



**UPAN Newsletter** Volume 6 Number 7 | **JULY 2019**

*“Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity”*

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**UPAN 6-Year Anniversary - Women’s Issues Part 2  
Women’s Dignity Legislation - PREA at USP**

**NEXT UPAN MEETING: MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2019 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

**Kafeneio Coffee House 258 West 3300 South, Salt Lake City**

**TOPIC: GUEST SPEAKER: Stephanie Puffer of Bristol Hospice, Utah Hospice and Palliative Care Organization - to discuss possibilities for Prison Hospice in the new Utah State Prison.**

**All UPAN Meetings are free and open to the public.**

**SEPTEMBER UPAN MEETING: Monday, September 9, 2019 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

**GUEST SPEAKER: David Leavitt, Utah County Attorney on changes and reforms**

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**LATE BREAKING NEWS FROM UDC WEBSITE: New prison mail restrictions  
Additional restrictions for mail sent to inmates will go into effect beginning Aug. 1**

“Only single layer white envelopes and single layer white paper or stationary will be allowed. Ruled white paper or stationary (writing paper printed with lines as a guide for handwriting) will also be allowed. The following types of envelopes, paper or stationary, and cards will be prohibited and shall be refused or denied and returned to sender:

Color envelopes (including manila and multi-layer envelopes); color paper or stationary; greeting cards, card stock or other multi-layered paper or stationary. In addition, mail with paint, chalk, crayons, markers or highlighters used on the incoming envelope or its contents will be denied.” <https://www.corrections.utah.gov/index.php/home/alerts-2/1218-new-prison-mail-restrictions>

**Disclaimer: Formulate your own opinions about the information presented.  
This information is presented for the reader’s enlightenment and evaluation.**

## **Six Years After UPAN's First Family Meeting UPAN is Going Strong**

By Molly Prince

On Monday July 29, 2013 the first Family Support Meeting was held in the group room of my clinical office. We had put the word out through visiting our loved ones and I expected about a dozen individuals would show up. We were surprised and pleased with more than double that number, 26 family members of incarcerated individuals showed up and we began what evolved into Utah Prisoner Advocate Network (UPAN). We have agreed to and established both mission and goals and over the years UPAN has grown and worked toward those goals. UPAN has become more than just a prisoner family support group. And we still need volunteers to step up and help address the wide variety of issues the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated face on a daily basis.

**UPAN is a non-profit all volunteer organization.** We are a group of concerned individuals (mostly families of incarcerated loved ones) who commit many hours of our time doing our best to accomplish the following objectives and goals:

**Provide a safe and understanding place** for families and friends of incarcerated individuals to connect with each other and share their challenges and receive support and information to help them more effectively cope on their prison journey;

**Offer support & help to incarcerated individuals** by identifying challenges and problems faced by inmates as they serve their sentences, and to communicate with prison officials and the Utah Department of Corrections administration to address and resolve these problems and help families understand how to navigate the prison system to help their loved ones;

**Partner & collaborate with other organizations** to improve conditions in Utah's criminal justice system. This includes monthly meetings in which we invite speakers and provide education and information to UPAN families and friends of inmates, representatives from interested agencies, as well as the general public. The purpose being to improve the level of understanding of what happens in the prison system and how things work which ultimately impact prisoners, their families and support systems, as well as the

community at large. These public meetings include discussion groups, forums, panels, and lectures, as well as dissemination of information through UPAN Newsletter, UPAN Facebook page, and other electronic media;

**Identify resources.** UPAN is currently working on gathering information about resources available to families and ex-offenders once they are released from the institution to the community to assist the formerly incarcerated in rebuilding their lives in a pro-social manner.

**Encouragement.** As a founder of UPAN, I would like to share the following inspiration found in the book *The Power of Positive Leadership*, pg.176 by Jon Gordon to all of our directors, volunteers, families and advocates, both on the inside and out here:

**No matter what anyone says, just show up and do the work.** *If they praise you, show up and do the work. If they criticize you, show up and do the work. If no one even notices you, just show up and do the work. Just keep showing up, doing the work, and leading the way. Lead with passion. Fuel up with optimism. Have faith. Power up with love, maintain hope, be stubborn. Fight the good fight. Refuse to give up. Ignore the critics. Believe in the impossible. Show up. Do the work. You'll be glad you did. True grit leads to true success.*

**Appreciation goes out to each and every one of you** who have contributed to the greater good through supporting UPAN through your hard work, monetary donations, time spent on any and all of UPAN's involvements within the organization and in the community. Sending out gratitude to inmates who have sent us letters with ideas, letters with concerns about what is happening in Utah's prisons and jails, letters with inspirational stories of what happens behind bars, and letters of appreciation that keeps us going when the going gets tough. UPAN also wants to acknowledge all of the community organizations that have stepped up to address the various needs in our prison and parole systems here in Utah. UPAN provides hope to many and many provide hope to UPAN. Here's to another year of growth, knowledge, and empowerment!

## **Women's Issues Part Two – Loss of Dignity; Mental Health; Medical; Safety**

**Summary of June UPAN Meeting** by Molly Prince

*This article is a continuation of the summary of the various issues related to women incarcerated in Utah's prison system discussed at the June UPAN meeting. Summarized by Molly Prince*

**Shannon Miller-Cox's** presentation was summarized in part in the June newsletter. She also shared a perspective that the prison has basically dropped the ball on gender-sensitive assessment and re-assessment for women. It is important that all

assessments and interventions be trauma informed for all genders, however in the women's facility this failure to have this awareness can create problems for those housed there. For example, many who have been traumatized in their past tend to be hyper-alert and

need to know what is happening in their environment in order to maintain their sense of safety.

So when a woman inmate asks an officer “why” or “what’s going on?” she is generally simply trying to gather information to help her maintain her sense of personal control and safety. If the officers do not respond to the trauma question, it increases anxiety and a sense of being unsafe which can then trigger other words or behaviors that may be interpreted by staff as argumentative, resistant, or non-compliant. We were encouraged to consider carefully what it would look like to have a trauma informed prison, and appropriate trauma informed mental health and substance abuse treatment within the correctional system.

**Tonya Smith** who graduated from the University of Utah is a case manager at Journey of Hope. Tonya spoke from her own experience in Utah’s criminal justice system. She discussed her history growing up in an abusive home and that she was incarcerated seven times in a 20-year period, spending 13 of those 20 years inside before she was able to begin her journey to healing. She stated, “All it took was one person to really believe in me,” and that was the beginning of her transformation. She addressed problems created by Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) policies that do not support contact and communication of children with their incarcerated parents and shared from her own experience.

Tonya outlined problems she experienced during her prison stay citing failure of the medical service to respond in a timely manner to health care requests. She said she put in five kites in two months to see medical and all were ignored. She shared her experience knowing a woman who did not receive the appropriate medical attention and ended up having to have a leg amputated.

Tonya discussed her experience with problems in the women’s facility with both case managers and officers failing to be responsive to inmate needs. Women go into prison with mental health needs but are taken off any medications they may have been on in the community and then are diagnosed with one of the standard mental health diagnoses, often bi-polar or some sort of personality disorder. Most are prescribed a standard medication that is not effective and the women are not provided with regular mental health counseling. They come out with more serious mental health problems.

There have also been reports received by UPAN from women’s families saying the female inmates are taken off their medications upon arrival. Then if prescribed ineffective meds, doctor will refuse to allow them to receive any psychotropic medications for not taking them as prescribed. Tonya explained that when the women are misdiagnosed, then the medication

prescribed is not always the appropriate medication for the mental health condition, so the women will trade them to try to find one that will give them relief. Without proper diagnosis and consistent mental health counseling, reliance on a “one size fits all” medication is putting a Band-Aid on a cut that needs stitches, so the problem just gets worse.

**“You lose your dignity.”** Other formerly incarcerated women spoke about their experiences in Utah’s jails and prison. The consensus is that the way things are handled often go far beyond the purpose of removing someone from the community for safety purposes and it turns into how much the institution and staff can punish and humiliate the inmates.

When someone enters prison, they are literally stripped of everything that is their own, from their prescribed medical and mental health medications, right down to their socks and underwear. Inmates are at the mercy of the humanity or lack of humanity of the officers whose custody they are in.

### **Physical and Sexual Intimidation or Abuse**

Several women spoke out about their experiences being physically intimidated or sexually abused by staff. One woman mentioned her experience being sexually assaulted by a maintenance staff person several years ago. She said that in the culinary, the staff abuse the female workers by taking them into the fridge. It was reported that other prison staff, not always officers, have sexually harassed female inmates through making sexual comments and innuendo. Another related an incident in which she was physically intimidated and abused by a high ranking officer when he yelled at her to leave a meeting and proceeded to push her with his body all the way down the hall to her room.

*It should be noted that the sexual abuse and rape issues are not limited to the women of USP.* UPAN has received information from male inmates who have been sexually assaulted by other inmates. In some cases they have reported it and then informed UPAN that nothing was done to protect them; or they were further victimized by being moved away from their housing unit where they wanted to stay, resulting in job or programming losses. They are rarely given information about what consequences the perpetrator received by the prison. When UPAN receives this information about sexual assault or rape, a report is made to the UDC Victim Advocate Doug Fawson. UPAN is not provided with any information about any investigation that is conducted subsequent to these reports and the only way we know if something is being done is if the incarcerated person writes UPAN and lets us know of any investigation or results.

According to the women who have experienced this type of abuse, intimidation, assault, or rape, they do not report it out of fear of further abuse or retaliation. They are so disempowered as prisoners that they do not feel

safe in reporting. They consider the prison system permissive of all forms of abuse – verbal, psychological, physical and sexual.

**Other Safety Issues - One Woman's Harrowing Experience** - *Safety policy can interfere with timely response by officers to emergencies such as suicide / attempted suicide.*

One woman I will refer to as Dee recounted a harrowing experience she had when in R & O at USP. Due to overcrowding she was housed in a maximum security unit as she was being assessed and processed into the prison. While she was preoccupied in the cell, her roommate hung herself, right in front of her. Dee jumped up and wrapped her arms around the woman's legs and held her cellie up, trying to keep her from choking to death, all the while yelling at the top of her lungs for help. Trying to get to the emergency button to push it was impossible while holding the choking woman up but she managed to do it at one point. Eventually enough inmates were yelling to get the attention of the guards. They came to the outside of the cell and told Dee to get on the floor. She yelled at them to cut the woman down. They said they would not open the door to enter and cut the woman down until Dee got on to the floor. Dee knew if she let go of the hanging woman's legs, she could die.

Her roommate was still breathing so Dee was not willing to risk anything. She continued to yell for help and to cut the hanging woman down. She was told they had to wait for a commanding officer to come make the decision to enter the cell if the inmates were not on the ground. Finally, one of the female officers put her job on the line and made the decision to enter the cell and cut the woman down while Dee held her legs. Immediately when she was down, they put her on a bunk and Dee got on the ground. Dee was covered with bodily fluids and excrement from the woman who had hung herself but was made to sit cuffed to a bench for four hours to wait for Mental Health to come talk to her. She was not allowed to shower or change clothes.

**Mental Health Follow-up Not Always Available.**

When Mental Health finally did show up, Dee was asked a few questions, but there was no follow up. Dee is out of prison now but has never worked through that incident. It still brings strong emotion and she relives the trauma as she re-tells it. Incidents like this create even more traumatic injury to the limbic system and compound any previously damaging experiences of inmates. The mental health service in USP doesn't have enough therapists to properly serve those in the state's custody.

Failure to receive mental health attention resulted in Dee failing to be able to cope with life in the following days and weeks. She was sent out to a county jail, where mental health is also not easily accessible. She blacked out at one point and then "went crazy" reliving the memories of the event that was so traumatizing.

Rather than receiving counseling to help her cope with it all, she was locked down in the jail and then labeled as "homicidal." Even then, she was not offered mental health support. Instead they put her on psychotropic medication that was not appropriate for her situation. Risperdal which is used to treat schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, not mental health symptoms of trauma, and Celexa which is to treat depression. This combination of medication prescribed for a condition she did not have resulted in Dee being unable to think clearly or function. If a therapist in either the prison or jail had taken the time to sit with and listen to Dee to understand what the problem actually was, they might have been able to provide appropriate care. As it is, Dee has never worked through the residual trauma from that event.

**Mental Health Overall.** According to the speakers and formerly incarcerated women in attendance, women's mental health needs do not seem to be a priority in USP. Many incarcerated women have a lifetime of unresolved trauma and distress that led to their choices that resulted in incarceration, addiction, and criminal choices. It only makes sense that Utah should allocate more resources to mental health treatment of prisoners who have experienced trauma. Medication can only partially help, and only then when it is the correct medication for the proper diagnosis. Research has shown that trauma-informed, present focused, cognitive behavioral therapy is one approach that could assist prisoners in learning skills to manage their current thinking and behavior. Processing and putting old trauma in perspective is important to facilitate healing.

**Suicide Watch.** According to the women's discussion, when someone threatens or discusses suicidal ideation, they are put on what is called a "suicide watch." The women described that the person is put in a strip cell – naked or in a restraint vest for approximately three days. They are given nothing, and even the 1 ply toilet paper has been known to be withheld from an inmate on suicide watch. One woman described receiving 1 square of toilet paper by staff only after "earning it."

**Other Issues Discussed in the Women's Meeting**

*Grievance forms are difficult to obtain.* UPAN attendees learned grievance forms are not easily available in Timpanogos. Inmates have to ask the same officers they will be grieving for the actual forms they will use. They report both subtle retaliation for filing grievances as well open retaliation. The women who shared their stories feel that due to the lack of officers in USP, the stress experienced by the officers that are working overtime and get burned out contributes to venting their irritability and dissatisfaction on the incarcerated.

**Programs have been cut back.** The Jogging Track at Timpanogos Is Closed and the Jogging Program Has Ended. The big yard has been closed so the women are no longer able to walk or jog around the yard. Now there is a small yard inside which is not useful for

getting fresh air, meaningful exercise or other outdoor recreation. Things have developed now to where women who are in for life or decades really have nothing they can do in terms of programs they can participate in and complete. Some said administrators who started great programs in Timpanogos several years ago have been moved out and those who took over stopped the positive programs they used to have.

**Believe the Unbelievable.** UPAN has been told by prison administrators that offenders often lie and to not believe everything we hear. However when similar experiences are described in different communications (letters, emails, in person) and told by an array of individuals who do not know each other, and are repeated over the years, and even are similar between both the male and female facilities, there has to be a significant amount of credibility to them. Many within UPAN have come to realize that if someone can imagine it, then it has happened somewhere, sometime, to someone.

We also realize that it is hard for people in administration to always know what is happening down in the actual housing units day and night, day in and day out, by every correctional employee in each of the facilities. Research done by national advocacy organizations has verified that it is very difficult to get all

the data on the types of situations described in this article verified within correctional institutions. However, maybe everyone would benefit from examining the tendency for both prisons and society to resist believing what already marginalized people are saying who have been neglected, mistreated, misdiagnosed, or victimized further. There is usually truth in everyone's stories.

There is a nationwide movement to bring dark practices into the light in correctional facilities across the country. UPAN directors have worked with various correctional officials in Utah over the years and personally I have witnessed the majority of directors and wardens and deputy wardens sincerely wanting to create facilities that are safe for inmates, staff, officers, and volunteers. I have said it before and I will say it again. It only takes one or two to create problems and make an already dark place even darker.

**To the Women of Timp:** *“Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy. Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.”*  
— Brene Brown

**The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons. -- Fyodor Dostoyevsky**

## **Does Utah Need a More Comprehensive Dignity Bill for Incarcerated Women?**

By Molly Prince

Dignity Bills (legislation / laws) for women prisoners are passing throughout the country this year. Utah has begun with one dignity bill this legislative session, the Utah Inmate Restrictions Standards Amendments, HB0138, chief sponsor Rep. Stephanie Pitcher and Senate Sponsor: Jacob L. Anderegg. It provides that the least restrictive restraints are to be used on a pregnant inmate; requires that a correctional staff member individually review an inmate's situation before allowing restraints to be used on an inmate during labor, delivery, and postpartum recovery; prohibits the use of shackles or other restraints during labor and delivery; requires the DOC staff member to document in a written record all decisions made regarding the use of restraints on a pregnant inmate; makes the record public with individually identifying information redacted; extends the requirements to county jails; and requires that specific information regarding inmate births be reported to the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) for its annual report.

**Feminine Hygiene Products** With that said, the issue about feminine hygiene products has come up time and time again with women inmates. Over the years UPAN has heard varying stories from inmates and formerly incarcerated women about how USP handles providing

sanitary pads and tampons to female prisoners. The formerly incarcerated women at the June UPAN meeting discussed various approaches to how feminine hygiene products are provided by USP.

In some housing units, the inmates can obtain a “handful” of product to try to last them thru their cycle. Other women have reported that some units in Timpanogos dispense only one sanitary pad or tampon per day. UPAN received an email from a mother saying her daughter reports there is a cabinet the officers unlock and they can get what they need but they are subject to criticism if they take “too many” of the product at one time. UPAN has heard that in maximum security housing the women are dispensed the products by officers and it simply depends on which officer is on duty if the women will receive an adequate amount of feminine hygiene products to get them through a menstrual cycle. So women make do with other things. One is toilet paper. Unfortunately, former inmates report that they experienced difficulty receiving adequate supplies of toilet paper. One-ply toilet paper is what the prison gives to inmates. We all know that 1-ply toilet paper is virtually useless without doubling or tripling it for use. The use of 1-ply toilet paper is hardly adequate to replace a tampon or sanitary pad!

**The Good News**...UPAN's Director of Women's Issues reached out to the UDC's Public Information Specialist Liam Truchard with an inquiry about USP's policy on feminine hygiene products in the women's facility. According to his email, "At Timpanogos, all feminine hygiene products such as pads and tampons are provided by the prison to female inmates. They are not a commissary item. Inmates in general population are able to get them from specific locations. In restrictive housing, correctional officers provide them since the inmate's movement is limited. There is no rationing or cap on the items. What they need, we provide."

### **Grievances and Let UPAN Know**

Mr. Truchard further invited UPAN to let him know if we have heard about specific issues when women are unable to obtain adequate feminine hygiene products. Therefore, if anyone in Timp runs into any issues with this policy, please file grievances and write to UPAN with the specifics of the situation. UPAN does not share the identity of the source of complaints about the prison without permission from the incarcerated person reporting it. We protect the identity of the source of information we receive to reduce possibility of retaliation, but we do need to have the names of housing locations and identities of staff involved in anything that is inappropriate, illegal, or against policy. It helps if we have dates as well.

**Toilet Paper.** Throughout the prison, toilet paper is a prized commodity. A common concern is not receiving enough to last when illness or other issues arise that require use beyond the normal amount. Toilet paper is used for a variety of necessary hygiene purposes from the standard toilet / bathroom use, to substituting for a sanitary pad, to blowing noses and using with upper

respiratory infections, colds, and allergies. Women tend to use more toilet paper than men for obvious hygiene reasons. Only on a good week could someone who has no intestinal problems, is not on a menstrual period, has no allergies or colds, and is not drinking much water, manage with one to two rolls of 1-ply. Basically, 1-ply toilet paper is not adequate from any perspective.

UPAN director Britnee Webb and Molly Prince are trying to reconcile what we are hearing from currently and formerly incarcerated folks with what the prison policy is and then what is actually happening on various housing units. UDC responded that the "standard issue for toilet paper prison-wide is 2 rolls per person per week. Per person, not per cell." If the prisoner needs additional toilet paper they can return the cardboard roll in order to receive an additional roll. Public Information Specialist Liam Truchard wrote "we will never leave an inmate without toilet paper just because they used the standard issue. This is the same for men and woman at all classification levels." So if you are having toilet paper problems, file a grievance or let UPAN know the specifics of which housing unit and names of the officers refusing to supply it and we will notify the prison.

Toilet paper in Utah's jails is also a problem. We have heard from individuals in Utah's county jails that toilet paper is also a highly prized commodity there – and often not provided in adequate amount. One woman in the June meeting discussed spending 13 days in Salt Lake County Jail without toilet paper at all. While folks in the community may take toilet paper and feminine hygiene products for granted, these are important hygiene issues for prisoners.

*"Nothing is more important than empathy for another human being's suffering. Nothing—not career, not wealth, not intelligence, certainly not status. We have to feel for one another if we're going to survive with dignity."* Audrey Hepburn

## **A Message to Women from Journey of Hope**

Lori Yearwood, Journey of Hope

Dear UPAN Partner Community – We are so pleased to introduce you to Journey of Hope, a non-profit dedicated to *empowering previously harmed women and LGBTQI* to create the beautiful lives they want and deserve! Nearly all of the individuals we serve have been involved with the criminal justice system and face many obstacles: Physically and emotionally safe housing, trauma-informed mental and physical health care, employment, training and the need for safe childcare -- the list is daunting. The good news is that you [they] do not need

to try to accomplish these things alone. Our case managers, peer leaders, and mentor volunteers have served more than 1,800 women since Journey of Hope opened its doors five years ago. Today, our staff coordinates with over 100 community providers, helping our clients do everything from finding housing, to

connecting with great trauma informed therapists, to obtaining food orders from the Bishop's Storehouse.

But as critical as all these things are to your new life, the thing we really want you to know, the thing that makes us different from anyone else, is this: We provide gender responsive, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, strength based, evidenced based, case management services. What, exactly, does this mean?

It means that we do not shame anyone for what has happened to them. It means that instead of asking you *why* you have had a hard time navigating life, we ask you: What happened to you that you had to cope in the ways that you have?

When our clients first walk through the doors of Journey of Hope, virtually 100 percent meet the lowest poverty levels. Most have experienced sexual assault and

almost all of our clients have self-medicated that devastating trauma with illegal substances and eventually been incarcerated. It's called the sexual assault to prison pipeline and we understand it and know how to help unwind it. You are not alone!

We will not shame you for this vicious cycle of harm and incarceration in which you found yourself. Nor will we label you a victim.

Instead, we will help you reframe yourself as a survivor and help you see your strengths and your resilience. Then, as we recognize all that power already within you, we walk with you in whatever new and positive direction you choose. It's called a strength-based approach and it's extremely powerful.

The vast majority of the women we mentor in our prison program, break out of the sexual assault to prison pipeline. In fact, we boast a low 17 percent recidivism rate. Comparatively, the state rate is 67 percent, so it is really clear that we know what we are doing at Journey of Hope. Our Executive Director and Founder, Shannon Miller Cox, is a previous Adult Probation and Parole Supervisor with 20 years in law enforcement work. She is also a national speaker and nationally trained expert on evidenced-based gender responsive/trauma-informed Case Management. This means our research, practices and policies are proven to work with previously harmed, incarcerated individuals.

Our executive director spends hundreds of hours training our staff. Like us, she has endured and overcome significant trauma herself. During weekly staff meetings, Cox often tells us: "You have been hand selected because of your hearts and dedication to the work -- not necessarily because of a college degree."

Sure, some of our case managers have earned college degrees; one of them just graduated from the University of Utah at the top of her class. But there is something even more impressive than a diploma: many of our

Journey of Hope case managers have received the same trauma-informed support that they now give. Someone amongst us has likely been where you have been. We share a deep passion for championing the people with whom we so deeply relate.

Our dedication is so palpable and so intense that we have become "disrupters" in spaces that don't normally recognize the sexual assault to prison pipeline and discriminate against returning citizens (previously incarcerated.)

We disrupt the cycle of sexual exploitation, addiction, poverty, abuse and incarceration. We also disrupt the mainstream beliefs of the systems that continue to perpetuate those cycles. We make phone calls and write letters of advocacy to judges and attorneys and the heads of organizations who need help viewing our clients through a trauma informed lens. If that doesn't work, we file complaints. Then we continue to educate the community, state, and federal leaders until we change the systems so they shape a restorative path to re-entry.

Whatever their pasts, our clients do amazing things. They go back to school, get jobs they are proud to have, complete their court and board obligations and live lives they love. We are helping our clients buy homes, and like our executive director likes to say: "They don't run a rap sheet when you buy a house!"

We are so excited about our work and the good we are accomplishing! Truth be told, we are excited about YOU and what you have to offer. This world needs you.

*If you are interested in meeting with a JOH case manager, here is the contact information:*  
*Phone: (801) 633-9409*  
*Mail: Journey of Hope, Inc. 8160 So. Highland Drive Suite A3 Sandy, UT 84093*  
*Email: [GuardianAngel@JourneyofHopeUtah.org](mailto:GuardianAngel@JourneyofHopeUtah.org)*  
*Website: [JourneyofHopeUtah.org](http://JourneyofHopeUtah.org)*

### **UPAN Editorial Assist Re: LGBTQIA+**

Understanding of those who don't fit the generally accepted designations of male or female. By Warren Rosenbaum

Clarity helps understanding. The following information has been researched from the internet using informative questions asked and answered by Google. Additional info from Wikipedia. This information is published here for our general readers who may be uninformed or exposed to misinformation and derogatory, belittling terminology and other forms of expression and don't have access to neutral, informative research sources (i.e. inmates and people unfamiliar with computers and the internet).

As a society, we have among us individuals who have physical, mental, and cultural acceptance challenges that each must live with and struggle through for

solutions. Our appropriate response should be to try to understand and realize, if we were in their shoes, what social and behavioral interactions we would seek or prefer. This fits the admonition, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

To begin with, many of us may be confused or may not be informed about the initials LGBTQIA. The latter two or three letters requiring more definition. The letters LGBT mean lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender. The Q has been understood as "queer," an umbrella term for sexual and gender identities who are not heterosexual or "cisgender" (to be explained later). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century (late 1800s), it was used



pejoratively against people having same-sex desires or relationships. The latest use of “Q” also means or includes “Questioning,” referring to those who are unsure of and are exploring their gender identity and sexual orientation.

Not everyone is born with a regular balance of chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals. According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, many people “do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies.” In the acronym LGBTQIA, the “I” represents “Intersex,” a term for a set of medical conditions that feature congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system. Intersex individuals are born with any of the aforementioned several variations in sex characteristics. And the “A” is for “Asexual” (having no sex of sexual organs, little or no sexual activity, desire or character) and/or “Allied” (meaning by kinship, agreement, support and acceptance). Both latter definitions from Webster’s New World College Dictionary 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, and in agreement with website LGBTQIA+ hosted by Weebly. BTW, according to that website, the + symbol is for all other sexualities, sexes, and genders that aren’t included in the already stated seven-letter acronym.

Something as significant as this, which is beyond the individual’s control but something they must live with, requires adaptation and adjustments to exist in the social environment. Such challenges should elicit other people’s understanding, empathy, and compassion.

*Every single lesbian and transgender woman is a woman. - Patricia Arquette*

“If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person’s point of view and see things from his angle as well as your own.” – Henry Ford

## **UTAH DOC CONTINUES TO RESIST FULL FEDERAL STANDARDS IN PREA COMPLIANCE**

*Note – UPAN reached out to Utah Dept. of Corrections requesting direction on accessing the UDC policies on sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. We have not received the requested information prior to publication of July’s newsletter.*

UPAN has been concerned for some time that Utah has chosen to not fully implement the Federal PREA standards. PREA is the acronym for the Prison Rape Elimination Act. According to a Salt Lake Tribune article by Luke Ramseth on May 15, 2017, Utah is one of only two states (Arkansas being the other) that continues to reject full implementation of federal guidelines meant to prevent prison rape. This information was gleaned from a 2017 U.S. Department of Justice report.

**PREA was established in the US in 2003** through federal legislation. It established hundreds of standards for a variety of different correctional facilities, including prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, community corrections facilities and immigration detention centers. The standards cover everything from hiring and training staff and adding security cameras to guidelines for reporting

People who identify with these definitions should not be a target for ridicule, taunting, teasing, violence or other forms of denunciation that is so common among uneducated and misinformed people.

Finally, cisgender was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2013. It means “designating a person whose sense of personal identity corresponds to the sex and gender assigned to him or her at birth (in contrast with transgender).” For example, someone who identifies as a woman and was assigned female at birth is a cisgender woman.

Cisgender is the opposite of transgender. Cisgender has its origin in the Latin-derived prefix “cis-“ meaning “on this side of,” which is the opposite of “trans-“ meaning “across from” or “on the other side of.”

According to the Human Rights Campaign website, Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

This article is designed to enlighten the uninformed or misinformed and smooth relationships between straight and LGBTQIA+ communities.

incidents to community-based rape crisis centers, investigating and evidence-gathering techniques when incidents do occur, and procedures for cross-gender strip and pat-down searches. The PREA standards also specify protocols for medical treatment and counseling for victims.

**Utah forfeits funding for lack of full PREA implementation.** In an article by Stephen Dark in November 25, 2015 edition of City Weekly called “The Hurt Lockup,” Dark’s research discovered that Utah as a state objects to the federal PREA guidelines despite losing federal funding. Ramseth’s 2017 Tribune article reports that in 2016 Utah lost \$146,132 from the Department of Justice grant funds for corrections and law enforcement, juvenile justice and violence against women programs, according to Bureau of Justice



Assistance figures. In 2015, it was \$134,899, in 2014 the state lost \$141,347.

The City Weekly and Tribune articles both cite a May 2014 letter the state submitted to the federal PREA Management Office at the Bureau of Justice Assistance in Washington, D.C. from Gov. Gary Herbert. He wrote that Utah is so concerned with prison rape "that we have evaluated carefully every line of PREA and the implementing regulations, and we have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, every recommendation that is good policy for Utah." According to the Public Information officer for the prison at that time, Utah had already acted on most of the recommendations before the passage of PREA back in 2003.

**However, certain guidelines that would contribute to dignity of both male and female inmates were not incorporated.** Herbert wrote that the state was opting out of PREA because of costs to audit the program. Another reason was that prison officials opposed the requirement for officers of the opposite gender from inmates to announce their presence in a housing unit.

According to the City Weekly article, Herbert's letter claimed that guideline "can create dangerous situations for the officers and can create an opportunity for inmates perpetrating sexual assault to stop and hide their offenses." This does not make sense because the officers of the opposite gender of the inmates are coming into housing units multiple times a day and if it prevents sexual assaults overall, why would the administration not want to honor that guideline?

Dark's research also discovered that in a November 2014 letter, an assistant attorney general with the Bureau of Justice Assistance responded that the guideline was simply to stop officers encountering opposite gender inmates while they were undressing, showering or using the toilet.

Formerly incarcerated spoke out at the June UPAN meeting. They stated that it is common for male officers to enter the housing unit without announcing their presence. In speaking to male former inmates, over the years it has become more and more rare for a female officer to announce her presence on a male housing unit.

**Another requirement of PREA** is that the institution provides a safe way for inmates to report sexual assault and rape to an outside resource or agency. This accommodation for sexual assault victims in prison has NOT been made in Utah. (Emphasis added. Ed.) USP's system requires an inmate to use the phones on the housing unit to call and report a sexual assault or rape – within earshot of everyone in the vicinity. Even using the phone on the housing unit – which would necessitate the abuser also being aware a call is being made - within hours or days after an assault feels

unsafe for the victim who is already disenfranchised and un-empowered by the fact that they are incarcerated.

According to Dark's article, PREA includes "educating all new prisoners about their rights and how to get help if they are under threat or sexually abused, along with developing partnerships with rape crisis centers in the community. His article cites Jesse Lerner-Kinglake, Communications Director for Just Detention International, a nonprofit advocacy group formerly Stop Prison Rape, as saying "If an inmate is assaulted, they should have access to the same level of care available in the community." That does not happen in Utah.

**UPAN does not have the statistics** on reported sexual harassment, sexual assaults and rapes in Utah State Prison system. However, in our June Women's Issues meeting several formerly incarcerated women all reported being humiliated sexually, harassed, and / or sexually assaulted.

One woman shared that she was sexually assaulted by a maintenance officer in her housing area and again when working in culinary, "they take you in the fridge," she stated. It is not safe for victims of assault by prison staff or officers to report abuse. They have very little control over their lives inside and to turn their worlds upside down by reporting and it being known is not something most inmates will risk.

Another woman discussed being intimidated and assaulted by a captain in a therapeutic community after a meeting. He gave a display of violence and intimidation by kicking a chair and then being physically intimidating as he ushered her out of the room and proceeded to push her with his body right behind her and against her all the way back to her room. Grievances went nowhere. In the end he was moved to a different area, but there was no disciplinary action against him.

Other forms of humiliation and what could be considered sexual harassment include when women in max are taken to the shower with the dog-collar and leashes by male officers when they are only wearing thin nightgowns and then being locked into the shower area and being left there for long periods of time, sometimes hours. One formerly incarcerated woman reported witnessing a woman being left in the shower by the guards for several hours. She got upset and repeatedly called for them to let her out. After hours she got angry and started yelling. She was then punished for that.

Another report was about women in general population housing units being made to sit or stand for long periods of time in their flimsy nightgowns which are easy to see through while waiting to be allowed to go back into their cells after showers.

**PREA standards should give training to officers on what is appropriate and not appropriate.** UPAN as well as formerly incarcerated acknowledge that there are some very good people trying to make a positive difference in Utah's prison system. However, it only takes a few that do not have good hearts, who do not value rehabilitation for the greater good, and lack humanity and compassion, to make prison a very unsafe place for those who live there.

Discussion at the Women's Issues Meeting included recommendations by folks involved in helping women in prison and on parole succeed that there need to be new standards to hire correctional officers who have the kind of temperament that is conducive to rehabilitation rather than punishment. One participant stated, "Utah can hire kind people and teach [them] to be correctional officers." This would be optimal, rather than hiring people who have their own power and control issues and take it out on people who have no control as inmates.

**Utah DOC Policy is to Investigate all Complaints of Sexual Assault / Rape.** UPAN reached out to the Victim Advocate for the prison, Doug Fawson, about this issue. We were told that the UDC "trains our staff to be vigilant in responding to any and all reports of sexual assault experienced by our offenders; whether by other offenders or staff members." He indicated that he is supposed to be contacted every time such a report is made. He wrote in an email that if an incarcerated person reports being sexually assaulted or

harassed to a staff member and no action is taken by that staff, he wants to be informed about it. He further stated that there will be consequences for the staff member. Those reports are investigated by the UDC's Law Enforcement Bureau, and a response is supposed to be made to the victim by Fawson's unit. He does acknowledge that there have been staff members terminated and prosecuted for having sexual relations with offenders but stated that "those relationships were not forced." He further wrote that he has not been informed of a staff member raping an offender since PREA was enacted in 2003. He encouraged UPAN to report to him information of a staff member sexually assaulting an incarcerated person. He emphasized that he is committed to making sure it is investigated. He was adamant that his office has no tolerance for sexual assault of prisoners.

**UPAN Reports Sexual Abuse.** UPAN will continue to share any information we receive from inmates regarding sexual assault or rape perpetrated by other prisoners or any staff member with Mr. Fawson. It helps to have the date and time, location of assault, description of assault, and names when available. Also it will be useful to provide UPAN the names of who the assault was reported to, if it has been. This includes any prison staff, correctional officers, housing captains, etc. Reports of sexual assault to UPAN are received by Molly Prince, LCSW and she is the one who will make the report.

### ***The stripping of identity and dignity destroys many prisoners - Alexander Solzhenitsyn***

#### **A Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh**

- Did you hear about the mathematician who was afraid of negative numbers? He would stop at nothing to avoid them.
  - Why did the dinosaur cross the road? Because the chicken hadn't evolved yet.
- A dog walks into a bar and says, "I'll have the coldest beer you've got." The bartender looks in amazement at this talking dog and says, "You should be in the traveling circus!" The dog responds, "Why? Do they need an electrician?"
- A bacon sandwich walks into a bar and orders a whiskey. "Sorry," growls the bartender, "we don't serve food here."

**UPAN's Writing Exercise (2019) is now closed. Thanks to this year's and future participants. Y'all are cool. Ed.**

#### **Utah Prisoner Advocate Network**

President: Shauna Denos  
Past-President & Treasurer: Molly Prince  
Vice-president: Unfilled  
Secretary: Unfilled  
Director of Communications: Shane Severson  
Inmate Newsletter Volunteer Coord: Deon Corkins  
Director of Sex Offender Policy Issues: Faye Jenkins  
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(Note: go there to view recent UPAN meetings)

***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead***