



Women's Empowerment Hotline

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Darcel Morgan - Women's Empowerment Hotline Volunteer



Over 23% of men incarcerated in New York State are married or were living in a common law arrangement at the time of their arrest. The percentage of incarcerated men with female intimate partners increases when the number of men with girlfriends is also considered.

When a woman has an intimate partner who is incarcerated, she loses the ability to contact him and hear his voice whenever she needs to talk to someone about the stressful situations in her life. Recognizing that women who have a husband, fiancé or boyfriend who is incarcerated often feel that they lack a support network, The Osborne Association created the Women's Empowerment Hotline.

Renette, one of the hotline volunteers, knows how difficult it can be when you want to get in touch with a loved one who is incarcerated, "our husbands can call us" she says, "but when we are going through something we can't call them." The Women's Empowerment hotline will be staffed by women with incarcerated or formerly incarcerated partners who want to be there to help support and empower women who also have a loved one in the prison system. Like the other hotline staff, Renette believes that her experience will help her connect with callers because as she says, "it's always good to have somebody that you know who identifies with what you are going through."

The Women's Empowerment Hotline, which will be fully operational on August 3rd, is the first hotline in New York State specifically designed to support and empower women who are in relationships with men who are incarcerated. The number for the hotline is 1-800-344-3314, and it will be open for calls on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays from 5-9pm.

The women who are answering the phones are looking forward to receiving the first call, their first chance to help the person on the other line because as Renette says, “sometimes it’s about saving a life because we never know where that person’s mind-frame may be.”

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