

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

# Impacts of Indigenous Healing Lodges for Men

*Healing Lodges and culturally-specific interventions offer benefits that support offender reintegration for men.*

## Why we did this study

Healing Lodges are environments centred on Indigenous values, traditions, and beliefs. They 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. The goal of this study was to examine the impacts that Healing Lodges have on Indigenous offender reintegration and post-release outcomes, as well as the cumulative effect of Indigenous-specific services and interventions.

## What we did

As part of a larger study, Indigenous men released from Correctional Service of Canada (CSC)-operated or Section 81 Healing Lodges ( $N = 614$ ) were compared to a matched control group of Indigenous men released from mainstream CSC institutions ( $N = 614$ ) between April 2013 and March 2018.

## What we found

At intake, men Healing Lodge residents were higher in dynamic risk and lower in reintegration potential. Healing Lodge residents were higher in static risk at both intake and release, though they were considered higher in motivation at release. These findings indicate that the profile of men Healing Lodge residents differed from Indigenous offenders released from mainstream institutions.

Men Healing Lodge residents showed a greater interest in Indigenous opportunities at intake and participated in culturally-specific services to a greater degree throughout their sentence. This included the development of a Healing Plan, having at least one Elder Review, participation in Pathways Initiatives, having Indigenous services staff assigned to their caseload, as well as previous Healing Lodge placements prior to their release. Healing Lodge residents were also more likely to be assigned to and complete correctional programs and other programs, both over the course of their full incarceration period and at the Healing Lodge in particular. While Healing Lodge residents were also more likely to complete employment programs, men in the control group were more likely to complete educational programs and vocational certificates at their releasing institution.

Compared to their counterparts, Healing Lodge residents participated in more Escorted and Unescorted Temporary Absences as well as work releases. Despite these efforts at gradual reintegration, Healing Lodge residents were less likely to receive a discretionary release. Overall, compared to Indigenous men released from mainstream institutions, Healing Lodge residents had equal suspensions of release and returns to custody, and once controlling for other factors, had an equal risk of revocation with a new offence.

A final objective of the study was to examine the relative contribution of Indigenous-specific interventions and services on post-release outcome. Once controlling for relevant risk, need, and offender characteristics, men who completed Indigenous cultural programs at a Healing Lodge had a 54% lower risk of revocation of release, while men who participated in Pathways Initiatives had a 29% lower risk. These analyses indicate that these are not redundant interventions and both offer benefits that may help offenders succeed upon release.

## What it means

Taken together, the results of this study highlight the benefits that Healing Lodges and culturally responsive interventions have in the support of Indigenous offender reintegration. Despite a more challenging population, Healing Lodge residents demonstrated positive changes in motivation level over the course of their incarceration, as well as greater participation in reintegration opportunities. While this represents a comprehensive quantitative study, future research will provide a holistic understanding of the experiences at men's Healing Lodges.

## 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.

