

# Let's Talk

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## A NEW GENERATION OF CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS



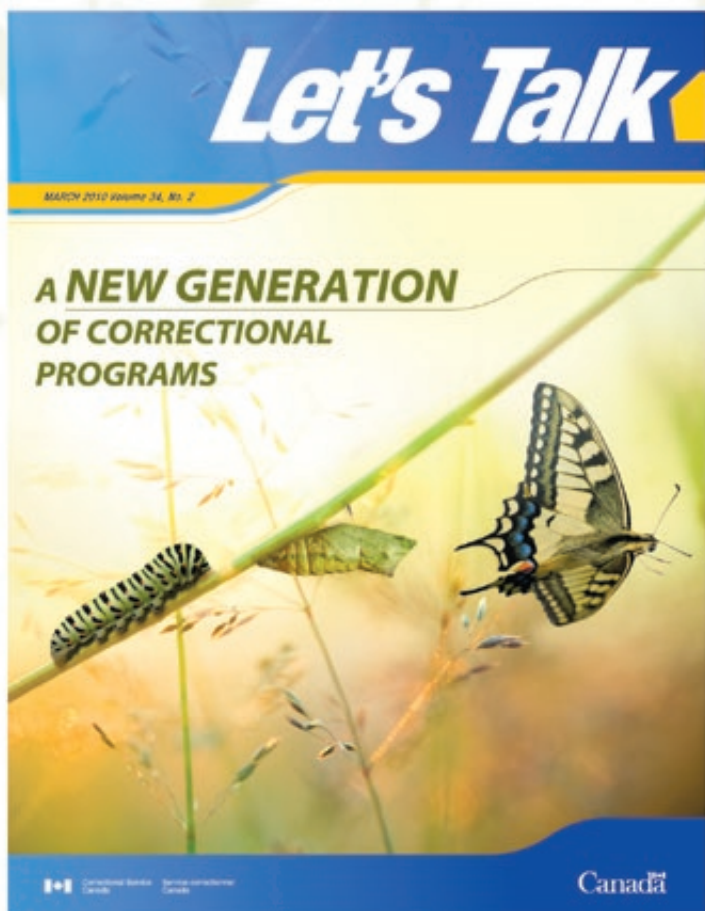
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## Commissioner's message

Don Head, *Commissioner*

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Welcome to this issue of *Let's Talk*, which highlights the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) many achievements in the area of correctional programs.

Staff members can take pride in CSC's long and respected history of developing and delivering correctional programs that work. Our programs are evidence-based and are proven to help offenders change the behaviours that contribute to their criminal activity.

Throughout my career within CSC, I have witnessed first-hand the impact that effective correctional programming can have on the life of an offender, and, in turn, public safety.

Whether it's helping an offender overcome an addiction, learn to deal with anger in non-violent ways, or address the risk factors that support harmful sexual behaviour, our staff who deliver programs use the latest research to guide offenders toward lives as law-abiding citizens.

It is challenging work that requires patience, stamina, and an unwavering belief in the potential for change. Their work makes an invaluable contribution towards enhancing public safety and as Commissioner, I'm proud of the dedication and professionalism our Correctional Program Officers demonstrate on a daily basis. It is because of their hard work that correctional services from around the world turn to CSC for advice and guidance on rehabilitation and effective correctional programming.

Now, after nearly 30 years of leading-edge correctional programming, CSC is embarking on its latest chapter in program development and delivery with the launch of the Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM).

As you have read in previous issues of *Let's Talk*, the ICPM builds on the most successful aspects of CSC's existing slate of programs, while incorporating the most promising innovations in correctional programming research. The ICPM pilot project kicked-off in the Pacific Region in January 2010.

It is designed to allow offenders to access programs much earlier in their sentence – at the intake stage. And the modular-based structure of the ICPM will also allow more offenders to be admitted into programs on an ongoing basis. Needless to say, we are monitoring the ICPM pilot project closely and we will assess its successes and challenges and make changes where necessary.

It's an ambitious project and I'm heartened by your commitment to continuing to improve how we deliver correctional programming. I believe ultimately that this commitment will allow us to better address the needs of offenders within our care and custody, for years to come.

As part of the ongoing Transformation Agenda, CSC is streamlining intake assessment and case management processes, and maximizing existing program capacity in order to help ensure offenders have access to the programs they need to adhere to their correctional plans. The development of the ICPM is a big part of this, but — as the ICPM pilot is limited to the Pacific Region — we should note that efforts are being made in the rest of the country to make the most of current program capacity and delivery to help prepare offenders for a successful release to the community.

I hope this issue of *Let's Talk* reminds all those who work in program development and delivery just how important each of you are to the organization and its contribution to public safety.

For those of you who do not work in program development or delivery, I encourage you to read this issue and learn more about correctional programming, its successes, and the challenges we are now working to address. ■

# Editor-in-Chief's message



Elizabeth Van Allen, Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to this issue of *Let's Talk*, which highlights the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) many achievements in the area of correctional programs.

First off, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how excited I am to be the new Editor-in-Chief of *Let's Talk*. I have been reading this publication ever since I began my career with CSC and it is truly an honour to now play a key role in its development.

Some of you may be unaware that *Let's Talk* is actually read around the globe – from schools in Canada and the United States, to correctional facilities abroad. This wide distribution is just another example of how the Service is sharing its knowledge and experiences in the field of corrections.

This issue in particular contains some very useful information for readers, as it focuses on CSC's correctional programs and how they contribute to the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. As you read through these articles, you will learn about various aspects of the Service's correctional programs and how they are being tailored to different groups of offenders.

In addition, you will come to see how the Service is building upon its world class correctional system with the piloting of its third generation of correctional programs – the Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM).

These are exciting times for CSC, and I hope this edition of *Let's Talk* will provide you with some insight into both the current array of correctional programs and what the future holds in the form of the ICPM. ■

## Come on now... do Correctional Programs Really Work?

**By Jodi McDonough, Program Officer,  
Reintegration Programs, National Headquarters**

“You want to know if programs work? As much as I hate to admit it, yeah, they work,” says George Leclair, a Lifer who spent more than 32 years inside before being released to the Ottawa community in 1992. Having provided outreach services to released offenders in the National Capital Region throughout the past decade, Mr. Leclair speaks with conviction when describing the range of positive impacts he has witnessed in the lives of his clients, thanks to their participation in the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) correctional programs.

Despite firsthand testimonies like that of Mr. Leclair, and Canada's longstanding reputation as an international frontrunner in the area of correctional programming, a mystique still surrounds what actually takes place in institutional classrooms, and the link between correctional programs and recidivism rates is still murky for some.

For those who want to know more about *how* our correctional programs work, here's the deal. Unlike social, cultural, or education programs, correctional programs are designed to target factors that have been identified in research as being directly related to criminal behaviour.

While criminal behaviour takes on many shapes and forms, criminological research has consistently demonstrated that a common set of factors – referred to as “criminogenic needs” – must be addressed in order to reduce the likelihood of re-offending, regardless of the behaviour in question. Whether an individual is serving a federal sentence as a result of substance abuse issues, general violence, family violence, or sexual offences, correctional programs are designed to target a distinct set of underlying factors that include an individual's social influences, along with his/her emotions, beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, and lifestyle.

In comparing and contrasting various treatment methods, research has also identified correctional programs that operate from a cognitive-behavioural approach as the most effective means of producing desired correctional results – a reduction in both general and violent

recidivism. Furthermore, research has also revealed that the most effective correctional programs in the world adhere to a set of nine basic principles – principles which have long been adopted as policy in Canadian corrections.

Given the Service's historical commitment to evidence-based programming, it is no surprise that Canada has been able to maintain such an impressive track record when it comes to preventing future crime. Our correctional programs were developed and are delivered consistent with "what works" since their inception in the early 1990s, and they continue to be guided by the latest treatment developments in the fields of criminology, psychology, and sociology. So, when asked how the Service has been able to boast such significant reductions in recidivism over the past 20 years, the answer is quite simple: it all boils down to adherence to the principles of Risk, Need, and Responsivity. In other words, CSC delivers correctional programs that target the right offenders and the most relevant needs, through the most effective approach.

For those who wish to know more about *how well* our correctional programs actually work, you only need to look to our success rates, which are significant in all five program areas, including Substance Abuse, Violence Prevention, Family Violence, Sex Offender Programs and Community Maintenance.

Although results vary by program, intensity level, and the demographics of participants, evaluations have consistently associated correctional program participation with a greater likelihood of conditional release, reductions in readmissions, and decreases in violent, general, and sexual re-offending (CSC National Evaluation, 2009; 95). It is also important to note that correctional program outcomes are significantly more positive when offenders participate in and complete programs that correspond to their assessed need, both in terms of treatment targets and risk level. This finding confirms that the quality of the assessment and referral process can help or hinder our ability to foster positive behavioural change in the lives of offenders.

As CSC's overarching mandate is to contribute to public safety, the ultimate measure of our success in achieving this end is reflected in our ability to prevent future crime. In comparing the success rates of those who participated in correctional programs with those who did not, the differences are marked<sup>1</sup>.

Results from CSC's most recent national evaluation of correctional programs reveal that offenders who participated in Violence Prevention Programs were 41 per cent less likely to return to custody for a new offence, and approximately half as likely (52 per cent) to be readmitted with a new violent offence. In terms of the Service's ability to prevent future conjugal violence, offenders who participated in the moderate-intensity Family Violence Prevention Program were 36 per cent less likely to be readmitted for a new offence and 57 per cent less likely to be readmitted for a new violent offence.

Among offenders with substance abuse issues, those who participated in the high-intensity National Substance Abuse Program were 45 per cent less likely to return with a new offence and 63 per cent less likely to return with a new violent offence. Results for the Service's Community Maintenance Program (CMP) are similarly promising. Evaluation results revealed that those who participated in CMP were 29 per cent less likely than the comparison group to be readmitted after release for any reason, including for technical revocation. They were also 40 per cent less likely to return to custody for a new offence, and 56 per cent less likely to be readmitted for a new violent offence than their counterparts.

An examination of outcomes for sex offenders with non-child victims revealed participation in the high-intensity sex offender program to be associated with reduced levels of readmission (25 per cent), and readmission with a new sex offence (71 per cent). Outcomes for sex offenders with child victims who participated in the same program also reveal considerable reductions in readmission levels for both general offences (54 per cent) and sex offences (50 per cent).

[...] offenders who participated in Violence Prevention Programs were 41 per cent less likely to return to custody...

Although the results of our Sex Offender Programs may appear to be as successful as those realized in other program areas, the national evaluation did not deem the above-noted results to be "statistically significant" – a term used in research to indicate that a result is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Nonetheless, the Service has made considerable strides in this program area over the past two decades; the results of which continue to demonstrate great promise for offenders and Canadian communities.

All results considered, you would think the Service might be tempted to rest on its laurels for a while, and take a break from the world of innovation...but not so. As pioneers in the world of progressive, effective corrections, we are forever endeavouring to set the bar higher. As of January 2010, the Service is piloting an entirely new correctional program model for male offenders that has the potential to deliver even greater public safety results for Canadians. And while some staff may be hesitant to embrace change...who better to take on a challenge of this magnitude than a country that has always been viewed by others as a leader in this regard. ■

<sup>1</sup> The discussion of correctional program outcomes captured in this article has been limited to results for non-Aboriginal male offenders, given the non-gender or cultural specific nature of the five program areas in question. For more information on correctional program outcomes for Aboriginal and women offenders, please consult the 2009 National Correctional Program Evaluation.

# Debunking the Myths of Correctional Programs

**By Michael Bettman, A/Director General, Offender Programs and Reintegration**

*The Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) Transformation Agenda can announce a great victory* – The Service has successfully reviewed all aspects of how it delivers programs and came up with concrete strategies for improving public safety. With the implementation of strategic reinvestments, CSC will boast the most significant increase in evidence-based programs in decades.

Correctional program facilitators know that their client is the public and the benefits for offenders can be a win-win success story.

Our obligation to Canadians is to clearly demonstrate that their investments have resulted in measurable improvements and continued public safety results.

This is not a difficult task, given the proven effectiveness of correctional programs, but my ten year stint as Director of Reintegration Programs has taught me that there are many misperceptions surrounding offender rehabilitation and our greatest challenge is often debunking the myths of effective reintegration.

I won't waste much space addressing the myth that programs do not work. CSC has conducted extensive research demonstrating that when the right offender is matched to the right correctional program, prolific criminals stop committing crimes.

I will, however, address the myth that our correctional programs work for everyone – because they don't. We have learned that not all programs work for all offenders, and as professionals we sometimes need to make difficult choices that are counterintuitive.

We have to see certain patterns of behaviour before we can effectively match an offender to a program; however, these behaviours aren't always visible, which can sometimes result in an offender participating in a program that is not properly suited to meet his/her needs. For example, low-risk offenders without extensive histories of antisocial activity will not benefit from correctional programs no matter how dysfunctional their life appears to be.

Another myth is that CSC is only about correctional programs. CSC offers a wide range of reintegration programs and, in my experience, most people falsely attribute the word 'programs' to correctional

programs and fail to consider the diversity of CSC's many successful employment, educational, and social interventions.

CSC also has supervision, work release, temporary absence, faith based, and mental health programs. Future research and evaluation will hopefully prove that it is not only the correctional programs that yield public safety results, but the interaction between our range of programs.

Another common myth is that waitlists for correctional programs are always a bad thing. In fact, when the Service maximizes the use of effective resources, a waitlist for a program means that we have assessed a criminogenic need and planned a set of programs with the offender at the most appropriate time to mitigate risk. Waitlists are indicators of good assessment and forward planning and allow CSC to match capacity with demand – a basic strategy that is too rare in social services.

Offenders who refuse to take programs are maintained on waitlists with the hopes that staff will encourage them to make changes. In addition, offenders in our institutions who have not yet had the opportunity to apply for supervised release are scheduled on waitlists for community programs.

I have also heard the myth that the more correctional programs the better. CSC does not need "special" correctional programs for every offender sub-population, as an overabundance of correctional programs unnecessarily complicates the correctional system.

Instead, CSC has created on-line tools to address the diverse individual needs that can make a difference in an offender's life.

The final myth I am going to mention is that anyone can deliver a correctional program effectively. In reality, Canadians rely on dedicated, hard-working staff who must undergo rigorous training and pass ongoing and rigid quality assurance procedures in order to deliver expert accredited content.

Correctional program facilitators know that their client is the public and the benefits for offenders can be a win-win success story. Facilitators must deliver structured content that addresses crime, not therapy that is exclusively focused on the offenders' desires and traumas. Facilitators are trained to reinforce prosocial attitudes and goals while helping offenders extinguish the acts that have caused suffering in too many people's lives.

Correctional Program Officers know that harsh sanctions and disrespect do not lead to public safety results, and they know how difficult it is to challenge the myths of criminal rehabilitation.

Having recently accepted the position of Acting Director General, Offender Programs and Reintegration, I can rest easy knowing that Lee Redpath, Acting Director of Reintegration Programs, will carry on the important work that is needed to continue to demystify correctional programs. Describing herself as a faithful 'recipient' of programs throughout her 20-plus years with CSC, Lee is eager to develop an even deeper appreciation and understanding of correctional programs, from an 'insider's perspective'. ■

# Inside the Integrated Correctional Program Model

– AN INTERVIEW WITH CARMEN LONG, FORMER ICPM PROJECT LEADER

***Let's Talk sat down with former ICPM Project Leader Carmen Long to get an inside look at the Service's third generation of correctional programs.***

**LT – What impacts do you think this new third generation of Correctional Programs will have on offender rehabilitation and public safety?**

CL – The Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM) overcomes historical challenges and gaps to ensure more offenders will have access to the right program at the right time. Furthermore, the move towards a holistic approach makes the programs much more responsive to the needs of the offender population, and public safety is enhanced when program resources are focused on higher-risk offenders.

**LT – What is the biggest challenge you and your team have faced so far working on the ICPM file?**

CL – Change management is difficult. One of our greatest challenges was dealing with the strong reactions to change. While this change still poses a challenge, we are bolstered by the support of many people, and I believe that this ongoing dialogue has only strengthened the project.

**LT – What previous career experiences qualified you and prepared you for your role on the ICPM file?**

CL – My operational experience, combined with my national management and program development experience, was key. Though the most significant thing I learned during my career is how important a team is to the success of a project. The ICPM is where it is now because of an incredible team of dedicated people.

**LT – What do the academic experts in the area of correctional programming think of this new approach?**

CL – The ICPM team met with correctional programming experts Don Andrews, Paul Gendreau, Ed Zamble, and Steve Wormith to discuss the new approach in detail. The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive.

Indeed, Don Andrews made a point of noting how impressed he was by the “highly individualized nature of the new model.” Although the benefits of taking an integrated approach might seem obvious at this time, Ed Zamble reminded us that “we couldn’t have done the model [ICPM] until we tried the programs all separately and learned from them.”

**LT – How many people have worked with you to get this file to where it is today?**

CL – The ICPM has benefited tremendously from the enthusiastic support of many people from across Canada. In addition to the core members of the ICPM Development and Implementation Team, I would like to recognize the following staff members, whose support and contributions made the ICPM possible:

Brenda Lepage, and later Julie Blasko as our Transformation Team leads, provided invaluable assistance.

John Edmunds of the Union of Solicitor General Employees has shown continued interest and support.

We also work closely with Chris Malloy, Paul Weaver, Kent Merlin, Linda Arseneault, and Rob Mills in order to develop meaningful program management and performance reports.

Cindy Cooper-Johnson and Lyne Parks helped us immensely in making modifications to the Offender Management System.

Alvin Kube from the Aboriginal Initiatives Division is a close partner. And Emily Henry works closely with the ICPM Elder Working Group.

The National Parole Board welcomed us and we have collaborated closely with them throughout the different stages of the project, especially in the Pacific Region.

In closing, I would like to thank each and every person who played a role in shaping the ICPM. It took a lot of hard work and I look forward to witnessing the positive impact this new program model will have on public safety results. ■



# Interventions for Offenders with Mental Health Issues

**By Paul Warren, Communications Advisor,  
National Headquarters**

With big changes to the offender profile over the past decade, including an increase in the percentage of offenders with a mental health diagnosis at admission, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has had to adapt its approaches to offender rehabilitation, and address a number of unique challenges – and the way the Service delivers mental health services is no exception.

While the aim of CSC's correctional programs is to address factors that are directly related to the offender's criminal behaviour, they don't fully target the symptoms of mental illness. As a result, mental health interventions have been designed to specifically target these symptoms, while providing offenders with the skills to better cope with their disorder.

"Given the diversity in the presentation and experience of mental illness, as well as program availability, some offenders with mental health diagnoses will be directed to mental health interventions as priority," said Shauna Bottos, Senior Programs Officer with Correctional Operations and Programs at National Headquarters. "Others will be directed to correctional programs. Some will receive both correctional and mental health interventions concurrently. As a result, it is important that correctional program staff members be equipped to work with offenders with mental health challenges within their existing programs."

And, through an online tool called the Responsivity Portal, the Service has created an incredible and innovative way of helping staff members get the information they need to effectively address offender rehabilitation challenges.

"The Responsivity Portal is one of the best tools we have ever developed when it comes to providing concrete strategies for staff to intervene and adjust program delivery for unique sections of the offender population," said Michael Bettman, A/Director General, Offender Programs and Reintegration. "It's so easy. With the click of a mouse the user can search key features and characteristics that are being displayed by an offender. The user is then provided with best practices and advice on how to more effectively interact and work with offenders presenting special challenges or unique needs."

Alongside many other offender subpopulations, this portal has a section that is designed to highlight the unique challenges that accompany special needs offenders, including those with mental disorders.

This is so important because not all individuals with mental health diagnoses are affected in the same way. Some will show minimal functional impairment while others will be much more seriously impaired by the symptoms of their illness. Of offenders diagnosed with one form of mental illness, over 90 per cent suffer from at least one other disorder,<sup>1</sup> further complicating matters.

Therefore, when an offender with a mental health disorder displays features or exhibits characteristics that pose a challenge to staff, the Responsivity Portal provides strategies that will help them enhance their program delivery and address the unique needs of the offender. These strategies are based on a solid body of evidence and their use and practicality has been reinforced by experts working in the field.

"Interestingly enough," said Bottos, "what we've found is that many of the same skills and strategies that have been shown to help manage symptoms also help manage offenders' criminal behaviour." ■

<sup>1</sup> Brink, J.H., Doherty, D., & Boer, A. (2001). Mental disorder in federal offenders: A Canadian prevalence study. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 24, 339-356.



# Correctional Programs in the Community

**By Reyhan Yazar, Project Officer, Reintegration Programs, National Headquarters**

People usually think of correctional programs as taking place inside the walls of our institutions. When we think about an offender in the community, we typically think of someone living in a halfway house, working or going to school, and being supervised by a Community Parole Officer. But correctional programs? Isn't that something done earlier in a person's sentence?

The truth is that while offenders do participate in programs during their incarceration, they often continue to take part in programs while in the community. In some cases an offender will reach his/her release date and still require further program intervention. But, the most common reason why offenders take programs in the community is to continue to develop, apply and maintain the skills they learned in the institution.

Correctional programs teach offenders how to recognize and avoid the people and places that have led to trouble in the past, and the skills necessary for managing risky situations they cannot avoid. Many of these programs can also teach offenders how to enjoy healthier, more productive lives for themselves and their families.

As long as an offender is incarcerated, the learning acquired through programming remains untested on the outside. So, it's only when an offender is released into the community that the "rubber really hits the road."

This is a very important part of the rehabilitation process, and offenders often require much support during the initial transition to the community. The programming side of support is often provided through maintenance programs. In maintenance, offenders get the opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills to the unique set of circumstances they are facing as part of their reintegration journey. So if something isn't working, or more practice is needed, the Community Correctional Program Officer (CPO) can fine-tune the program or help develop a new plan that will more effectively address an offender's risks and needs.

At the Ottawa Parole Office, Jeein Kim helps deliver maintenance programs to offenders. She considers there to be two main advantages of delivering programs in the community; not only can offenders apply the skills they've learned more directly to real-life issues, but they also have the freedom to act like themselves in the community.

Brian Mortotsi, currently delivering the Violence Prevention Program at the Keele Community Correctional Centre in Toronto, believes there can be less pressure on offenders in the community than in an institution, so people feel free to talk with staff about issues. Mortotsi reiterates that the things offenders learn "can be applied immediately when they walk out the door... in real time."

Nancy Morin, who currently delivers a Community Maintenance Program, agrees that the work she does in the community is meaningful because the offenders she counsels are dealing with everyday problems in the larger community, not just institutional issues. "And it also helps that offenders are more likely to get support from their families when taking these programs to improve themselves," Morin adds.

Delivering programs in the community can be challenging. It's a reality that some offenders don't manage their real-life issues very well, slipping back into old ways and being suspended as a result. When an offender has a job and family obligations, and has to take a bus or walk to every appointment, making time for correctional programs can be difficult. For those reasons, Community CPOs often work evenings.



Sharon Hogan and Nancy Morin, Community Correctional Program Officers in the Ontario Region

Overall, research shows that community programs are effective in preventing re-offending. For example, according to the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) January 2009 evaluation report of correctional programs, offenders who participate in the Community Maintenance Program are 40 per cent less likely to return to a penitentiary for any kind of crime, and 56 per cent less likely to return for a violent crime (as compared to offenders who didn't take community programming).

Beyond the numbers, CPOs are able to see the human face of change. Sharon Hogan, who delivers an *Alternatives, Associates and Attitudes* program, describes how many people call her back, sometimes years after they've taken the program, to report on how well they're doing. They like to share their successes, and often thank her for caring. "It's great when someone calls me back after a year or two, to say they recall our discussions on consequences and understanding the hurt they've caused," she says. "It's something they never want to happen again."

The reality of Canada's correctional system is that the majority of offenders will be released back into our communities. Thanks to the efforts of dedicated staff like those described in this article, offenders can transform their lives, making Canadian communities safer for us all. ■

# Aboriginal Correctional Programs



An Aboriginal Correctional Program Officer  
at Edmonton Institution in the Prairie Region

## **By Randy Mason, Director, Aboriginal Interventions, National Headquarters**

Whether living on a reserve, in a city, or within the walls of a correctional facility, Canada's Aboriginal peoples have a rich history that is deep-rooted in tradition. In order to help preserve this culture, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has integrated its effective correctional programming principles with traditional Aboriginal healing approaches.

I think about what I can become,  
what I can learn, and what I know  
I can change...

Through extensive consultations and partnerships with Aboriginal organizations and communities, national Aboriginal stakeholder groups, and Aboriginal Elders, the Reintegration Programs Division has developed and introduced 10 Aboriginal correctional programs designed to address the criminogenic needs of the Aboriginal offender population.

These programs are delivered by trained and qualified Aboriginal Correctional Program Officers (ACPOs) with the support of Aboriginal Elders who provide cultural teachings, counselling, spiritual guidance, and ceremony to program participants.

Aboriginal correctional programs are distinct from core correctional programs, given their heavy emphasis on "Aboriginal healing." In Aboriginal correctional programs, a lot of attention is directed

towards the emotional realm, as well as attachments, Aboriginal identity, and the inter-generational impacts of the residential school system.

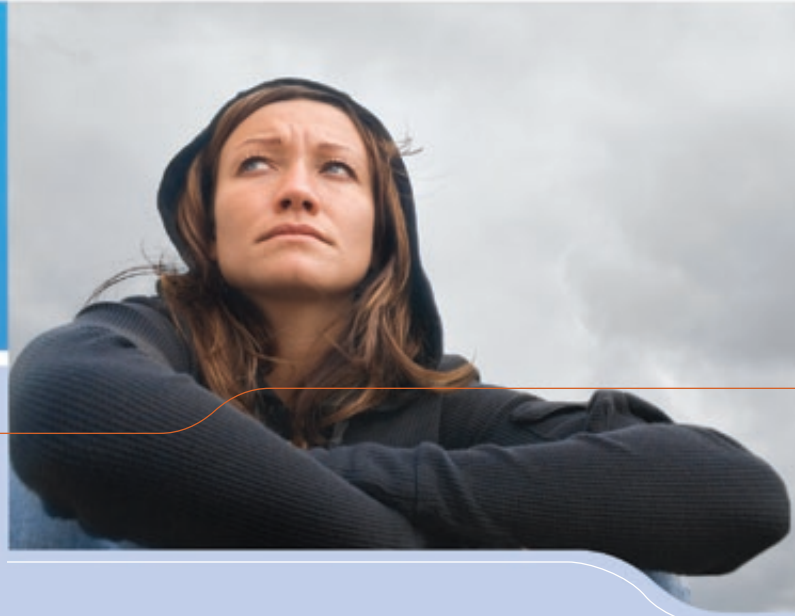
Offenders regularly comment on the positive impact these programs have had on their lives and their rehabilitation. As one program participant writes, "I'd say it helped me become a better person in a way. Like I said, it makes me think clearly. Before, I would do everything on reaction, on a sudden impulse. Now, I think about it... I think about what I can become, what I can learn, and what I know I can change..."

Program facilitators are noticing changes too, as they are observing higher levels of motivation, increased participation and engagement, and better group cohesion as a result of respectful interactions. These results are reflected in a recent evaluation of CSC's correctional programs that noted improvements in both institutional behaviour and recidivism rates.

It's important for CSC to continue to engage Aboriginal peoples in meaningful dialogue about corrections, as this process allows Aboriginal correctional programs to continue to be developed by Aboriginal Peoples, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. One Elder remarked, "It has been over a hundred years since the last time government engaged Aboriginal Peoples in consultations and discussions in this manner... I never thought I would see these days. We have accomplished more than I ever thought possible."

The Elders teach that Mother Earth was built round so that we would not see too far into the future. And yet, the future has revealed itself to us in the form of the Aboriginal Integrated Correctional Program Model. Knowing that the current array of programs has helped develop this second generation of Aboriginal correctional programs, it is with a sense of great pride and accomplishment that we welcome tomorrow. ■

# Correctional Programs for Women Offenders



**By Doris Fortin, Manager, Interventions and Policy, Women Offender Sector, National Headquarters**

Being able to address the needs of offenders of all cultural groups who often present many inter-related problems is something unique to correctional programs for women.

While getting involved in the management of correctional programs for women offenders, I quickly realized that male-adapted programs were not meeting the unique needs of women. Women offenders often exhibit different characteristics than males, such as being generally motivated to change and open to opportunities to participate in programs.

As a result, the menu of correctional programs for women has continued to expand over the past decade, beginning in 2000 when an expert panel recommended the development of a standardized women-centred substance abuse program.

While the main objective of the Women Offender Substance Abuse Program is to target substance abuse, it also consists of a multi-target treatment approach that is designed to offer a continuum of care from admission to warrant expiry. Recent evaluation results demonstrated that “institutional substance abuse treatment leads to reductions in readmissions among women offenders,” and that the *combination* of institutional treatment and community maintenance was particularly beneficial in lowering the likelihood of a return to custody.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to substance abuse programming, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) also conducted an in-depth analysis of women offenders incarcerated for violent crimes, which resulted in a gender-specific violence prevention program for women. The program specifically targets thinking and behaviours directly linked to violence and decision-making that can lead to victimization. Initial results obtained through pre- and post-program testing are revealing significant improvements for participants.

Furthermore, a correctional program for women offenders who are assessed as high risk and housed in secure units is currently being piloted at three regional women offender institutions. The *Women’s Modular Intervention*, a unique program designed for individual

delivery as required, allows for flexible delivery, includes newly conceptualized models, and offers an Aboriginal stream with Elder assistance.

Addressing the needs of Aboriginal women offenders using culturally appropriate interventions is a corporate priority for the Service. Networking with partners from other government and non-government agencies has allowed the organization to implement programs rooted in an Aboriginal worldview.

In 2001, CSC obtained permission from Manitoba Justice for the implementation of the Circles of Change Program, a multi-target program designed specifically for Aboriginal women offenders. At the same time, CSC worked with Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) for the implementation of a violence prevention program for Aboriginal women offenders entitled the Spirit of a Warrior Program. In 2006, NCSA, under contract with CSC, developed an Aboriginal Women’s Maintenance Program, which was implemented shortly thereafter in institutions and community sites.

Programs for women offenders require a flexible approach that responds to gender-specific needs and unique cultural differences. This approach must also acknowledge the diverse life experiences of women, and reflect a belief in their ability to change.

The Service receives many inquiries about its programs for women. In fact, a number of provincial jurisdictions<sup>3</sup> have adopted CSC programs, and their staff have been trained by CSC trainers. Some international guests have also participated in training.

CSC is moving towards a fully integrated model of correctional programs for Aboriginal<sup>4</sup> and non-Aboriginal women offenders. The Service has also made consistent efforts to dedicate qualified, trained facilitators to the delivery of correctional programs for women offenders in order to continue to reduce recidivism rates and increase public safety. ■

<sup>1</sup> Matheson, F., Doherty, S., and Grant, B. A. (March 2008). Women Offender Substance Abuse Programming & Community Reintegration. Addictions Research Centre. Research Branch. Correctional Service Canada. Page 5.

<sup>2</sup> The Circles of Change Program was adapted by Manitoba Justice from the Moving On Program developed by Dr. Marilyn Van Dieten. Dr. Van Dieten agreed to CSC’s use of the Program.

<sup>3</sup> CSC currently has memorandums of understanding with British Columbia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland & Labrador.

<sup>4</sup> Aboriginal Correctional Programs for women offenders are Elder assisted.



CSC staff at an ICPM training session in the Pacific Region (left to right): Back row; Loméga Étienne, Jordan Liberman, Sav Bains, John Eno, Joanne Jolin, Corey Unger. Front row; Marla Kavalak, Jodi McDonough, Emily Henry, Haley Bullen, Jennine Hamilton.

## Pacific Region: **Integrated Correctional Program Model training**

**By Corey Unger, National Program Manager, ICPM,  
Pacific Region**

From the moment the Pacific Region received word that we were selected as the location to pilot the Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM), the Pacific Region ICPM Implementation Team moved full steam ahead to ensure a successful implementation of this important program.

Throughout the development of the ICPM program delivery strategy, we communicated with various partners and stakeholders and held town hall meetings with all sites and communities. These half-day sessions, which were attended by both offenders and staff, allowed for dynamic discussion in relation to ICPM and the impact this program model will have in correctional planning and offender rehabilitation.

Training took place for 66 Correctional Program Officers from January 11-22, 2010, in Abbotsford, British Columbia. In early February, the ICPM program delivery pilot was launched at various sites in the Pacific Region – marking the official beginning of the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) third generation of correctional programs.

After a few weeks of ICPM program delivery, 50 more Correctional Program Officers underwent ICPM training from March 1-12. These ICPM-trained Correctional Program Officers are now awaiting the launch of program delivery at the remainder of the pilot sites, which is scheduled for April 2010.

The training was a huge success, with all participants learning every aspect of the ICPM. However, it did pose a few challenges, as the National ICPM Trainers delivered the information to a mix of new and

experienced Correctional Program Officers. Due to the participants' varying ranges of knowledge and experience, it was crucial that the material was taught in a way that would be understood by everyone.

Another area that required additional attention was transitioning from the old correctional program model to the ICPM as smoothly as possible. A continuous review of all program start and end dates, to verify our ICPM Training Plan corresponded with existing programs, ensured that the process did not create gaps in program availability for offenders.

This ICPM pilot project has had far-reaching impacts on many areas of our business, and as a result of the number of correctional areas affected by this pilot project, it has taken some incredible teamwork from a variety of departments and specific individuals throughout our organization.

Today, reflecting back over the last several months of planning, developing, and implementing, it is a true accomplishment for our entire ICPM Team to have successfully met our initial commitments.

It's truly incredible that over 8,500 pages of ICPM program manuals have been written, 116 staff members have been trained, and all necessary tools to effectively identify, prioritize, manage, and monitor offender ICPM program referrals have been created within such a short time frame.

In the coming months, we look forward to evaluating our current progress and making any adjustments to improve our ICPM program results. ■

Prairie Region:

# Aboriginal Offender Substance Abuse Program

**By Tom Dahl, Aboriginal Correctional Programs Officer, Stony Mountain Institution**

“The Aboriginal Offender Substance Abuse Program is not just another program, it is the way to freedom for these boys,” says Elder Gordon Nepinak, a long-time Elder at Stony Mountain and a respected member of the National Elders’ Working Group.

The Aboriginal Offender Substance Abuse Program (AOSAP) is a blended program that combines current best practices in the addictions field with cultures, teachings, and ceremonies guided by both Aboriginal facilitators and Elders.

A truly holistic program, AOSAP addresses all aspects of a person’s life, not simply alcohol and drug abuse, by using the *Sacred Medicine Wheel* to help participants assess the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of their lives – the goal being to achieve a healthier balance in all four areas.

The program also offers the *Seven Grandfather Teachings* as a set of values shared by many Aboriginal cultures in some form for many centuries. These teachings are a prescription for a good life and are simple but powerful. One AOSAP graduate commented, “I would usually do badly in programs, but this one was different. If I’m thinking negatively, all I have to remember is humility. Be a humble person like an Elder. It calms me down right away and I don’t fly off the handle. I learned a lot in the program but I’ll never forget the Seven Teachings.”

Over the course of the program, offenders learn many aspects of Aboriginal teachings, protocols, medicines, and ceremonies. They are taught how to deal with the effects that colonization has had on Aboriginal peoples, and they learn about the far-reaching effects of alcohol and drug abuse. By the final stage of AOSAP, offenders can identify the core reasons for their substance abuse and develop a Self-Management plan to maintain sobriety and gain a healthier balance in the four aspects of their *Medicine Wheel*.

Elder Nepinak and other Elders have agreed, “If you have a group of Aboriginal men with drinking and drug problems, you will have a group of men with many traumas in their lives and the lives of their families. We cannot ignore the truth of that. Many of them need to heal from these traumas so they can move on in their lives. AOSAP helps them start this process, slowly, little by little.”



Murray Monkman (left) and Tom Dahl (right), Aboriginal Correctional Program Officers, along with Elder Gordon Nepinak (middle) in the Prairie Region

Since 2004, when the pilot program began, 134 offenders have successfully completed AOSAP at Stony Mountain Institution. For the most part, these numbers are regarding AOSAP High-Intensity, but with the May 2009 pilot of AOSAP Moderate-Intensity, the only Aboriginal program offered at that intensity level at Stony Mountain, many more offenders are now taking this program.

If only I could have taken a program like this in my community I might never have ended up in here.

One graduate at Stony Mountain tearfully admitted, “If only I could have taken a program like this in my community I might never have ended up in here.”

Another graduate commented, “I always knew I could survive on the street, after AOSAP I believe I can learn to really live in the community, to have a real life.”

Finally, when an offender was asked why he shed tears during a particularly emotional exercise, he said, “That was the moment I forgave my parents. I never understood what they must have gone through until now.” When asked how he felt now he replied, “I feel different, lighter. I feel free.” ■

# Ontario Region: Violence Prevention Program



Correctional Program Officers at Collins Bay Institution in the Ontario Region (left to right: Back row; Janice Saunders, Roberto DiFazio, Kelly Laforest, Merri MacDonald, Bev Pitcher. Front row; Crystal Bailey, Cathy Galt.

## **By Reyhan Yazar, Project Officer, Reintegration Programs, National Headquarters**

Since the new correctional programs building opened in April 2009, staff members at Collins Bay Institution in Ontario have really gotten down to business.

It is the goal of the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) Reintegration Programs to meet all offenders' treatment needs in a timely fashion. And to Program Manager Bev Pitcher, having such a broad range of correctional programs running concurrently in one location is exceptional. "It says that something good is happening here," she says. "And it's all due to the excellent team around me."

Vicki Garrett and Rick Petit, who run the Family Violence Prevention Program, note how participants were motivated, willing to be honest, and open to change. They believe the bright new building makes a difference, and because there is so much quality programming taking place, offenders are participating more. "Other offenders approach us in the hallways to ask when they could get in the program," says Garrett.

Cathy Galt runs a moderate-intensity Violence Prevention Program (VPP) and for her, the challenges are similar. "When working with offenders and trying to help them change their behaviour for the better, the hardest part is to engage participants," she explains. "The second hardest part is for participants to try out what they've learned in the classroom in real-life situations." But Galt's group is doing well. After the Christmas break, offenders came back to the program talking about how they implemented their new skills outside of the classroom with family and friends.

Kelly Laforest, currently running a substance abuse program (but having run VPP a few months ago), agreed. "One of my participants

spoke about an argument he had with a staff member," she said. "He mentioned using his newfound knowledge and coping skills to calm himself down and try to see things from the other person's perspective. He then went back to apologize."

Merri MacDonald who usually runs the high-intensity VPP, is now running the moderate-intensity VPP. The feedback she's received about the programming at Collins Bay Institution has been positive, even though sometimes, in larger groups, offenders maintain a posture of toughness. In more private settings, participants have demonstrated that they do care, and that they "get it." Asked what they liked about the program, one participant said, very quietly, "Everything."

Angela Kingston and Roberto DiFazio run the high-intensity VPP. High-intensity participants are typically harder to work with, as they usually have longer histories of violence, and represent the greatest risk to re-offend. Both Kingston and DiFazio remain motivated and enjoy coming to work because of the solid core of colleagues around them, even on days when the high-intensity group is especially challenging.

"In the old days it was hard to even get participants to talk to you," says Kingston. "There was a bit of a struggle between 'the old side' and 'the new side'."

DiFazio explains, "You'd see the old side telling others not to participate because we represent authority, whereas the new side believed there was something to gain from participating. They kept an open mind."

Although most of these challenges have been overcome, it is the perennial issue of programming with offenders. To trust, or not to trust. To learn something new, or to keep your mind closed. Word from Collins Bay Institution is that participants are giving the new way a chance, and in record numbers. ■

# Quebec Region: Sex Offender Programs



Loméga Étienne, Senior Project Manager at National Headquarters

## **By Sharon-Isabelle St-Pierre, Communications Advisor, National Headquarters**

With numerous years of experience in delivering various Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) correctional programs, and with the support of a solid team, Loméga Étienne, Senior Project Manager for the Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM), has developed a solid understanding of how to deliver effective sex offender programming.

“I’ve been working at CSC since 2002 in correctional programs,” says Étienne, who started at Archambault Institution before going to La Macaza to facilitate the Sex Offender Assessment and Intensive Treatment Program at La Macaza Clinic (LMC), a high-intensity cognitive behavioural group program for sex offenders. “My experience at the LMC was very rewarding, allowing me to expand my theoretical knowledge and practices regarding sex offenders and to establish ties with accomplished professionals in the field.”

With the experience gained at the LMC, Étienne then worked at the Montreal Metropolitan District with offenders on parole, where he led various correctional programs (moderate-intensity family violence prevention, low-intensity substance abuse program, low-intensity and sex offender maintenance program). Étienne was responsible for monitoring the majority of paroled sex offenders in the Metropolitan area who had successfully completed a program during their incarceration or during their release.

“The most remarkable aspect of my work in the community was the dynamic nature and dedication that the professionals I encountered demonstrated in their work, guiding parolees in their reintegration and helping them to become law-abiding citizens,” says Étienne. “One of the greatest pleasures of working in the community is working with parolees

to update their self-management plans to address their risk factors and high-risk situations while developing a healthy and pro-social lifestyle based on their life’s goals and interests.”

In the Quebec Region, figures for the 2008-09 fiscal year show that a total of 257 offenders participated in a sex offender program. Of this number, 151 sex offenders completed the program “successfully” or with “participation in all sessions.” This means that only 59 per cent of sex offenders in the Quebec Region completed a sex offender program during this fiscal year. This situation is comparable to the other regions.

It’s important to highlight that in the third quarter of the 2009-10 fiscal year, the completion rate for sex offender programs for the Quebec Region was over 70 per cent. These results clearly demonstrate how the hard work put in by the staff responsible for these programs has yielded very encouraging results.

However, these results also show that the staff responsible for managing and delivering sex offender programs are currently facing a number of challenges, including:

- increasing the percentage of participants who complete the sex offender program they are assigned to;
- reducing the number of offenders on waiting lists and ensuring that offenders have access to the program at the appropriate time; and
- dealing with various other challenges, particularly concerning human, financial and material resources.

The Integrated Sex Offender Programs will address current challenges by helping to ensure that offenders are able to participate in the programs they need, at the appropriate time in their sentence management. To achieve this objective, resources will be used on a priority basis to meet the needs of moderate- and high-risk sexual offenders. ■

# Atlantic Region: **Community Correctional Programs**



A Community Parole Officer meets with an offender in the community

## **By Jean-Guy Bourque, Regional Administrator, Reintegration and Programs, Atlantic Region**

When dealing with correctional programs in the community, the question always asked is “What should take priority – employment or programming?” In the Atlantic Region, the response has always been that both are equally important.

For the most part, our main focus in the community is our Community Maintenance Program, which allows offenders to practice and build upon the skills they learned while completing a correctional program within the institution. Providing these programs in the community does much more than just continue an intervention for an offender, it provides a positive means of supporting the reintegration process and increasing public safety.

Based on the philosophy that effectiveness is maximized when offenders participate in correctional programming in a community setting, the Atlantic Region continues to strive to offer more correctional programs in the community. Currently, the region offers the Moderate Intensity Family Violence Program several times per year in the community. In addition, upcoming community program plans will include the National Substance Abuse Program – Moderate Intensity, as well as the Violence Prevention Program.

During fiscal year 2008-09, the Atlantic Region assigned a total of 568 offenders to a national correctional program in the community, which represents 21 per cent of the assignments across the country

for this time frame. These results show how much the region supports community programming, and that public safety is greatly improved as a direct result of this support.

While such numbers represent great results, the Atlantic Region still faces many challenges, such as increasing the use of Community Correctional Centres (CCCs) for programming purposes. The current problem is that a large majority of CCC beds are being occupied by offenders on Statutory Release with a Residency condition. Releasing offenders to CCCs for programming purposes would not only support and potentially improve reintegration efforts, but bring greater balance to the offender profile in CCCs as well.

The Atlantic Region cannot talk about correctional programming in the community without mentioning our non-governmental organization partners. Their commitment to public safety and the strong relationships they have developed with CSC have greatly enhanced our ability to offer correctional program opportunities in the community, especially in rural areas. These partnerships have assisted us in dealing with the increasingly complex needs of today’s offender population, and in maximizing our contributions to public safety.

Moving ahead, the Atlantic Region is looking forward to the next generation of correctional programs, known as the Integrated Correctional Program Model. This new model, should ensure the continued success of correctional programming in general, as well as in the community. ■



# Moving Beyond Transformation

**By Mary Beth Wolicky, Communications Specialist,  
CSC Transformation Team, National Headquarters**

*We are in a stage of transition: moving from transformation to integration of fundamental changes that will enhance our ability to achieve the Service's key priorities, in the context of our Mission and contribution to public safety.*

—Commissioner Don Head

For the past two years, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has focused on enhancing how it contributes to public safety through the implementation of a Transformation Agenda. A wide variety of initiatives have been undertaken to respond to the observations and recommendations of the CSC Review Panel and the strategic direction provided by CSC's Executive Committee (EXCOM). During this period, emphasis has been placed on integrating transformation initiatives with the priorities identified in CSC's *Report on Plans and Priorities*, as a way of transferring responsibility to and, therefore, empowering staff in our institutions and the community.

Staff and our partners in the community continue to raise questions about next steps, especially in light of the fact that the mandate of the Transformation Team ends on March 31, 2010.

Responses to some of these questions follow in order to ensure everyone is informed about where we are and where we are going, as the transformation journey moves to a new phase.



The Women Offender Sector used an integrated approach to develop the Women Offender Community Strategy. CSC collaborators included (left to right): Barry McGinnis, Women Offender Sector; Jennifer Hayward, Aboriginal Initiatives Directorate; Diane Zilkowsky, Community Reintegration Branch; Irene Klassen, CORCAN; Sue Coatham, Women Offender Sector (substantive position, Calgary Parole Office); Michelle Hall, Reintegration Programs Branch (substantive position, programs, Pacific Regional Headquarters).

## IS “TRANSFORMATION” OVER?

CSC received funding in Budget 2008 to support transformation initiatives over a two-year period and, in some cases, beyond. Although the Transformation Team will conclude its work, the Commissioner has established a Transformation Steering Committee to ensure these initiatives are sustained and enhanced over the next several years. In other words, although the Transformation Team is leaving, the Transformation Agenda is still very much alive.

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA AND WHAT INITIATIVES ARE CONTINUING?

There are several ways to learn about what has been achieved and what is planned for the future. For example, you can find the “Integrated Overview: CSC Transformation Agenda” on the CSC Web site ([www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca)). There is a section on key priorities, including lists of completed initiatives.

Three reports are also being prepared for EXCOM and for submission to the Minister of Public Safety. They will include:

1. **A Report on Safety and Security** (outlining current results, and future plans/priorities and related funding investments)
2. **A Report on Initiatives Undertaken to Enhance the Correctional Continuum** (e.g. offender intake assessment, the correctional plan, the Integrated Correctional Program Model and Case Management)
3. **A Future Directions Paper** (outlining steps to be taken to integrate transformation initiatives with priorities, outcomes and results identified in the 2010 *Report on Plans and Priorities*)

Of course, you will also be able to monitor the progress of these initiatives through the Service's regular reporting to Parliament through the *Report on Plans and Priorities* and *Departmental Performance Report*. Updates will also be provided in future issues of *Let's Talk*.

## WHAT DIRECTION WILL BE PROVIDED TO ENSURE FULL INTEGRATION OF TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES AND DEPARTMENTAL PRIORITIES?

As noted above, the Commissioner created a Transformation Steering Committee to provide advice and recommendations to EXCOM on the effective transition of initiatives to CSC operations in the institutions and the community. Steering Committee members include the Commissioner, Senior Deputy Commissioner, and key members of the Executive Committee. The Steering Committee meets at least monthly to provide advice and recommendations to EXCOM to ensure that a nationally consistent approach to implementation is integrated, cost-efficient, effective, and coordinated across all regions and sectors.

## WHAT'S THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA THEMES AND CSC'S CORPORATE PRIORITIES?

It's all about contributing to public safety for Canadians.

Since fiscal year 2006-07, CSC has maintained consistent focus on the following five priorities. They were developed to manage the risks and needs of a changing offender population profile, while enhancing the Service's contribution to public safety:

- Safe transition of eligible offenders into the community
- Safety and security of staff and offenders in our institutions
- Enhanced capacities to provide effective interventions for First Nations, Métis and Inuit offenders
- Improved capacities to address mental health needs of offenders
- Strengthening management practices

The progress for these corporate priorities helps us fulfill our Mission, which is to contribute to public safety by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure, and humane control. For example, working to reduce the flow of drugs entering institutions helps create safe and secure institutional environments for offenders to actively engage in their correctional plans. And improving the delivery of programs through the implementation of the Integrated Correctional Program Model, and strengthening the case management linkages between institutions and the community, result in a "seamless" transition of offenders into the community and improved offender supervision and intervention.

## WHY HAS PHASE 2 OF THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA FOCUSED ON THE COMMUNITY?

While many of our activities and operational practices in institutions serve immediate objectives of safeguarding surrounding communities, and the staff and inmates at particular sites, ultimately, our work is focused on the eventual return to the community of most offenders, from intake assessment through warrant expiry.

Everything we do has successful reintegration in the community as its ultimate goal: we strive to run safe and secure institutions in order to create the climate to facilitate the activities that will support safe community reintegration. We assess offenders so that we can develop plans to address criminogenic needs to support safe reintegration. We have developed and implemented very sophisticated and comprehensive program, intervention, educational and employment strategies, so that offenders can acquire the tools and skills they need to re-enter society as safe and productive members. We seek to change offenders' attitudes and behaviours in ways that, again, will support them to be law-abiding citizens in the community.

## HOW CAN I SUPPORT CSC'S ONGOING TRANSFORMATION?

As you may recall, the Transformation Agenda followed John Kotter's eight-step change-management theory, which includes: creating a sense of urgency, establishing a small team, and communicate, communicate, communicate. The last two steps (don't let up and create a new culture) will continue to be relevant for staff and partners of the Service for some time to come. The "new culture" includes an ongoing emphasis on integration, engagement, communications, and relationship building, and we each have a role to play there.

The foundation for ongoing transformation has been set by the period of intensive work over the last two years. Now, the ball is "in the court" of each and every staff member as we move forward to help improve what we do, to help keep communities across Canada safe. ■

## 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CROSSWORD ANSWERS

### Across

- |                |                   |               |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. initiatives | 9. parole         | 16. recipere  |
| 5. ideas       | 13. upper         | 17. five      |
| 6. archambault | 14. strengthening | 18. community |
|                |                   | 19. lifeline  |

### Down

- |              |                   |                 |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 2. rights    | 7. restorative    | 11. conditional |
| 3. strategic | 8. transformation | 12. supervision |
| 4. system    | 10. capital       | 15. equity      |

