



HEAR FROM HER

Jennifer Charlene Toon

**System-Impacted Women Speak Series
Brought to you by the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition**

Often, women are returning to toxic relationships and inadequate housing out of necessity. We must find a way to divert them into better environments that will support them. We must treat the causes of why women become entangled in addiction and crime in the first place. What preventative measures have worked? Are we investing in those?

Women offer a unique perspective. We approach problems from many angles and look at an array of solutions that often focus on the more human impact of a decision than just hard facts. Without that perspective, communities and families suffer.

I used my time for personal growth, but there were few opportunities provided through TDCJ in terms of preparation for release. Once I made parole and transferred to a therapeutic community for the last six months, then the preparation began. Seems like this should have started when I walked in, not six months before I walked out.



I have been advocating for women's justice in the criminal justice system for years. In prison I did what I could, whether it was as a peer educator, a columnist for The Echo, or as the expert on grievances. I found opportunities to speak up for our needs as women in the system. I continue that now as a freelance writer, a YouTube blogger, and a member of the Texas Women's Justice Coalition.



Did you feel there were a lot of women in prison similar to you?

It appeared to many of the women at first glance that I didn't belong there but the more we shared and the more we got to know one another through our struggles, we knew that we were inherently the same.

Beautifully broken, incredible resilient, and desperate for redemption.

For more information about women in Texas' justice system, visit TexasCJC.org/Womens-Justice