

# FORUM

on Corrections Research

May 2003, Volume 15, Number 1

## Featured issues

Community  
engagement

Perspectives

Profiles

Reintegration



Correctional Service  
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FORUM ON CORRECTIONS RESEARCH is published twice a year in both English and French for the staff and management of the Correctional Service of Canada and the international corrections community.

FORUM reviews applied research related to corrections policy, programming and management issues. It also features original articles contributed by staff of the Correctional Service of Canada and other international researchers and practitioners.

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FORUM invites contributions to any section of the magazine from researchers in the field. Please send your contributions to

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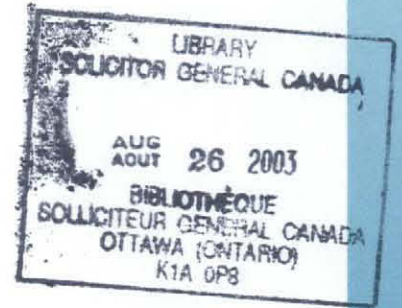
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# FORUM

on Corrections Research



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Articles should be written in plain language. Complicated research and statistical terms should be avoided. However, if they are unavoidable, a clear explanation of the meaning of the term should be provided. FORUM reaches about 6,000 individuals in more than 35 countries, including academics, the public, journalists, corrections staff (from front-line staff to senior managers) and members of the judiciary. Our goal is to present reliable research to a **lay audience**.

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# Community corrections: A National Parole Board perspective

Don Tully<sup>1</sup>

National Parole Board, Ottawa

*It goes without saying that “community corrections” is important within the overall correctional system. We do not always, however, take the opportunity to talk about what community corrections means and to focus on its importance. It also goes without saying that there is a very close and important relationship between community corrections and conditional release in Canada, and the complementary role of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) and the National Parole Board (NPB) in their delivery. Again, the opportunity is not always taken to talk about this important relationship. This article outlines some of the issues related to community corrections and conditional release from the perspective of the National Parole Board and briefly addresses some of the possibilities for continued improvement.*

## Community corrections and conditional release

What is community corrections? The answer to this question will vary depending upon the perspective of the person responding. For some people, community corrections refers to alternatives to incarceration (e.g., probation, community service orders) at the front end of the criminal justice system. For others, it may mean programs and activities at the back end of the criminal justice system to assist offenders to reintegrate into the community through a system of conditional release following a period of imprisonment. In reality, community corrections is all of the above.

The focus of this article is on the conditional release of offenders into society following a period of imprisonment, with a focus on the Canadian federal conditional release system jointly delivered by CSC and NPB and other partners in the community.

Conditional release occurs as a result of a decision by NPB in the case of day parole and full parole, or as a result of a function of the law in the case of statutory release. These decisions and releases, however, cannot be made and implemented without the extensive involvement of CSC staff in the preparation of cases for release and the supervision of offenders following release.

Conditional release represents the means by which offenders are available for participation in a community corrections system. The federal community corrections system (e.g., supervision, programs, residential facilities) developed and implemented by CSC and its partners facilitates and supports the operation of the conditional release program. Community corrections and conditional release are thus mutually dependent upon one another – one cannot effectively exist without the other.

## Why are community corrections and conditional release so important?

Community corrections and conditional release have existed for many years and have become an integral component of the Canadian criminal justice system - so much so that on any given day there are over 7,000 federal offenders in the community on conditional release under the jurisdiction of CSC and NPB. The majority of federally-sentenced offenders in Canada will, at some point in their sentence, serve a part of their sentence in the community on conditional release.

There are a number of compelling reasons for having a system of community corrections and conditional release. Some of these include:

- The majority of custodial sentences in Canada are for a definite period of time. Offenders serving these sentences must, therefore, be released to the community at some time. Public safety is enhanced in the long term when most offenders are released from imprisonment under supervision with assistance and control prior to the expiry of their sentence rather than “cold turkey” at the end of the sentence.
- Crime begins in the community and in most cases can best be addressed in the community. Community corrections provides an opportunity for the community to recognize and accept responsibility with respect to the reintegration of offenders.
- Providing an opportunity for offenders to be contributing members of society and to demonstrate accountability for their actions.

- Providing the potential for an increased level of protection and satisfaction for some victims and their families.
- Community corrections is more cost effective than incarceration and provides the potential for scarce resources to be used optimally in a manner to help prevent future crime.

### Community corrections and conditional release from a NPB perspective

The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* states that:

*The purpose of conditional release is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by means of decisions on the timing and conditions of release that will best facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens (s.100).<sup>2</sup>*

In making decisions on the timing and conditions of release the NPB is guided by a number of principles and requirements including:

- The protection of society is the fundamental consideration in any conditional release decision.
- Decisions must reflect the least restrictive determination consistent with the protection of society.
- The Board must adopt and be guided by policies.
- The Board must take into consideration all available information that is relevant to a case.
- The offender must be provided with relevant information used in decision making.

In fulfilling their mandate as conditional release decision-makers within the legislative framework outlined above, each Board member's major requirement is information. Board members do not expect more information than what is required by the legislation but they cannot work effectively with less. Most of the information, except certain information received directly by the Board (e.g., from victims), originates with, or is collected by, CSC staff, mainly parole officers in the institution and community. It is essential that the Board's information requirements are clear and are clearly understood by CSC. It is also essential

that there be good open working relationships between NPB (members and staff) and CSC staff.

The Board's information requirements are outlined in the Board's decision-making policies and are also addressed in detail in various CSC standard operating practices. The Board's information requirements are not unique. The Board basically requires the same information that a parole officer needs to make a thorough assessment and recommendation with respect to conditional release. This information should be comprehensive, while being as concise as possible, and include an analysis based on the individual circumstances of the case and the legislative criteria for the decision in question. Any information to be used by Board members must be shared with the offender by CSC in accordance with legislative requirements and agreements between CSC and NPB.

The information required by the Board for decisions prior to release includes the following:

- The major case-specific risk factors and needs at the time of incarceration.
- The extent to which the specific risk factors and areas identified as requiring intervention have been addressed by the offender, and whether there has been benefit to, or evidence of change in the offender which could reduce risk to the community.
- The type of release and the release plan, including any essential special conditions, to address the identified needs and risk of the case.
- The community resources available in the proposed release community.
- The management strategy for the offender while under supervision.
- An analysis of the risk presented by the offender in light of all of the above information.

Following release, the Board's requirements include the following:

- The details of any increase in the level of risk and the action taken, including any significant variation from the approved release plan.
- The offender's progress in the community in relation to the approved release plan.
- Analysis and recommendation regarding any violations or requested changes in conditions.

- Supervision of each case in accordance with CSC supervision standards.

### Potential future action

Community corrections and conditional release have evolved considerably over the years. Many improvements have been made and results achieved so far suggest that the complementary systems are effective. Both NPB and CSC, however, necessarily continually seek ways to make further improvements.

Potential future improvements include:

- Enhanced messages regarding the purpose and potential of conditional release and community corrections.
- Enhanced coordination and continuity between institutional and community staff.
- Further opportunities for interaction between NPB (members and staff) and CSC staff outside of the day-to-day processing of cases. Possible subjects for discussion include case preparation, sharing of information with offenders, community resources, recommendation/imposition/monitoring of special conditions, community supervision, operating regimes, and joint CSC/NPB training opportunities.
- Ensure the existence of appropriate policies, practices, resources, community programs and other interventions, including services for particular groups of people such as

Aboriginal and women offenders and offenders from diverse cultural backgrounds, and other offenders with particular needs (e.g., elderly, mental health).

- Ensure programs and interventions are research based to the extent possible.
- Enhance existing, and pursue new, partnerships in the community.
- Enhance the exchange of information amongst partners through automated and non-automated means.
- Full implementation across the country of existing and future agreements between CSC and NPB followed by adjustments as necessary.

The author is optimistic that further improvements will be made to enhance the contribution of conditional release and community corrections to public safety. The Board is currently investigating various means to improve its contribution and we are aware that CSC is also pursuing a number of promising initiatives. National Parole Board members and staff look forward to working with CSC and others on further improvements. ■

<sup>1</sup> 410 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0R1.

<sup>2</sup> *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, (1992), c.20.

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# Issues affecting halfway houses

*John Rives<sup>1</sup>*

*Life Line InReach, Ontario Region*

**O**n November 22<sup>nd</sup>, St. Leonard's House Windsor celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. People from across Ontario gathered to celebrate the vision of Reverend Neil Libby in the very hall where his foresight became reality. Understanding that imprisonment is by its very nature an alienating and isolating experience, Reverend Libby perceived a need to assist prisoners with their return to "street" society. Many lacked the very basics of support, such as: family, a residence, and three square meals a day. The halfway house would provide a stable environment during this critical transition period for the residents. It was intended to feel like home and promote good citizenship while remaining secure for those inside the halfway house, as well as out.

**T**he halfway house movement has spread with the force of a juggernaut throughout North America. At this point, thousands have benefited from the support and guidance received during their residence. Indeed, the loss of halfway housing in Ontario for provincially-sentenced offenders was perhaps the only serious reversal in this process. I believe that a contributing factor to the ease with which this loss was accomplished was that the record of residential success had been left largely unexamined and unquestioned.

In concluding remarks at the St. Leonard's House Windsor 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, John Braithwaite (former Deputy Commissioner and current Chair of the Life Line InReach National Resource Group) challenged Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and those present to examine what works in terms of successful release. In particular, he noted that we need to discover the key factors for a successful re-entry, especially for long-term offenders. Currently, a comprehensive study of halfway housing is underway by the Research Branch of CSC, in partnership with St. Leonard's Society Canada and many other non-governmental organizations and interested parties. As we enter into this research phase, we must keep at least part of our focus on the big picture. Halfway houses are not merely platforms for the delivery of programs.

The 40-year history of house construction, occupancy, and the accretion of programs to

them, calls to mind W. P. Kinsella's dictum in *Field of Dreams* "build it and he will come". And they have, in abundance. However, the concern is that the founding intent is gradually being forgotten. Community-based Residential Facilities (CRFs) and Community Correctional Facilities (CCFs) are often perceived as mere extensions of supervision and control into the community. It is difficult to counter this argument when we witness increasing numbers of offenders on statutory release being released with residency conditions.

Lifers provide the source for another large group of residents of halfway houses. As part of the process of gradual reintegration, a period of residence on day parole is a standard part of re-entry. Many lifers benefit greatly from this, particularly those transitioning from decades of incarceration. However, it appears that every lifer over the past several years has been required to pass a period of residency in a halfway house. It seems unlikely that not a single potential parolee could pass a high enough test of risk manageability for a release directly to full parole.

Eleven years ago, I was granted full parole after completing a period of unescorted temporary absences from a medium-security institution. My release plan was well designed and included residency with a local Anglican priest and his family. I agreed with the National Parole Board and case management at that time that this was a manageable release in terms of public safety. Were we all mistaken?

Directing the use of halfway houses to accommodate high-risk statutory release offenders and low-risk lifers has led to an interesting division amongst a preponderant number of residents. Putting it simply, halfway houses are filled with: those who don't want to be there; and, those who don't need to be there.

As envisioned, a halfway house is to provide a supportive environment for the less well adapted and housing for those lacking community support. Of course, a guidance component is an integral part of the package and the many programs offered, from Choices to



Community Reintegration, have become important aspects of this support structure.

I fear that focusing the use of statutory release and day parole on the above-mentioned groups has not only contributed to a negative environment for the well motivated, it decreases the opportunities for more challenging cases to make that first tentative step into the community. Residence at a halfway house does provide for a greater degree of supervision and control than release directly to a personal residence. Risk manageability assessments should place more emphasis on this fact. The lowest risk releases should bypass residency as an inappropriate intervention (in keeping with the mandated least restrictive measures) and some slightly elevated needs clients should be considered as appropriate candidates for these highly supportive environments.

As a final issue, certain aspects of the accommodation and regulatory regime for residents should be challenged. Current budgetary limitations make provision of single rooms virtually impossible for most houses. At the same time, most, if not all, potential residents will be leaving correctional institutions where they have earned or been afforded a great deal more privacy. As the objective of all houses is to further community reintegration, placing residents in such atypical conditions for adult Canadians can only be

counterproductive. Much the same can also be said for the, perhaps necessary, but often complex, sets of rules by which the residents must abide. One of the most significant hurdles facing ex-prisoners re-entering the community is the gradual elimination of regulatory control with a commensurate emphasis on personal responsibility and decision-making. I believe that reintegrative supports need to more closely embrace this reality. Given the potential consequences for a breach of house rules, including suspension and a return to custody, remaining subject to the regulations of the residence longer than necessary fails to actively promote reintegration, runs counter to normal standards of community living and increases stress on the individual.

As we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, halfway houses will remain a vital bridge for the successful re-entry of prisoners into the community. By keeping our eyes firmly focused on the prize, I believe we can more effectively realize the vision of Neil Libby and enhance the safety of all Canadians. After all, as the Executive Director of one halfway house recently said to me "we must always remember our residents are citizens, not just offenders". ■

<sup>1</sup> 200A-837 Princess Street, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 1G8.

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# The role of Citizens' Advisory Committees in Canada

Charles Emmrys, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>

National Chair, Citizens' Advisory Committees

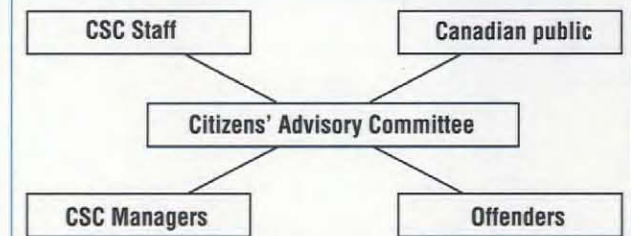
**A**t the current time there are over 80 Citizens' Advisory Committees (CACs) in Canada, involving approximately 500 Canadians. Every prison and every major parole office in the country has the benefits of CAC input in their operations. CAC regional and national committees are also active in coordinating the work of local committees and in voicing the views of CACs in regional and national forums.

In 1977, Justice MacGuigan advanced a proposal for one of the most ambitious and comprehensive exercises in citizen involvement yet attempted by any level of government in Canada or the world. Building on a number of local initiatives that dated as far back as 1965, the MacGuigan report proposed that every institution and parole office in the federal correctional service have in place a committee of unpaid citizens whose role it would be to give all the partners in the correctional process the benefit of their independent and impartial observations and advice<sup>2</sup>. Their mission was quite simply to contribute to public safety by helping to improve the correctional system. To support this work, Justice MacGuigan proposed that committee members be given unprecedented access to every part of the facility they served and that they be invited to communicate their ideas regularly to correctional staff, offenders and their fellow citizens. To the credit of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), the recommendation was supported and acted upon so that, at the current time, every federal correctional institution and regional parole office in the country now has a Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) attached to it.

The roles that CACs are asked to carry out are clearly challenging. To be effective, they must be competent and informed observers, good communicators and able advice givers in one of the most complex and emotionally charged environments in our society. To succeed, the CACs across the country have had to build strong and constructive relationships with the four constituencies most involved in correctional issues: the CSC management, the offender population, CSC front line staff, and

the Canadian public. Figure 1 illustrates how these committees find themselves at the nexus point of these constituencies.

Figure 1



Each of these relationships presents CAC members with a number of specific challenges. The relationship that committees form with the CSC managers of their facility is vital to it carrying out its mission given that these managers are the ones that will receive and possibly act on the advice the committee will offer. Since this advice is meant to be persuasive but not binding, CACs have an interest in keeping their relationship with managers as healthy as possible. On the other hand, managers also need to be attentive to this relationship given that the CAC will be giving an account of their work to the broader community. Therefore, it is advantageous to both groups that CAC members be as well informed as possible about the workings of the facility they serve. In this way, managers can be confident that the quality of their work will be accurately represented to the public and CAC members can feel more confident in making the recommendations they advance.

The second challenge that the relationship between CSC managers and CAC members presents is that of "finding the right distance". This phrase alludes to the need that CACs have to ensure that their relationship with managers is not so close that they can be perceived as being simple spokespersons for CSC. To some degree, CACs are protected from this by being obliged to develop relationships with other groups such as inmate committees or union representatives. Committees, however, need to

be ever attentive to the actual and publicly perceived distance between themselves and CSC managers, since their credibility as impartial observers rests on their finding the right balance.

The relationship between CAC members and offenders requires just as much work even if the relationship is somewhat more clearly defined. CAC members must remain in regular contact with representatives of the offender population to hear their stories and take into consideration their view of the correctional system. Offender accounts always provide a powerful counterweight to the views presented by managers and are, therefore, exceedingly important for CAC committees. The challenge in this relationship is to avoid the perception by managers, staff and the public that CACs are just another group fighting for the rights of offenders. To avoid this, committees have had to work hard to repeatedly reiterate to all four of their key constituencies that their mission is not to speak out for offenders or to defend CSC staff. It is to improve the correctional system and hence the security of Canadians.

Contacts with front line staff and union representatives are also important since they, like the offenders, provide a different and at times competing perspective on the information that managers will typically provide. Here again, the CACs ability to be effective rests in its ability to make its mandate as clear as possible to each group. Individual issues related to any given group become pertinent to CACs only when they affect the system's ability to proceed with its fundamental work, that of working towards the rehabilitation of offenders.

Finally, CACs are called upon to actively engage their fellow citizens to become better informed about the correctional service. This outreach role is intended to provide transparency to the correctional process, to give Canadians a better sense of how their correctional service is evolving and to give them voice regarding these developments. Each committee is challenged to develop their own public voice and to contribute positively to the public dialogue on corrections in their community. Clearly, this part of the CACs mandate is crucial. There is ample evidence to show that the more informed citizens are about their correctional service and the more accurate that information is, the more apt they are to support changes that will improve the effectiveness of their service and hence public security. The less informed they

are, the more apt they are to support repressive measures that provide short-term reassurances that lead eventually to over-incarceration, higher costs, and in most cases a net deterioration in the quality of the service. CACs are challenged, therefore, to help their fellow citizens avoid the myths and false beliefs that often surround the correctional process, to provide accurate and clear information about the correctional system and to be honest about the challenges that are still to be overcome. To achieve this in an environment where crime is so intensely sensationalized and romanticized by the media is indeed a difficult task.

In the 25 years since their inception, the success of CACs has been, by most accounts, mixed. On the one hand, their presence in the system has provided a powerful source of support for the development and offering of effective rehabilitation programs for offenders. These programs have become the cornerstone of our correctional process and Canada is now recognized widely around the world as a leader in this area. CACs have also been effective in supporting improvements in staff training and have played an important role in breaking down the traditional divide between inmates and correctional staff. They have often achieved this by adhering to the age old diplomatic principle of simply being there, of listening effectively and of giving voice to the values that are integral to their community.

Committee members have also often acted as independent observers in many crisis situations. During these times, CAC members are important contributors to the process of de-escalating conflicts and providing the public with an impartial view of events as they happen. Faith in the correctional system rests in part on the confidence that the public has in the system's ability to respond effectively and professionally in times of crisis. CACs have often been in a position to provide that reassurance or to, on occasion, challenge the correctional system to improve its response.

Where CACs have been less successful is in their ability to contribute effectively and powerfully to the public debate on corrections. Clearly, committees have often carried out interventions with the public that have been very effective. They have hosted public forums, reached out to the local media, participated in public debates and communicated directly to the public via the issuing of reports. To date, however, these efforts have not led to CACs being a visible and

important voice on the regional and national stage. Just how to develop this voice and make it effective is still the subject of reflection and debate.

The creation and development of the CAC system is clearly one of the most important initiatives in public engagement that any government has yet attempted in the area of corrections. A recent survey of correctional systems around the world shows no comparable effort being pursued in any of the almost 80 jurisdictions consulted, including those of Europe<sup>3</sup>. In pursuing this novel and bold experiment in citizen participation, the Correctional Service of Canada is setting a benchmark for openness and transparency, one that clearly enriches civic society and adds to the democratic process. In August 1998, CACs were identified as an international "Best Practice" when the program was honoured with the American Correctional Association's (ACA) Chapter Award in the Public Information Category for Best Practices and Excellence in Corrections. The Chapter Award is the highest level of the ACA Awards categories. In January

2000, the Privy Council Office recognized Citizens' Advisory Committees as a Canadian Public Service Best Practice. In May 2000, the International Association for Public Participation awarded the Correctional Service of Canada the "Organization of the Year" Award in the area of public participation due, in a great part, to its Citizens' Advisory Committees program.

The last 25 years have shown, we believe, the value of pursuing this initiative. As CACs become better known to Canadians, their contribution will likely increase in importance and, if successful, affect both the quality of the service and the awareness that Canadians have of the system that is so central to their sense of personal safety and well-being. ■

<sup>1</sup> 38 Queens Road, Sackville, New Brunswick, E4L 4G6.

<sup>2</sup> MacGuigan, M. (1977). The Sub-Committee on the Penitentiary System in Canada. Report to Parliament, Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, Second Session, Thirtieth Parliament. Ottawa, Ontario.

<sup>3</sup> Personal communication, Ola Ingstrup.

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# Communities: Are you involved?

Jodi McDonough and Jim Murphy<sup>1</sup>

Community Engagement Sector, Correctional Service of Canada

The participation of citizens and communities in partnership with the Correctional Service of Canada is fundamental to a more effective and safe return of the offender back to the community as a law abiding citizen. A broad and diverse citizen base, actively involved in the correctional process, and representative of both Canadian communities and the offender population, is key to ensuring that strong and safe communities remain an essential part of the quality of life for all Canadians.

Canadians consider their personal safety and the security of their communities to be a priority. They look to their public institutions for reassurance that the criminal justice system is working and serving the best interests of public safety. In fulfilling its mandate, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) contributes to a just, peaceful, and safe society by carrying out sentences imposed by the courts. It does so to ensure the safe and humane custody and supervision of offenders while assisting in preparing offenders to safely reintegrate into the community through the provision of programs in penitentiaries as well as in the community.

The engagement of citizens and community-based voluntary organizations through a wide range of initiatives and activities contributes to achieving these goals. Offenders are part of our communities - they come from our communities, and the majority will return to our communities. Offender reintegration can therefore be conceptualized as a community affair - an affair that citizens must be engaged in to better support the safe reintegration of offenders and in turn, the long-term protection of the public. The Service's mission statement reflects and reinforces the value of citizens' involvement in the correctional process. Furthermore, its strategic objectives direct the service to ensure that volunteers form an integral part of program delivery both in institutions and the community.

This engagement must be conducted in an integrated manner from the beginning of the sentence, to warrant expiry, and beyond. This type of integration is instrumental in providing opportunities to involve victims, volunteers,

Citizens' Advisory Committees and communities, as well as our traditional partners to participate in this process. This is consistent with the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* principle which directs us to "facilitate the involvement of members of the public in matters relating to the operations of the Service"<sup>2</sup>.

To maintain, enhance, and sustain our correctional results, CSC must engage communities throughout the continuum of correctional processes in a variety of ways. Such as, raising community awareness, mobilizing community support for the reintegration of offenders, and consulting with communities. By positively impacting the lives of offenders, mobilizing crucial community resources, raising public awareness as to humane, effective corrections and the needs of offenders, Canadians have the opportunity to contribute to an even greater degree in the safety of their communities.

The Governor General of Canada in her speech from the Throne reinforced to Canadians the role and potential contribution of citizens in building competitive cities and healthy communities:

"respectful of our history, confident in our future, let each of us do our part... we know that by pursuing the common good, we pursue our own good; [a country]... is a common enterprise to which all can contribute"<sup>3</sup>

In highlighting the implications and benefits associated with the involvement, support and participation of diverse citizens and communities in the correctional process, a reality begins to reveal itself. That reality is in order to preserve and enhance the well-being of communities that Canadians are so very proud to call home, we all must share the responsibility for ensuring their safety and security well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ■

<sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.

<sup>2</sup> *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, R.S.C., C-20, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Clarkson, A. (2002). *The Canada We Want: Speech from the Throne*, September 30.

# A profile of offenders serving time in the community

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According to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA), the purpose of the federal correctional system is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by carrying out sentences imposed by the courts through the safe and humane custody and supervision of offenders, and by assisting in the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law abiding citizens through the provision of programs in penitentiaries and the community<sup>2</sup>. Offenders can serve time in the community through day parole, full parole or statutory release. To better understand their programming needs, this article provides a profile of offenders serving time in the community, and examines differences among those on different forms of release.

Currently, on any given day, approximately 9,200 offenders are serving time in the community on some form of release from a federal correctional facility<sup>3</sup>. About one-half of the offenders serving time in the community are currently on full parole (51%), one-third (36%) are on statutory release and 13% are on day parole.

## Socio-demographic characteristics

About 500 of the federal offenders (5%) serving time in the community are women. This proportion is larger than the proportion of women currently incarcerated in federal correctional facilities (2.5%). As illustrated in Table 1, larger proportions of those on day parole and full parole are women (7% each), as compared to those on statutory release (2%).

Similar to those who are incarcerated in federal correctional facilities, about three-quarters of offenders who are serving time in the community are Caucasian (72%). However, a smaller proportion is Aboriginal (12% versus 18%) and a larger proportion is Asian (4% versus 2%). As seen in Table 1, larger proportions of those on statutory release are Aboriginal (17%), compared to those on day or full parole (14% and 9%, respectively).

At the time of admission to the federal correctional system for the current sentence, the average age for those serving time in the

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics				
	Day Parole	Full Parole	Statutory Release	P
Women	7%	7%	2%	***
Aboriginal	14%	9%	17%	***
Single at admission	44%	38%	47%	***
< Grade 8 at admission	15%	15%	20%	***
Unemployed at arrest	59%	47%	69%	***

\*\*\* $p < .001$

community was 35, which is older than those currently incarcerated in federal correctional facilities (average 33). At the time of release to the community, the average age was 38. Those released on full parole were older at the time of release (average 40 years of age) than those released on day parole (average 38 years of age) and statutory release (average 36 years of age).

At the time of admission, 42% of offenders serving time in the community were single, which is less than those currently incarcerated (49%). Similar proportions of those serving time in the community and in correctional facilities had less than a grade 8 education upon admission (17% and 18%, respectively). A smaller proportion of those serving time in the community were unemployed at the time of arrest (58% versus 68%).

As shown in Table 1, larger proportions of those on statutory release were single, had less than a grade 8 education and were unemployed at arrest, as compared to those on day and full parole.

## Offences

Larger proportions of those serving time in the community are currently incarcerated for drug-related (20% versus 5%) and property offences (11% versus 8%) as their most serious offence, as compared to those who are currently incarcerated.

As illustrated in Table 2, for those on day or full parole, the largest proportion are currently serving their sentence for homicide/attempted murder (24% and 33%, respectively) as their most serious offence. The largest proportion of those on statutory release are currently serving their sentence for robbery as their most serious offence (31%).

Table 2

Most serious current offence				
	Day Parole	Full Parole	Statutory Release	P
Homicide/Attempted Murder	24%	33%	7%	***
Assault	5%	2%	13%	***
Sexual Assault	6%	6%	16%	***
Robbery	20%	9%	31%	***
Other Violent	1%	1%	2%	*
Property	15%	9%	19%	***
Impaired Driving	1%	1%	1%	NS
Drugs	18%	28%	8%	***
Other Criminal Code/ Federal Statute	7%	9%	3%	***

NS = not significant; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

The average aggregate sentence length for federal offenders serving time in the community (excluding those serving life sentences) is approximately 6.0 years, which is similar to those who are currently incarcerated in federal correctional facilities (6.2 years). The average aggregate sentence length for those on full parole (6.7 years) is longer than those on day parole and statutory release (5.5 and 5.3 years, respectively).

### Criminal history

Those who are currently incarcerated in federal correctional facilities tend to have more extensive criminal histories than those serving time in the community. For instance, larger proportions of those currently incarcerated had prior youth and adult court convictions, had served previous sentences, and had failed on various sanctions while involved in the correctional process.

Among those serving time in the community, those on statutory release tend to have the most extensive criminal history, followed by those on day parole. Those on full parole have the least extensive criminal history (Table 3).

Table 3

Criminal history				
	Day Parole	Full Parole	Statutory Release	P
Prior youth court	36%	21%	51%	***
Prior adult court	77%	64%	87%	***
Previous community supervision	65%	47%	77%	***
Previous provincial term	59%	42%	76%	***
Previous federal term	18%	9%	32%	***
Failure on community-based sanctions	44%	26%	63%	***
Failure on conditional release	25%	15%	45%	***
Reclassified to higher custody level	8%	3%	19%	***
Segregation for disciplinary infraction	15%	6%	34%	***
Escape/unlawfully at large	15%	8%	30%	***
< 6 months since last incarceration	14%	7%	27%	***

\*\*\* $p < .001$

### Static and dynamic factors

In addition to information on each federal offender's background, social situation and education, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC)'s Offender Intake Assessment also collects information on factors relevant to determining criminal risk (such as number, variety of convictions and previous exposure, response to youth and adult corrections), and factors relevant to identifying offender dynamic needs (such as employment history, family background, criminal associations, addictions, attitudes). The results help determine institutional placement and correctional plans.

At the time of admission for the current offence, more than one-third (35%) of offenders serving time in the community were rated as high risk to re-offend. Larger proportions of those serving time in custody were initially rated as high risk to re-offend (60%). As illustrated in Table 4, of

Table 4

Static and dynamic factors				
	Day Parole	Full Parole	Statutory Release	P
High risk to re-offend	33%	22%	50%	***
Low reintegration potential	5%	2%	32%	***
High need (overall)	43%	26%	60%	***
Employment (some/considerable)	48%	45%	56%	***
Marital/family (some/considerable)	38%	31%	47%	***
Social interaction/associates (some/considerable)	64%	60%	62%	*
Substance abuse (some/considerable)	63%	48%	74%	***
Community functioning (some/considerable)	33%	30%	38%	***
Personal/emotional orientation (some/considerable)	83%	73%	90%	***
Attitude (some/considerable)	49%	43%	56%	***

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

those in the community, larger proportions of those on statutory release were rated as high risk to re-offend at the time of admission (50%), compared to those on day or full parole (33% and 22%, respectively).

A larger proportion of offenders who are currently incarcerated were rated as having low reintegration potential at the time of intake to the correctional facilities, as compared to those serving time in the community (25% versus 14%). Of those in the community, larger proportions of those on statutory release were rated as having low reintegration

potential at intake (32%), as compared to those on day or full parole (5% and 2%, respectively).

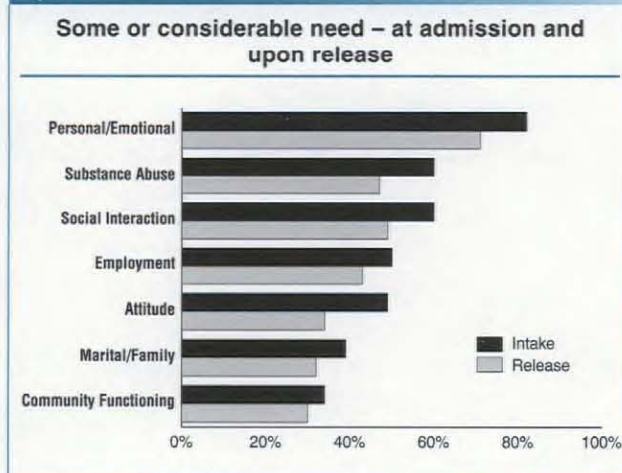
At the time of intake into the federal correctional facility for the current conviction, 42% of those serving time in the community were assessed as having high need for programming. The largest proportions were rated as having "some" or "considerable" need in the areas of personal/emotional orientation, social interaction/associates, and substance abuse. Larger proportions of incarcerated offenders were assessed as high need for programming at the time of intake (64%).

Of those on release, larger proportions of those on statutory release were rated as having high need (60%), as compared to those on day and full parole (43% and 26%, respectively).

### Needs at intake and upon release

It is also possible to examine whether the needs of offenders at intake into the correctional facility differ from their needs at the time of release to the community. As illustrated in Figure 1, for all need domains, fewer offenders were assessed as having "some" or "considerable" need at the time of release than at the time of admission<sup>4</sup>. This indicates that needs are being addressed through programming or services while the offenders are incarcerated.

Figure 1



As illustrated in Table 5, for those on all types of release, the proportion of offenders rated as high need overall was lower at release than at intake to the federal correctional facility. Similarly, for those on day and full parole, the proportion of offenders rated as having "some" or "considerable" need for each need domain was substantially lower at release than at intake.

For those on statutory release, the proportion rated as having "some" or "considerable" need was lower for social interaction/associates (39% versus 62%), substance abuse (67% versus 74%), and attitude (51% versus 56%). However, on personal/emotional orientation, employment and marital/family issues, similar proportions of those on release and intake were rated as having "some" or "considerable" need. The proportion with "some" or "considerable" need for community functioning increased slightly (from 38% to 40%).

Table 5

	Dynamic factors - at admission and upon release					
	Day Parole		Full Parole		Statutory Release	
	Intake	Release	Intake	Release	Intake	Release
High need (overall)	43%	24%	26%	8%	60%	48%
"Some" or "Considerable" Need:						
Employment	48%	39%	45%	28%	56%	55%
Marital/family	38%	30%	31%	20%	47%	45%
Social interaction/associates	64%	29%	60%	9%	62%	39%
Substance abuse	63%	54%	48%	22%	74%	67%
Community functioning	33%	30%	30%	19%	38%	40%
Personal/emotional orientation	83%	78%	73%	51%	90%	87%
Attitude	49%	38%	43%	17%	56%	51%

### Summary

This profile indicates the differences between offenders serving time in the community and those incarcerated in federal facilities. Generally, the two groups are fairly similar in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, except that there are larger proportions of women, and fewer Aboriginal offenders, among those serving time in the community. However, those serving time in the community are more often incarcerated for drug and property-related offences, have less extensive criminal histories, are lower risk to re-offend and lower need at time of intake to the federal correctional facility, as compared to those currently incarcerated. Perhaps more importantly, although offenders serving time in the community are assessed as having "some" or "considerable" need for certain types of programming at the time of release, the extent of their needs are less at the time of release to the community than at the time of intake. Programs and services utilized during incarceration may be responsible for these changes.



The highest need areas for offenders at the time of release were personal/emotional orientation, social interaction/associates, and substance abuse. This points to the importance of programs to address these issues in the community.

The profile identifies differences between those on day parole, full parole and statutory release. Generally, smaller proportions of those on statutory release than on day or full parole are women, larger proportions are Aboriginal, and larger proportions are uneducated and unemployed at the time of admission. Furthermore, those serving time in the community have different offence profiles.

Those on statutory release have more extensive criminal histories, are higher risk to re-offend and have higher needs, than those on day or full parole. ■

<sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.

<sup>2</sup> *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, RSC, C-20, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> The data are based on a one-day snapshot of offenders incarcerated in federal facilities or serving time in the community in November 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Significance is calculated based on means, using a 4-point scale, with 1 indicating an asset, 2 indicating no need, 3 indicating some need, and 4 indicating considerable need. The substance abuse and personal/emotional orientation domains utilize 3-point scales (no need, some need, considerable need).

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# Participation of federal offenders in community-based programs

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Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada

**T**he Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) actively assists offenders to become law abiding citizens by encouraging participation in correctional programs. Correctional programs target issues that directly contribute to criminal behaviour, and assist the offender in being equipped with the necessary skills to ensure successful reintegration into the community<sup>2</sup>. Thus, as part of the correctional plan, programs begin upon admission to a federal institution and continue throughout the reintegration process. This article focuses on the latter part of the reintegration process, focusing on various trends in program participation upon an offender's release into the community.

**T**his study examined program participation and release outcome for federal offenders on conditional release. Conditional release facilitates the successful reintegration of offenders into the community in the form of day parole, full parole or statutory release<sup>3</sup>. First, a profile of offenders participating in programs while on conditional release was conducted. Next, trends in program participation over an eight-year time period were examined. Finally, the relationship between program participation and release outcome was studied.

Offenders were profiled in terms of their most recent overall dynamic factor (criminogenic need) ratings, motivation level and reintegration potential ratings prior to conditional release. Dynamic factors are grouped into seven target domains: employment and education, marital/family relations, associates/social interaction, substance abuse, community functioning, personal emotional orientation, and attitudes<sup>4</sup>. Motivation level assesses the degree to which the offender is willing to participate in recommended correctional programs and address problem areas. Reintegration potential reassessment is based on an offender's security level, motivation level, and progress made in addressing dynamic factors. This information is initially collected via CSC's Offender Intake Assessment process, then reassessed periodically via progress monitoring procedures<sup>5</sup>.

This article reports the proportion of offenders participating in correctional programs while on conditional release over the past eight years. The degree to which there has been community involvement or support was also examined over time. Finally, conditional release outcomes (returns or revocations with a new offence) were compared for program participants versus non-participants.

## Procedure

All assessment and program data for this study were extracted from CSC's automated Offender Management System (OMS). Releases were included in the study if the following criteria applied:

- The release was the first of that sentence.
- The release was conditional (i.e., a day parole, full parole or statutory release).
- The release occurred between April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2002.

The sample consisted of 31,995 federal offenders comprising 33,164 releases in the given time period<sup>6</sup>. Of the releases, 48% were for day parole, 15% were for full parole and 36% were for statutory release. Overall, 43% of offenders in the sample participated in at least one program that began some time after they started their conditional release<sup>7</sup>. Eighty percent of the sample were non-Aboriginal male offenders, 15% were Aboriginal males and 5% were women.

If offenders were available for a time period of three years after their conditional release date, they were included in the follow-up section of the study. The analyses matched program participants with non-participants on static risk level. Post-release outcome was measured as any return to federal custody with a new offence within three years of release.

## Profile of offenders participating in correctional programs

Non-Aboriginal males, Aboriginal males and women were equally likely to have participated in at least one correctional program following

their release. Of the total sample, 44% of non-Aboriginal males participated in at least one correctional program post release. Similarly, the participation rate was 43% for Aboriginal males and 43% for women offenders.

As illustrated in Table 1, offenders participated in a variety of programs following their release from federal correctional facilities. This involved institutional employment (26%), substance abuse (21%), living skills (13%), education (12%) and personal development programs (11%).

### Trends in post-release program participation

Since 1995, the rate of participation in correctional programs has been steadily rising (see Figure 1). This may be due to the increasing number of Community Correctional Centres (CCCs) and Community Residential Facilities (CRFs) in Canada, and recent legislation and justice initiatives that encourage community involvement.

Among other things, CCCs (operated by the federal government) and CRFs (owned and operated by private agencies under contract with CSC) provide counselling and treatment programs to offenders on conditional release. Since 1995, there has been an increase in the number of Community Correctional Centres and Residential Facilities. This increase may be attributed to a number of factors, such as increased involvement of the community in the criminal justice process and an increase in the number of professionals in the community with expertise in program delivery.

Table 1

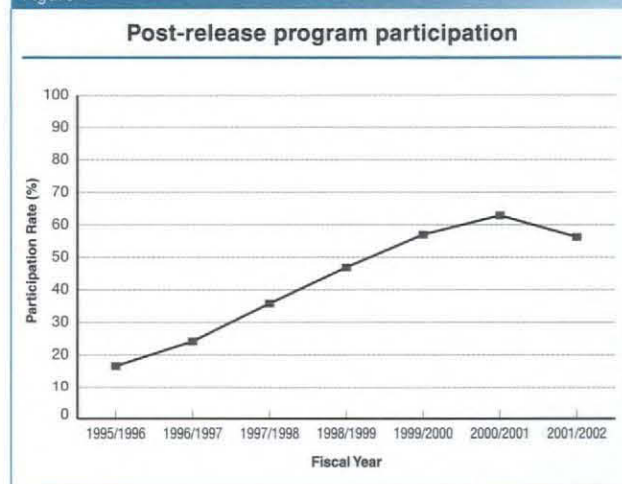
Type of program participation	
Program Category	Participants
CSC/CORCAN Institutional Employment	8,358 (26%)
Substance Abuse Programs	6,637 (21%)
Living Skills	4,087 (13%)
Education	3,760 (12%)
Personal Development Programs	3,383 (11%)
Psychological Oriented Programs	1,083 (3%)
Sex Offender Programs	1,068 (3%)
Family Violence	946 (3%)
Counter-Point	839 (3%)
Violent Offender Programs	619 (2%)

Note: Numbers may not add up as offenders may participate in more than one program

Offenders rated as high risk, having low motivation and low reintegration potential ratings just prior to release were most likely to be participating in programs ( $p < .0001$ ). Offenders with low motivation levels and low reintegration potential may be more likely to have program participation as a condition of their release.

As part of the correctional plan, offenders are encouraged to participate in programs that address their specific needs. Thus, not surprisingly, offenders rated with high overall criminogenic need were more likely to participate in programs upon their conditional release than those with lower need (69% versus 57%,  $p < .0001$ )<sup>8</sup>. Further, those with needs identified in specific dynamic factor domains prior to release were most likely to participate in programs addressing that need (see Table 2).

Figure 1



Note: the drop in the 2001/2002 fiscal year participation rate may be due to gaps between release date and program commencement date. That is, offenders recently released have less time and thus less opportunity to participate in programs.

Table 2

Participation rates by dynamic factor domain			
Dynamic Factor Domain	Program Category	% With Need	
		Identified	Not identified
Employment and Education	CSC/CORCAN Institutional employment***	38	32
	Education***	21	15
Substance Abuse	Substance Abuse Programs***	41	7
Community Functioning	Living Skills***	20	16
Personal/Emotional Orientation	Personal Development***	13	10
Attitude	Counter-Point Program***	7	3

\*\*\*  $p < .0001$

CCCs and CRFs also offer the opportunity for community involvement. As stipulated by CSC's Principles of Supervision:

*"Those providing supervision services shall take an active approach to supervision. The Parole Officer shall intervene to address the offender's needs and manage risk by making effective use of community resources and collateral contacts."<sup>9</sup>*

Thus, it is important for community-based program initiatives to recognize the value of community involvement and support. For example, the CSC-sponsored program "Circles of Support and Accountability" is a community-based program run by trained volunteers. This program is designed to provide continual treatment to long-term offenders. Similarly, offender substance abuse programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous enlist the aid of community volunteers to ensure continual support for offenders with substance abuse needs.

The community also participates in the federal criminal justice process via Citizens' Advisory Committees (CACs). These committees of volunteers provide input to penitentiaries and parole districts to assist in the delivery of correctional interventions<sup>10</sup>. Over the past 25 years, the number of CACs in Canada has been steadily growing, primarily those associated with parole offices.

### Post-release outcome of conditional releases

Outcome while on conditional release (return to federal custody with a new offence) for program participants was examined for offenders who were available for a three year follow-up period, compared to those who did not participate in programs. Results showed that, while controlling for risk, offenders participating in at least one program were less likely to return to federal custody with a new offence than non-participants (13% versus 17%,  $p < .0001$ ). On average, program participants remained in the community longer (33 months, range=.03 months to 36 months, versus 31 months, range=.07 months to 36 months,  $p < .0001$ ).

### Conclusions

Results revealed that, for offenders who participated in post-release programs, most were likely to have participated in correctional programs that addressed their specific criminogenic needs. Program participants were also less likely to return to federal custody with a new offence. Thus, findings of this study support the notion that post-release participation in appropriate programs is an effective reintegration measure. The increasing participation rate in post-release correctional programs, together with the increasing level of community involvement and justice initiatives, is a promising indicator of future success in the reintegration of offenders into the community. This research suggests that prospective studies identifying key program specifics (i.e., intensity level, targeted dynamic factor, accreditation, frequency), optimal site specifications (site accreditation) and criteria identifying prime candidates will assist in efforts that focus on reintegration into the community upon release. ■

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<sup>2</sup> See Commissioners Directive number 726 for definition and policy relating to correctional programs.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, sections 99,100,119 and 120, for definitions, eligibility criteria and terms of conditional release.

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed description of the OIA, see Motiuk, L. L. (1997). Classification for correctional programming: The Offender Intake Assessment process, *Forum on Corrections Research*, 9(1), 18-22.

<sup>5</sup> See Standard Operating Practices 700-04 and 700-05.

<sup>6</sup> Offenders could be represented more than once if they had multiple sentences in the given time period.

<sup>7</sup> Note that offenders may also continue programs offered during their incarceration period while on conditional release, particularly those on day parole.

<sup>8</sup> This finding also held for all seven dynamic factor domains.

<sup>9</sup> Correctional Service of Canada Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) # 700-06.

<sup>10</sup> See Commissioner's Directive No. 023 "Citizen Advisory Committees".

# Citizens' Advisory Committees: A profile of members

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An integral part of the management of the federal correctional system in Canada is the involvement of the public. Citizens' Advisory Committees (CACs) represent one way that citizens are involved in the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). CACs have been in place in some form since the mid 1960s. In 1977, the MacGuigan report recommended that CACs be implemented in all correctional institutions across Canada<sup>3</sup>. Today, there are CACs associated with all federal correctional facilities in Canada, and over 20 with parole offices. This article provides a profile of individuals who are volunteers of CACs.

According to the CSC Commissioner's Directive 023, the objective of CACs is:

To ensure citizens are consulted in the development and implementation of policies and programs relating to offenders and to promote and maintain positive relationships between operational units and local communities through the establishment of Citizens' Advisory Committees<sup>4</sup>.

The role of CACs is to:

- facilitate mutually gainful relationships between the institution and the local community;
- assist and advise the Director in implementing national, regional and local policies and plans, with particular reference to community-related policies;
- assist and advise the Director, as required, in commenting on the development of national and regional policies and plans;
- promote positive interaction between the institution and the local community; and
- participate in the development and maintenance of community resources for the Service<sup>5</sup>.

In order to gain a better understanding of the individuals who volunteer on CACs, the Research Branch of CSC, in partnership with the Community Engagement and Evaluation and Review Branches of CSC and the National Executive Committee of CACs, undertook an

examination of CACs. A membership survey was sent to all CAC chairs, requesting the participation of members. By mid-March 2003, 194 completed surveys had been returned<sup>6</sup>.

In total, 25 respondents were from the Pacific region, 55 from the Prairie region, 38 from the Ontario region, 41 from the Québec region, and 31 from the Atlantic region. Of the completed surveys, 136 were from CACs associated with federal correctional facilities, 43 from CACs associated with parole offices, and 10 from CACs associated with both correctional facilities and parole offices<sup>7</sup>.

## Involvement in CACs

The largest proportion of CAC members said they became a member of the CAC because another member (46%) or someone in CSC (38%) asked them to join. Members joined the CAC for a variety of reasons, such as wanting to have greater community involvement (66%), wanting to learn more about the criminal justice system (41%), wanting to contribute to a safe society (41%), or wanting to assist offenders (33%)<sup>8</sup>. The vast majority (90%) said that they participate in other volunteer activities.

The respondents have been members of CACs for varying periods of time. Approximately one-fifth (22%) of the respondents have been members of a CAC for between three and four years and a further one-fifth (21%) for one to two years. Eighteen percent have been involved for less than one year, 14% for five to six years, 14% for seven to 10 years, and 10% for more than 10 years.

The largest proportion of CAC members reported spending up to three hours a month volunteering with their CAC (46%), while 29% spend 4-6 hours per month. Approximately 25% spent seven or more hours a month doing volunteer work on their CAC.

## The characteristics of CAC members differ from the Canadian population

Generally, the sample of CAC members who responded to the membership survey differs

from the Canadian population as a whole on some characteristics<sup>9</sup>. For instance, a slightly larger proportion of men are involved in CACs (56% compared to 50% of the Canadian population). Furthermore, CAC members tend to be older than the general Canadian population, with 82% of CAC members 45 years of age or older (compared to 35% in the Canadian population). Almost two-thirds (64%) of CAC members are married (compared to about 50% of the Canadian population).

Three-quarters (75%) of the CAC members said that English was their primary language, and 22% said it was French. Only 2% reported their primary language as being something other than English or French (compared to 6% in the Canadian population). In terms of ethnicity, 8% of the respondents reported being a visible minority and 5% Aboriginal. In the Canadian population, 11% are visible minorities and 4% are Aboriginal.

Approximately two-thirds (68%) of the respondents said they had completed post-secondary education, including a college, university or post-graduate degree. In comparison, about one-third (35%) of the Canadian population have a post-secondary degree.

As might be expected given the age of the respondents, the largest proportion of CAC members (40%) are retired. The next largest proportion reported having jobs related to the

social sciences, education and religion (14%), followed by business, finance and administrative occupations (8%), and sales and services (7%). Over one-half of the sample (59%) reported an average family income of \$50,000 or greater.

### Involvement in CAC activities

One of the primary purposes of CACs is to act as independent observers. CAC members reported an average of five visits in the past year in order to act as an observer for day-to-day activities and/or operations of CSC<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, CAC volunteers reported an average of one visit per year to act as an independent observer during a crisis or disturbance.

Respondents were also asked to indicate, on a five-point scale, the extent to which they are involved in various CAC activities<sup>11</sup>. As illustrated in Table 1, the largest proportion (65%) said they were often involved in meetings and discussions with CSC managers and staff. Further, 52% said they were often involved in being informed about the criminal justice system, 52% in seeking information on general correctional issues, 45% in requesting information about the correctional process, and 37% in regular visits to CSC facilities and programs. Approximately one-third said they often helped to identify and solve problems relating to community attitudes, myths and misinformation (33%), met with offenders/

Table 1

#### Involvement in CAC activities

Activities	A great deal (%)
Having regular meetings and discussions with CSC managers and staff	65%
Being well informed on the correctional process and other components of the criminal justice system	52%
Seeking information on general correctional issues	52%
Requesting information on all aspects of the correctional process	45%
Regular visits to CSC facilities and programs	37%
Assisting in identifying and solving problems involving community attitudes, myths and misinformation	33%
Meeting with offenders/parolees and offender/parolee groups	32%
Supporting and encouraging community involvement through volunteer participation	31%
Increasing awareness/understanding of my local community about CSC.	29%
Helping to increase communication between my local community and CSC.	28%
Serving as a link between CSC and the local community.	28%
Maintaining liaison with other CACs through national, regional and/or local participation	26%
Acting as independent observer of CSC's day-to-day activities and operations.	22%
Contributing to offender programs in the institution and in the community	21%
Meeting with community members and groups to inform and receive feedback on correctional issues	19%
Contributing to the training and development of other CAC members	18%
Assisting offenders in their community reintegration.	16%
Being an observer or participant at correctional workshops or training sessions	15%
Assisting in the development of community resources for institutional pre-release or post-release programs	11%
Surveying attitudes of the community, offenders and correctional staff	10%
Attending parole hearings, disciplinary courts and grievance proceedings	8%
Acting as independent observer during disturbances or crises	7%

parolee groups (32%), and supported and encouraged community involvement through volunteer participation (31%).

Finally, when asked about their experience as a CAC member, more than two-thirds (70%) said that they derived a great deal of satisfaction from their experience as a CAC member.

The findings of this study, although preliminary, provide some insight into reasons why individuals become members of CACs. Further, based on the sample that completed the surveys, the profile of CAC members differs from the

profile of Canadian society. CAC members are older, more often married, better educated and tend to be retired or working in a field related to social sciences. This profile is not surprising given the unique demands of volunteering within the correctional system. The study also illustrates that CAC members are most frequently involved in meetings with CSC and seeking information. These findings have implications for the recruitment of CAC members and can better inform CSC and provide important information about the major areas of activity of CAC members. ■

<sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> MacGuigan, M. (1977). The Sub-Committee on the Penitentiary System in Canada. Report to Parliament, Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, Second Session, Thirtieth Parliament. Ottawa, Ontario.

<sup>4</sup> Commissioners Directive 023, Correctional Service of Canada, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> The sample is based on CAC members who returned their membership surveys by mid-March, 2003. It should be noted that not all membership surveys were received by this date.

Therefore, this is not necessarily a representative sample of respondents.

<sup>7</sup> CACs may be associated with an institution, a parole office, multiple institutions, or an institution and a parole office.

<sup>8</sup> Members may have given a number of reasons for joining the CAC. Therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%.

<sup>9</sup> Based on data from the 1996 or 2001 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada.

<sup>10</sup> A few outliers were removed from this average because the scores skewed the mean.

<sup>11</sup> For analysis purposes, the 5-point scale was re-grouped into "low" (1-2), "some" (3), and "a great deal" (4-5).

## Let's Talk

*Let's Talk is a magazine published by the Communications and Consultation Sector of the Correctional Service of Canada.*

*Let's Talk welcomes letters to the editor, suggestions for articles and contributions from readers. Materials submitted may be edited for style and length. Please include your electronic mail address and a daytime telephone number. Address all correspondence to:*

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# Halfway houses for federal offenders: What do we know about them?

Elizabeth White<sup>1</sup>

St. Leonard's Society of Canada

**A**t the present time, the state of the art does not allow an extensive evaluation of community-based residential facilities because of a lack of basic knowledge of how they function. As a first step, it is necessary to establish a database that will: (a) provide current and continuing information on how community-based facilities function; (b) allow for a more reliable tool for management to monitor the operation of the facility; and (c) provide baseline information to assess the impact of releasing federal inmates on the institutional population, the criminal justice system and the public<sup>2</sup>.

**C**anada has a strong history of involvement of the voluntary sector in the provision of transitional residential services to federally-sentenced persons on conditional release. According to the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) Standard Operating Practices of Community Supervision "gradual release is the safest correctional strategy for the protection of society"<sup>3</sup>. Residential services are a key component of this approach. Yet, in the 26 years since Zeitoun arrived at his conclusion that we really do not know very much at all about our halfway houses, we have made little progress in gathering accurate and useful information about them.

The St. Leonard's Society of Canada<sup>4</sup> (SLSC) identified a lack of evidence-based research on "what works" in halfway houses. Our primary concerns were the gap in knowledge about halfway houses generally, the trend towards accreditation for programs and services and the lack of a framework which could be used by the houses to that end, and the need for the public to have access to relevant comprehensive information about these 175 non-government resources in our communities.

Since the opening of the first halfway houses in the late 1940s and early 1950s<sup>5</sup>, a number of organizations in Canada have provided accommodation, food, services and programs to ex-offenders. The Salvation Army, Anglican Houses, St. Leonard's, John Howard and Elizabeth Fry Societies have each played a significant role in the growth of the halfway houses.

Correctional halfway houses were initially designed to help offenders negotiate the critical transition from confinement to the community. They also assisted offenders in need of short-term supervision in a community residential setting. It was felt that the provision of a supportive environment, the basic necessities of food and shelter and assistance in securing employment, education and counselling services would facilitate adjustment to the community and thus contribute to the correctional goal of reintegration.

There are currently two primary types of residential facilities in the community for federal offenders in Canada. Firstly, there are non-governmental privately run facilities, identified as Community Residential Facilities (CRFs). CRFs are funded through fee-for-service agreements with CSC, to provide a variety of services including accommodation, counselling, employment preparation and supervision of offenders. There are approximately 175 non-governmental CRFs that provide services to federally released male and female offenders. Secondly, there are Community Correctional Centres (CCCs) which are government-run facilities. CCCs are minimum-security facilities whose primary roles are as transition centres, program delivery centres and intervention centres. Currently, there are 17 CCCs run by CSC.

## Research project: The effectiveness of halfway houses

In February 2002, SLSC and CSC, in collaboration with the Canadian Training Institute, initiated a research project on Canadian halfway houses. This multi-phase research project involves the participation of a National Advisory Committee and residential service providers throughout Canada, reflecting cultural, gender and profile specificity to achieve the goals of the research. It involves an examination of CRFs in Canada in order to discuss "what works" in community-based residential services and programs for federally sentenced persons in Canada.

It is anticipated that the project will involve two phases. Phase 1 (2002-2003) involves developing a



profile of residents in halfway houses over the last few years. It includes interviews with directors in a sample of halfway houses to describe various models currently in use and issues they are facing. In addition, this phase involves developing appropriate outcome measures to examine what works in these facilities. Phase 2, tentatively scheduled for 2003-2004, will include an examination of the effectiveness of the various models of halfway houses and make recommendations for areas of improvement.

Additional partners are being encouraged to join the project as it progresses. The involvement of parole, crime prevention and the Solicitor General of Canada is key to the success of the multi-disciplinary approach.

### Background

CRFs have developed over time in response to needs identified by local communities. Therefore, there is a great deal of diversity in the approaches used in providing services to offenders across Canada. For example, while updating the CRF directory we encountered a variety of non-traditional approaches to the halfway house model. Currently, some halfway houses operate as privately administered facilities, some as residency programs that co-exist with detoxification and drug treatment centres and homeless shelters, and some house clients in provincial institutions.

Large scale evaluations of CRFs have not been conducted in Canada in about two decades. With a few exceptions, the main body of research on the halfway house concept was conducted between the 1960s and 1980s. These studies tended to conclude that halfway houses are neutral at best in terms of effectiveness. However, these results reflect an era of correctional programming that preceded the "what works" literature. Much has changed in both correctional planning and technology. Principles of effective correctional programming, effective correctional treatment and evaluations of their outcome largely emerged in the early 1990s. These currently inform both the design and operation of many correctional programs. The late 1990s also witnessed advances in the determination of critical process variables in positive community-based residential program outcomes. Together with the development of risk/need assessment instruments and advances in research technology, these factors make it timely to develop models to evaluate the effectiveness of community-based residential facilities.

### Methodology

The first step was a Literature Review, prepared by the Canadian Training Institute in March 2002. *Toward an Evaluation of Community-Based Residential Facilities in Canada: A Review of the Literature*<sup>6</sup> confirmed that there is a dearth of current information on the effectiveness of halfway houses and identified the historical trends in the field.

The next step was to develop a broad-based advisory committee. St. Leonard's Society of Canada is committed to working in co-operation with all those interested in this area. It is our conviction that these agencies often work in isolation, lacking the support that can be provided by increased connections among other agencies. As the halfway houses are community-based, we want this project to be informed by the best practices and advice of those in the field. In June 2002, CSC funded a meeting of a group of about 25 interested advisors from the voluntary and public sectors to consider the results of the literature review and to provide perspectives on appropriate next steps.

A feature of this project has been the development of a group of persons and organizations who are interested in the project and who wish to be informed of its progress. Initial information was provided to them in the spring of 2002, an update was distributed in the early fall, and a report will be sent out in spring 2003. People expressing interest are added to the list on a regular basis.

During the summer of 2002, a Directory of Community Resource Facilities was prepared by CSC and SLSC. This comprehensive update helped to identify the wide range of approaches in the field.

Three aspects of the project are concurrently underway:

1. A profile of offenders residing in halfway houses for the last 5 years is being developed using data compiled from the CSC Offender Management System.
2. The Research Branch of CSC and St. Leonard's have developed an interview protocol designed to gather comprehensive information about the nature, approach and status of the halfway houses. Interviews with a sample of directors of halfway houses in each region were conducted. These focus on describing the halfway house, its governance, staff, residents, programs/

services, best practices, and issues they are facing. Components include:

- Philosophy/goals/objectives
- Historical background
- Program and service delivery
- Referral and intake process
- Criteria for inclusion
- Organizational structure
- Physical layout
- Institutional and community roles

It is important to note that this phase is for background purposes only and is not an assessment in itself nor will the material gathered be used for assessment purposes.

3. Through a contract with CSC, the Canadian Training Institute is preparing a report proposing a comprehensive methodology to evaluate effectiveness using a range of outcome measures and performance indicators.

<sup>1</sup> 712-151 Slater St., Ottawa, K1P 5H3.

<sup>2</sup> Zeitoun, L (1978). The development of community-based residential centres in Canada, *Offender Rehabilitation*, 3, 133 - 150. Cited in *Toward an Evaluation of Community-Based Residential Facilities in Canada: A Review of the Literature*, Canadian Training Institute, May 2002, unpublished. Available on request electronically.

<sup>3</sup> Correctional Service of Canada, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> St. Leonard's Society of Canada is a national registered charity that affiliates non-profit agencies and individuals committed to

## Next steps

The information gathered through the interviews will be included in a report describing halfway houses in Canada, including models in place and a profile of individuals residing in halfway houses. The proposed methodology will be the focus of discussion, debate and review by the advisory committee.

It is anticipated that preparation for Phase 2, the testing of the methodology, will begin in the spring of 2003. During Phase 2, the plan is to provide an opportunity for representatives of the halfway houses to share best practices and establish ongoing links which will foster improved access to their peers and knowledge of the range of highly effective interventions which exist in the field in Canada. The working group is confident that the basis will be laid for supporting halfway houses as they seek to assess and improve their service to clients and their continued contribution to community safety in Canada. ■

the prevention of crime through the provision of service. Our member societies serve men, women and youth in conflict or at risk of conflict with the law with an historical emphasis on services for federally sentenced men. The first St. Leonard's House opened in Windsor, Ontario in 1962.

<sup>5</sup> Ingles House for young women was founded in 1947 to serve women released from Mercer Reformatory; Beverly Lodge in Toronto for men leaving provincial jails opened in 1954.

<sup>6</sup> Canadian Training Institute, May 2002, unpublished. Available on request electronically.

## Coming up in *FORUM on Corrections Research*

*The September 2003 issue of Forum will focus on Performance Measurement.*

# The Community Maintenance Program: A new strategy for providing treatment follow-up in the community

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## Background

In the last decade, the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) reintegration programming has followed two main strategies: standardization and accreditation. The purpose of standardization is to ensure that offenders are provided with the same intervention for the same criminogenic risk factors throughout the country. The purpose of accreditation is to ensure that the treatment that is delivered meets theoretical and empirically-based criteria for effective treatment.

The first generation of standardized or national programs, such as Cognitive Skills (now called Reasoning and Rehabilitation), Anger and Emotions Management, and the Offender Substance Abuse Program were designed to address specific criminogenic need factors, such as problem solving, anger arousal control, and substance abuse, closely paralleling the target domains and indicators identified by the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA). These programs are prescribed for all offenders for whom the skill deficit is considered a criminogenic need.

The current generation of standardized programs has taken another approach. Programs such as Family Violence or Violence Prevention attempt to address a number of the criminogenic need factors or skills deficits that are believed to be associated with the harmful behaviour. These programs are prescribed for offenders who are convicted of specific types of offences. Sex Offender treatment has always taken this approach, while the High Intensity Substance Abuse Program is a hybrid. Although not specifically aimed at an offence type, it addresses a number of skills deficits such as problem solving, thinking distortions, dealing with unpleasant emotions, social skills and conflict resolution which are associated with the problem behaviour.

Theoretically, the main advantage of programs that deal with a specific type of offence by addressing a number of criminogenic needs is the opportunity to apply the gained skills directly to the problem behaviour leading to the offence. This is generally done using a relapse prevention or self-management model.

## Strategy for providing maintenance

During the last five years, program development in CSC has increasingly been informed by the realization that skills gained through treatment programs are more likely to be maintained with follow-up rehearsal and reinforcement. Furthermore, it is more likely that skills gained within the restricted environment of institutions will successfully generalize to the community upon release with aftercare. There has been a growing awareness of the need for maintenance programs, especially in the community. Therefore, all standardized programs now have a built-in maintenance component.

The proliferation of maintenance programs has had some unforeseen consequences. For instance, there are now a multitude of follow-up programs which offenders must attend upon release to the community. Depending on prior program participation, an offender may be mandated to take several maintenance programs. This has proven to be problematic because motivation to take programs in the community is often low, and the motivation to take multiple programs is almost absent. The main problems, however, have been availability and access. It is financially and practically prohibitive to have the full range of maintenance programs at every parole office. Since offenders are spread out in the community, it is difficult to assemble the critical number of offenders necessary to start a treatment group in all but the metropolitan centres. In addition, a small but significant number of offenders return to remote communities and are supervised at a distance. The net effect is that most offenders have to wait long periods until they can enter a maintenance program. For many offenders the contact they have with their parole officer is the only kind of intervention they can expect upon release.

The Effective Corrections initiative was one response to concerns over access to, and availability of, programs in the community. At a meeting of parole and programs stakeholders in Ottawa in 2001, consensus was reached for developing a community maintenance program which would address some of these identified

problems. The advisory committee put forth the following guidelines for the development of the new program:

- It should be based on a relapse prevention or self-management model of treatment.
- It should be a follow-up program and maintain already learned skills, rather than teaching new skills.
- It should focus on applying skills to everyday problems which offenders experience.
- It should be written and delivered using a simplified and jargon-free language.
- It should be readily comprehensible and usable by graduates of the different programs which would "feed" into it.
- Intake should be continuous so that an offender could start maintenance quickly, if not immediately, upon entry into the community.
- For the sake of almost universal availability, it should be capable of being delivered either individually or in a "group" format.
- It should recognize the importance of Andrews<sup>2</sup> risk and need principles: intervention should be directed at offenders that present a moderate or higher risk to re-offend, and treatment should target criminogenic needs.

The limits of the program were also agreed upon. Firstly, since it was not possible to address the needs of all offenders in the community, it was agreed that women offenders and Aboriginal offenders should attend programs that take into account their specific risk, need and responsibility factors. As well, it was not deemed possible to meet the needs of completely untreated offenders within the same framework.

### Developmental background

Relapse Prevention (RP) is a cognitive-behavioural treatment technique that was initially developed by Marlatt and his colleagues<sup>3</sup> to maintain gains and prevent relapse following treatment for substance abuse. The technique was later applied to sex offenders in order to maintain treatment gains. More generally, the relapse prevention model has been used as a framework to guide treatment and is, in fact, the common model underlying most of CSC's treatment programs. Although not every program uses the full range of RP concepts and associated strategies, the central

RP concepts of high risk situations and relapse prevention plans occur in every program except Cognitive Skills (Reasoning and Rehabilitation). All of these programs culminate in the offender creating a personal relapse prevention plan. Therefore, it made sense to use the RP model as the framework of the community maintenance program.

There were two potential obstacles to using a simplified RP framework: the diverse language of the different programs and conceptual departures from the "classic" RP model by several of the "feeder" programs: National Sex Offenders Program, Violence Prevention Program, and Counter-Point. The differences in RP language between the programs were dealt with by paring down the concepts to three: high risk situations, comprising both internal and external triggers; offence paths (including the concept of offence cycles); and a relapse prevention plan.

The classic RP model is based on the assumption that the client is motivated to stop engaging in harmful behaviour, or to avoid it altogether. The possibility also exists, of course, that the client is motivated to continue engaging in harmful behaviour, especially but not exclusively in a correctional population. Ward and Hudson<sup>4</sup> have dealt with this possibility in their extension of the RP model: the Self-Regulation model. Their model describes two possible goals regarding re-offending: **avoidance and approach**, and two possible strategies, **active and passive**, resulting in four possible offence pathways: passive or active avoidance, and automatic or explicit approach. They explain that different treatment strategies should be used for individuals on each of these different pathways. The most basic difference is that, while increasing awareness of high risk situations through self-monitoring is a common task for individuals on the first three pathways, the most important task for individuals on the fourth pathway, explicit approach, is to challenge the basic goals and underlying beliefs, attitudes and values. Both the sex offender treatment and violence prevention program deal with these different pathways to offending, while Counter-Point specifically targets the goals and thinking which characterizes individuals on the explicit approach pathway. The community maintenance program is based on the self-regulation model and the need to suit intervention to the individual's offence pathway.

The program is also based on Zamble and Quinsey's<sup>5</sup> coping model of criminal recidivism. This model suggests that, for many offenders,

recidivism is the end result of a definable series of emotional and cognitive events, called a path of habitual offending or *offence path*. The proximal cause of recidivism is the development of certain problems (e.g., interpersonal conflict, substance abuse, strong negative emotional states) with an accompanying lack of effective coping responses. Thus, recidivism is seen as the result of failing to cope. The implications of the coping model are that treatment should be based on the identification of an offender's individual offence path and precursors, it should include increasing awareness of these precursors, and it should stress active and collaborative problem solving.

### Program format

The Community Maintenance Programs (CMP) consist of a cycle of 12 weekly two-hour sessions. Six of the sessions consist of skills rehearsal: review and practice of six core skill clusters common to many correctional treatment programs. These sessions are fairly structured. The remaining six sessions are less structured, and consist of the application of the core skills to everyday problems, obstacles, and high-risk situations. The skills and application sessions alternate. The full cycle takes approximately 90 days to complete. Since each of the sessions is designed to "stand alone", an offender can enter and exit the program at any point in the cycle.

There are two admission criteria: being moderate to high risk to re-offend as measured by static risk indicators, and, having participated in a program with a relapse prevention component. At intake, offenders are rated on two assessment instruments: a dynamic risk measure, and a skills mastery (need) measure. Both instruments have been developed specifically for the program.

All participants are expected to attend a full 12 session or 90-day cycle of the program. Future attendance and frequency of attendance hinges on the level of dynamic risk and level of skills mastery. Offenders whose dynamic risk level is low, and who show mastery of the skills in everyday life, can graduate from the program. If dynamic risk should increase in the future, an

offender may be re-directed to the program by his parole officer.

### Program content

Examination of the content of CSC's standardized programs shows that they teach a number of common skills, for example, problem solving, anger and emotional arousal control, relapse prevention or self-management and dealing with thinking errors and rationalizations. While the models and language used to communicate these skills varies from program to program, the differences appear to be mainly superficial.

Five of the six core skills clusters appear in many programs: problem solving, emotional regulation, challenging high-risk thinking (values, beliefs, and attitudes), relationship skills, and relapse prevention or self-management. The sixth, working towards goals, which includes impulse and habit control and planning skills, is subsumed in many of the programs but comprehensively addressed only in the Violence Prevention Program.

### Implementation

The CMP will be implemented as a pilot program. Pilot implementation will include both urban and rural settings across the country. Facilitators will be drawn from programs and parole staff and may also include program facilitators from non-governmental organizations. Training will be intensive, given the number of skills on which facilitators will have to achieve at least a basic level of competence. However, once trained, facilitators will be able to work with a wide range of offenders, either individually or in groups, and in effect will be able to respond to the need for maintenance programming wherever it exists. There will be an ongoing evaluation of whether the program reduces short- and longer-term risk, how it compares with existing maintenance programs, and whether it has the potential to increase the effectiveness of community programming with regards to increased access and availability. ■

<sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, D.A., Zinger, I., Hoge, R.D., Bonta, J., & Cullen, F.T. (1990). Does correctional treatment work? A clinically relevant and psychologically informed meta-analysis. *Criminology*, 28, 369-404.

<sup>3</sup> Marlatt, G.A., & Gordon, J.R. (Eds). (1985). *Relapse prevention: Maintenance strategies in the treatment of addictive behaviours*. New York, NY: Guilford.

<sup>4</sup> Ward, T., & Hudson, S.M. (2000). A self-regulation model of relapse prevention. In D.R. Laws, S.M. Hudson, & T. Ward (eds.) *Remaking relapse prevention with sex offenders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

<sup>5</sup> Zamble, E., & Quinsey, V.L. (1997). *The criminal recidivism process*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

# Managing addictions in the community

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In the summer of 2000, as part of the Correctional Service of Canada's National Drug Strategy, the Addiction Research Centre and the John Howard Society of Greater Moncton Inc. entered into a unique partnership to begin the development of a community-based substance abuse treatment program. The goal of this demonstration project was to develop a treatment program for adult male offenders with moderate to severe alcohol and drug problems as a collaborative effort between government and community. The outcome was the development of a unique, multi-disciplinary approach to substance abuse treatment that integrates a variety of community services in a comprehensive intervention framework. The *Managing Addictions in the Community* program incorporates a clinical component, draws on existing community supports and interventions, and effectively provides a continuity of treatment from institution to community for those offenders being released from federal or provincial institutions who are addicted to drugs and alcohol.

## Background

In April 2000, Federal Solicitor General Lawrence MacAulay announced a three-pronged initiative by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to combat the supply of drugs in federal institutions, the demand for drugs by federal offenders, and the problem of substance abuse by offenders living in Canadian communities<sup>3</sup>. In the spirit of a renewed commitment by government and the voluntary sector to work together, Graham Stewart, Executive Director of John Howard Society (JHS) of Canada proposed the development of a new community-based substance abuse treatment program for offenders.

The John Howard Society in Moncton, New Brunswick, was chosen as the site to develop and pilot the new program. The city of Moncton draws from four federal institutions in the Atlantic Region that house male offenders, as well as two provincial jails. In the two years prior to the project, a total of 203 offenders were released to Moncton and, of these, 73% were assessed as having substance abuse needs.

Furthermore, 23% of those assessed as having substance abuse needs fell into the intermediate to severe category. Because of the Canada/New Brunswick Initiative<sup>4</sup>, the program also targets provincial offenders. The New Brunswick Department of Public Safety reports that up to 85% of offenders on probation have substance abuse as a contributing factor to their crime.

As a key goal of this initiative, the program was designed to be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. Although this goal initially proved to be a challenge to traditional ways of thinking and working for both JHS and the Addiction Research Centre, bringing in a third level of government and the community generated even greater challenges. The outcome of working in partnership on this project, however, has been a greater mutual understanding and respect for each other's sector, and new working relationships.

## The program model

Consultations with the federal and provincial corrections community, and the after-care community, identified that offenders with severe to substantial substance abuse problems often have a correspondingly high need for other interventions upon release. The combination of housing, employment, family, social and recreational needs, along with psychological, medical, and financial problems that are compounded during the offender's reintegration into the community can increase stress levels that may trigger relapse. An effective community-based model must incorporate a comprehensive intervention framework to address these needs, combined with a continuation of the substance abuse treatment received in the institution.

Based on the time frame, it was decided that the most efficient way to achieve our development goal was to incorporate a series of program components into our model that have been researched and documented as effective treatment responses for offenders with substance abuse problems.

The Managing Addictions in the Community demonstration pilot project has three key components:

1. *Choices*: core treatment component that provides continuity of care from the institution.
2. *Substance Abuse Maintenance (SAM)*: long-term ongoing support to maintain improved behaviours before and/or after Choices.
3. *Wraparound Process*: coordination of multiple community resources around the offender in an integrated, formalized, way.

### **Choices**

The Choices program is a community correctional Brief Treatment Relapse Prevention and Maintenance Program that was developed as a national substance abuse treatment program for CSC. It is delivered to offenders who are on conditional release in the community. The overall goal of the program is to reduce the offenders risk for relapse to substance abuse and criminal behaviour. Choices is based on the social-learning model, the most effective model for treatment of offenders in a variety of life domain need areas. The results of an outcome evaluation of the Choices program suggest that the program was successful in increasing the offenders' knowledge about the effects and consequences of alcohol and drug use as well as in the development of a number of skills that are deemed essential in abstaining from or controlling future substance use<sup>5</sup>. Further, the success rates in the community for offenders with substantial to severe substance abuse problems were greater for Choices participants than for those in a matched comparison sample<sup>6</sup>. The Choices program, then, successfully met the criteria for an effective core treatment component that would provide a continuity of treatment from institution to community.

### **Substance Abuse Maintenance (SAM)**

SAM is a continuous-intake community-based substance abuse maintenance program based on the Choices program's relapse prevention theory. With a new Choices program scheduled to begin every 8 to 9 weeks, SAM is available for an offender who is waiting to begin the program and wants to continue maintaining and developing his relapse prevention skills. SAM is also accessible for the offender who has completed the Choices intensive and

maintenance phase. It provides clients with opportunities to discuss challenges, receive feedback, and generally receive long-term ongoing support that some clients may need to maintain changed behaviour in the community.

### **Wraparound Process**

The Wraparound Process is a community-based intervention designed for individuals with complex needs, using a team approach to address those needs. It focuses on developing support for the offender by bringing existing community resources together in a collaborative way. The offender and a Wraparound facilitator begin the process with the identification of needs that fall within 12 life domain areas (such as housing, employment, financial, medical, family, legal). The offender's strengths are also identified at this point through a structured but informal discussion between the facilitator and the offender. This initial process is designed to motivate the offender to fully commit to achieving his substance abuse goals and addressing his reintegration needs.

The offender and the facilitator begin identifying existing resources in the community that may be able to meet those needs as a team. The facilitator and the offender make contact with the various resource people identified and invite them to meet together with the offender. This team then works together to assist the offender in developing a plan to meet his needs. Wraparound has been described as a step above the traditional inter-agency team approach in that it includes non-professional people in the team. For example, a Wraparound team might include clergy, community volunteers, or representatives of community leisure activities to meet the offender's spiritual, socialization, or recreation needs.

The Wraparound Process is based on strong support for the offender when he needs it and at the level of intensity he needs. Services are brought in and phased out based on his needs. When his risk level increases, or he is returned to secure custody, the team members 'wrap tighter' around the client as opposed to walking away. In essence, everyone on the team is working together based on the offender's needs and works with the offender until the needs have been met.

This approach can lead to a total integration into the community of the offender and is based on the concepts of community inclusion and responsibility for "taking care of our own".

Secondary outcomes include feelings of increased support amongst community service providers, increased networking and partnering amongst community service agencies, cross-pollination between corrections and other sectors, and increased knowledge within the service community about the needs and dynamics of substance abuse and offenders. On a broader scale, data capturing tools designed for the project are recording most commonly recommended services, and their availability in the region, providing a 'snapshot' of assets and gaps in community service in the Moncton region.

Most importantly, this approach is providing offenders with more directed interventions and assistance to meet their complex needs while they are working on their substance abuse problem in the community. With the team of professionals and non-professionals working with him, the offender should feel more supported, less isolated, and therefore more likely to succeed in his treatment and integration goals.

### Evaluation

Since October 2001, 105 clients have been referred to the Choices program, 32 to SAM, and 25 to the Wraparound Process. Over 40 different community-based agencies/resources and almost a dozen non-professionals have been involved with offenders in the Wraparound Process to date.

The development of a research model consistent with the information required by CSC and the

New Brunswick Department of Public Safety is being done in collaboration with the Addiction Research Centre. Traditionally, substance abuse treatment programs developed for CSC have generally identified recidivism as a primary indicator of successful treatment. There are three areas in which this project is being evaluated. The project's main research question is around whether the Wraparound Process is effective, as an add-on to existing CSC substance abuse programming. Second, this project will identify and use additional indicators that relate to the objective of community integration. As such, positive changes in money management, employment, development of social/recreational support systems, and general coping in the community are being recorded. Third, because of the strong collaborative nature of this pilot project, information is being gathered from community partners to find out if the program and process are of value based on their own mandates.

### Next steps

As a result of tremendous work of all partners involved, unforeseen and unavoidable delays that occurred early in the project have been corrected. In essence, these problems created a lack of referrals to the Wraparound component and, as such, the number of participants in this component has been less than anticipated. Fortunately, there is an opportunity to continue the research and evaluation of the program over the next two years and a full evaluation should be completed in March 2005. ■

<sup>1</sup> P.O. Box 891, Moncton, NB, E1C 8N8.

<sup>2</sup> 23 Brook Street, Montague, PEI, C0A 1R0.

<sup>3</sup> News Release: *Federal Solicitor General Announces Drug Strategy Initiatives*. Downloaded via world wide web 2003-01-07: [www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/releases/00-04-05\\_e.shtml](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/releases/00-04-05_e.shtml).

<sup>4</sup> An Exchange of Services Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of New Brunswick pursuant to section 16 of the CCRA.

<sup>5</sup> T<sup>3</sup> Associates (1999). An outcome evaluation of CSC substance abuse programs: OSAPP, ALTO, and Choices. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

<sup>6</sup> Delnef, C. (2001). Correctional Service of Canada substance abuse programs: OSAPP, ALTO, and Choices. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 13(3), 39.

## Don't be shy

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# Restorative justice in corrections

Amey Bell and Shelley Trevethan<sup>1</sup>

Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada

The groundwork for a restorative approach to justice is found in the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) core values and guiding principles that emphasize individual dignity and respect, the potential of offenders to live as law abiding citizens, as well as those that recognize the importance of community connections and partnerships. The concept of restorative justice has early roots at CSC in its Aboriginal and Chaplaincy divisions. In 1996, CSC established the Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution Unit as a separate, dedicated division to explore emerging trends and initiatives in the fields of restorative justice. Other restorative justice initiatives within CSC include "Restorative Justice Week", the Ron Wiebe Restorative Justice Award, and the Dispute Resolution Fund. This article discusses the use of restorative justice initiatives in correctional settings.

## Restorative justice in federal institutions

Most of the research on restorative justice to date has examined its use at the front-end of the system, such as police and court diversion schemes. In particular, much of the interest in restorative justice research has focused on young offenders at the time of arrest. However, restorative justice programs are increasingly becoming more available in correctional environments. The goal of these programs is not typically to benefit offenders by early release, parole consideration, or restitution agreements. Rather, they often occur because the victim wants to meet the offender to learn more about what happened, to reach beyond fear and anger, and to facilitate the healing process. Restorative justice programs for adult offenders in custodial settings range from victim-offender mediation, surrogate victim and offender groups, prison adjudication among inmates, community reintegration strategies at the pre-release stage to community group conferences or community service work for parolees.

The common goal of victim-offender mediation is to bring together the victim and offender in order to reconcile the relationship, discuss feelings about the crime, and address issues of re-victimization. With the assistance of family, victim, and officials, some of the programs

develop reintegration plans prior to the offender's release from prison. Victim-offender mediation varies in terms of the number of participants attending the meeting, the types of crimes mediated, and the point of the prison sentence in which the mediation occurs.

Surrogate victim and offender groups involve offenders and matched or random victims who meet together in direct dialogue to discuss the crime in general terms. Citizens, victim advocates, and family members may also attend these sessions. The programs vary, but may be comprised of discussions, exercises, role-plays, letters of apology, and in rare instances, actual encounters with the victims. The groups help to address offender accountability, participant awareness, victims' rights, and the long-term effects of crime.

Some institutions have implemented inmate adjudication using a restorative justice framework with the goal of improving relationships in prisons. These workshops focus on developing strategies of conflict resolution and effective communication. The goal is to reduce hostile attitudes and social avoidance as well as to increase self-esteem and thinking skills of inmates.

Community reintegration programs with a restorative focus attempt to reduce the risk of re-offending and ease offenders' transition into the community. Such a program allows for community consultation and involvement, offender-release planning, and face-to-face interaction with the victim, if possible. All of this occurs prior to conditional release.

## Restorative justice in the community

At the post-incarceration stage, there is one restorative justice program in operation in Canada for federal offenders. The Restorative Options to Parole Suspension program uses a community group conference for parolees who are deemed to be at risk of either re-offending or of committing a technical violation. The parole officer, offender, victim, family supporters, counsellors, and community members attend the conference to discuss the offender's present

behaviour, to develop a comprehensive plan, and to assist the offender in further reintegration into the community<sup>2</sup>.

In a review of the program, it was found that, of the eight conferences held at that time, only two cases had remained in the community without further re-offending or parole violation.

However, the conferences seemed to imply other successes such as changes in offender behaviour and victim perceptions. The review found that there were some areas of the program that needed to be improved. For example, community support was mandatory for the program to proceed, conferences needed to be more flexible, case preparation is critical to success, and conferences must be held immediately after release from custody<sup>3</sup>. A formal evaluation of this program is currently being conducted by the Solicitor General of Canada.

### Gaps in the research

One of the primary research gaps is the lack of research on restorative justice programs in institutional and post-institutional settings. In particular, there is a lack of formal evaluations of existing programs. Much of the research to date involves program descriptions rather than outcome evaluations. The absence of standardized measures indicates the need to develop a set of indicators to consistently measure success across programs and jurisdictions. It is also important for evaluations to include measures besides the standard offender-focused measure of recidivism. There is the need for large and random samples, control and treatment groups, or at least matched samples. Finally, longitudinal analysis is required to examine long-term recidivism patterns, long-term effects along the different stages of the criminal justice system, and participation effects for long-term offenders.

Another research gap is that there is little information on the community component of restorative justice. There are many short- and long-term effects on the community that require examination. For example, strained resources, public acceptance, sense of security, fear of crime, perceptions of the criminal justice system, and community member participation are important issues to be addressed. In addition, obtaining and maintaining community partnerships, commitment, and responsibility is critical for effective program implementation and delivery. Griffiths and Patenaude (1990) reaffirm this point by stating that "community-

based corrections strategies will only be effective if they are incorporated into a larger framework of localized corrections"<sup>4</sup>. The racial and ethnic diversity of communities also affects the success of a program both in how different cultural communities interpret, participate, and support the program.

The importance of conducting further research on restorative justice programs in corrections is evident for a number of reasons. First, it is important to gather empirical data to support the expansion of programs or to prevent the implementation of programs that are not effective. Second, the Canadian population needs to know whether these programs are effective at reducing the incidence of crime and are contributing to the safe reintegration of offenders. Lastly, there is a need to study individual programs, to determine what factors make one program more successful than another. These factors may include community commitment, the offender's belief in acceptance, and the victim's willingness to accept restorative solutions.

### Research priorities in federal corrections

The following are some important considerations for future research and practices in corrections including the institutional and community settings. These priorities offer a potential framework that may guide future restorative justice research initiatives.

#### Implementation

The integration and application of restorative justice into institutional and community correctional programs is a high priority for CSC. It is necessary to examine how restorative justice practices have been implemented, and the ways in which we are able to expand on these programs. Further, expansion of current programs requires consultation with key individuals within CSC and outside organizations. More importantly, it is important to examine whether we are able to implement restorative justice into prisons and parole systems, while at the same time doing "good corrections".

#### Feasibility

The suitability of restorative justice in correctional settings is a valid concern for those involved. The type and seriousness of cases appropriate for restorative intervention remains a primary concern. An additional priority is determining whether "end-of-the-system"

approaches can be considered as restorative in nature. For instance, when considering the retributive prison environment, the inmate culture, and management issues, there is some doubt whether prisons can provide safe and constructive communication for participants.

### **Policy**

It is important to identify and address any implications for policy and practice. The extent to which restorative justice initiatives affect correctional legislation (i.e., *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*) and the mandates of correctional agencies (i.e., National Parole Board) require further exploration. It is necessary to recognize the limits within this legislative context, and to find a balance between a restorative and traditional justice system.

### **Program evaluation**

Program evaluation is a critical priority. Besides having very few programs at the correctional stage, there are even fewer evaluations to report. The important question is how to evaluate programs in institutions. There are a number of unique factors that may affect program outcomes and the evaluation due to the particular setting. Some of the issues include coerced participation, lack of interest, inconvenient schedules, conflicting programs, and unavailable staff and space. The specific outcome measures must also be identified, and the extent to which they vary from other evaluations at different stages. Measuring a program in terms of its restorative nature and whether it is adhering to a restorative model is a difficult task.

### **Outcomes**

It may be beneficial to examine the differences in outcomes achieved between a front-end approach and an end-of-the-system approach. Similarly, it would be important to identify which stage of the justice process is most effective in employing a restorative justice program. For example, would direct confrontation be more effective in securing offender attitude change shortly after arrest or after sentencing? Once again, it is necessary to examine how the seriousness of the offence and the respective program environment affect the process and outcome. As previously mentioned, a number of different outcomes need to be evaluated besides the typical measure of recidivism.

### **Public opinion**

Public acceptance of restorative justice initiatives can be difficult to measure, but such opinions are necessary to sustain the vitality of programs. There is likely considerable variance in opinion regarding the appropriateness of restorative justice processes and outcomes. Community representation and consensus building are areas that need to be supported. The debate between restoration and retribution needs to be filtered in respect to restorative programs in institutions in order to identify emerging problems. Furthermore, CSC should actively encourage public awareness of, and discussion about, restorative justice approaches.

### **Reintegration potential**

Restorative justice initiatives at the post-incarceration stage offer offenders the opportunity to deal with their emotions and behaviour in a non-confrontational atmosphere. The skills learned at this stage can be instrumental in how the individual copes and deals with life situations upon release. Participation in restorative justice programs while supervised in the community can help facilitate the reintegration process by offering positive and encouraging supports, maintaining healthy communication networks, and re-establishing a community connection.

### **Community involvement**

Community participation in restorative justice programs is critical for effective program delivery. Definitions of the community may be revised due to the nature of the prison environment. There is also the concern that participation may be more difficult to obtain in this particular environment due to physical barriers, public stereotypes, and the tense atmosphere. Furthermore, the involvement of the victim, community, and professionals in the restorative process are important to success. To another extent, the roles of correctional staff will ultimately be changing in terms of their involvement in mediation and facilitation.

### **Aboriginal offenders**

Similar to other research in corrections, it is fundamental to consider the perspective of Aboriginal peoples. The current application of restorative justice programs to Aboriginal offenders in institutions and the community needs to be reviewed. An inherent problem identified in past research includes the different definitions and practices of shame and

reintegration in Aboriginal culture. It needs to be taken into consideration that Aboriginal communities operate under different patterns of socialization and authority, and program implementation and delivery need to accommodate those differences. Once again, we need to appreciate the role of customary law and tradition. There may also be differences in obtaining support and participation in Aboriginal communities compared to traditional communities.

### **Obstacles**

Finally, the potential advantages and disadvantages of restorative justice initiatives in correctional institutions need to be considered. For example, do restorative justice approaches present a solution to overcrowded prisons or an

obstacle to prison release? Some are concerned that parole decision-makers will be more likely to grant parole to an offender who has participated in a pre-release restorative justice program. These factors need to be taken into consideration before moving ahead.

### **Conclusion**

Restorative justice offers the potential for offenders to effectively deal with both external and internal relationships while incarcerated. The extension of these practices upon release can help facilitate their successful reintegration and development of community ties. However, as noted, more research is necessary to address some of the gaps in knowledge about the use of restorative justice in the correctional system. ■

<sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.

<sup>2</sup> McWhinnie, A. (2000). *Restorative justice options to parole suspension project: Interim report, May 11<sup>th</sup> 2000*. Report prepared for Correctional Service Canada. Victoria Parole, Victoria, British Columbia.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Griffiths, C.T., & Patenaude, A. (1990). "The use of restitution and community service sentencing in the Canadian north: The prospects and problems of localized corrections". In B. Galaway & J. Hudson (eds.) *Criminal justice, restitution and reconciliation* (pp. 145-154). New York, NY: Willow Tree Press, Inc.

## **Research in Brief**

*The Research Branch of Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has developed a publication entitled Research in Brief. This is a series of one-page summaries of research reports specifically designed to more broadly disseminate correctional knowledge to others.*

*Volume 1, R-01 to R-100, provides summaries covering the first one hundred research reports published to date. Volume 2, R-101+ is being prepared and will be made available shortly.*

# Offenders as resources in crime prevention

Ed Buller and Pennie Louttit<sup>1</sup>

Aboriginal Corrections Policy Unit, Solicitor General Canada

**T**here are very few of us left in this world. For that reason, we must acknowledge that there are no "spare" people that can be left aside and that banishment from the people represents the worst possible solution to a problem".

**C**urrently, on any given day, there are more than 2,227 Aboriginal people housed in federal institutions<sup>2</sup>. This means that we, as Aboriginal people, collectively lose over 20 centuries of time each year due to having our people housed in federal institutions.

There is a growing recognition that possibly the most knowledgeable, yet under-utilized resources in the area of crime prevention, are offenders who have witnessed and lived within the criminal world. Many Aboriginal offenders, as part of their growing awareness of their Aboriginal culture and spirituality, have come to realize that crime and incarceration diminish the strength of Aboriginal people, as a People. They have not only turned their own lives around but want to stop the destructive cycle of institutionalization of Aboriginal youth.

The Aboriginal Corrections Policy Unit (ACPU) is examining how federal offenders can be used as educators to share their experiences with high-risk Aboriginal youth, including those with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), in programs for high-risk youth and as mentors for other offenders being released into the community. The ACPU administers the Aboriginal Community Corrections Initiative (ACCI), the Department of the Solicitor General's Aboriginal portion of Effective Corrections, and the Aboriginal Community Corrections and Crime Prevention component of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention. The ACPU tests and evaluates innovative, community-based, restorative approaches to healing for Aboriginal offenders.

Aboriginal Community Corrections and Crime Prevention is a policy-driven component of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime prevention. From 2002 to 2005 ACPU will test pilots in two areas: 1) using Aboriginal offenders as resources in urban areas utilizing a "choices and consequences" based approach;

and 2) working with children and families of Aboriginal offenders to help break the cycle of offending from being passed on from generation to generation.

Whenever the ACPU looks at an issue that potentially affects Aboriginal communities, the ACPU will bring together a small group of Aboriginal community members to discuss the issue, or problem at hand, and together the ACPU and those community members will develop possible directions for the ACPU to follow. This strategy was used again in 2002 to answer the following questions about the use of released offenders as resources in youth crime prevention projects:

- Which offenders should be used for these projects and how will they be selected and trained?
- Should it be an individual or a team (i.e., including the police) involved in the project?
- How would a project target youth to be the most effective?
- How can offenders be used as mentors to support released offenders through their most difficult times?
- Should there be different approaches for male and female youth/offenders?
- Should there be different models for institutional, urban or community projects?
- How would those different models look and operate?
- How could projects be evaluated?
- What should a training manual, or manuals, include?
- What contribution should/could an institution, organization or community make?
- What would it cost to test a project?
- How could projects be adapted to become part of ongoing institutional, organizational or community programs?

The Gathering's consensus was that, as a part of their own healing journey, offenders must take responsibility for their offences. Part of that taking responsibility is seeing the criminal acts as the abuse of trust that they are. By working with young people, offenders can strengthen and give back to the community that they have harmed by past acts. The information from this Gathering was recorded, edited and released in February 2003 as part of the ACPU's Aboriginal Peoples Collection in an effort to continue the discussion beyond those who participated<sup>3</sup>.

To test this approach, the ACPU has entered into an agreement with the Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services (NAN), a non-profit organization located on the Fort William First Nation near Thunder Bay, Ontario. NAN delivers a wide range of law-related services to the 49 First Nation members of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation including legal, public education, and law reform services.

Aboriginal Circle Healing Lodge Society is a non-profit traditional healing lodge society in Mission, British Columbia that works with offenders who have been released to the community from Mission federal correctional facility. The Society offers traditional teachings, traditional healing, life/work skills and counselling to released offenders.

These two projects will draw on the experiences of offenders through a "choices and consequences" model to empower youth-at-risk, or those already involved in the criminal justice system, to break the cycle of destruction. Using the concepts of the medicine wheel as well as restorative justice approaches, these projects will build a supportive environment for both youth and ex-offenders. These projects will contribute to the enhanced understanding of, and responses to, the needs of offenders and high-risk urban Aboriginal youth.

These projects will run over the next 24 months. With information gained from these pilot projects, together with further research and discussion about the use of offenders in crime prevention, the ACPU plans to produce a "how-to" manual for people and organizations who want to work in the area of crime prevention, offender reintegration and using offenders as resources in crime prevention.

The second element of the ACPU's crime prevention strategy involves working with children and families of offenders to break the intergenerational cycle of offending. To test this approach, the Unit has entered into a relationship with the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC). The

PAGC has been involved in justice and corrections on a number of fronts, including mediation, diversion, alternative measures, probation, sentencing and healing circles. In addition, they run a *Spiritual Healing Lodge*. The Healing Lodge is a 30-bed facility with a staff of fifteen, including an Elder. The focus at the Lodge is on self-healing through Aboriginal spirituality, culture and programs. The Lodge programs take care of spiritual, mental, physical and emotional aspects of healing. It provides an environment for male offenders who wish to follow a traditional Aboriginal path to healing. Given the capacity of this organization and their expressed concern about the need for more reintegration of offenders especially with families and victims, this project will build upon the existing infrastructure to help stop the cycle of offending from being passed from generation to generation.

The Spiritual Healing Lodge is the site of the "Family Reintegration Project - Building Relationships Between Offenders, Their Children and Their Families". PAGC will develop and implement a pilot project to work with children and families of Aboriginal offenders in an urban setting. Designed to stop the cycle of offending from being passed from generation to generation, this process will help support the family as a whole. Beginning while the offender is incarcerated, and continuing for six months, the process will build a supportive community environment and build upon progress that was made in healing while the offender was incarcerated. This project will contribute to the enhanced understanding of, and respond to the needs of, Aboriginal offenders and their children and families. This project will be formally evaluated and the results will be published as part of the APCU's Aboriginal Peoples Collection in 2006.

As with all projects supported by the Aboriginal Corrections Policy Unit, these projects are designed to support policy development within the Portfolio of the Solicitor General. Further, they demonstrate ways in which Aboriginal people, through a return to traditional approaches, can begin to address the over-representation of Aboriginal people in corrections and support healthier individuals, families and communities. ■

<sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.

<sup>2</sup> Data from Correctional Services Canada, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> 22 people from across Canada attended the gathering, representing a mix of government and community representatives from both rural and urban areas.

# Community outreach by the Correctional Service of Canada: Engagement activities and initiatives

Claude Tellier and Jeffrey Franson<sup>1</sup>  
Strategic Planning, Correctional Service of Canada

Involving Canadians in the creation of safer and stronger communities has been a priority of the Canadian government since 1997. The federal government continues to encourage public, private, and voluntary sectors to work with all citizens to enhance the quality of life for future generations. In fulfilling its mandate, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) contributes to a just, peaceful and safe society by carrying out sentences imposed by the courts through the safe and humane custody and supervision of offenders and by assisting the reintegration of offenders in the community as law-abiding citizens through the provision of programs in penitentiaries and in the community.

The Mission of CSC directs the organization to engage members of Canadian communities as a key element of the correctional process. It further recognizes the benefit of communities in facilitating offenders' successful transition to society, thus supporting and assisting offenders upon release. CSC has been involved in outreach in the community for years with various individuals, groups and organizations. Although some of these outreach initiatives have been of a formal nature, the majority tend to be informal and individualized.

This article provides an overview of community outreach and engagement activities and initiatives undertaken by CSC during a one-year period, from May 2001 to May 2002. The article presents a snapshot of how the Service is conducting outreach to engage Canadians and communities, where and how activities and initiatives are occurring, reasons behind the activities, and who is involved in them. The results help identify new ways to engage communities in fulfilling the Service's mandate of building safe and stronger communities to serve Canadians.

## Methodology

A questionnaire was administered to gain a clearer picture of existing community outreach and engagement activities and initiatives undertaken at all levels of the organization. The questionnaire examined: respondents' opinions and perceptions about community outreach and engagement; community outreach and

engagement initiatives underway; and, information about the operational unit and sector that responded to the questionnaire.

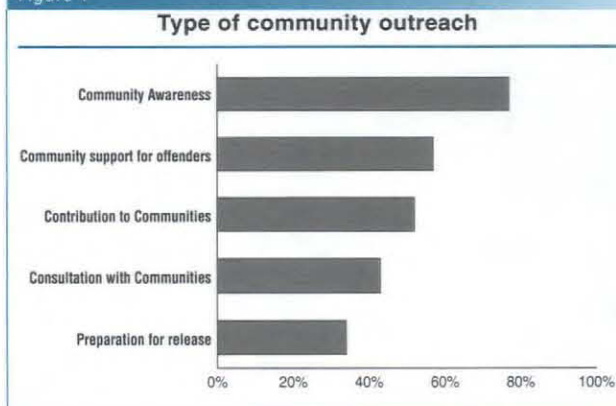
A web-based application was developed by the Research Branch in order to facilitate data entry and analysis. The questionnaire was sent to District Directors, Wardens, Regional Deputy Commissioners, and Sector Heads at NHQ via e-mail. One hundred and thirty seven respondents, representing 153 operational units, provided input into the inventory, resulting in a response rate of 91%. Twenty-five units within NHQ and 128 operational units within the regions provided responses.

## Results

### Engaging the community

Respondents were asked what they thought were the main benefits of community outreach and engagement<sup>2</sup>. The most important reason given for community outreach and engagement was to raise community awareness by increasing confidence and encouraging community involvement in the correctional process. The second most important reason was to increase community support for offenders. Other benefits include: gaining support for reintegration, gaining support for corrections in general, and enhancing community safety.

Figure 1



Respondents were requested to describe community outreach and engagement initiatives in which they were involved. A total of 347 outreach and engagement activities were

reported by respondents within a one-year period. The initiatives fall under five strategic areas. As illustrated in Figure 1, more than three-quarters (77%) of the community outreach and engagement initiatives involved providing information to raise community awareness<sup>3</sup>. A further 57% of the activities involved working with communities in supporting offenders' efforts to reintegrate successfully once they have returned to society, and 52% were considered to contribute to communities by enhancing public safety and/or providing a social, cultural or financial benefit. A further 43% of the activities involved community consultation, namely interactive exchanges with community members based on mutual respect and understanding by involving communities in the identification of options and solutions to assist CSC's decision-making. Finally, about one-third (34%) of the activities were said to involve the community in enhancing offenders' social and work skills needed to prepare and plan their release.

More than 29,000 individuals were involved in the 347 reported community outreach and engagement initiatives. It should be noted that this may be an underestimate of the number of people involved due to the difficulty in tracking the number of participants in some outreach activities such as Community Forums.

Figure 2 illustrates the types of people involved in CSC outreach initiatives. Community members make up 59% of the total number of people involved in outreach initiatives. The number of community members involved attests to the principle of community outreach in that CSC initiatives engage large numbers of community members to maximize the successful

return of offenders for safer and stronger communities. The level of participation of offenders (14%), CSC staff (14%), and various outside organizations (13%) are similar. The proportion of victims involved (2%) is substantially lower than other categories. It is difficult to say exactly why there is an under-representation of victim involvement. One might postulate that there is a lack of initiatives designed specifically for victim involvement or that victims may decline to participate in CSC outreach and engagement initiatives.

The location of community outreach and engagement initiatives plays a role in the level of involvement of individuals. For instance, offenders and staff are more often involved in community outreach and engagement initiatives when they are held in an institution. The participation of offenders is almost non-existent when conducted in a parole office, rural community centre, school, church or police station. CSC staff are more engaged in initiatives undertaken at CSC operational units rather than in various community settings. Victims appear to be more involved when community outreach initiatives are held in community centres than other locations. Interestingly, initiatives involving greater numbers of offenders were associated with a significantly greater involvement of victims. The majority of initiatives reported involving victims, resulted in a partnership and for the most part centered on restorative justice.

There are numerous ways that CSC community engagement and outreach initiatives have engaged Canadians. Figure 3 demonstrates that Canadians are engaged through multiple approaches. Most of the methods of engagement focus on the provision of information and communication, and consultation with the community. Two exceptions relate to recruiting

Figure 2  
Individuals involved in CSC outreach initiatives

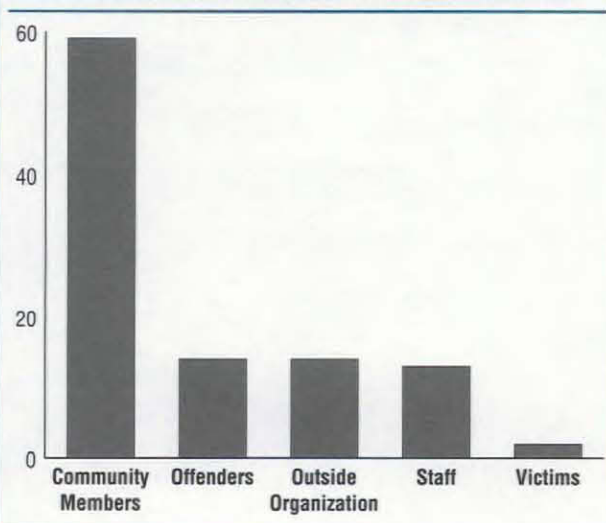


Figure 3  
Ways to engage Canadians



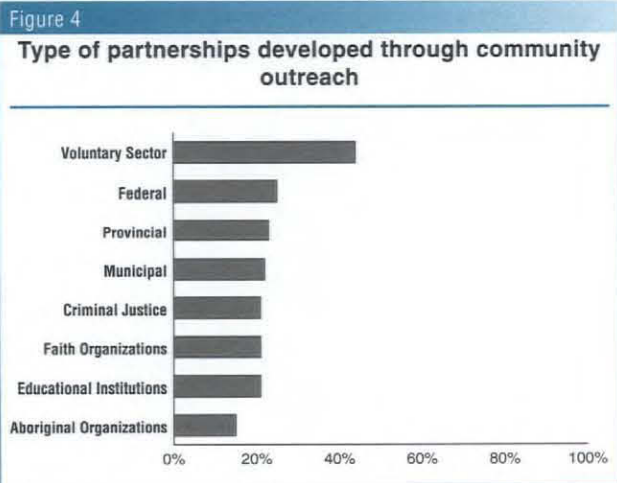


volunteers and providing training, which can be classified as methods to increase participation and citizen involvement with CSC.

Only 89 respondents (58%) reported using community outreach tools when engaging Canadians. This included the use of information on CSC web-sites and CSC publications. Interestingly, despite the wealth of tools available, many respondents mentioned using customized materials to engage citizens and communities.

### Partnerships

In order to expand outreach capabilities, CSC relies on the assistance of traditional and non-traditional partners to reach target audiences and engage citizens. Partnerships bring particular strengths, perceptions, abilities and expertise and are viewed as one approach to ensuring that CSC's outreach endeavours have a long life-span. According to the respondents, 228 of the 347 initiatives resulted in one or more partnerships. As illustrated in Figure 4, multiple partnerships emerged from the initiatives. Overall, 70% of partnerships involved some level of government, including federal (25%), provincial (23%) and municipal (22%) governments. Further, 44% of partnerships were with the voluntary sector.



At the institutional level, more partnerships are forged when community outreach activities focus on preparation for release. Initiatives that focus on contributing to communities and providing community support for offenders also tend to result in partnerships. Likewise in the community, partnerships are more often created when initiatives focus on the offenders' preparation for release, consultation with communities and supporting offenders upon release.

### Conclusion

This first CSC inventory provides basic information on the scope and nature of existing community outreach and engagement activities undertaken by CSC. The reported outreach and engagement initiatives fall under more than one strategic area. The largest proportion of the organizations efforts are in the areas of community awareness, followed by community support for offenders, contribution to communities, consultation with communities and offender preparation for release. This inventory provides the Service with important information for present and future outreach and engagement activities and initiatives.

A second administration of the inventory, or the development of an interactive database for ongoing input by operational units and sectors at Regional and National Headquarters, would likely yield a greater number of community outreach and engagement initiatives. A "live" inventory would serve as a valuable management and operational tool to gain an occasional snapshot of local and corporate endeavors in the area of community outreach and engagement. CSC could build on existing activities and initiatives undertaken and foster new opportunities for enhancing working in partnerships with Canadians and communities. ■

- <sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.
- <sup>2</sup> Respondents were able to give more than one response. Therefore, the percentages do not add to 100%.
- <sup>3</sup> Each activity may have more than one purpose. Therefore, the percentages will not add to 100%.

## Look what you are missing!

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