



Corrections **FAST FACTS**

Through monitoring, mentoring, training and community support, we are effectively helping to break the cycle of crime for women offenders.

Did You Know?

- The number of admissions of women offenders to federal jurisdiction increased by 14.5% from 276 in 2005-06 to 316 in 2006-07.⁺
- Overall, women continue to represent a small proportion of the total number of admissions (i.e., 6.2% in 2006-07).⁺
- As of April 8, 2007, there were 476 women incarcerated in Canada under federal jurisdiction and 513 women serving their sentence in the community.⁺⁺
- In 2006-07, 60.8% of women offenders successfully completed* their conditional release.⁺⁺
- In 2006-07, 0.8% of conditional releases for women offenders ended with a new conviction for a violent offence.⁺⁺
- In 2006-07, 8.6% of conditional releases for women offenders ended with a new charge for a non-violent offence.⁺⁺
- In 2006-07, 29.8% of conditional releases for women offenders ended with a breach of condition.⁺⁺

Sources:

+ *Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview*, December 2007.

++ Correctional Service of Canada

* Release is considered successful if it was completed without a return to prison for a breach of conditions or for a new offence.

Women Offenders

Women offenders in Canada's federal correctional system have specific needs and risks. While some interventions for women offenders are similar to those for male offenders, in recent history, a new philosophy of women's corrections has emerged.

The 1990 Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, entitled *Creating Choices*, set out a new direction for women's corrections at the federal level. Under the guiding principles of empowerment, meaningful choices, respect and dignity, supportive environments and shared responsibility, a number of changes have since taken place:

- The Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario was closed.
- Five regional women's facilities and an Aboriginal healing lodge were built.
- Gender-informed programs have been developed.
- A community strategy was improved and expanded with residential and non-residential programs and services for women offenders who are conditionally released.

These changes brought about a new definition of effective corrections for women offenders – one that now encompasses a holistic approach to dealing with their specific needs.

Section 77 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) mandates program development specifically for women offenders.

Programs have been implemented to address the risk and need areas for women offenders, including substance abuse, employment needs, mental health interventions and culturally specific programs for Aboriginal women offenders.

Women Offenders

These programs are critical when you consider that:

- Substance abuse is a significant need area for approximately 80% of women offenders.
- Studies generally show that women offenders who have employment needs are at a higher risk of recidivism as compared to women offenders without employment needs.
- One in four women offenders is identified as having mental health concerns upon entry into prison. This represents a 100% increase since 1997.
- The majority of women offenders have experienced abuse and trauma in their families of origin or with their intimate partners.
- The percentage of incarcerated Aboriginal women offenders has increased over the past decade, representing approximately one-third of the total incarcerated women offender population.

Facilities for Women Offenders

Several facilities across Canada now accommodate women offenders in locations closer to their communities, families and support networks.

The design of the regional women's facilities include: a cluster of stand-alone houses (each accommodating up to ten women); facilities for programs, education and training; a health care unit; a secure unit for women offenders classified at the maximum security level; and a house that provides a structured environment specifically for women with mental health issues.

Two specialized units also provide mental health treatment to women who require a longer-term, more intensive intervention than is available in the women's facilities.

The design, philosophy and programming for the healing lodge are based on Aboriginal spirituality and traditions, and were planned and implemented in close collaboration with Aboriginal communities.

Major Reviews of Women's Corrections

Since the release of *Creating Choices* in 1990, there have been several major reviews of women's corrections in Canada. Further enhancements to policies, programs and services for women offenders have all followed the reviews listed here:

- The Honourable Louise Arbour, *Commission of Inquiry into Certain Events at Prison for Women* (1996)
- Report of the Auditor General of Canada on the Reintegration of Women Offenders (April 2003, Chapter 4)
- Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC): *Protecting Their Rights – A Systemic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women* (2003)
- Inspection Reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales (2005)
- Moving Forward with Women's Corrections – Expert Committee Review of Correctional Service of Canada's Ten-Year Status Report on Women's Corrections (2006)

*Nova Institution
for Women,
Truro, Nova Scotia*

*Joliette Institution,
Joliette, Quebec*

*Grand Valley
Institution for Women,
Kitchener, Ontario*

*Isabel McNeill House,
Kingston, Ontario*

*Okimaw Ohci Healing
Lodge, Maple Creek,
Saskatchewan*

*Edmonton Institution
for Women,
Edmonton, Alberta*

*Fraser Valley Institution,
Abbotsford,
British Columbia*

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