

UNAFEI's 175th International Training Course (Online)
“Treatment of Women Offenders”

1. Duration and Participants

From 26 October to 11 November 2021

21 overseas participants from 11 jurisdictions

2. Programme Overview

This programme focused on the treatment of women offenders, aiming to enhance knowledge and understanding on gender-responsive offender treatment in the community and in prisons by taking into account the gender-specific needs of women offenders. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the programme was conducted online. To account for the time differences and work duties of each participant, the participants were divided into two groups, and each group had live Q&A sessions with the lecturers, discussions and individual presentations online. The participants were also provided a virtual conference room and chat room through which they were able to communicate with the UNAFEI faculty and staff members as well as their colleagues in real time.

3. Lecturers

(1) Lectures

Lectures were video-recorded in advance, and the participants watched them on-demand. They submitted questions to the lecturers online in advance of the live Q&A sessions with the lecturers. Lectures were given by an expert from the United States, ad hoc lecturers from Japan and a UNAFEI faculty member:

- Expert from the USA
 - Dr. Stephanie S. Covington (Co-Director, Institute for Relational Development and Co-Director, Center for Gender & Justice)
“Gendered Justice: Creating Services for Women”
- Ad hoc lecturers
 - Ms. KAMIOKA Harue (Founder of the Women’s Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Center “DARC”)
“Mother-child Support Programme for Women with Drug Use Disorders and Their Kids”
“Outcomes of Interviews with Women with Lived Experiences of Addiction and Their Children”
 - Ms. KINOSHITA Toshimi (President of the women’s halfway house “Ryozenkai”)

“Halfway House (Rehabilitation Facility) ‘Ryozenkai’”

- Ms. ODAGIRI Mari (Chief of the Sendai Regional Correction Headquarters)
“Characteristics of Women’s Correctional Institutions – Challenges and Solutions”

In addition, Professor TAKAI Ayaka from UNAFEI provided a lecture on “Supervision of Female Clients in Community Settings in Japan”.

(2) Q&A Sessions with the Lecturers

The Q&A session with Dr. Covington helped deepen the participants’ understanding on the theoretical background and scientific evidence that support the idea of gender-responsive offender treatment, while the Q&A session with the Japanese lecturers focused on the practical aspects of effective gender-responsive offender treatment in the community and prison settings. During the Q&A session with Dr. Covington, the participants were divided into two breakout rooms to discuss and propose a plan to put into practice the Guiding Principles for Gender-Responsive Services recommended by Dr. Covington in her lecture. Each group presented the outcomes of their discussions and was given feedback by Dr. Covington.

(3) Action Plans

At the end of the programme, participants were required to make and present their action plans to improve the treatment of women offenders in each jurisdiction based on what they had learned throughout the programme. It was obvious from the Action Plans presented by the participants that everyone remarkably enhanced their understanding on gender-responsive offender treatment and was eager to put their plans into practice in their jurisdictions, and a lot of interesting ideas were proposed to achieve gender-responsive offender treatment.

4. Feedback from the Participants

We received a lot of positive feedback from the participants, such as “This was the first time to learn about the concept of ‘gender-responsiveness’”, and “It was a great experience to share our practices with other participants”. There were also many requests for in-person training and follow-up training. We are sure that all the participants will make the most of what they have learned throughout the programme, and despite the inability to meet in person, it was worth providing the opportunity to learn from each other online.

5. Comments from the Programming Officer (Professor SASAKI Ayako)

The concept of gender-responsive offender treatment and its practical application is relatively new in the long history of corrections in Japan, and while it seemed to be alien to the

participants at the beginning of this programme, we saw that women offenders in every jurisdiction share many similar issues in areas such as drug addiction, traumatic experiences, intimate relationship violence and abuse, and parental responsibilities. It was also clear that the participants had been aware of those issues in their daily duties of treating women offenders and that the concept of gender responsiveness provided the participants with a theoretical framework and scientific approach that would be useful in practice. The course also enabled the participants to share a lot of suggestions on how to effectively handle practical issues. During the programme, I was pleased to hear from some participants that they had already shared with their colleagues the knowledge they gained through this programme, and I am confident that the outcomes of this programme will contribute to the development of treatment of women offenders in their respective jurisdictions.