

# Reducing Stigma and Improving Access for Women with Experiences of Criminalization and Trauma

Existing research shows that experiences of intimate partner violence are a leading cause in women's incarceration and is a "direct or indirect pathway" into the criminal justice system (Gilfus, 2002; Ditcher, 2015). Racialized women are over-represented in the pathways from intimate partner violence into the criminal justice system (Gilfus, 2002).

## Common Pathways for Racialized Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence into the Criminal Justice System



### Coerced into Crimes

Abusive partners can force women to unwillingly commit crimes and wrongfully confess to crimes. Women can be falsely accused of crimes by their partners or commit crimes to escape violence (Gilfus, 2002).



### Fleeing from Abuse

Without resources to flee violence, women may turn to criminalized activities as a means of survival, such as stealing food or basic items, social welfare fraud, cheque forgery, drug sales, or sex work (Gilfus 2002; Oregon Justice Resource Centre, N.D; Ditcher, 2015).



### Coping with Abuse

To cope with experiences of abuse, women may use prohibited substances to self-medicate (Ditcher, 2015).

#### References:

- Ditcher, M. (2015). Women's experiences of abuse as a risk factor for incarceration: a research update. National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women.
- Gilfus, M. (2002). Women's experiences of abuse as a risk factor for incarceration. VAWnet Applied Research Forum.
- Oregon Justice Resource Center.(N.D). Herstory Oregon survey intimate partner violence and trauma

The Fund for Gender Equality is supported by a collaboration between Community Foundations of Canada and the Equality Fund with support from the Government of Canada.