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Getting Out: Women in Transition

Abigail Gordon

Washington University in St. Louis

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GETTING OUT: WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Abigail Gordon

Mentor: Linda Lindsey

The United States has the highest prison population in the world, with over two million individuals who are currently incarcerated and almost five million under some form of supervisory or custodial control of the criminal justice system. Since the 1980s the amount of women in prison has risen 700%. This dramatic rise in women going to prison means that there is also a significant increase in those transitioning back into society once released. However, 66% of women released are re-arrested within three years. "Getting Out: Women in Transition" explores this transitional period, asking why the recidivism rate is so high and what would make the transition process more successful for specifically women. I interviewed two previously incarcerated women about their journeys and what it means for them to be successful. I found that women's issues upon re-entry are magnified by the necessity to support their family in combination with finding employment and housing, in addition to often battling with addiction. However, these challenges can be significantly alleviated through the productive creation of relationships and the correct transitional programing, leading to a significant decrease in the recidivism rate and an increase in women leading successful lives.

This article is interspersed with videos of the two women that I interviewed in order to allow for their voices to be heard, not just quoted. With the help of Dave Walsh and the greater American Culture Studies department, I created a website to display my article and the videos in an easily relatable and comprehensive medium. I wanted my thesis to reach people, and I believe that this combination of the written word, videos, and online access is the most beneficial way to do so in an academic setting.