

RESEARCH DIGEST

STRUGGLES OF RE-ENTERING MOTHERHOOD DURING REINTEGRATION



Reuniting with their children is one of the top priorities for incarcerated mothers during post-release¹

Re-integration is a Challenging Experience for Incarcerated Mothers



Dealing with mother's guilt and labelled as a bad mother & ex-offender^{2,4}



Mothers often face greater social stigma for their offence



Experience roller coaster of emotions^{3,4}

Joy of reuniting with children



Anxiety from formal supervision



Guilt & shame about their past, and self-doubt about ability to take care of their children



Family members would prevent them from taking on caregiving duties



Engage in self-destructive acts (e.g., misuse of drugs, suicide) as a coping mechanism

How Can We Empower Mothers During Reintegration



Continue to provide social support

Provide social support starting in-care, this can be in the form of lending them a **listening ear** to share their inner thoughts and feelings about reintegration



Equip mothers with strategies to manage emotions

Help mothers understand their emotional experiences and introduce **emotional regulation strategies** (e.g., **breathing exercises, journaling**) to help them manage negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, guilt) during reintegration



Provide incarcerated mothers with after-care resources

Provide incarcerated mothers a list of Parenting Support Providers (PSPs) by Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) they can seek during reintegration (e.g. Triple P Program - Positive Parenting Program)

By doing so, you are:

Providing a **safe space** for incarcerated mothers to explore negative maternal emotions and take on maternal responsibilities during their re-entry



Instilling **trust and hope** in mothers to build a future with their children through positive, instead of deviant behaviors



**SINGAPORE
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The Research Digest is intended to communicate research findings conducted in SPS and promote the use of research to inform policy and practice.

For more information on this, please contact:

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¹ Chiarolanza, C., & Bastianoni, C. (2014). Remeaning motherhood in prison: an exploratory study. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Family Studies*, 19(1).

² Baldwin, L. (2018). Motherhood disrupted: Reflections of post-prison mothers. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 26, 49-56.

³ Baldwin, L. (2020). 'A Life Sentence': The long-term impact of maternal imprisonment. In *Mothering from the Inside*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

⁴ Baldwin, L. (2021). Motherhood Challenged: A matricentric feminist study exploring the persisting impact of maternal imprisonment on maternal identity and role.