A Qualitative Study of Reintegration Focusing on the Perceptions of Female Ex-Offenders Returning to Society

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF REINTEGRATION FOCUSING ON THE
PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE EX-OFFENDERS RETURNING TO SOCIETY

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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The purpose of this study was to add to the criminological research on the topic of reentry. This study was conducted to examine the process of reintegration from female ex-offenders’ perspectives as they move through reintegration programming. Specifically, this study was concerned with the barriers women face as they return to society and whether or not reentry programming makes them feel as though they are successfully prepared to return to society.

To address the research questions, a qualitative design implementing one-on-one interviews to question female ex-offenders was utilized. Respondents for this study were asked to participate by responding to a posted flyer. Recruitment during activity during observation periods at an organization providing reentry services located in Pennsylvania was also conducted. Respondents also answered a series of questions through a two-week period of individual journaling. These questions primarily addressed the theoretical components of the study.

Barriers to obtaining employment, adjustment issues, and issues related to substance abuse and addiction were primary concerns for this sample of returning female ex-offenders. The need for further research surrounding gender-specific issues and needs, treatment, and criminal justice policies should be addressed.