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Cognitive Restructuring through Dreams & Imagery:
Descriptive Analysis of a Women's Prison-Based Program

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Abstract

This report describes process and outcome evaluation of an innovative program based in a women’s maximum-security correctional facility. Methodology included review of program materials, unobtrusive observation of group process, participant evaluation forms, focus groups, and individual interviews with current and former program participants. Findings indicate that program was a great source of emotional respite, release, and support for the women, with women describing increased insights into themselves, their traumas, and their crimes. Implications are discussed, including popular appeal of dream work and its potential clinical relevance to prisoners’ inner conflicts.

**KEY WORDS:** prisoners; incarceration; women; dreams; group therapy; correctional programming.
COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING THROUGH DREAMS & IMAGERY: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF A WOMEN’S PRISON-BASED PROGRAM

Introduction

Cognitive therapies are gaining visibility within correctional programming and have demonstrated empirical support in reducing recidivism in adult and juvenile offenders (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). Amid shrinking budgets, prisons are increasingly reliant upon programs provided by non-profits or community volunteers—programs which vary in content but often share a group-therapeutic structure and use of cognitive techniques to facilitate coping or problem-solving. Literature on the effectiveness of these programs is scant. This report describes process and outcome evaluation of an innovative program entitled “Cognitive Restructuring through Dreams and Imagery.”

Program Overview

The program, based in a women’s maximum-security correctional facility, includes cognitive, experiential, and didactic modalities common to many group therapies. Specific techniques include dream work, guided imagery, learning about the science behind sleep phenomena, and group discussion. The program draws upon both experiential and rational processing. According to Cognitive Self Theory, an individual’s experiential processing system contains holistic imagery, narratives, and metaphors representing previous experiences and related emotional associations. Processing in this system is intuitive and below the level of consciousness. The rational system processes analytically and is intentional, logical, and actively experienced within conscious awareness (Epstein, 1990). Within the program, experiential modalities facilitate participants’ self-awareness, affect regulation, and processing of traumatic
experiences while rational modalities help participants to identify conflicts and address
distorted thinking patterns (TMHS, 2007). Addressing such patterns is the essence of
cognitive restructuring—replacing maladaptive thought patterns with constructive
thoughts and beliefs (Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, 2008).

The program’s primary facilitator is a licensed clinical social worker with 15 years
experience in studying and working with dreams. She directs the program toward
several overarching goals: providing a safe context to work on personal issues; raising
awareness of internal thoughts, emotions, and the continuity of consciousness
throughout waking and sleeping; learning new ways to conceptualize thoughts, address
harmful assumptions, and become more self-nurturing; creating a sense of community,
commonality, and connection; and inspiring a sense of hope. Enrollment is voluntary,
and most participants hear about the group through word-of-mouth. As with other
programs at the prison, participants must be free of disciplinary actions to enroll. Each
group includes up to 10 participants and meets once a week for 14 weeks. At the onset
of our evaluation, the multi-week program had already been delivered in its entirety
more than ten times.

The program model derives from the group dream-work technique of Dr.
Montague Ullman (1996). Ullman’s process for group work with dreams begins with one
individual volunteering to share the manifest content of a dream. Other group members
then ask questions clarifying information that was not explicit in the dreamer’s account
(e.g., “Are there any feelings that you were aware of in your dream?” “Were you the
same age as you are now?”). This is followed by an exercise in which the group makes
the dream its own and members share feelings that they associate with the dream—the
intent being to create a pool of meanings that may be helpful to the dreamer. The dreamer may respond and offer his or her own associations. The group aids the dreamer in searching for context—the emotional residues that triggered the dream (e.g., “Did anything happen recently that left you with that feeling?”). At this point, the dreamer “plays back” the dream, recounting it and including any new or existing associations. This often evokes a different feeling in the dreamer as the once private and ephemeral experience come back as a more palpable public creation. Group members may offer further integrative orchestration of associations to the dream, and the dreamer is encouraged to revisit the dream alone while not under group pressure so that additional connections might be discovered (Ullman, 2001).

**Previous Research on Dream Work in Therapy**

The International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD, 2009) defines dream work as an effort to explore meaning beyond literal interpretation for a dream recalled from sleep. The IASD recognizes the dreamer as the decision-maker regarding significance of a dream and notes that every dream may have multiple meanings. Persons who lead dream work include therapists, educators, social workers, or group facilitators.

Ullman (1994) describes dream groups as a vehicle for working out feelings using metaphors and imagery of dreams. The end goal is self-healing or positive growth in the emotional and physical realm. Scholarly literature on efficacy of dream work in achieving this healing is limited, with much of extant empirical work addressed in a comprehensive review by Pesant and Zadra (2004). These authors detail underlying assumptions of dream work as well as descriptive and experimental studies to examine
clinical utility of dream work. The "continuity hypothesis" (Domhoff, 1996, 2002) posits that content of dreams are associated with the dreamer's waking concerns. Despite this association, few therapists address clients' dreams in routine practice, possibly—in part—due to feelings of uncertainty regarding how to effectively do so (Pesant & Zadra, 2004).

Research suggests expected gains of dream work include increased client insight into the self and increased client involvement in the therapeutic process. Empirical data shows some support for effectiveness of dream work in reducing frequency of recurrent dreams (Webb & Fagan, 1993) and enhancing commitment to therapy (Cartwright, Tipton, & Wicklund, 1980; Hill et al., 2000). The latter may have important implications for persons resistant to use of traditional therapeutic approaches, and Cohen (1999) found that survivors of trauma were likely to be more open to exploring issues via dreams versus in direct therapeutic interventions. Pesant and Zadra note that "clients may be less reluctant to discuss disturbing issues when these are approached through dream exploration, partly because dreams are often seen as not being real, and a safer distance exists between the client and the material evoked by the dream" (2004, p.497). Accordingly, it may be possible that dream work would be well suited to populations of incarcerated females, in that substantial evidence demonstrates that these girls and women have experienced high levels of victimization and other adverse life events (Browne, Miller, & Maguin, 1999; DeHart, 2008; Harden & Hill, 1998; Richie, 1996; Steiner, Garcia, & Mathews, 1997).

We were able to locate only a single author's writings on use of dream work within correctional settings. Bette Ehlert (1996, 1999) writes poignantly about the subjective experience of directing a women's dream group at a county jail. Her writings
focus largely on clinical discoveries of this process, including connections between
dwomen's trauma and their perpetration of crime. "I was not prepared for what I found.
What I found was that jails are psychically filthy places--full of bloody dreams and gory
feelings that are never mopped up " (1999, p.32). Ehlert vividly describes her own
realizations as well as revelations experienced by women in her group. She encourages
dream work focused on cognitive exploration of alternative situations to traumatic
events in order to break the "inevitable connection between trauma and crime" (p.50). In
support of such techniques, some research has indicated that experiential writing about
dreams may facilitate cognitive restructuring to address traumatic distress (Kuiken,
Dunn, & LoVerso, 2008). To date, we know of no published work directed toward
evaluation of dream work in correctional settings. The present study sets a foundation
by examining processes and outcomes of a prison-based women's dream group.

Method

Evaluation Approach

This research was granted exemption from human subjects review by an
institutional review board as evaluation of an existing service program. The study was
guided by principles of extended-term mixed-method evaluation design, in that choice of
methods was guided by developmental stage of the program and the most pressing
questions to be answered at the time data were collected (Chatterji, 2004). The study
was requested by the program’s director as a means of identifying key processes and
subjective outcomes for participants of the dream work group. Specific goals of
evaluation were to attest to program characteristics and identify benefits of participation
so that these might be conveyed to correctional administrators and to the broader field.
The program director also wished to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program for purposes of ongoing refinement. Chatterji (2004) emphasizes the importance of such formative evaluation to document and shape programs before mounting more rigorous experimental or quasi-experimental studies.

We employed a mixed-method approach via quantitative survey and qualitative interview components. Methodology included review of program materials, unobtrusive observation of group process once each for two separate groups, participant evaluation forms administered at the final session for six consecutive runs of the program, focus groups with participants from each of two separate dream groups, and individual interviews with current and former program participants.

**Sampling & Consent**

Prior to the research, the program director gained permission from all current dream group participants for the evaluator to be present during selected group sessions for observational purposes. All focus-group and interview participants signed standard correctional consent forms and received a project information sheet describing purpose of the evaluation and their rights as participants. A total of 19 women participated in our evaluation focus groups and interviews (5 in one group, 7 in another group, and 7 individual interviews), including program participants who signed up for interviews as well as several drop-outs recruited at the request of the evaluator.

**Transcription & Analyses**

Field notes were transcribed by the interviewer. No participant identifiers, demographics, or criminal history data were recorded in order to protect confidentiality within this small, diverse sample. Descriptive statistics were performed on quantitative
data from evaluation forms using SPSS software. Qualitative transcripts were analyzed using ATLAS/ti software, and findings and excerpted quotations illustrate major themes that emerged from our grounded theory analyses (Strauss & Corbin, 1991).

Results & Discussion

Results include quantitative results of participant evaluation forms and qualitative findings from focus groups and interviews.

Participant Evaluation Forms

The evaluator implemented uniform evaluation forms during the most recent six groups (N = 55). These forms included ratings to reflect potential benefits of dream groups as described in the literature, including dream groups as: helping work out feelings, helping learn about the self, helping relate to how other people feel, helping deal with everyday problems, helping set goals for oneself, and providing hope for facing the future. We also assessed group climate via items on whether groups were a safe place to share inner thoughts and a place where one could say what's on one's mind. As can be seen in participant ratings (Figure 1), the program was very positively received by women. Foremost, participants indicated that dream group was a safe place to share thoughts, say what was on their minds, and work out their feelings. The program also helped women to learn about themselves, relate to others' feelings, and gave the women hope for the future. The program was rated lower in helping women set goals for themselves or deal with their everyday problems, but these ratings were nevertheless quite high. Exploratory analyses indicate that these ratings were largely comparable across groups and uncorrelated with number of group sessions attended.
Qualitative Findings

Qualitative findings address themes including motivations for enrollment, group process, and impact of the group on women's well-being. Women spoke very frankly in both interviews and focus groups, from which representative anonymous quotations are excerpted below in italics.

Motivations for Enrollment

A common motivation for enrolling in the program was to address unusual dreams or nightmares.

"I was having a bad dream over and over, and someone suggested that I need to talk about it. It was a devastating dream. When I came to the group, everything just eased out....It's a way to express yourself, to get your feelings out."

A few participants had more general motivations of continuing education and learning about themselves, and even fewer enrolled to placate counselors' urging that they get involved in some sort of group or activity. Once involved in the program, most participants looked forward to attending each week. Sometimes attendance was disrupted by work demands (e.g., if crew was short-staffed), lockdowns that resulted in schedule changes, and other occurrences germane to prison settings. Attrition from the program was usually attributed to related issues (e.g., participant would miss a week due to work and fail to return). Many participants repeated the program, and they often felt a bond with other group members.

"We've become like an extended family. We're very open, honest, and able to trust one another."
Group Process

During the first group session, the group facilitator provided a handout describing goals and ground rules for the group (e.g., confidentiality, acceptance of all faiths). The utility of these rules was immediately evident. In individual interviews, some group members recounted an incident in which confidentiality had been breached by one member. They described feeling safe expressing themselves having seen the program director strictly enforce confidentiality and discharge that individual from the group. During observation, the evaluator witnessed group adherence to ground rules as a member described a dream pertaining to her spiritual affiliation, for which she had been persecuted by some inmates in the yard. Here, in group, members demonstrated respect and displayed no prejudice, asking thoughtful questions to probe matters relevant to the dream work (e.g., “Is anyone trying to lead you away from what you believe in?”).

Each session of the program employed Ullman’s (1996) process for working with members’ dreams. As prescribed by Ullman, this process began with the facilitator asking for volunteers to share a dream. The dream can be a recent dream, one from childhood, or any of her own dreams that the dreamer wishes to discuss. The dreams varied widely in content and level of abstraction, and the group accommodated this. After several women shared, the facilitator prompted the group to select one dream to work with. Members began the discussion by asking questions (e.g., "What kind of a bird was it?" "When did you have the dream?"). The dreamer was provided the option to answer or indicate that she prefer not answer. The dreamer then would retell the dream, including as much detail as possible. Group members shared their own interpretations,
Cognitive Restructuring through Dreams

stating, “If it were my dream...”. This strategy kept the dreamer from being put on the defensive and allowed others in the group to learn about themselves through someone else’s dream. It underscored the personal nature of dreams and that interpretation is a subjective process that derives from each dreamer’s own experiences.

"I like that it is a safe place to share things. People are open minded, and they aren't judging you. They are supportive of you and your dreams."

"I like that everyone gives their opinion about a dream....It's like you’re in a chamber, and everybody disappears, and you’re there with your dream. And then everybody else is there to talk about it with you."

Throughout the discussion, members were free to express emotions in non-aggressive ways, including use of humor and laughing with--not at--other members, as well as crying without fear of embarrassment. The facilitator continued to normalize (e.g., "It’s not uncommon to dream about that"), kept the discussion focused, and assured that the group did not fall into a unitary interpretation of the dream.

"I would have never thought that other people had dreams like I have. Like I was ashamed about a sex dream that I had. I didn't go into the details of it, but I told them that when I woke up, it felt like I’d had sex. I thought, ’Oh no, [the group facilitator] is going to think I’m a pervert.’ But she kept on talking like it was normal. You can talk about anything and not be judged, not worry that people will talk about you behind your back."

An emphasis on multiple interpretations allowed a more individualized approach than that typical of books on dream interpretation.
“This group offers the idea that a dream isn’t always literally what you dreamed about. Like if you dreamed about a child that was 7 or 8 years old, it’s not necessarily about a child that age. The leader might ask you what you were doing 7 or 8 years ago. It gives you a new perspective for looking at your dreams, to see new sides of things in a less threatening way.”

This entire process was universally viewed positively by group members.

“Dream group is a clean way of going through therapy. No meds. No drugs. This is how I want it to be. I don't want to be a zombie on pills.”

“It helps you to understand things from your past that led you here, and it helps you get to a point of peace. It helps you feel free. Although you’re locked up, you can feel free in here.”

Beyond the shared dream work that formed the core of group process, a number of other activities took place in the group. Sometimes group members acted out dreams, and the facilitator often shared educational materials about sleep phenomena such as lucid dreaming (i.e., when one is aware that one is dreaming and takes control of the dream) and sleep paralysis (i.e., when one is immobilized during REM sleep). Group members enjoyed learning about these things and demonstrated their knowledge throughout dream discussions. In a humorous example, the facilitator had previously explained "day residue"–how thoughts and events from the day's activities may show up in that night's dream. Later, when a dreamer told of dreaming of a filthy restroom with "stuff hanging from all around the edge of the toilet seat," another member quipped, "Oh, don't worry about that. That's just day residue!" The group laughed in appreciation of the member's creative use of dual meaning for the term.
The group also included instruction on strategies that members could use on their own. As a way of exerting control over something that seemed uncontrollable, they sometimes rewrote dreams but conclude the dreams with different endings.

"[I like] rewriting the dreams. I learned how to give a better ending to dreams. I can take power away from my nightmares, take power back."

Alternatively, they sometimes attempted to engage in lucid dreaming by "going back into a dream" that had been interrupted. If they wished to find out more about their own dreams, they sometimes dialogued with themselves in the same way they might dialogue with another dreamer.

"If you wanted to find out more about your dream, the dream is an extension of yourself, so you can have a dialogue with yourself or whoever was in your dream to find out more."

The facilitator also gave each member a notebook in which they could journal about daily events and dreams in order to identify themes or issues. The facilitator taught mediation techniques as a means of relaxation and personal reflection.

"[The facilitator] gives us time to relax ourselves, where you tune out and focus on something else. I do it in my cube. It helps me come to peace with myself and feel the moment. It helps me get into me and get through the day. I use it as an everyday thing when I’m tensed up. I use it to calm myself down."

"When I come home from work here, I’m stressed, and I do the labyrinth. [The facilitator] gave us one on paper. You follow the maze with your finger, and you do it slow. While you do it, you try to think of a peaceful place. I do it when I want
to wind down in the evening to go to sleep. I run my fingers through the labyrinth.

By the time I lay down, I’m ready to sleep.”

Group members appreciated that the facilitator tailored her approach to the individual needs of group members. For instance, she often talked individually with members before or after group, brought in books that might be of interest to particular members, or handed out poems or stickers pertaining to specific dreams.

Effects on Well-Being

Participants’ subjective impressions of the dream group revealed a number of areas in which participation contributed to well-being. At the most basic level, the group provided a respite from the sometimes chaotic or stressful interactions in the prison’s dorms and yard. Participants also felt that the dream work itself served a therapeutic function, allowing them to vent emotions, explore subconscious issues that influenced their moods, and gain a sense of mastery amidst so many feelings of powerlessness in prison. Many of the women struggled with nightmares—stemming from histories of trauma, mistakes in their past, and fears about their futures.

"I was real sick one day because of a dream I had. I was sick to my stomach because of it....there was so much blood in the dream that I could taste it and smell it...I have a lot deal with, and I bring it to the group.”

The dream group helped women become aware of precipitating issues, gave them knowledge about sleep phenomena (e.g., stages of sleep), and imparted specific strategies (e.g., writing about dreams or engaging in active imagination) that reduced the threat of intrusive thoughts and dreams.
"I’m not scared now to go back into a dream and finish it to the end. You get back into the same position and go back to sleep....Before, you’d never get to the end of your dream. It was like a rainbow where you never get to the end. Now I get to the end and release it."

For the women in our sample, much of the dreams and the corresponding dream work involved coming to terms with their crime or time in prison.

"It’s amazing how much your dreams have to do with your time and with things like anniversaries that come up. I realized I wasn’t the only one who felt the same way."

Although the women’s crimes were typically not discussed in the dream group, some women felt that the discussion of symbolism and hidden meaning helped provide insight into why they did their crime. The dream work helped some women get beyond nightmares and flashbacks to come to peace with their violent pasts.

"When a dream puts fear on you, [the facilitator] helps you transform that dream....Dream group helps you transform your fear to peace, your sadness to happiness."

"I was having dreams about my crime, like flashbacks about something that I did back when I was 18, and it messed me up bad. This group helped me accept that and accept my dreams, and then I didn’t have those dreams anymore because I’d accepted it."

The group also helped women face the challenges of life in prison. Several women explained that prison was the first time in their lives they had been free from the...
fog of alcohol and drugs, so they were struggling with an awareness of dreaming that they had not recently had.

"Most people, when they’re free, don’t have a chance to explore who they are because there’s drugs and alcohol and you’re out there trying to figure out what you’re going to do next....They had no chance to be themselves outside."

"Drugs, anger, bottling things up--they are all a danger to us. Eventually, you’re gonna explode, and it’s gonna be something that gets you in trouble. It could all be avoided if you just had someone to talk to. In here--in prison--it’s hard to find people to talk to that you can trust. The group leader listens to everything."

They felt the group helped to get through unfamiliar feelings and relieve pressures associated with strange or threatening dreams. Women also began to use dreams to anticipate possible situations and get input from similarly situated others on best ways to address things. The women felt that in this way, the dream group helped them make better choices and stay out of trouble.

"I’ll have a dream about someone that I may run into, someone that I argue with or that has maybe a bad attitude. Then when I see them the next day, I can make it go the other way, approach it differently."

"I know methods to relax and meditate. If I have a bad day, maybe I would have reacted by being ill tempered, which leads to arguments, which leads to fights, which leads to police, which leads to jail....[Now] I can stand there and meditate...instead of being verbal."
Because being in the dream group required that women not have disciplinary actions against them, there was also incentive to steer clear of problem situations in order to maintain membership in this valued program.

"All I know is that I used to be in lock up like every two weeks, and I haven’t been there for 5 months since I’ve been in the group."

"You take in knowledge and realize that you could be a better person inside and out. You realize you don’t need to be out on the compound getting in trouble and getting involved with bad cliques."

"Dream group is an investment for me. I am motivated to stay out of trouble because I don’t want it to be taken away. I want to stay in the group. There is just too much to lose."

More generally, the women felt the dream group increased self-awareness and self-discipline; helped to build their character, confidence, and self-esteem; enhanced their creativity; and contributed to feelings of inner peace.

"I've gotten more assertive and more confident, and I value myself more. I used to think I was a horrible person for some of the things that I dreamed because I took them literally."

"The group leader really believes in self-help. This group puts you in the position where you can help yourself. You grow as a person and as a woman."

"It helps you realize where you are at in life and where you went wrong, and what you need to get it right. It helps build character to be the kind of person that you really are."
Women also described some perceived health effects of the group such as experiencing more restful sleep and alleviation of certain health conditions.

"It has a big impact on my sleep at night...I don’t feel like I need Tylenol PM or to see a doctor to get sleep medicines. There are things I know how to do now that work as good or better, and I don’t have to worry about dependency."

On an interpersonal level, women believed the group helped them to connect with others, share and learn from others' perspectives and experiences in life, and rehearse new approaches to relationships for better interactions.

"I think the group affects the relationships, like you break things down and it helps you open up more. Like if you miss your kids, you see them and you hug and kiss them, but you haven’t been able to say to them what you really want to say. Once you dream about it, it brings it out and you can say it."

"I dream about my children just about every night....I felt like they were there with me. It is reassuring. I tell my children what I learned in the dream group, about things that apply to me. I am more comfortable with who I am because of the group. That means that my children must be more comfortable with me, too."

An important benefit of the group relative to other prison programs was that--unlike some groups that addressed previous trauma or substance abuse--the dream group gave women the power to go beyond their pasts rather than dwell on it.

"In [different program], you’re perpetually a victim, even if you have overcome it, there’s still a part of you that’s a victim. Here, in dream group, you can be whoever you want to be. You can take charge of your life and not just be a
Dream group is different because it’s a way to acknowledge things in your life, but then you can get beyond them.”

Women described how the group helped gain insight into feelings and their own current position as well as gather bearings on life for charting a course toward the future.

"Now I dream about my appeal and what will happen if I lose, or I dream that I went home but then someone told me it would be better if I moved to a different town. My dreams give me insight into my hopes and fears, and it teaches me how to come to terms with just being in prison."

"We all make bad choices. We all just want a chance to make better ones. The dream group has helped me do that."

A number of women believed that they would continue to keep dream diaries after leaving the program, and some expressed a desire for a transition program that they could attend once released from prison.

"If there was a transitional place on the outside with groups like this, it would help. Women in here have so much time—they’ve been locked up a long time. Then they put you out on the streets after so many years."

"I will continue to keep track of my dreams, and that will help me go through new situations. I will be one step up when I get out because I know about dreams and I’m more in tune with myself."

**Conclusion**

Findings indicate that the dream groups have been very positively received by these incarcerated women. The groups seem to be a great source of emotional respite,
release, and support for the women. Women described increased insights into themselves, their past traumas, their crimes, and their relationships, and some women described perceived effects on their hope for the future, their self-esteem, and physical health. Fewer women described impacts on coping with everyday problems, but several indicated that the desire to maintain membership in the group had kept them out of trouble. The drug-free approach to stress relief and relaxation may be of particular benefit to incarcerated women, in that many have struggled with dependency. Also, the less threatening nature of dream work relative to direct therapeutic intervention may be a resource for women reluctant to participate in traditional therapies.

It is possible to map the process by which the group contributes to well-being in terms of a logic model (see Figure 2). The situation is one in which women’s opportunities for shared expression are limited by the prison context. They come to the institution with histories of trauma and adversity including victimization, crime, addiction, poverty, and family conflict. Withdrawal of everyday freedoms may be characterized by feelings of powerlessness. The group structure promotes connection through nonjudgmental sharing and confidentiality. Group experiential and cognitive components contribute to increased awareness of waking concerns and ability to reconceptualize maladaptive thinking. Didactic techniques enhance women’s understandings of sleep phenomena and self-regulatory techniques. All of this may contribute to self-healing (e.g., reduction in intrusive thoughts) and positive growth (e.g., increased awareness of self and others, sensed mastery and hope).

These findings are, of course, preliminary and derive from a non-random sample of a single program. However, these findings form a foundation from which future
research and practice might develop. This particular program, for instance, might develop formal protocols that might aid other program developers in replication at other institutions across the nation. As the program evolves, we might perform tests of the logic model or conduct quasi-experimental evaluation to examine program impact on factors such as psychosocial well-being, prison disciplinary records, or criminal recidivism. Dream work is a phenomenon surrounded by skepticism, but this research demystifies some of its elusive aspects and may lend credence to the theoretical rationale and practical efficacy of dream work for specific applications. That is, dream work may possess some popular appeal as enigmatic and enjoyable, while at the same time having clinical relevance as an access point to the client’s inner conflicts. Because dream work may be helpful for engaging resistant clients, program developers might consider integration of dream work with more traditional cognitive behavioral therapies. For re-entry after prison, community-based transition programs might be considered. In sum, findings here indicate that dream groups have potential for positive impact for female offenders both within and beyond correctional settings.

References


Figure 1: Participant Evaluations from Six Runs of the Program

Participant Ratings (N = 55)

- Work out feelings: 4.6182
- Learn about self: 4.5455
- Relate to others: 4.3818
- Deal with problems: 4.0556
- Set goals: 4.1091
- Hope for future: 4.3889
- Safe place to share thoughts: 4.7636
- Say what's on mind: 4.7455
Figure 2: Logic Model of Group Process

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<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Trauma &amp; adverse life events</td>
<td>Group structure (e.g., nonjudgmental, confidential, varied perspectives)</td>
<td>Sensed community &amp; connection</td>
<td>Self-healing &amp; positive growth</td>
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<td>Experiential processing (e.g., narratives, visualizing)</td>
<td>Increased mastery over waking concerns &amp; emotions</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cognitive processing (e.g., guided imagery, group discussion)</td>
<td>New ways to conceptualize maladaptive thoughts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Didactic content (e.g., sleep phenomena, self-regulation)</td>
<td>Increased understanding of sleep phenomena &amp; self-discipline techniques</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensed powerlessness</td>
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