

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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## Case Management for Gender Diverse Offenders: What We Know

*Case management of gender diverse offenders is a growing area of interest; currently, correctional jurisdictions use an individualized case management approach.*

### Why we did this study

Recent research indicated that gender diverse offenders (GDOs) were a heterogeneous group that represented about 0.4% of the federal offender population within the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC).<sup>1</sup> An overview of international correctional policies and operational management practices for GDOs was also conducted, but information related to case management<sup>2</sup> for this subpopulation was not available at the time. An evaluation report<sup>3</sup> of CSC's institutional case management underlined a need for a greater understanding of how to support GDOs.<sup>4</sup> As such, a review of available literature related to case management for this subpopulation was completed.

### What we did

Quarterly scans of peer-reviewed and grey literature were conducted using Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, various correctional jurisdiction websites, and other literature databases to find information about case management of GDOs. Publications about operational and health care practices (i.e., housing, access to hormone replacement therapy, etc.) were also explored.

### What we found

Generally, correctional jurisdictions use an individualized case management approach for GDOs. One exploratory study<sup>5</sup> specific to community case management of GDOs was found; these semi-structured interviews with case managers at a residential community corrections site in the United States focused primarily on operational and health services management (e.g., housing, clothing, access to gender affirming health care). Yet, staff reported experiencing uncertainty when working with GDOs due to the lack of relevant gender diversity training.

Compiling information from peer-reviewed and grey literature, correctional policies and practices, and the GDOs profile<sup>1</sup> alludes to potential areas to inform case management.<sup>6</sup> First, gender affirming practices and supports (e.g., preferred pronouns and name, supporting

self-identification, etc.) that endorse the individual's identity assists in building trust and rapport. Second, trauma-informed interventions and supports may be beneficial for these offenders as most GDOs experienced lifetime abuse/trauma and may experience discrimination and harassment related to their gender diversity. Third, the intersectional nature of their experiences (e.g., gender identity and expression, race/ethnicity including Indigenous Social History for about half of federal GDOs,<sup>1</sup> age, biological sex, sexual orientation, family status, etc.) underscores the complex needs of this group. Fourth, understanding the nuances of their offence histories is crucial for case management with the majority committing violent offences (one-third with a sex offence history<sup>1</sup>). Finally, a multi-disciplinary team approach that includes staff knowledgeable about gender identity and expression issues as well as health care (physical and mental) may assist GDOs as they work to address their complex criminogenic needs.

### What it means

With the establishment of the Gender Considerations Secretariat in 2020, the promulgation of *Commissioner's Directive 100: Gender Diverse Offenders*<sup>7</sup> in May 2022, the creation of guidance documents which supports decision making and policy implementation, and the focus on diversity training for staff, CSC is enhancing its resources to provide direction to staff when working with GDOs, ensuring appropriate care, supervision, and gender accommodations for GDOs. Empirical case management research for GDOs is rare; on-going monitoring of this research will continue. An ongoing GDO research project in partnership with the University of Victoria is exploring health and safety barriers related to institutional transfers of GDOs; results will inform CSC's case and operational management practices.

### For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#). You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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<sup>1</sup> Farrell MacDonald, S., Smeth, A., Cram, S., Garrel, S., & Derksen, D. *Examination of gender diverse offenders* (R-442). Ottawa, ON: CSC.

<sup>2</sup> Case management is a dynamic process that involves assessment, intervention, and supervision of an offender throughout their sentence.

<sup>3</sup> CSC. (2023). *Evaluation of offender case management: Offender Intake Assessment and institutional supervision*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

<sup>4</sup> The evaluation report indicated a need for information related to sexual orientation, but no information was available for this subpopulation.

<sup>5</sup> Ellis, T., & Opsal, T. (2023). Gender rules in the community corrections context: Examining how case managers navigate trans client supervision in a binary setting. *Probation Journal*, 0(0), 1-20. DOI: 10.1177/02645505231174028

<sup>6</sup> Complete listing of publications examined is available upon request.

<sup>7</sup> Correctional Service Canada. (2022). *Commissioner's Directive 100: Gender Diverse Offenders*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

