

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF RAGE TOWARDS THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS:
DIVERSE VOICES WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

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Abstract

A multi-method study investigating incarcerated women's experiences of rage towards their intimate partners was conducted. The sample was drawn from a Philadelphia prison's recovery unit for women. Phenomenological and feminist critical theory perspectives guided the study; these combined approaches captured the essence of rage, while also offering a critical analysis for understanding complexities involved in the cultivation of rage. Three primary forms of data collection methods were used: (a) the *Aggression Questionnaire*, which was completed by 60 inmates; (b) a *Demographic Worksheet*, which was completed by 46 inmates and used to screen for subsequent interviews; and (c) in-depth interviews, which was completed by 37 women. Focus groups were used to debrief participants at the completion of the study. Results indicated rage as a distinct experience from anger. Past sources of emotional pain, embedded within shame and trauma, were revealed as fueling current actions of rage. Links between women's social location, their experiences of rage, and their involvement within the criminal justice system were revealed.

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