnerable, and even naive does not appear to be supported by these data.

Familial Contact

Informal sources of support for the marriage including immediate and extended family, friends, and acquaintances of both the inmate and the spouse are examined in this section.

In total 86% (31) of the inmates had siblings. Of the inmates with siblings, 87% (27) had some contact with their siblings while the remaining 13% (4) had siblings that refused to contact the inmates. Of the siblings who live in the area of British Columbia, 86% (57) were in contact with the inmates, while the remaining 14% (9) refused to contact the inmates.[13] Of the siblings who lived outside of the British Columbia area, 93% (13) of the siblings remained in touch with the inmates, and only 7% (1) did not remain in touch

[12] Values in parentheses refer to column percentages.

[13] Residential location of inmates' sibling was assessed using a multiple response question (see footnote 1 for more information).

with the inmates. Therefore, it appears that siblings of the inmates tend to stay in contact and distance does not appear to effect the contact.

The amount of contact between inmates and their parent(s) was also recorded Of the inmates who had parent(s) still living, 97% (28) had some contact with their parent(s) while 3% (1) refused to remain in contact with parent(s) because they felt that their parent(s) had failed them.

Extended family of the inmate could also be a source of support for the inmate. Out of the 86% (31) of the inmates who had some extended family, 55% (17) had some contact with their extended family while 45% (14) did not have any contact with the extended family members. Consequently, the majority of inmates have some type of contact with their parent(s) while they were less frequently in contact with extended family.

Visiting patterns of the inmates' children are presented in Table 23. Of the 58% (21) of inmates who had children, 27% (7) were visited by their children while 73% (19) did not have visits from their children. Two factors that may assist in determining whether or not the inmates' children visit are the age of the children and the residential location of the children. An analysis of the age of the children by whether or not the children visit found that 17% (2) of the inmates' children under the age of 18 visited their fathers while 83% (10) did not visit. Twenty-four percent (7) of children over 18 years of age visited while 76% (22) did not visit. Not surprisingly, all (100%, 4) of the inmates' children of ages unknown to their fathers did not visit their fathers. In terms of the residential location of the children, 31% (5) of children living in the British Columbia area visited their fathers while 69% (11) did not visit, and 20% (3) of the inmates' children living outside the British Columbia area visited their fathers while 80% (12) did not visit. It appears that the children of inmates that are young and live outside of the British Columbia area are less likely to visit their fathers than older children and children living in the area. Overall, visiting by the inmates' children is quite low at 30% or less, regardless of age or residential location.

Table 23 details the reasons that the inmates' children do not visit their incarcerated fathers. Of the inmates who have children that do not visit, 25% (8) cited distance, 28% (9) reported that the former spouse (the child's mother) does not permit visiting, 16% (5) stated that the child does not wish to visit, 6% (2) reported that they do not wish to be visited by their children, and 25% (8) stated that they do not know where their children live. [14]

Table 23: Frequency of inmates' children visitation and reasons for not visiting

Do inmates' children visit	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	26.9
No	19	73.1
Total	26	100.0
Reasons child does not visit (Multiple response)	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Distance	8	25.0
Former spouse does not permit	9	28.1
Child does not wish	5	15.6
Inmate does not wish	2	6.2
Do not know where child lives	8	25.0
Total	32	100.0

The contact the inmates receive from the spouses' family members also plays a role in the amount of support the inmates experience. The visiting between the spouses' siblings, parents, and children and the inmates was assessed. Of the 79% (27) of spouses who

[14] These are responses to a multiple response question.

have siblings, 26% (7) of the siblings visit the inmates and 74% (20) do not visit the inmates. Of the 79% (25) of the spouses who have at least one parent still living, 28% (18) of the spouses' parent(s) visit while 72% (18) do not visit the inmates.

Finally, visiting by the current spouses' children was assessed. Of the inmates who have step-children from the current relationship, 68% (17) of the inmates receive visits from them and the remainder do not. Of the spouses' children who do not visit, 75% (6) were antagonistic or embarrassed or barred from contact while 25% (2) gave other reasons such as distance for not visiting. The step-children's age by whether or not they visit found that 77% (10) of the children under the age of 18 had some visitation with the inmate while 72% (13) of the children 18 years of age and older visited the inmate. All (100%, 2) of the spouses' children of ages unknown to the inmates visited the inmates to some capacity. Therefore, it appears that it is relatively uncommon for the inmates to receive visits from the spouses' immediate family with the exception of the spouses' children. Whether or not the spouses' children visit appears to be unrelated to the age of the children.

The relatively low frequency of inmates being visited by the spouses' sibling(s) and/or parent(s) is in contrast with the relatively high frequency of inmates being in contact with the inmates' own sibling(s) and/or parent(s).[15] If the visitation or contact with inmates represents support of the marriage then the inmates' sibling(s) and parent(s) appear to be more supportive. However, it is difficult to determine if visitation or contact with inmates represents support for the inmates themselves or support for their marriages.

The inmates' friends may also have a role in the inmates' informal network of support. In total, 72% (26) had some friends visiting and 28% (10) were not visited by friends. The presentation of the origins of the friends visiting the inmates in Table 24 reveals that

[15] Note that the definition of familial contact is different for the inmates' siblings and parents than for the spouses' siblings and parents. This difference may have effected the frequency of reporting contact and therefore the rate of contact between spouses' siblings and parents may be inflated.

friends from school or " the street", and from the religious community appear to visit the inmates most often.

Table 24: Visiting patterns of friends

Origin of friends visiting	Frequency	Percent
Work	7	19.4[16]
School or "the street"	13	36.1
Ex-inmates	1	2.8
Religious community	15	41.7
Other	11	30.6

Sources of support for the spouses were assessed. In terms of family or friends, 74% (26) of spouses were reported to have the support of close friends, 57% (20) were reported to be supported by close family members, and 63% (22) were reportedly supported by their children. Supports within the community and formal sources of support were also assessed. In total, 31% (11) were reported to have the support of religious groups, 31% (11) were reportedly supported by religious leaders, 49% (17) were reported to have the support of institutional chaplains, 14% (5) were reportedly supported by other institutional organizations, and 23% (8) were reported to have other sources of support. It appears from this information that similar to their incarcerated husbands most spouses have at least some formal or informal source of support.

[16] These percentages represent the percent of the total sample of 36 that received visits from each origin.

Institutional Programs

Institutional programs can be a source of support and development. Institutional programs available to inmates include various educational and vocational training programs, substance abuse treatment programs, cognitive skills training programs, anger management programs, family violence programs, and programs offered by the Regional Psychiatric Center (i.e., sex offender programs, personality disorder programs). Of the 36 inmates in the sample only one (3%) had not taken any institutional programs, 17% (6) had taken one or two institutional programs, 44% (16) had taken three or four programs, and 36% (13) had taken five or more programs while institutionalized. The mean number of programs taken by inmates was approximately four.

The number of institutional programs taken differed significantly between inmates who married spouses associated with the institution and those with spouses not associated with the institution ($t(34)=2.72$, $p<.05$). Specifically, inmates with spouses associated with the institution had taken more programs (mean number of programs = 4.29) than inmates with spouses not associated to the institution (mean number of programs = 2.80). No other significant differences were found on the number of programs taken on the basis of sentence length and the number of years before parole eligibility.

Program participation was evaluated and is presented in Table 25. According to the table, the most frequently participated in programs were Living without violence (56%), educational upgrading (56%), cognitive skill training (58%), and substance abuse (61%) programs.

Table 25: Participation in institutional programs

Participation in institutional programs (Multiple Response)	Frequency	Percent
Living without violence	20	55.6[17]
Cognitive skills	21	58.3
R.P.C and similar packages	16	44.4
Substance abuse	22	61.1
Anger management	13	36.1
Vocational training	11	30.6
Educational upgrading	20	55.6
Other	9	25.0

Although the number of programs taken by inmates did not differ significantly by age the trends are interesting. Table 26 presents the distribution of number and type of institutional programs by age categories. Although the one inmate who had not taken any institutional programs was between 36 and 45 years of age, in general the inmates between the ages of 36 and 45 appeared to report the highest rate of participation in multiple institutional programs while the 46 and older inmates appeared to report the lowest rate of participation.

Which programs were taken by the different age groups was also assessed. Table 26 presents the distribution of institutional programs by age categories. There does not appear to be any clear pattern among age categories as to program participation, however, substance abuse programs approached statistically reliable differences across age

[17] These percentages represent the percent of the total sample of 36 that participated in each respective program.

categories. Specifically, the 36 to 45 age category reported the highest participation in the substance abuse program (77%, 13), followed by the 21 to 35 (58%, 7) and the 46 and older (29%, 2) categories.

Table 26: Participation in institutional programs by age

	Age		
Number of institutional programs taken	**21 to 35 years**	**36 to 45 years**	**46 years and older**
None	0 (0%)[18]	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
1 to 2	2 (29%)	3 (43%)	2 (29%)
3 to 4	7 (39%)	7 (39%)	4 (22%)
5 or more	3 (30%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)
Participation in institutional programs (Multiple response)			
Living without violence	7 (58%)[19]	9 (53%)	4 (57%)
Cognitive skills	7 (58%)	11 (65%)	3 (43%)
R.P.C. and similar	6 (50%)	6 (35%)	4 (57%)
Substance abuse	7 (58%)	13 (77%)	2 (29%)
Anger management	4 (33%)	8 (47%)	1 (14%)
Educational	8 (67%)	7 (41%)	5 (71%)
Vocational	4 (33%)	5 (29%)	2 (29%)
Other	2 (17%)	5 (29%)	2 (29%)

[18] Values in parentheses refer to row percentages.

[19] Values in parentheses refer to percentages of total number of subjects in each age group participating in each respective program.

Various programs offered by the institutional chaplaincy are available to the inmates such as fellowship, pre-marital and marriage counseling, blessing unit, and various family oriented programs. Overall, 31% (11) of offenders had not participated in any chaplaincy programs offered, while 61% (22) had taken one or two chaplaincy programs, and 8% (3) reported taking three or more chaplaincy programs while incarcerated. The rate of participation in individual programs is presented in Table 27. The highest rate of participation in programs was in the worship of weekday fellowship (28%), healthy relationships, victim offender reconciliation and parenting programs (28%), and pre-marital or marriage counseling (31%).

Table 27: Participation in institutional chaplaincy programs

Participation in chaplaincy programs (Multiple response)	Frequency	Percent
Worship/ weekday fellowship	10	27.8[20]
Pre-marital/ marriage counseling	11	30.6
Blessing	5	13.9
Family enrichment/ breaking barriers/ life is a decision	6	16.7
Healthy relationships, victim-offender, parenting	10	27.8

Analysis of the number and type of institutional chaplaincy programs participated in by inmates is presented in Table 28. Overall, the older inmates (36 to 45 year old inmates and 46 years and older inmates) appear to be more likely to report participation in chaplaincy programs. For example, two-thirds (2) of the inmates who had participated in three or more chaplaincy programs were 46 years of age or older.

[20]These percents represent the percent of the total sample of 36 that participated in each respective chaplaincy program.

Older inmates were more likely to have participated in all chaplaincy programs except the pre-marital and marriage counseling programs where the participation rate was relatively consistent across the age categories at approximately 30%. Given that this is a sample of inmates who had been or were planning to be married in the institution, the participation rate may be considered low for marriage counseling.

Table 28: Participation in institutional chaplaincy programs by age

	Age		
Number of chaplaincy programs taken	**21 to 35 years**	**36 to 45 years**	**46 years and older**
None	4 (36%)[21]	5 (46%)	2 (18%)
1 to 2	8 (36%)	11 (50%)	3 (14%)
3 or more	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)
Participation in chaplaincy programs (Multiple Response)			
Worship/ weekday fellowship	3 (25%)[22]	4 (24%)	3 (43%)
Pre-marital / marriage counseling	4 (33%)	5 (29%)	2 (29%)
Blessing	1 (8%)	2 (12%)	2 (29%)
Family enrichment/ breaking barriers/ life is a decision	1 (8%)	3 (18%)	2 (29%)
Healthy relationships, victim-offender, parenting	2 (17%)	4 (24%)	4 (57%)

[21] Values in parentheses refer to row percentages.

[22] Values in parentheses refer to percentages of total number of subjects in each age group participating in each respective chaplaincy program.

The following paragraphs detail the inmates' reported perceptions of both institutional programs and institutional chaplaincy programs as well as their suggestions for improved services for inmate marital and family relationships. All responses concerning opinions and perceptions were gathered using open-ended questions and were then classified into broad statements by Appavoo for the purposes of data coding and interpretation.

The inmates were asked for their perception of the helpfulness of the institutional chaplains. Of the inmates who responded (39% or 14 had no comments), 73% (16) reported good relations with the institutional chaplains, while 27% (6) were critical. Furthermore, inmates made suggestions based on their perception of their contact with the chaplain on the role of the chaplain in inmate marriages. Thirty-six percent (13) of inmates did not respond, while of the remaining inmates who responded, 48% (11) suggested that the chaplain should have a role as a mediator, 9% (2) commented that the chaplain is very necessary and needed in inmate marriages, and 43% (10) suggested that the chaplain has a useful role in the inmate's family and that community or outside involvement of the chaplain would be useful. When asked if there was a role for the institutional chaplain in marital and family relationships, 74% (25) held the opinion there was definitely a role, 18% (6) responded that the chaplain should have a role if required, and the remaining 9% (3) were undecided.

Opinions of the usefulness of the chaplains in bridging the gap between life inside an institution and life in the community were collected using open-ended questions. Inmates' suggestions for the chaplain's involvement in the community found that 53% (18) believed that chaplains should have a proactive role strengthening the family unit or acting as a mediator between the inmate and the inmate's family, 24% (8) suggested that the chaplain should act as a couple counselor for long periods of time, and 24% (8) were undecided about the role for the chaplain in the community. When asked if and in what manner the chaplain should be working closely with the outside community, 29% (10) responded that they and their spouses would definitely become involved if chaplains were to work with the outside community, 34% (12) felt that the chaplain would have a role in

linking the inmate with the outside world through coordinating work-release or similar programs, another 14% (5) suggested that the chaplain should work with the family of the inmates in the community as a source of support, and the remaining 23% (8) had no comments. Finally, the inmates' opinions regarding the role of the chaplain in family reconciliation, if needed, was assessed. A full 62% (21) of inmates stated that the chaplain would definitely be helpful in family reconciliation while 38% (13) felt that the chaplain was not needed.

An open-ended question requested overall program recommendations for both institutional and institutional chaplaincy programs from the inmates. Many of the inmates expressed recommendations for programs that prepare the inmates for the outside community. For example, 9% (3) suggested that technical programs offered by outside experts which would serve as release preparation be instituted, 13% (4) endorsed work related pre-release programs, 9% (3) recommended treatment based pre-release programs, and 22% (7) suggested having the chaplain link the inmate to the outside community. Other recommendations include giving inmates university credit for growth and knowledge (13%, 4), instituting couple oriented treatment programs (19%, 6), establishing aging and refresher courses as follow-up (3%, 1), and having other staff sit-in on inmate programs in order to get to know more about the inmates (13%, 4). Generally, it appears that these inmates would appreciate some preparation for the outside community, as an individual and as a member of a marriage and family. These suggestions may be useful in designing future programs for inmates who marry while incarcerated.

Discussion

This study suggests that inmate marriages take place in the context of considerable social support. Married inmates receive visits from their parents, their siblings, their friends, their spouses and their spouses' children (not so much from their own children by previous marriages or common-law relationships). As such, inmates who marry are among the most socialized of the inmate population. In comparison, the 1995 CSC inmate survey revealed that 35% of inmates have had visitors on more than ten occasions while 28% receive no visits (Robinson and Mirabelli, 1996). Spouses also have a support network of friends, family, children, religious leaders, etc.

These inmate marriages are usually equitable undertakings. While the previous relationships of spouses are a little less numerous and have lasted a little longer than those of the inmates, overall, inmates and spouses have similar relationship histories. Spouses are generally the same age as the inmates, although spouses who were associated with the institution when they met their partners were slightly older than their partners. However, inmates who had married women who were associated with the institution when they met were more likely to be involved in numerous institutional programs.

There is also a fair degree of equity in education and employment, with spouses possessing slightly more education than the inmates and having higher status occupations.

The majority of couples have children from previous relationships and more than one-third of couples have children under the age of 18. The number of children and specifically the number of non-adult children effects the financial situation and the supportive needs of the couple.

In terms of attitudes, inmates report high respect for their spouses and do not endorse statements that are degrading to them. They appear to intend to maintain a long term relationship with their spouses. Couples who underwent pre-marriage or marriage counseling also revealed less pronounced factors of "Egocentrism" and "Desire for family

control", a positive sign for persons presenting themselves to the chaplain for marriage concerns.

Concerns and Suggestions

About 75% of inmates receive no visits from their children by previous relationships regardless of their age. Various reasons are given such as distance from prison, prohibition by previous spouse, decision of child, decision of inmate, lack of knowledge about where the child lives. This lack of contact is perhaps comprehensible. However, the children of previous relationships now become part of the inmate's past, a past that is now largely "hidden" from the new spouse and perhaps even from the inmate himself. In the context of preparing for marriage, it seems important to address this issue properly, especially in prison where there is general concern about "hidden" information.

A desire was expressed for more programming on family issues. There was a high rate of participation in institutional programming, including those associated with family living (e.g., Living without Violence). Contacts with chaplaincy were respectful and trusted, but more for the specific chaplains and for the role of the chaplain, rather than for effective programming associated with marriage. Suggestions for this type of programming included effective visiting opportunities, pro-social institutional programming, and employment and education opportunities. This could be accomplished by new programming within chaplaincy, or with more close association between chaplaincy and such programming offered by another department in the prison.

In terms of pre-marriage programming ("counseling") this study points towards some useful content areas: reconstituted families (especially the role of children of previous relationships in them); age differences (a number of inmates marry women in an older age category), dealing with issues that lead to break-up: fidelity versus infidelity, sobriety versus the use of drugs and alcohol, conflict resolution versus conflict, freedom versus incarceration (issues to be faced upon reintegration into society); and a realistic look at the economics and financial management of family life (who controls what).

Future studies should consider sample design so that the results could be more confidently applied to a wider portion of the inmate population and consideration might be given to studying the durability of inmate marriages and the causes for their failure.

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