

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Comparison of CSC-operated and Section 81 Healing Lodges

The profile, opportunities, and post-release outcomes of Indigenous offenders differ based on Healing Lodge type.

Why we did this study

Healing Lodges are environments centred on Indigenous values, traditions, and beliefs. Whether operated by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) or by an Indigenous community through a Section 81 agreement, Healing Lodges offer culturally responsive services and programs for Indigenous offenders to address the factors that led to their incarceration, as well as prepare them for release. A goal of this study was to consider the profile and correctional outcomes of Indigenous offenders released from CSC-operated Healing Lodges and those released from Section 81 Healing Lodges.

What we did

As part of a larger study on Healing Lodges, Indigenous offenders released from CSC-operated Healing Lodges ($N = 527$) were compared to offenders released from Section 81 Healing Lodges ($N = 221$) between April 2013 and March 2018.

What we found

Despite comparable assessments at intake, Indigenous offenders released from a Section 81 Healing Lodge were more likely to be considered high in reintegration potential and lower in dynamic risk at release. Over the course of their sentence, Section 81 residents demonstrated greater improvements in the dynamic need areas of Associates, Attitudes, Community Functioning, Marital/Family, and Substance Abuse. CSC-operated and Section 81 Healing Lodge residents were similar in their level of improvement in the Employment and Personal/Emotional domains.

Indigenous offenders were more likely to complete educational programs, correctional programs, and Indigenous-specific cultural programs (non-correctional programs) at CSC-operated Healing Lodges. Section 81 residents were more involved in Indigenous services throughout their sentence, including developing a Healing Plan, having at least one progress Elder Review, and participating in Pathways Initiatives.

While residents of CSC-operated Healing Lodges participated in more Escorted Temporary Absences (ETAs), Section 81 residents had more Unescorted Temporary Absences. Indigenous offenders that had

resided in a CSC-operated Healing Lodge were comparable in release characteristics to those that had resided in a Section 81 in terms of type of release (i.e., day/full parole vs. statutory release) and Section 84 releases. Those who were released from a Section 81 Healing Lodge were, however, more likely to also reside in a Section 81 while on release.

While there were no significant differences in the rates of suspensions or returns to custody due to revocation, Indigenous offenders released from a Section 81 Healing Lodge spent a significantly greater period in the community prior to their first suspension or revocation of release. In cases of suspension, the Section 81 released offenders were also more likely to have those suspensions cancelled or withdrawn (55.4% versus 43.3%, respectively). Offenders released from a CSC-operated Healing Lodge were significantly more likely to return to custody with a new offence (10.4% versus 5.0%), though it was not possible to control for the impact of other factors (e.g., reintegration potential) due to small base rates.

What it means

Overall, Section 81 released offenders had more favourable post-release outcomes. Offenders released from CSC-operated Healing Lodges benefit from more programming and ETAs, though they continue to present as higher risk at release. While both types of Healing Lodges offer relevant interventions and services, which improve outcomes for Indigenous offenders, the varying results likely reflect a difference in offender profile at release. This study highlights the importance of having Indigenous communities involved in supporting offenders in their healing journey and reintegration.

For more information

Hanby, L., Ridha, T., Sullivan, R., & Farrell MacDonald, S. (2022). *Indigenous Healing Lodges: Impacts on Offender Reintegration and Community Outcomes* (Research Report R-437). Ottawa, Ontario: Correctional Service of Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, or for other inquiries, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#). You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

