

Gender Responsive Discipline and Sanctions Policy Guide for Women's Facilities

Alyssa Benedict, CORE Associates
Becki Ney, Center for Effective Public Policy (Editor)
Rachelle Ramirez, Center for Effective Public Policy (Editor)

Welcome to the homepage of the *Gender Responsive Discipline and Sanctions Policy Guide for Women's Facilities*.

Purpose of the Guide

The Guide is designed to assist corrections professionals in revising discipline and sanctions policies and practices to more effectively manage women inmates, and create safer facilities for staff and inmates. It builds on a growing body of research and practice that supports an approach to discipline and sanctions tailored to women inmates. It also provides a synopsis of American Correctional Association (ACA) standards, and case law relevant to discipline and sanctions policies and practices for women.

The Guide outlines a process for corrections agency leaders, women's facility wardens, managers, and staff to:

- Gain a greater understanding of the gender responsive, trauma-informed research and best practices, and their implications for discipline and sanctions policies and operational practices;
- Explore the relationship between discipline and sanctions and facility culture;
- Assess the strengths and challenges of current discipline and sanctions policies and practices;
- Gain a greater understanding of how to adapt ACA "discipline and sanctions" standards to women's facilities; and
- Revise and implement discipline and sanctions policies and practices within women's facilities.

The Guide is a new and innovative approach for applying what is known about women (i.e., research and practitioner experience) to discipline and sanctions policies and practices. Its primary purpose is to inform corrections work in this area, and contribute to the growing body of knowledge and research to achieve more successful outcomes with women offenders.

NRCJIW Wants to Hear From You!

Have you developed/implemented gender responsive approaches to discipline and sanctions with women inmates? The NRCJIW is collecting innovative policies, practices, data and research to inform our collective work in this area and to begin a national conversation about this important topic.

Please contact us to share your efforts.

How to Use this Guide

The Guide was developed specifically for use by executive management teams within women's facilities that have been charged by the agency/facility leadership to conduct a policy review of discipline and sanctions. However, it can also be used as a resource by other staff, stakeholders, and any individuals who wish to incorporate gender responsive and trauma-informed strategies into their day-to-day work with women inmates.

The primary audience for the Guide is women's correctional facility executive management teams.

Section 2 outlines a suggested step-by-step process that executive management teams can use to conduct a thorough analysis of current policies and practices, and implement revised policies and practices. The steps include:

1. Committing to discipline and sanctions policy and practice changes that are anchored in a gender responsive and trauma-informed perspective;
2. Becoming more familiar with and knowledgeable about the research that supports a gender responsive and trauma-informed approach to discipline and sanctions (see Appendix);
3. Clarifying the facility's values and goals for discipline and sanctions;
4. Engaging staff at all levels at all stages of policy review, development and implementation (see Section 2);
5. Gaining a greater understanding of the strengths, challenges and gaps of current policies and practices (see Sections 3 and 4);
6. Developing an implementation plan for revising policies and practices; and
7. Implementing the revised policies and practices and measuring the results.

Users of the Guide may choose to review the materials in the order they are presented—as is suggested for facility executive management teams—or select one or more sections for review based on their particular area of interest. However, the content in the Appendix provides an important foundation for understanding the research implications (Section 3) and application of ACA standards (Section 4). Users are encouraged to become familiar with the research prior to their review of these sections.

Getting Started

The Guide is organized into five sections and an appendix. To begin, click on any of the sections below to download a PDF of that section. [Click here](#) to download a pdf of this webpage.

SECTION	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Section 1	Overview	Provides a rationale for revising discipline and sanctions in women’s facilities, including the benefits and challenges of engaging in this work.
Section 2	Process	Describes a step-by-step process for reviewing and revising discipline and sanctions policies and practices. Includes ten components to consider when revising policies.
Section 3	Research Implications	Provides implications for revising discipline and sanctions policies and practices based on research from multiple disciplines.
Section 4	Integrating Research & Practice with ACA Standards	Reviews seven ACA standards regarding “Rules and Discipline” and how they can be adapted to meet the needs of women inmates and women’s facilities. Each standard includes a set of self-assessment questions.
Section 5	Legal Issues	Provides an overview of relevant case law pertaining to discipline and sanctions in women’s correctional facilities.
Appendix	Research Findings	Provides a discussion of the foundational research that forms the basis for the concepts and recommendations discussed throughout the Guide.

Acknowledgments

This Guide is the result of a collaborative effort by NRCJIW staff and partners and is the culmination of many years of work by Alyssa Benedict, CORE Associates, and many other practitioners and policymakers who have worked to develop models and tools regarding the behavioral management and motivation of justice-involved women.

As the primary author of the Guide, the NRCJIW would like to thank Ms. Benedict for her substantial contributions to its development. Becki Ney and Rachelle Ramirez from the Center for Effective Public Policy also developed content and served as the Guide’s editors. Phyllis Modley from the Center for Effective Public Policy and Andie Moss from The Moss Group provided project oversight, and their expertise contributed significantly to the Guide’s early development.

Finally, we wish to thank Jennie Lancaster, Former Chief Deputy Secretary, North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Division of Adult Correction, for her careful review from a practitioner’s perspective. Her keen insights and perspective contributed significantly to revisions of the Guide and its final organization and content.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2010-DJ-BX-K080 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the SMART Office, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.