

Trauma of Incarceration: Older Adults in Prison

Over two-thirds had no contact with their marital or life partner or parents. The majority reported no contact with their children or their grandchildren. Almost half reported they had no contact with siblings. The older adults who were close to the end of their prison terms reported feeling anticipatory stress about being released from prison. Despite past and current life adversity, many older adults also reported coping resilience using physical, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and participatory (empowerment) strategies for survival in prison.



Photo Credit: Ron Levine/Prisoners of Age

Please see Figure 1 and Table 2 in this document for other types of traumatic and stressful experiences in prison and sources of resilience.

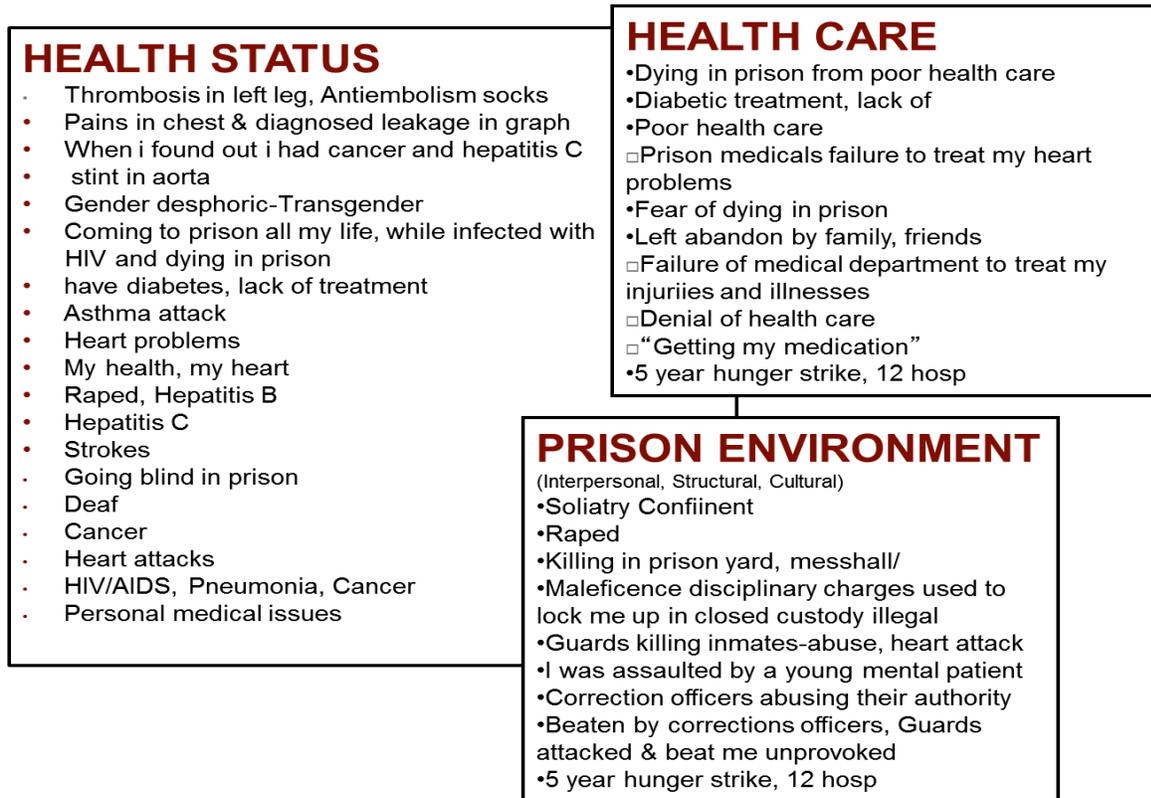
For more information please see the following articles:

Maschi, T., Viola, D., & Morgen, K. (2013). Trauma and Coping among Older Adults in Prison: Linking Empirical Evidence to Practice. *Gerontologist*. First published online July 19, 2013 doi:10.1093/geront/gnt069.

Maschi, T., Viola, D., Morgen, K., & Koskinen, L. (2013). Trauma, stress, grief, loss, and separation among older adults in prison: the protective role of coping resources on physical and mental wellbeing. *Journal of Crime and Justice*. doi:10.1080/0735648X.2013.808853 (SPECIAL ISSUE ON ELDER ABUSE).

For copies of the articles, feel free to email your request to tmaschi@fordham.edu

Figure 1: Qualitative Findings of Sources of Trauma and Stress Reported by Older Adults In Prison



(Maschi et al., 2012; 2103)

Table 2: Sources of Coping and Resilience Reported by Older Adults in Prison

- **ROOT**-Basic Needs (Survival & Foundation in Love and Family)
- **PHYSICAL**-Exercise (Yard, Run/Walk, Yoga, Sports), Medication
- **COGNITIVE**-Find Peace Within, Think Positive, Making Healthy Choices, Puzzles, Read
- **EMOTIONAL**-Counseling, Support Groups
- **SPIRITUAL**-Church, God, Pray, Service to Others
- **SOCIAL** - Family, Friends, Peers in Prison, Program Participation, Yoga
- **PARTICIPATORY**: (Leadership, Participation, and Empowerment):, Teaching, Leading a Book Club, Being a Paralegal, Advocacy, Group and Workshop Facilitation, Advocacy

Sample Quotes

“I pray. I try to meditate and read a great deal to take my mind off worries”

“I do yoga, Dr. Tina Maschi, yoga”

“I participate every Monday in group therapy. Cage your rage program 10 weeks”

“I became a jogger & sprinter at 56 years old. I run 5 miles per day and sprint 105 yd sprints every other day”

“Prayed to God, got in touch with family members and did a whole lot of jogging exercise”

“I love to work”

“Programs, exercise, palliative care worker, working with at risk juveniles, etc...”

“Focus on victim program, exercise, computer workforce, community awareness day, HIV AIDS group”

“Read my Bible, I am a minister now. I do all things the word way”

“NA and AA”

“Exercise, work (strip/buff floors), write letters, talk on the phone”

(Maschi et al., 2012; 2013)