



Why Is MCI-Framingham Designated a Medium-Security Prison?

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Massachusetts prison officials recently announced plans to save money by closing the minimum-security wing at Old Colony Correctional Center in Bridgewater. This is the latest in a spate of prison closures and highlights a troubling gender disparity: While Massachusetts is reducing its prison capacity for men, it continues to confine women in overly restrictive environments despite evidence that women pose little security risk.

Many justice-involved women have endured abuse and victimization, often beginning in childhood, leading to chronic physical and mental health challenges. Histories of trauma make them vulnerable to re-traumatization in punitive environments where privacy and autonomy are severely restricted. The conditions of higher-security custody — loud noises, open toilets, and threats of punishment — often mirror behaviors of past abusers, exacerbating trauma and potentially leading to disciplinary issues and even harsher custodial conditions.