

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Responding to Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls

Overview of Correctional Service Canada Programs, Policies and Interventions

**SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO
MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS (MMIWG)
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Correctional Service
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INTRODUCTION

This document is submitted to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (the National Inquiry) to provide an overview of Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) programs, policies and interventions that are relevant to the federal government's response to violence against Indigenous women and girls. A range of culturally and gender-informed correctional programs, policies and interventions have been developed and implemented by CSC to address the needs of women and men in federal custody and on conditional release, including Indigenous women and men who choose to follow a traditional healing path.

CSC's Mandate

The Constitution divides the responsibility over administering custodial sentences imposed by a court under the *Criminal Code*. Administration of sentences that are less than two years falls within the mandate of the provinces and territories, while administration of sentences that are two years or more falls within federal responsibility. CSC is the federal government agency responsible for administering sentences of a term of two years or more, as imposed by the court. CSC is responsible for managing institutions of various security levels and for supervising offenders under conditional release in the community.¹

CSC's responsibilities are derived from the [Corrections and Conditional Release Act \(CCRA\)](#) and the [Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations \(CCRR\)](#). The *CCRA* and *CCRR* outline CSC's responsibilities as:

- a) the protection of society, which is the paramount consideration for CSC (s. 3.1 of the *CCRA*);
- b) effective, open and timely exchange of information with victims of crime (s. 4 of the *CCRA*);
- c) care and custody of inmates (s. 5 of the *CCRA*);
- d) provision of programs that contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders and to their successful reintegration into the community (s. 5 of the *CCRA*);
- e) preparation of inmates for release (s. 5 of the *CCRA*);
- f) parole, statutory release supervision and long-term supervision of offenders (s. 5 of the *CCRA*); and
- g) maintaining a program of public education about the operations of CSC (s. 5 of the *CCRA*).

Section 4 of the [CCRA](#) sets out a number of guiding principles, including the principle that there be an effective, open and timely exchange of information with victims of crime, and the principle that the CSC's correctional policies, programs and practices be responsive to the special needs of women, Indigenous offenders, and offenders requiring mental health care. Other provisions of the *CCRA*, as well as the [CCRR](#), and CSC's Commissioner Directives, address specific policies and programs and their delivery in order to respond to the rehabilitation needs of offenders, including those who have been violent toward Indigenous women and girls, and Indigenous

¹ <http://www.csc-ccc.gc.ca/about-us/006-0001-eng.shtml>)

offenders. Commissioner's Directive 784, Victim Engagement, sets out responsibilities to engage victims, by upholding victims' rights and ensuring timely and effective information sharing.² In addition, Commissioner's Directive 786 outlines CSC's victims' complaint process,³ while Commissioner's Directive 785 speaks to policy for the Restorative Opportunities Program and Victim-Offender Mediation Services provided by CSC under appropriate circumstances.⁴ CSC does not automatically inform victims about the offender who harmed them. Victims request the information by registering with the CSC and the Parole Board of Canada.⁵ Once a victim registers, CSC can disclose the information.⁶ Registered victims may also receive information about the offender's correctional plan.⁷ CSC's victim services reflect the Federal/Provincial/Territorial [*Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime*](#),⁸ which guide FPT governments as they develop legislation and policy. [*Commissioner's Directive 702, Aboriginal Offenders*](#)⁹ responds to specific needs of Indigenous offenders by providing effective interventions, through a Continuum of Care model, including considering an offender's Aboriginal social history.

Correctional Policies and Programs

CSC develops, implements and monitors correctional policies, programs and practices that respect gender, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences and are responsive to the needs of women, Indigenous peoples and other groups with the goal of protecting Canadian communities through appropriate custodial measures, effective rehabilitation and safe reintegration of people serving a federal sentence. CSC provides essential health care services and reasonable access to non-essential mental health care that contribute to offenders' rehabilitation and successful reintegration into the community.

CSC's correctional programs are designed to address risk factors, which have been linked to criminal behaviour. Offenders who participate in these programs learn and apply the skills and strategies they need to prevent them from committing crimes, including those related to violence against women and girls, including Indigenous women and girls. These skills and strategies help them to successfully and safely transition into the community when they are released, which contributes to safer communities. CSC interventions are guided by the most recent evidence in correctional research, relevant theory and current practices, and are offered to Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women offenders. The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model¹⁰ provides the foundation for effective correctional programming and numerous studies have demonstrated that adherence to the risk-need-responsivity principles maximizes the effectiveness of correctional programming at reducing recidivism.

² <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/acts-and-regulations/784-cd-eng.shtml>

³ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/acts-and-regulations/786-cd-eng.shtml>

⁴ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/acts-and-regulations/785-cd-eng.shtml>

⁵ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/victims/index-eng.shtml>

⁶ Section 26 of the CCRA.

⁷ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/victims/092/003006-6009-eng.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/03/princ.html>

⁹ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/acts-and-regulations/702-cd-eng.shtml>

¹⁰ <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rsk-nd-rspnsvty/index-en.aspx>

As part of this work, CSC is responsive to the unique circumstances of Indigenous women and men offenders. For example, an individual's Aboriginal social history¹¹ must be considered in CSC's decision-making processes, in conjunction with culturally appropriate/restorative options. The unique circumstances include, for example, the effects of the residential school system, family or community history of substance abuse, level or lack of formal education, experience in the child welfare system and loss or struggle with cultural/spiritual identity.

CSC recognizes that inter-generational cycles of violence and abuse which flow from colonization and historical cultural disruption contribute to Indigenous peoples being disproportionately represented at all levels of the Canadian criminal justice system, as victims and as offenders. Of note, the 2017 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview¹² indicates that:

- From 2007-08 to 2016-17, the in-custody Indigenous offender population increased by 35.8%, while the total (in-custody and under supervision in the community) Indigenous offender population increased by 38.5% over the same time period.
- The number of in-custody Indigenous women offenders increased steadily from 177 in 2007-08 to 253 in 2016-17, for an increase of 42.9% in the last ten years. The increase for in-custody Indigenous men offenders was 35.4% for the same period, increasing from 2,619 to 3,545.

CSC recognizes the need to provide a wide range of culturally responsive, appropriate, restorative programs and interventions that address an Indigenous offender's risk, leading to timely access to rehabilitation to foster their successful reintegration as contributing members of their families and communities.

¹¹ Defined in CD 702 as:

"Aboriginal social history: the various circumstances that have affected the lives of most Aboriginal people. Considering these circumstances may result in alternate options or solutions and applies only to Aboriginal offenders (not to non-Aboriginal offenders who choose to follow the Aboriginal way of life). These circumstances include the following (note that this is not an exhaustive list):

- effects of the residential school system
- sixties scoop into the adoption system
- effects of the dislocation and dispossession of Inuit people
- family or community history of suicide
- family or community history of substance abuse
- family or community history of victimization
- family or community fragmentation
- level or lack of formal education
- level of connectivity with family/community
- experience in the child welfare system
- experience with poverty
- loss of or struggle with cultural/spiritual identity.

¹² ([CCRSO 2017](#))

Collaboration with Indigenous Communities

Providing effective, culturally appropriate interventions for First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders, and reintegration supports in the community, remains one of CSC's key corporate priorities. CSC is committed to ensuring that programs, policies and interventions are in place to effectively respond to the needs of Indigenous offenders, and to ensure safe reintegration of offenders into Indigenous communities. The Commissioner's mandate letter emphasizes the importance of effective relationships with Indigenous peoples and organizations.¹³

CSC continues to work collaboratively with criminal justice partners, agencies, organizations and Indigenous community stakeholders to support the rehabilitation and safe reintegration of Indigenous offenders into the community. In order for CSC to have a holistic understanding of the needs of the Indigenous offender population and of Indigenous communities, advisory bodies such as the Commissioner's [National Aboriginal Advisory Committee](#)¹⁴ (NAAC), and the National Elders Working Group (NEWG) were created. The NEWG is comprised of seven Indigenous Elders from across Canada, each of whom is an expert knowledge-holder. The NEWG advises the Director General of CSC's Aboriginal Initiatives Directorate on spiritual, traditional and cultural protocols and practices and provides recommendations on policy, procedures and interventions impacting Indigenous offenders. Through these resources, CSC's ability to address its priority of ensuring effective, culturally appropriate interventions and reintegration support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders is strengthened.

Consultation with the NAAC, the NEWG, as well as with Indigenous Elders and staff working within CSC, has highlighted the need for interventions and services that will support Indigenous offenders to address the impacts of intergenerational trauma, addictions, and life skills to better prepare them to contribute positively to their families and communities upon release.

CSC is currently implementing a 3-day Elder Program Orientation, developed in consultation with the NEWG, as part of its ongoing commitment to work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and communities. The orientation will respond to concerns raised by the NAAC asking for further information and training to assist Elders, working with both men and women offenders, on how to work within the system by gaining more understanding of correctional program structure and content to assist them in their roles in Indigenous correctional programming. It will be co-delivered by an Elder and a CSC staff member.

CSC has strengthened its support for offenders in the community by increasing the number of Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers¹⁵ in urban centres. Budget 2017 increased funding for additional Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers' work with halfway houses to connect Indigenous men and women offenders to culturally responsive services in the community. Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers mobilize and partner with Indigenous community agencies to provide integrated ("wrap-around") services.

¹³ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/about-us/006-0006-en.shtml>

¹⁴ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/aboriginal/002003-3005-en.shtml>

¹⁵ Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers provide support for Indigenous offender reintegration in urban communities.

Through the Budget 2017 allocation, Public Safety Canada is supporting the development of community-based and culturally relevant projects with a focus on alternatives to incarceration and reintegration support for Indigenous offenders. A call for proposals was launched at the end of 2017 and selected projects are expected to begin before the end of the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

OFFENDER REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS

CSC is committed to delivering structured interventions that address risk factors and support offenders in their safe and successful reintegration into the community. The Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM) is in place for male offenders, including those who have been violent toward women and children, both through sexual violence and through domestic violence. As discussed below, CSC also has an Aboriginal Integrated Correctional Program Model (AICPM) in place, while the ICPM remains available to Indigenous male offenders who choose not to follow a traditional healing path.

Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM) for Men

The Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM) is an innovative and holistic approach to correctional programs, designed to enhance program efficiencies, program effectiveness, and public safety results. The ICPM consists of four distinct program streams for offenders: non-Aboriginal multi-target programs, non-Aboriginal sex offender programs, Aboriginal multi-target programs and Aboriginal sex offender programs, all of which include readiness or introductory (Primer), moderate and high intensity main programs, and institutional and community maintenance programs.

The ICPM also includes an adapted program in order to better support the needs of those offenders experiencing cognitive or mental health challenges and who may otherwise be unable to successfully participate in the programming model. Another feature of the ICPM is a motivational and support component. It is a formal part of the ICPM process. There are three targets of offenders for the Motivational Module: refusers, drop-outs, and those who require additional support while in the program. Structured processes are in place to address each of these groups of offenders.

The ICPM enhances offenders' understanding of the interaction among their multiple risk factors, as well as their understanding of how the same skills can be used to effectively manage their risk. The ICPM's four distinct program streams allow CSC to continue to target the needs and risks presented by specific offender populations, while their integrated nature allows CSC to holistically address the individual risk and needs of offenders within each population. In addition to these benefits, the ICPM facilitates the management and delivery of correctional programs; promotes timelier access to, and completion of, programs; increases program enrolments; enhances the accuracy of referrals; and reduces readmissions for new convictions, including violent offences against women and children.

The main goals of the ICPM are to:

- Teach offenders skills that will help them to reduce their risky and/or harmful behaviour, including violence.
- Change offenders' negative attitudes, beliefs and associates.

Family violence or general violence, as with all harmful behaviour, does not exist in a vacuum – it is a complex interplay between thoughts, beliefs, emotions, maladaptive behaviour and associates. Family violence or general violence program content is included in ICPM. When compared to traditional family violence or general violence programs, ICPM provides participants with more time spent on important topics that are related to family violence or general violence, including teaching skills that help reduce their harmful behaviours.

ICPM provides each offender with the opportunity to fully explore all aspects of his life and to learn skills required to develop concrete and comprehensive self-management plans. All ICPM facilitators are trained in, and all offenders will be exposed to, awareness of family violence and general violence issues throughout the program. ICPM targets criminogenic factors known by research to be associated with partner abuse:

- Problem thinking related to abuse (values, beliefs and attitudes, distortions regarding the role of women and the justification of abuse as a response)
- Emotional mismanagement (jealousy, anger, fear and dependency)
- Other problems in self-regulation related to impulsivity (poor self-monitoring, reactivity, lack of goals, poor self-management)
- Deficits in social and communication skills
- Antisocial peer associations that endorse the abuse of women

The ICPM's multi-target approach is advantageous given that:

- An estimated 40% of male federal offenders have some history of violence against their intimate female partners. By virtue of its multi-target approach ICPM reaches more offenders with histories of family violence than the previous traditional multi-program model.¹⁶
- Most offenders who are abusive towards their partners are abusive to others as well.
- Offenders' harmful attitudes toward women surface in the delivery of all programs; not only in family violence programs – but the ICPM is equipped to address these attitudes when they arise.
- ICPM targets thinking and behaviour related to all forms of violence, providing a broad spectrum of violence prevention.
- A comparative analysis of program effectiveness between the ICPM, traditional family violence programming and other Nationally Recognized Correctional Programs for men has revealed that ICPM completion shows substantial improvement with respect to

¹⁶ Family Violence Programming: Treatment Outcome for Canadian Federally Sentenced Offenders 2008 No R-174: <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/r174-eng.shtml>.

reducing returns to federal custody for offenders identified at intake as having perpetrated spousal assault¹⁷.

- Another analysis of program effectiveness of the ICPM over the traditional program array revealed that ICPM was associated with recidivism reduction for both federal Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men offenders¹⁸.

Aboriginal Integrated Correctional Program Model

The [Aboriginal Integrated Correctional Program Model¹⁹](#) (AICPM) streams are similar to the ICPM but designed to meet the specific needs of Indigenous offenders, and were developed in consultation with Elders, Indigenous CSC staff and Indigenous community members from across Canada. The AICPM programs include a weekly ceremonial session, culturally relevant materials and Elder involvement. The programs include an examination of the offender's Aboriginal social history experiences such as cultural disruption, residential school or foster care experiences and community fragmentation. Further research on the Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM), found that Aboriginal offenders participating in the AICPM do as well as, or better than, participants in the traditional Aboriginal correctional programming as it pertains to return to custody and to return with an offence²⁰.

An [Inuit Integrated Correctional Program²¹](#) is similar to the ICPM in that it is a complete model that extends through an offender's entire sentence. It also addresses multiple risk factors in a comprehensive and integrated manner through readiness, main, and maintenance programs. However, there are a number of important differences which take into account the unique experiences of Inuit male offenders. The program is culturally based in order to respond to the needs of Inuit men. In keeping with cultural appropriateness, the program acknowledges the uniqueness of the Inuit population and includes ceremonial activities. Elders play an important role in providing culturally relevant teachings and support.

¹⁷ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/005008-rb-16-02-eng.shtml>

¹⁸ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/rib-16-01-eng.shtml>

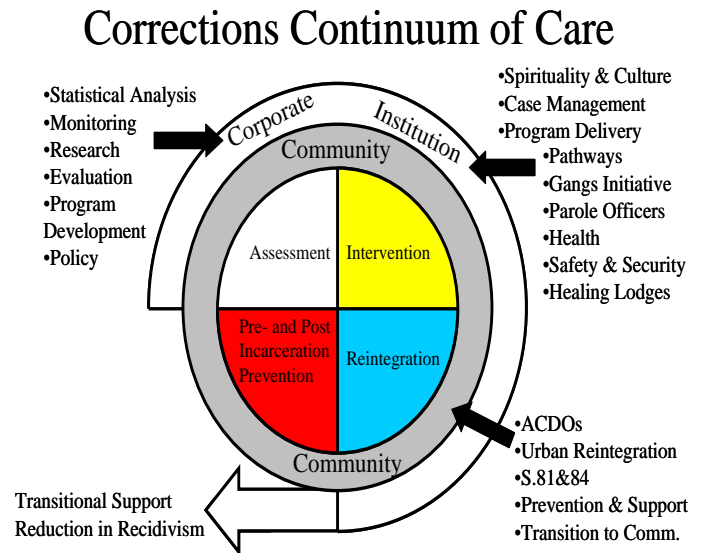
¹⁹ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/correctional-process/002001-2011-eng.shtml#s2>

²⁰ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/005008-0328-eng.shtml>

²¹ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/correctional-process/002001-2001-eng.shtml#s3>

ABORIGINAL CORRECTIONS CONTINUUM OF CARE

The [Aboriginal Corrections Continuum of Care model](#)²² is a care model that provides specific approaches to address the needs of Indigenous offenders. Introduced in 2003, it was developed in consultation with Indigenous stakeholders, including Elders, working with CSC to develop new approaches to address Indigenous offender needs to improve outcomes. Corporate and operational policies that are culturally appropriate and recognize the impacts on Indigenous offenders are crucial in addressing systemic barriers for Indigenous offenders in the federal correctional system. Indigenous community research indicates that the major factors contributing to Indigenous offenders' success upon release are their participation in spiritual, traditional and cultural activities, as well as, programs (preferably delivered by Indigenous Peoples) and the support they received from family and community.¹



¹Heckbert, D., & Turkington, D. (2001). Turning points: A study of the factors related to the successful reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. Research Report R-112. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

To integrate Indigenous culture and spirituality within CSC operations, the Continuum:

- starts at intake, to identify Indigenous offenders and to encourage them to bridge the disconnect with their culture and communities;
- leads to paths of healing in institutions to better prepare Indigenous offenders for transfer to lower security and for conditional release;
- engages Indigenous communities to receive offenders back into their community and support their reintegration; and,
- ends with establishment of community supports to sustain progress beyond the end of the sentence and prevent re-offending.

²² <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/005/006/702-cd-eng.shtml#s5>

The following individuals are key to the Continuum of Care process:

- First Nations, Métis and Inuit **Elders** who contribute throughout the sentence to meet the cultural and spiritual needs of diverse Indigenous offenders. They provide guidance and leadership in correctional planning/intervention for Indigenous offenders who wish to follow a traditional healing path.
- **Aboriginal Liaison Officers** who ensure the unique histories and needs of individual Indigenous offenders in institutions and of their communities are understood and met. Provide liaison between offenders and non-Indigenous staff to ensure spiritual and cultural needs are addressed.
- **Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers** who provide support for Indigenous offender reintegration in urban communities.
- **Aboriginal Correctional Program Officers** who deliver culturally-appropriate programs within institutions to address behaviours that place Indigenous offenders at risk to re-offend.
- **Aboriginal Community Development Officers (ACDO)** who work with Indigenous offenders who have expressed an interest in returning to their communities. Under section 84 of the *CCRA*, ACDOs work with these communities to develop a plan for reintegration of the offender. These release plans are submitted to the Parole Board of Canada for consideration in making a decision regarding conditional release.

Pathways

[Pathways](#)²³ is one of the key interventions of the Aboriginal Continuum of Care. At all levels of security, Pathways Initiatives are designed to provide a healing environment and more intensive interventions for those Indigenous offenders who are engaged and committed to their personal healing path. Indigenous offenders who participate in Pathways demonstrate a commitment to responsible behaviour, and engage more actively and intensively in counselling and traditional Indigenous ceremonies.

Elders provide one-to-one services, as well as group work that combines counselling and ceremonial work grounded in traditional teachings. This intensive work prepares the offender to look inward, to examine their often painful journey, and to deal with their unaddressed trauma. All of this work is undertaken as part of their correctional plan and prepares the offender for a structured and supported release into the community.

In Pathways, Elders contribute to the case management process and through various traditional cultural and spiritual interventions assist offenders to address the issues in their Aboriginal social history that have brought them in conflict with the law. These interventions assist in reducing the risk that an offender poses, and they contribute to offenders becoming law-abiding citizens.

²³ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/acts-and-regulations/702-1-gl-eng.shtml>

In the 2016-17 fiscal year, Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways Initiatives at some point during their sentence had higher rates of conditional release than Indigenous offenders who did not participate. For example, among Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways Initiatives at some point during their sentence and were first released in the 2016-17 fiscal year, 49.6 percent were released on day or full parole, compared with 32.1 percent for non-participants. Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways Initiatives had a significantly lower number of involvements in security incidents compared to non-participants, which may have improved their potential for release on day or full parole.

In addition:

- A lower rate of Indigenous offenders who participate in Pathways are admitted to segregation than Indigenous offenders who do not participate in Pathways and non-Indigenous offenders. In 2016-17, the number of admissions to segregation was 290 per 1,000 for Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways, compared to 621 per 1,000 for Indigenous offenders who did not participate in Pathways and 400 per 1,000 offenders for non-Indigenous offenders (less than half);
- Indigenous offenders who participate in Pathways have a much lower rate of serious institutional charges than Indigenous offenders who do not participate in Pathways and non-Indigenous offenders. In 2016-17, 311 per 1,000 Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways experienced serious institutional charges, compared to 599 per 1,000 for Indigenous offenders who did not participate in Pathways and 363 per 1,000 for non-Indigenous offenders (just over half);
- Indigenous offenders who participate in Pathways continue to have a lower number of involvements in security incidents compared to Indigenous offenders who do not participate in Pathways and non-Indigenous offenders. Data shows that in 2016-17, the number of offenders involved in security incidents was 293 per 1,000 offenders for Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways, compared to 755 per 1,000 for Indigenous offenders who did not participate in Pathways and 330 per 1,000 for non-Indigenous offenders (significantly less than half);
- Indigenous offenders who participate in Pathways have a lower percentage of positive random-sample urinalysis compared to Indigenous offenders who do not participate in Pathways. In 2016-17, 6.5% (49) of random-sample urinalysis for Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways were positive compared to 7.2% (228) of Indigenous offenders who did not participate in Pathways;
- In 2016-17, Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways had a much higher participation rate in ETAs (escorted temporary absences) per 1,000 offenders (7,046 per 1,000), than Indigenous offenders who did not participate in Pathways (2,790 per 1,000) and non-Indigenous offenders (3,304 per 1,000) (more than double for all);
- Indigenous offenders who participate in Pathways upgrade their education prior to full parole eligibility date (FPED) at a higher rate than Indigenous offenders who do not participate in Pathways and non-Indigenous offenders. In 2016-17, 70.5% (74) of

Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways upgraded their education prior to FPED compared to 56.0% (512) of Indigenous offenders who did not participate in Pathways and 53.3% (1,417) for non-Indigenous offenders;

- Indigenous offenders who participate in Pathways have a higher percentage of discretionary release results compared to Indigenous offenders who do not participate in Pathways. In 2016-17, 49.6% (120) of Indigenous offenders who participated in Pathways obtained a discretionary release at the time of their first release compared to 32.1% (273) of Indigenous offenders who did not participate in Pathways and 54.4% (2,143) of non-Indigenous offenders.

Source: CSC/PMMR 2016-17

Healing Lodges

[Healing Lodges](#)²⁴ offer services and programs for offenders that reflect Indigenous culture in an environment that incorporates Indigenous Peoples' traditions and beliefs. In a Healing Lodge, the needs of offenders serving federal sentences are addressed through Indigenous teachings and ceremonies, contact with Elders and culturally relevant programming.

Healing Lodges operate in two ways: those operated by CSC, and those managed by Indigenous communities under section 81 of the *CCRA*. There are currently four CSC operated Healing Lodges:

- Pê Sâkâstêw Centre (Men's facility, Prairie Region);
- Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge (Women's facility, Prairie Region);
- Willow Cree Healing Lodge (Men's facility, Prairie Region); and
- Kwîkwèxwelhp Healing Village (Men's facility, Pacific Region).

In addition, section 81 of the *CCRA* allows the Minister of Public Safety to enter into an agreement with an Indigenous community for the provision of correctional services to Indigenous offenders. There are currently four section 81 Agreements with Indigenous communities that comprise of five section 81 Healing Lodges:

- Native Counselling Service of Alberta:
 - Stan Daniels Healing Centre (Men's section 81 facility, Prairie Region)
 - Buffalo Sage Wellness House (Women's section 81 facility, Prairie Region)
- O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi Healing Lodge (Men's section 81 facility, Prairie Region);
- Waseskun Healing Centre (Men's section 81 facility, Québec Region); and
- Prince Albert Grand Council Spiritual Healing Lodge (Men's section 81 facility, Prairie Region).

²⁴ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/aboriginal/002003-2000-eng.shtml>

CSC continues to engage and collaborate with Indigenous communities on section 81 agreements under the *CCRA* for Healing Lodges. CSC is currently engaged in ongoing discussions regarding proposed section 81 agreements and continues to review statements of interest from Indigenous communities.

Approach and Programs for Indigenous Women Offenders

Indigenous women offenders tend to be younger, more likely to have experienced or been exposed to violence, experience relatively high rates of poverty and unemployment, tend to have higher rates of substance abuse issues, and experience mental health issues. While these characteristics tend to represent the women offender demographic more generally, in the case of Indigenous women offenders, these issues are often times amplified (e.g., higher rates of physical and sexual abuse). It is, therefore, particularly important for CSC to consider their needs in the context of Aboriginal social history and to ensure that cultural interventions are available.

CSC's approach is holistic, women-centred, and founded on the principles in [*Creating Choices*](#)²⁵ (empowerment, meaningful and responsible choices, respect and dignity, supportive environment, shared responsibility), as well as on the [*National Strategy on Aboriginal Corrections*](#)²⁶ and the [*Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Corrections*](#)²⁷. There are five multi-level security women's institutions housing women classified as minimum, medium or maximum security (Fraser Valley in the Pacific Region, Edmonton Institution for Women in the Prairies Region, Grand Valley Institution in the Ontario Region, Joliette Institution in the Quebec Region and Nova Institution in the Atlantic Region).

[*CSC's programs that address the unique and diverse needs of all women offenders*](#)²⁸ have been developed and implemented with the goal of reducing reoffending by increasing success for women in the community. Many culturally specific services and interventions are provided to Indigenous women who choose to follow a traditional healing path, to prepare them for safe and timely release into the community. For example, in Fall 2010, CSC launched its new stream of Aboriginal Women Offender Correctional Programs,²⁹ which includes program continuum unique to Indigenous women offenders referred to as the *Circle of Care*. Aboriginal Women Offender Correctional Programs are grounded in culture and are all Elder-assisted. The overall goal is to assist Indigenous women to prepare for, build, and enhance their ability for a safe and successful reintegration.

²⁵ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/women/toce-eng.shtml>

²⁶ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/aboriginal/002003-1006-eng.shtml>

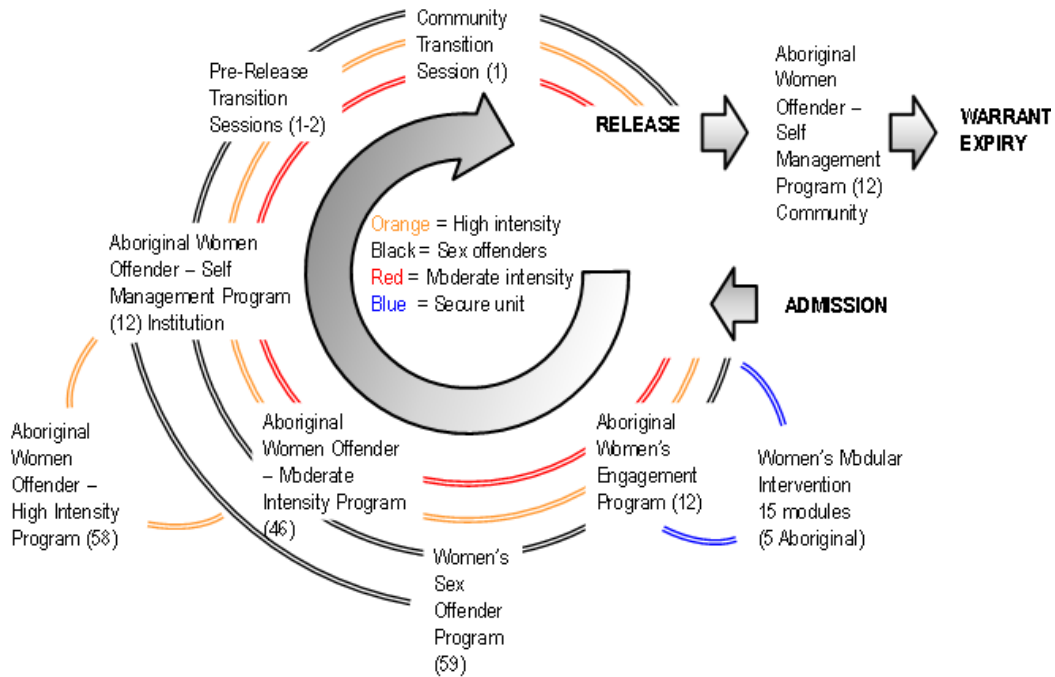
²⁷ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/aboriginal/092/002003-1000-eng.pdf>

²⁸ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/correctional-process/002001-2001-eng.shtml#s2>

²⁹ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/005007-2002-eng.shtml>



Aboriginal Women Offender Correctional Programs The Circle of Care



Number in brackets denotes number of sessions

The Aboriginal Women Offender Correctional Program (AWOCP) is CSC's first comprehensive and holistic Indigenous correctional program model and is available in each federal women's institution, CSC's Healing Lodge for Indigenous women and in the community.

The AWOCP includes content that addresses the Indigenous women offenders' social history, experiences such as intergenerational trauma, residential school experience and involvement in the foster care system. The trauma-informed, Elder-assisted process focuses on healing through cultural identity and provides traditional teachings, ceremonies and spiritual counselling for Indigenous women offenders. Elders can have a profound impact on not only the women's value and belief system, but also their behaviour, better preparing them for reintegration to the community as contributing members of the families and communities.

All programs included in the *Circle of Care* focus on helping participants understand the impact of problematic behaviour across a broad array of situations and relationships. The main theme is that of healing through cultural identity. Program participants have the opportunity to develop Healing Plans that include strategies to cope with everyday life.

For pre-release transition, women offenders who are being released from the institution may meet with a program facilitator for pre-release transition sessions. By providing a safe and supportive venue, the sessions help facilitate the transition from the institution to the community. The sessions provide an opportunity to prepare for release by helping participants consolidate the skills and insights they have gained in programs. The focus of the sessions is on reviewing the participant's progress and Healing Plan, goal setting for their future, and planning for what they will need in the community (supports and community resources).

An assessment of the AWOCP found that completing these programs increases skills and significantly decreases rates of returns to custody for women offenders.³⁰

Inuit women offenders are provided with culturally-sensitive services as part of CSC's Anijarniq Strategy³¹ which aims to support Inuit offenders in a holistic fashion to ensure that they have the support and resources needed to return and to remain in their communities as contributing members of their families and society.

Pathways for Indigenous Women Offenders

As part of CSC's Pathways initiatives, the Aboriginal Women's Pathways Continuum provides opportunities for Indigenous women at maximum, medium, and minimum security levels to engage in intensive healing interventions supported by Elders that includes one-to-one counselling, increased ceremonial access, and following a more traditional Aboriginal healing path consistent with Aboriginal traditional values.

Pathways Healing Units were established at Fraser Valley Institution, Edmonton Institution for Women and Grand Valley Institution to meet the healing and correctional needs of Indigenous women in preparation for either release to the community, or transfer to Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge or a section 81 healing lodge (i.e., Buffalo Sage Wellness House). As of 2016, a full Women Offender Pathway Continuum was introduced at these three institutions to provide opportunities to women inmates at all three security levels to participate in the initiative. Also, in the fall of 2009, Nova Institution introduced an Aboriginal healing house that provides cultural interventions similar to those offered in Pathways Units.

Aboriginal Intervention Centres – Women Offender Sites

An Aboriginal Intervention Centre (AIC) model that takes into consideration the unique reintegration needs of Indigenous women has been developed, and this model is also being implemented at women offender sites. This will ensure timely access to correctional programs and the existing Aboriginal Corrections Continuum of Care interventions such as Pathways, Elder services, and the support of Aboriginal Community Development Officers and Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers.

³⁰ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/r-391-en.shtml>

³¹ CSC developed the Anijaarniq Holistic Inuit Strategy in 2014 with the objective of ensuring that Inuit offenders have the support and resources they need to return to their communities as contributing members of their families and society.

Programs and interventions will be more closely integrated and aligned with case management, to strengthen the potential for successful reintegration of Indigenous women offenders, while increasing the participation of Indigenous communities in the care and custody of Indigenous women offenders. CSC is also committed to addressing the spiritual and cultural needs of Indigenous women offenders and will explore alternative and individualized interventions at institutions where the Indigenous population is limited in numbers.

Of note, the programs that form the AWOCP Circle of Care are culturally sensitive and are designed from an Indigenous worldview. All programs in the *Circle of Care* are Elder-assisted and the Elders provide the necessary teachings and ceremonies to the women in order to promote healing and balance. Programs are based on and include traditional Indigenous beliefs, values, ways of life, culture, ceremonies, etc. as well as how Indigenous people traditionally interact with the world around them.

Healing Lodges for Women

Since 1995, CSC has operated a Healing Lodge for Indigenous women classified as either medium or minimum security. [Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge](#)³²(OOHL) is located in Saskatchewan and provides culturally appropriate programming and traditional healing practices, facilitated by Elders and Spiritual Advisors. To better meet the needs of Indigenous women, the capacity of OOHL was expanded from 44 to 60 beds in 2016. Indigenous healing is also facilitated at the other women's institutions through Elders and Spiritual Advisors, and is supported by both Aboriginal Correctional Program Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers.

As well, Buffalo Sage Wellness House is the first women's section 81 facility in Canada. In September 2011, CSC and the Native Counselling Services of Alberta collaborated on the opening of Buffalo Sage, which provided 16 multi-level beds for women, with four beds designated as section 84 releases. Section 84 of the *CCRA* provides a legal framework for CSC to collaborate with Indigenous communities in the release planning process when an inmate who is applying for parole expresses an interest in having an Indigenous community or agency collaborate in planning their release. It is a process that engages Indigenous communities in establishing a release plan to maximise the chance of offender's success in the community.

In November 2017, the section 81 agreement with Buffalo Sage was expanded and an additional 12 beds were added for a total of 28 beds.

CSC continues to explore additional section 81 agreement opportunities for women offenders.

³² <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/institutions/001002-4007-eng.shtml>



Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge

Since its beginning in 1995, horses have been an integral aspect of the [Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge](#)³³ located on the Nekaneet First Nation near Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. During the opening ceremonies of the Lodge, the Nekaneet People performed a Horse Dance Ceremony for the women, for strength and guidance.

The Four Seasons Horse Teaching Program is provided over a 12-month period and allows the women of the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge to benefit from sustained contact with horses.

The program provides participants with therapeutic contact with the horses and the development of new skills required to care for the horses, the barn, and the grounds. Results of the program have been shown to positively contribute to healing and personal growth for the offenders who participate.

The Four Seasons Horse Teaching Program maintains close links with the community by participating in various Nekaneet ceremonies, such as the annual Sun Dance, and other seasonal activities, which are an integral part of the program. The Elders share teachings specific to the Horse Spirit, and the program also welcomes visitors from the local community as well as other areas to share expertise about horses and their long-term care. While working with an Elder and the Nekaneet Horse Teaching Instructor, the women learn the traditional teachings about the horse from a Nekaneet perspective. At the same time, they are mastering the basics of equine care and horseback riding.

There are four four-week seasonal intake sessions that coincide with each season. These sessions are more intensive and include teachings on care, grooming, safety, anatomy, as well as riding skills. The modules are taught through in class sessions and hands-on learning.

The Four Seasons Horse Teaching Program is holistic in its approach, targeting all areas of the participant's life by focusing on the teachings of the Medicine Wheel where all things are a part

³³ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/institutions/001002-4007-eng.shtml>

of Creation. These teachings acknowledge and explore the Sacred Gifts of Life, the Four Hills of Life, the Sacred Laws of Creation, the Four Spiritual Principles, and the Four Directions of the Universe and each of their specific gifts. It is through these teachings that the participants learn to come together in harmony with the Creation, within the Circle of Life, and the Spiritual Path they walk.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Within CSC, mental health services are provided by qualified mental health professionals and are based on an assessment of an individual's needs. Where identified as a need through the assessment process, particular attention, based on Indigenous history, is given to the exploration of abuse, including violence. In accordance with relevant policies and guidelines³⁴, for Indigenous offenders this is done in the context of their Aboriginal social history and would likely include the provision of interventions grounded in trauma-informed principles.

CSC's model for the delivery of mental health services includes three levels of mental health care. Intensity of services is based on the level of mental health need as assessed by a mental health professional:

1. Primary Mental Health Care is provided to inmates with mental health needs that can be accommodated by the health care teams in mainstream CSC institutions.
2. Intermediate Mental Health Care is provided to inmates who do not require admission to a hospital, or do not consent to hospital admission, and whose needs exceed the level of care provided through primary care.
3. Psychiatric in-patient Hospital Care is provided to inmates who have such severe and acute mental health concerns that they require a hospital environment providing 24-hour health care.

For minimum and medium security women offenders with mental health needs, separate intermediate level care units (Structured Living Environments) have been established at each of the five women's facilities to provide additional assistance and supervision. These five units provide a more intense level of mental health services. Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) has been implemented in these unit, which is a mental health program offered specifically to women offenders. DBT has been demonstrated to be an effective intervention to help people with emotion management and interpersonal difficulties, including survivors of trauma.³⁵ Intermediate Mental Health Care is also available for maximum security women in the five women's facilities as well as at CSC's Regional Psychiatric Centre (RPC) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

³⁴ Commissioner's Directive 800 – Health Services and associated guidelines - <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/lois-et-reglements/800-cd-eng.shtml>),

³⁵ See for instance: Blanchette, K., Flight, J., Verbrugge, P., Gobeil, R., & Taylor, K. (2011). *Dialectical Behaviour Therapy within a Women's Structured Living Environment*. R-241 Ottawa, Ontario, Correctional Services Canada and Eljdupovic, G., Lapierre, D., Reimer, J., (2016). *Dialectics Associated with Implementation of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy in Canadian Federal Correctional Institutions for Women*. *Suicidologi* nr 2-2016.

CSC Health Services provide health care to all offenders disclosing a sexual assault to a CSC staff member. Immediate action is taken to ensure that the safety needs of the inmate are met. Mental health professionals work collaboratively with Elders and Spiritual Advisors to obtain input in the development of the offender's treatment plan, as appropriate. Moreover, mental health professionals consider Aboriginal social history when arriving at conclusions and recommendations, integrating relevant aspects of this history in their work with Indigenous offenders.

STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR INDIGENOUS CORRECTIONS

National Indigenous Plan

The National Indigenous Plan³⁶ streamlines existing Indigenous resources and services to ensure that those offenders choosing to access the Aboriginal Continuum of Care interventions are prioritized for placement. Elder and liaison services will continue to be available at all institutions, and section 84 release planning will begin two years prior to an offender's day parole eligibility date, to ensure that Indigenous communities can actively engage in release planning of their members. Additionally, following completion of a program or six months in a Pathways initiative, an automatic security classification review will be undertaken and progress assessed.

Aboriginal Interventions Centres (AICs) operate as both an intake assessment centre and an interventions centre, and through a realignment of existing resources within institutions and the community, more intensive support and interventions are available. AICs are intended for Indigenous offenders, particularly those with shorter sentences, who at intake will begin Aboriginal programming, work with an Elder, and begin the release planning process. Access to Pathways following program completion at either medium or minimum security, and preparation for day parole are coordinated through a dedicated case management team who work collaboratively to ensure that Indigenous offenders are prepared for release at the earliest safe opportunity, and supported in their Indigenous community with a robust section 84 release plan. These teams have received specialized training on the consideration of Aboriginal social history throughout an offender's sentence, and will be in better positions to use an Indigenous lens when making case management decisions.

In addition, to enhance its cultural competency and better meet the needs of Indigenous offenders, CSC is working diligently to attract and retain Indigenous staff through succession planning and via career and leadership-development opportunities. CSC has human resources outreach recruitment initiatives in place that aim to increase the number of Indigenous employees at all levels of the CSC as part of its commitment to employment equity. As of April 30, 2018, 9.9% of CSC's national workforce self-identified as being Indigenous peoples, compared to the workforce availability of 6.4% and over half of CSC's Indigenous employees

³⁶ <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/005007-2606-en.shtml>

are women.³⁷ Corporate performance and talent management programs allow for employee development and advancement to take into consideration representation of Indigenous staff.

CONCLUSION

Ensuring that CSC's policies, programs and interventions for federal offenders are focused on effective rehabilitation to improve community safety for all Canadians, including for Indigenous women and girls, is an important part of building a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

With regard to Indigenous offenders, CSC's approach to Indigenous corrections is culturally responsive and inclusive of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. The objective is to provide the most effective correctional outcomes, including the prevention of violence against women and girls through effective rehabilitation, which in turn contributes to the safety of Canadian communities.

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³⁷ CSC Human Resource Management System.