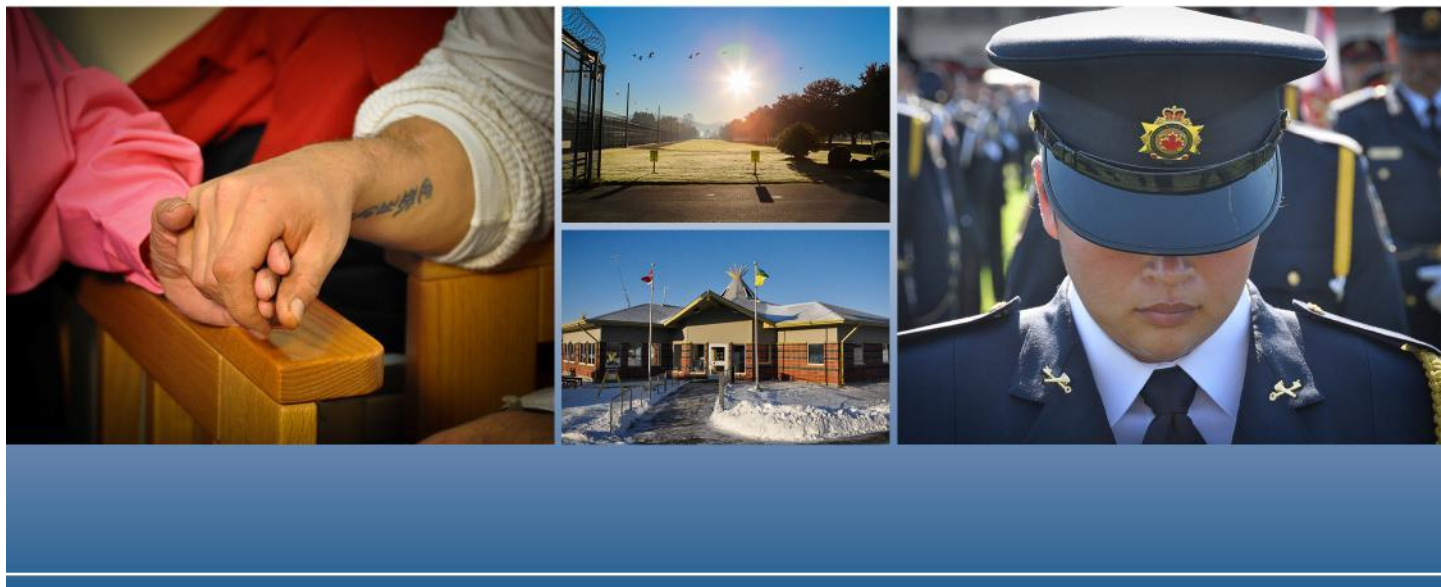


# CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.



## RESEARCH REPORT

### Revocations Among Ethnocultural Offenders

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# **Revocations Among Ethnocultural Offenders**

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2024



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## Executive Summary

**Key words:** *ethnocultural groups, men and women, sentence and risk characteristics, release type, release outcomes*

Previous research examining admission, in-custody, and community supervision indicators for ethnocultural offenders illustrated differences among ethnocultural subgroups in terms of characteristics, experiences and outcomes while incarcerated and in the community (CSC, 2022). However, the analysis of community outcomes relied upon a 2-year release cohort, an 8-month fixed follow-up period, and risk-relevant differences (other than release type) were not considered. As a result, the present report extended the analysis of community outcomes across various ethnocultural groups (e.g., White, Indigenous, Black, and Other<sup>1</sup>) by identifying a five-year release cohort, expanding the follow-up period, and accounting for pre-existing differences and in-custody experiences.

A cohort of individuals released on their first term from a federal institution between April 1, 2017, and March 31, 2022 was identified for this study. Only those released on either day parole (DP), full parole (FP), or statutory release were included ( $N = 20,166$ ). The most common ethnocultural group among men was White (56%), followed by Indigenous (27%), Black (9%), and Other (1%). Women in the cohort most commonly identified as White (49%), followed by Indigenous (38%), Other (7%), and Black (6%).

The findings revealed differences in sentence and risk characteristics across ethnocultural groups for men in the release cohort. For instance, a greater proportion of White and Indigenous men (71.6% and 70.7%, respectively) had a sentence of two to four years, relative to Other ethnocultural (63.0%) and Black men (57.9%). On average, Indigenous men had the greatest number of domains on the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis, Revised (DFIA-R) requiring intervention ( $M = 4.8$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ). Additionally, a greater proportion of Indigenous men were serving a sentence for a serious or violent offence (73.7%) compared to White (60.1%), Black (68.1%), and Other ethnocultural men (53.9%). Black men were the youngest at the time of release ( $M = 34.0$ ,  $SD = 10.1$ ), while White men were the oldest ( $M = 40.8$ ,  $SD = 13.1$ ). A greater proportion of Indigenous men were released on statutory release (63.6%), compared to Black (50.0%), White (44.6%), and Other ethnocultural men (38.2%).

Results from a descriptive analysis of community outcomes as well as survival analyses that accounted for risk-relevant covariates indicated that there was a relationship between ethnocultural group and outcomes on first release. After accounting for the effects of risk-relevant covariates,<sup>2</sup> Indigenous men had a 17% increase in the likelihood of any return to custody relative to White men. Conversely, Black and Other ethnocultural men had significantly lower likelihoods of a return to custody (35%, and 34%) compared to White men. Findings were similar when examining returns to custody without an offence and returns with a new offence.

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<sup>1</sup> Other ethnocultural includes individuals identifying as South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, West Asian, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Korean, Multiracial, other, or unable to self identify.

<sup>2</sup> The risk-relevant covariates were the CRI, the number of DFIA-R domains assessed as moderate or high need for intervention, age at release, completion of correctional programming, and release type.

Returns to custody with a new violent offence occurred infrequently (1% or lower across all groups), ultimately preventing an examination of the relationship between ethnocultural group and this outcome, while accounting for relevant covariates. The findings highlight that although the rates of revocation during first release vary across ethnocultural groups, the majority of these incidents were due to violations of conditions of supervision. When returns to custody were due to a new offence, the associated offence was rarely considered serious or violent, and rather was most commonly non-violent, often related to being unlawfully at large.

Results for women in the release cohort revealed differences in sentence and risk characteristics across ethnocultural groups. For instance, the majority of White (79.4%), Indigenous (75.3%), and Other ethnocultural women (67.6%) were serving a sentence of two to four years, compared to less than half of Black women (48.4%). The average number of DFIA-R domains requiring intervention was lower for Black women ( $M = 2.0, SD = 2.2$ ) and Other ethnocultural women ( $M = 3.1, SD = 2.2$ ), relative to White ( $M = 4.1, SD = 2.0$ ) and Indigenous women ( $M = 5.5, SD = 1.6$ ). Across ethnocultural groups, most women were released on DP or FP, with Indigenous women representing the highest proportion on statutory release (33%, compared to White (17.4%), Other ethnocultural (11.1%), and Black (9.9%) women). The majority of Indigenous women were convicted of a serious or violent offence (63%), whereas White and Black women were more likely to be convicted of a Schedule II drug offence (43%, and 65%). On average, Black and Indigenous women were 34 years old at the time of release, compared to an average of 38 years old for White and Other ethnocultural women.

Results from a descriptive analysis of community outcomes as well as survival analyses indicated that there was a relationship between ethnocultural group and outcomes on first release for women. After accounting for the effects of risk-relevant covariates,<sup>3</sup> Indigenous women had a 25% increase in the likelihood of any return to custody relative to White women. Conversely, Black women had a 47% lower likelihood of any return to custody compared to White women, while Other ethnocultural women had a comparable likelihood of a return to custody as White women. Reoffence results that did not take risk-relevant covariates into account indicated that, over an average follow-up of 21.6 months ( $SD = 11.3$ ), a greater proportion of Indigenous women (9.5%) returned to custody with a new offence compared to White (3.5%) and Other ethnocultural (4.6%) women. Notably, the results for Black women had to be suppressed because there were too few instances of a return to custody with an offence.

Findings from this study demonstrate that community outcomes vary across ethnocultural groups. Notably Black men and women had more positive community outcomes relative to White men and women, while Indigenous men and women consistently had poorer community outcomes. Further, among those who returned to custody during first release, Indigenous men and women returned after the shortest period of time in the community, relative to the other ethnocultural groups. As discrepant rates of returns to custody were not fully explained by differences in risk and need levels or sentence characteristics, future research is required to better understand these differences to determine what supports are in place that contribute to improved outcomes for certain ethnocultural groups, while also identifying the barriers faced by others.

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<sup>3</sup> The risk-relevant covariates were the CRI, the number of DFIA-R domains assessed as moderate or high need for intervention, age at release, and release type.

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## **Introduction**

Much like the general population of Canada, the population of offenders in the custody of the Correctional Service Canada (CSC) has also become more ethnically and racially diverse. This has prompted targeted research projects and reports, both internal and external to CSC, that aim to better understand the correctional experiences of ethnocultural offenders. The current study extends a recently completed examination of a variety of in-custody and community indicators across offender subgroups (CSC, 2022) to expand the analysis of community outcomes following release from custody. Although core findings from CSC (2022) are summarized below to provide context for the current study, readers are encouraged to refer to the original study for a more fulsome discussion of ethnocultural offenders at CSC.

### **Framework for Identifying Ethnocultural Offenders**

Within CSC, an ethnocultural offender is defined as “any offender who has specific needs based on ethnicity, culture, religion or language and who has a desire to preserve their cultural identity and practices” (Commissioner’s Directive [CD] 767, CSC, 2021). Separate legislative and policy frameworks exist for Indigenous offenders (see the Commissioner’s Directive 702: Aboriginal Offenders; s. 79 to s. 84 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act). As such, Indigenous Peoples are not captured under the ethnocultural term at CSC. However, previous research pertaining to Indigenous offenders and White offenders is included throughout this report to facilitate comparisons and to provide a comprehensive description of the offender population. For the purposes of research, ethnocultural identity is established through an offender self-identifying from a list of over 25 categories, which represent physical characteristics (i.e., Black or White), ethnicity (e.g., Arab), and geographic origins (e.g., Caribbean). Although the categories are not mutually exclusive, individuals are limited to selecting one category<sup>4</sup>.

The ethnocultural composition of CSC’s offender population is an important consideration in ensuring that CSC is able to fulfill its mission of actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens. CSC’s legislative framework establishes that

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<sup>4</sup> Categories tend to be combined for research and reporting purposes.

correctional policies, programs and practices respect “gender, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic differences”, and be “responsive to the special needs” of various groups, including ethnocultural groups (*Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)*, s. 4(g), 1992). In 2020, CSC acknowledged the existence of systemic racism within the correctional system and promptly launched the *CSC Anti-racism Framework*. The objective of the framework is to combat the root-causes of inequities (CSC, 2021) and to deliver effective programs and resources to best support its growing diverse prisoner population (Government of Canada, 2021).

### **Changing Offender Population**

Comparing CSC’s offender population at the end of the 2019/2020 fiscal year to the end of the 2009/2010 fiscal year revealed that there was an increase in the federal offender population among Indigenous, Black, Arab/West Asian, Latin American, Filipino, South Asian, and Southeast Asian men, while the proportion of White men decreased (CSC, 2022). Similarly, there was an increase in the number of Indigenous, Black, and White women. The results from the CSC study (2022) indicated that in 2019/2020, aside from Indigenous offenders, Black men and women comprised the largest incarcerated ethnocultural group and were over-represented relative to the general Canadian population. Despite only representing 3.4% of the Canadian population according to the 2016 Census of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2017), Black men and women were over-represented in both the in-custody groups (9.1% for Black men; 5.5% for Black women) and community supervision groups (6.8% for Black men; 8.4% for Black women). Other ethnocultural groups that were over-represented include Southeast Asian men, along with Indigenous men and women.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, South Asian, Chinese, Filipino and Arab/West Asian men were under-represented in institutional and community offender populations.

### **Research on Correctional Experiences and Outcomes for Ethnocultural Offenders**

While CSC provides rehabilitative support to federal offenders to contribute to their safe reintegration into the community, several internal and external reports have demonstrated that

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<sup>5</sup> Southeast Asian men represented only 0.9% of the Canadian population but represented 1.6% of men in custody and 2.5% of men under community supervision. Indigenous men represented 4.8% of the Canadian population but represented 25.2% of men in custody, and 16.7% of men under community supervision. Indigenous women represented 4.9% of the Canadian population, yet at the end of fiscal year 2019/2020, 36.1% of women in custody and 25.9% of women under community supervision were Indigenous.

certain offender subgroups, namely Indigenous offenders and Black offenders, are more likely to have negative correctional indicators and outcomes (e.g., initial security placement, timely access to correctional programming, institutional employment opportunities) relative to White offenders (e.g., CSC, 2022; Office of the Auditor General of Canada [OAG], 2016; 2017; 2021; Office of the Correctional Investigator [OCI], 2022), and Indigenous offenders in particular have demonstrated higher rates of revocation and reoffending while supervised in the community (e.g., CSC, 2022; Stewart et al., 2019). It should be noted that the results highlighted below do not take into account other variables that may be related to outcomes.

Recent examinations of the experiences of Black offenders in federal corrections (OAG, 2022; OCI, 2022) highlighted that a greater proportion of Black men (15%) relative to White men (6%) were initially classified as maximum security (OAG, 2022). Although not disaggregated by men and women, the OCI reported that Black and Indigenous offenders had comparable rates of gang affiliation (24% and 22%, respectively), which was considerably higher than the 6% of White offenders who identified as gang affiliated (OCI, 2022). However, Black offenders appeared similar to White offenders in terms of their risk and need profiles. Despite this, a lower proportion of Black individuals (5.4%) were serving their third or more federal sentence (i.e., not their first or second federal sentence) relative to White (15.3%) and Indigenous (15.1%) individuals, underscoring that Black individuals tend to successfully reintegrate and not return to federal custody after completing their sentence (OCI, 2022). Black individuals were also underrepresented among institutional employment opportunities that develop or offer marketable skills relative to their proportion of the offender population.

Furthermore, both Indigenous and Black offenders did not have access to timely, culturally specific correctional programming (OAG, 2022; OCI, 2022). The findings from the OCI report (2022) suggested that barriers to programming for Black offenders negatively impacted their correctional trajectories, including their release on parole. Findings highlighted by the OAG (2022) and Public Safety Canada (2023) also indicated that Indigenous men and women were persistently released on parole later in their sentences when compared to non-Indigenous offenders. For example, in fiscal year 2020-21, 76% of releases for Indigenous offenders were statutory releases, compared to 57% of releases among non-Indigenous offenders (Public Safety Canada, 2023). The OAG (2022) also found that 37% of Indigenous men and 66% of Indigenous women released on statutory release were directly released from maximum

security, which was higher than the overall offender population (15% for men, 21% for women). These findings suggest that Indigenous offenders, on average, serve a greater proportion of their sentence in custody and are therefore less likely to benefit from gradual release to the community (OAG, 2022). This disparity is largely problematic because research has shown that rates of return to custody and reoffending are higher among those released on statutory release compared to those released on parole (e.g., Stewart et al., 2019).

CSC's (2022) examination of a variety of in-custody and community supervision indicators among ethnocultural offenders further supplements existing research in this area and adds recent evidence to situate the current context. Similar to the previous examinations, results indicated that a greater proportion of Indigenous and Black men incurred institutional charges, were classified as higher security at admission to custody, and had less involvement in institutional employment relative to White men. However, Black men were more likely to complete correctional programming by their day parole eligibility date compared to White men. Findings pertaining to community supervision indicators indicated that both Black and Indigenous men were more likely to be released from maximum security institutions and have lower percentages of discretionary release relative to White men. Results across ethnocultural groups for women revealed noteworthy differences. A greater proportion of Black women were classified as minimum security at admission to custody and were less likely to incur institutional charges relative to White women. The opposite trends were observed for Indigenous women, however, indicating that Indigenous women were less likely to be classified as minimum security at admission relative to White women and were more likely to incur institutional charges. Furthermore, relative to White women, Indigenous women were less likely to be released to the community from minimum security, were less likely to be released on parole, and were also less likely to secure employment in the community. Conversely, a greater proportion of Black women were released to the community from minimum security compared to White women and were more likely to be released on discretionary release.

Finally, rates of revocations within eight months of discretionary release were lower for Black and Other ethnocultural men (7% and 3%, respectively) relative to White and Indigenous men (9% and 15%, respectively). A similar pattern was observed among offenders who were released on statutory release, whereby Indigenous men had the highest rate of revocation (45%), followed by White (28%), Black (23%), and Other ethnocultural men (15%). Rates of a

revocation due to a new offence were considerably lower across all groups, but the same trend was apparent among those on statutory release for men. For women, results indicated that Indigenous women on discretionary release had the highest rates of revocation (16%) compared to White women (9%). Findings for Black and ‘Other’ ethnocultural women were not reported due to small frequencies. These results are consistent with previous CSC research, which found that Indigenous men have nearly two times the odds of a revocation with an offence compared to non-Indigenous men; and Indigenous women had between one and a half and three times greater odds of a revocation for an offence when compared to non-Indigenous women (Stewart et al., 2019).

### **Current Study**

Overall, previous research illustrates differences among ethnocultural subgroups in terms of characteristics, experiences and outcomes while incarcerated and in the community. Further research is warranted to explore community outcomes over a longer period of time and to account for pre-existing differences and in-custody experiences (e.g., risk and need level, release type, participation in correctional programs) across ethnocultural groups. Understanding differences across various indicators, including those related to community supervision, can help identify opportunities for CSC to enhance the supports available to offenders from different ethnocultural groups. This research also contributes to addressing the Office of the Correctional Investigator’s (OCI) recommendation to conduct a targeted program of research examining correctional outcomes for Black individuals (Recommendation 15(d), OCI, 2021). The following research questions will guide this study:

1. Do the rates of revocation with and without an offence differ across ethnocultural groups for men?
  - a. After accounting for risk-relevant differences, does the likelihood of revocation with and without an offence differ across ethnocultural groups for men?
2. Do the rates of revocation with and without an offence differ across ethnocultural groups for women?
  - a. After accounting for risk-relevant differences, does the likelihood of revocation with and without an offence differ across ethnocultural groups for women?

## Method

### Participants

A cohort of individuals released on their first term from a federal institution between April 1, 2017, and March 31, 2022, was examined for this study. Only those released on either day parole (DP), full parole (FP), or statutory release were considered for inclusion in the cohort ( $N = 22,344$  releases, representing  $N = 22,167$  unique offenders). Given that it was possible for an individual to have first releases from distinct sentences during the study timeframe, one sentence was randomly selected so that the individual was only included once in the analyses. Individuals were excluded from the release cohort if they were missing race information, did not have more than 30 days of potential follow-up following their release,<sup>6</sup> or did not have complete risk and need information to facilitate their inclusion in the analyses. A total of 1,978 individuals were excluded as a result, leaving a final cohort of 20,166 individuals available for analysis. A comparison on available data between those retained in the cohort and those excluded indicated that those excluded tended to have lower levels of risk and need. As a result, it is important to acknowledge that the cohort used for analysis is not fully representative of all releases on DP, FP, and statutory release from federal institutions.

The distribution of ethnocultural groups for men and women<sup>7</sup> is presented in Table 1. White men were the most common ethnocultural group (56%), followed by men identifying as Indigenous (27%), and Black (9%). The proportions of men comprising the remaining ethnocultural groups were too small to facilitate meaningful analyses, so were collapsed into an “Other” ethnocultural group. For women, approximately half of the cohort identified as White (49%), followed by Indigenous (38%). Due to the smaller number of women, the proportional breakdown across more refined ethnocultural groups is not presented.

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<sup>6</sup> Reasons for short periods of potential follow-up could include being released in close proximity to warrant expiry date, being deported or extradited following release, the individual becoming deceased, or the release being terminated due to change in eligibility.

<sup>7</sup> Men and women were categorized based on a variable in the Offender Management System (OMS) that corresponds to the individual’s current sex. This variable can be updated to be consistent with gender identity following gender-affirming surgery (see [CD 100: Gender Diverse Offenders](#) for more details). However, it is important to note that there may be individuals included in either the ‘men’ or ‘women’ groups used throughout this study who would otherwise not identify with this categorization.



Table 1

*Proportion of each ethnocultural group for the release cohort*

	Release Cohort	
	%	<i>n</i>
<b>Men</b>		
Arab/West Asian	1.9	361
Black <sup>1</sup>	8.8	1,643
Chinese	0.4	72
Filipino	0.4	75
Indigenous <sup>2</sup>	26.7	4,961
Latin American	1.3	244
Other <sup>3</sup>	1.3	250
South Asian	1.4	252
Southeast Asian	1.9	350
White <sup>4</sup>	55.8	10,379
<b>Women</b>		
Black	5.8	91
Indigenous	38.0	600
Other <sup>5</sup>	6.8	108
White	49.4	780

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Black includes individuals identifying as Black, Caribbean, or Sub-Saharan African. <sup>2</sup>Indigenous includes individuals identifying as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. <sup>3</sup>“Other” for men includes individuals identifying as Japanese, Korean, multiracial, other, or unable to self identify. <sup>4</sup>White Includes individuals identifying as White, British Isles, European French, or European Eastern/Western/Northern/Southern. <sup>5</sup>“Other” for women includes individuals identifying as South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, West Asian, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Korean, Multiracial, other, or unable to self identify.

## Data

Administrative data were extracted from the Offender Management System (OMS). The OMS is an electronic system containing offender file information. Variables examined included socio-demographic characteristics, risk and need assessments, sentence information, offence information, release type and date, correctional program participation, conditions of release, and whether there was a return to custody following the first release. Differences across ethnocultural groups on risk-relevant variables were explored to determine whether they should be included as

covariates in the examination of community outcomes during the first release. Information on each of the potential covariates of interest follows.

### **Offender Intake Assessment (OIA)**

The Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis, Revised (DFIA-R) is a component of the OIA that assesses needs across the following domains: employment/education, marital/family, associates, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional, and attitudes. Most<sup>8</sup> domains receive a rating of either an asset, low or no need for intervention, moderate need for intervention, and high need for intervention. Previous research has demonstrated that ethnocultural groups differ in the level of risk and need captured in the OIA (CSC, 2022; Keown et al., 2017). For the purpose of this study, the number of domains that were assessed as either a moderate or high need for intervention was utilized as a control variable. As a result, this variable represents an approximation of the overall level of criminogenic need for an individual.

The Criminal Risk Index (CRI) was used as an index of the overall level of risk. The CRI is derived from the Criminal History Record, which is a subcomponent of the Static Factors Assessment completed during the OIA. As a result, the CRI is based on indicators that relate to previous youth and adult court involvement, as well current offence details. Previous research has demonstrated that the CRI is significantly related to other measures of risk and need, as well as community outcomes for men, women, and Indigenous offenders (Motiuk & Vuong, 2018). The indicators that comprise the CRI are summed to produce a total score ranging from 0 to 37. Previous research has identified five risk categories for men and women, but for the purpose of this study, the total score was utilized as a control variable.

### **Release type**

Consideration was given to whether the first release was discretionary (i.e., DP or FP) or whether it was a SR. Discretionary release decisions are made by the Parole Board of Canada, which has the authority to grant parole to eligible offenders who do not pose an undue risk to society. Discretionary releases occur earlier in the sentence, meaning that a larger proportion of the sentence is served under supervision in the community. Statutory release is mandated to

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<sup>8</sup> The rating of 'Asset' is not available for the personal/emotional or the substance abuse domains.

occur when two-thirds of a determinate sentence has been served. Individuals released on statutory release have higher rates of returns to custody relative to those released on parole (e.g., Public Safety Canada, 2023; Thompson et al., 2015), so it is important to consider release type when examining community outcomes across offender subgroups.

### **Conditions of release**

The number and type of special conditions that were imposed throughout the course of the supervision period was examined. Previous research has found that the number of special conditions imposed is linked to risk, such that an increase in risk is associated with a greater number of special conditions (Parole Board Canada [PBC], 2022). Further, Indigenous men and women tend to also have more conditions relative to non-Indigenous men and women (Farrell MacDonald, 2018a; Farrell MacDonald, 2018b; PBC, 2022). Alcohol and drug related conditions were associated with returns to custody for all men while accounting for risk, whereas residency conditions and the number of conditions imposed were associated with returns for non-Indigenous men only (Farrell MacDonald, 2018a; Farrell MacDonald, 2018b). When controlling for risk among women, there was no relationship between the number of conditions and returns to custody.

For the purpose of this study, conditions were categorized as relating to alcohol and substance use, avoiding persons, residency requirements, treatment and programming, and “other” (e.g., avoiding certain places, abstaining from driving, or abstaining from gambling). Any condition that was imposed at any point throughout the supervision period was counted. The total number of conditions was then examined as a potential control variable in the analyses. It is possible for conditions to be modified or to be in effect for a portion of the supervision period, so the approach utilized for this study represents an overestimate of the total number of conditions imposed at any one time throughout supervision.

### **Sentence number**

The number of distinct federal sentences was examined as a control variable, which largely serves as a proxy for criminal history involvement. Nearly three-quarters of the cohort were serving their first federal sentence, while 16% were serving their second sentence. Given the small proportion of offenders with more than two federal sentences, this variable was dichotomized to reflect first federal sentence or second or more.

### **Age at release**

Given the robust relationship between age and propensity for criminal behaviour (e.g., Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983), age at release was included in the analyses as a control variable. A recent examination of recidivism rates among CSC offenders demonstrated that the highest rates of recidivism were noted among offenders under age 25, while recidivism rates were over six times lower for those over the age of 55 (Stewart et al., 2019).

### **Correctional program completion**

Any instance of a completed main correctional program between admission to custody and first release was considered as a control variable. Since previous research has indicated that rates of participation and completion in correctional programs vary across ethnocultural groups (CSC, 2022), it was important to consider whether there was a relationship between ethnocultural group and community outcomes while controlling for the relationship between correctional programs and community outcomes. It is important to highlight that, for this study, correctional program participation did not account for whether the individual had an identified correctional program need.

### **Possible follow-up**

There was considerable variation in the potential follow-up period for individuals in the cohort (see Table 2). Possible follow-up considers the amount of time between release and either the end of the current sentence (i.e., Warrant Expiry Date [WED]), the end of data collection (April 9, 2023), or the date that corresponds to the end of the supervision term for reasons including being deported or extradited following release, becoming deceased, or the release being terminated due to a change in eligibility. On average, men had 607.6 days ( $SD = 340.5$ ) of possible follow-up. Among the ethnocultural groups for men, Indigenous men had the shortest average number of possible days followed during their release, at approximately 18 months (565 days). Relative to men, women had longer possible follow-up periods (overall  $M = 670.5$ ,  $SD = 344.0$ ), however, when considering ethnocultural groups for women, Indigenous women had the shortest average number of days for follow-up ( $M = 623.8$  days,  $SD = 338.8$ ).

Table 2

*Average possible follow-up in days by ethnocultural group*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Median</i>
<b>Men</b>					
White	10,379	609.1	335.8	34 - 2,187	515
Indigenous	4,961	565.3	324.0	42 - 2,182	473
Black	1,643	653.7	361.6	32 - 2,187	548
Other ethnocultural <sup>1</sup>	1,604	681.7	377.0	35 – 2,197	570
<b>Women</b>					
White	780	667.0	327.7	214 – 2,166	550
Indigenous	600	623.8	338.8	73 – 1,976	527
Black	91	871.8	392.3	179 – 1,644	812
Other ethnocultural <sup>1</sup>	108	785.7	361.8	246 – 1,938	699

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Other ethnocultural includes individuals identifying as South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, West Asian, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Korean, Multiracial, other, or unable to self identify.

### **Release outcomes**

First release outcomes were examined between release from custody and the earliest of the following: WED, return to custody date, the date of the release ending (which could be due to deportation, death, or the release period being deemed inoperative), or the end of the data collection period (April 9, 2023). Returns to custody were classified as a return without an offence (i.e., revocation due to a breach of condition or to prevent a breach of conditions) and a return with a new offence. To be considered a return with a new offence, the individual had to be convicted of the offence, and the offence had to take place after release but prior to returning to custody. Given the requirement for a conviction, the number of returns to custody with a new offence in this study is underestimated, especially for returns that took place near the end of the data collection period.

### **Analytic approach**

Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, median, and frequencies) were utilized to examine differences in risk, need, and sentence characteristics across the ethnocultural groups for men and women, as well as to examine the frequency of first release outcomes. Cox regression proportional hazards survival analysis was then conducted to assess the relationship between

ethnocultural group and community outcomes (i.e., any return to custody, revocation without an offence, revocation with a new offence). Cox regression is a useful technique for predicting recidivism outcomes (Hosmer et al., 2008; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) as it can account for variable follow-up time and sample censoring. For the purposes of the current study, an individual was considered to be censored when they were no longer able to be followed (e.g., reached WED), but had not returned to custody.

The parameter of interest from these regression models is the hazard rate, which represents the rate of failure at a given point in the follow-up. Estimates of the relationship between predictors and the hazard rate are provided by the models. Other variables (i.e., covariates) can be accounted for, resulting in a more precise estimate of the relationship between key variables of interest (e.g., ethnocultural group and returns to custody). The hazard ratio (HR) is the effect size that is interpreted from the models. HRs that include 1.00 indicate that there is no association between the predictor and the hazard rate. A HR above 1.00 indicates that as the values on the predictor increase, the hazard of the outcome also increases. For example, a statistically significant HR of 1.05 for CRI score, would indicate that every one-unit increase in a CRI score is associated with a 5% increase in the hazard of a return to custody. HRs below 1.00 indicate that there is a negative relationship between the predictor and the outcome, such that increases in the predictor are associated with decreases in the hazard of returns to custody. For any categorical predictor, a reference category is selected to compare against the remaining categories and the corresponding HR represents the change in the hazard of the outcome for one category relative to the reference category.

Separate survival analysis models were explored for each first release outcome for men and women. Each variable was assessed independently to determine whether it was related to the outcome. A multivariate model was constructed with all individual predictors that demonstrated a relationship to the outcome. Any variable that was no longer significantly related to the outcome when accounting for the other variables was removed from the model to determine if there was a substantial deterioration in the model. Once relevant control variables were identified, the statistical assumptions<sup>9</sup> and the overall performance of the model were assessed.

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<sup>9</sup> The proportional hazards assumption states that the effect of a given variable is consistent throughout the follow-up period. When violations of the assumption were noted, separate models were examined that removed the variables that violated the assumption. Results from these revised models did not meaningfully change. Given this, results from the full model are presented throughout this report.

## Results

### Cohort characteristics for men

White men comprised over half of the release cohort (55.8%), followed by Indigenous (26.7%), Black (8.8%), and Other ethnocultural<sup>10</sup> (8.6%) men. Sentence and risk information was compared across ethnocultural groups for men included in the cohort (see Table 3). The most common sentence length across all ethnocultural groups was two to four years; however, a greater proportion of White and Indigenous men (71.6% and 70.7%, respectively) had a sentence of two to four years, relative to Black (57.9%) and Other ethnocultural men (63.0%). A smaller proportion of Indigenous (35.6%) and Black men (35.5%) had a minimum Offender Security Level (OSL) rating at release, compared to 54.6% of Other ethnocultural men and 45.3% of White men. Similarly, the greatest proportion of individuals released with a Maximum OSL was among Indigenous men and Black men (10.4% and 10.7%, respectively). On average, Indigenous men had the greatest number of dynamic factor domains that had a need for intervention ( $M = 4.8$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ), followed by White ( $M = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 1.8$ ), Black ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ), and Other ethnocultural men ( $M = 3.2$ ,  $SD = 1.8$ ). Other ethnocultural men had the greatest proportion rated as Low or Low-Moderate on the CRI (73.4%), while 33.2% of Indigenous men were rated as Low or Low-Moderate. The distribution of CRI ratings was similar for Black and White men. The majority of men were serving their first federal sentence, although higher proportions were noted among Black men (79.6%) and Other ethnocultural men (85.9%) relative to White men (70.4%). The most common release type for Indigenous men was statutory release (63.6%), whereas, the proportion on statutory release was lower among Black (50.0%), White (44.6%), and Other ethnocultural men (38.2%). A greater proportion of Indigenous men completed a main correctional program while in custody (62.2%), followed by 57.7% of White, 56.7% of Black, and 46.5% of other Ethnocultural men.<sup>11</sup> Across all ethnocultural groups, men were most often serving a sentence for a serious or violent offence.<sup>12</sup> A greater proportion of

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<sup>10</sup> Other ethnocultural includes individuals identifying as South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, West Asian, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Korean, Multiracial, other, or unable to self identify.

<sup>11</sup> Completion of correctional programming does not account for whether the individual met correctional programming referral criteria or had an identified need for correctional programming.

<sup>12</sup> A serious or violent offence is defined as any offence listed under Schedule 1 of the *CCRA* (1992) or homicide offences. Offences listed under Schedule 1 include assault, use of firearms in the commission of an offence, sexual offending, attempted murder, robbery, discharging a firearm with intent, and arson.

Indigenous men were serving a sentence for a serious or violent offence (73.7%) compared to 53.9% of Other ethnocultural men. Conversely, a greater proportion of Other ethnocultural men were serving a sentence for a Schedule II drug offence<sup>13</sup> (38.8%), relative to approximately a quarter of White men (24.3%) and Black men (26.5%), and 13.4% of Indigenous men. On average, Black men were the youngest at the time of release ( $M = 34.0$ ,  $SD = 10.1$ ), while White men were the oldest ( $M = 40.8$ ,  $SD = 13.1$ ). Indigenous men had a higher average number of conditions associated with their supervision (approximately six) compared to the remaining ethnocultural groups, which tended to have approximately five conditions.

Overall, results highlight key differences in sentence and risk characteristics across ethnocultural groups for men. Identifying these differences is helpful in understanding why certain groups may have different rates of returns to custody during their release. Further, analyses that account for variables that demonstrate differences across the groups will more accurately estimate the relationship between ethnocultural group and community outcomes.

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<sup>13</sup> Offences listed under Schedule II of the *CCRA* (1992) include trafficking, importing and exporting, production, and distribution and possession of drugs for the purpose of distributing.



Table 3

*Sentence and risk information across ethnocultural groups for men*

	White men ( <i>N</i> = 10,379)		Indigenous men ( <i>N</i> = 4,961)		Black men ( <i>N</i> = 1,643)		Other Ethnocultural men ( <i>N</i> = 1,604)	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Sentence length								
2 to 4 years	71.6	7,429	70.7	3,508	57.9	951	63.0	1,010
4 to 6 years	16.1	1,672	16.9	837	22.4	368	18.8	301
6 to 10 years	9.3	969	9.6	475	14.4	237	14.0	224
10 or more years	2.2	223	2.2	110	3.8	62	3.1	50
Indeterminate	0.8	86	0.6	31	1.5	25	1.2	19
OSL at release								
Minimum	45.3	4,706	35.6	1,766	35.5	584	54.6	876
Medium	48.7	5,052	54.0	2,678	53.7	883	40.0	641
Maximum	6.0	621	10.4	517	10.7	176	5.4	87
CRI ratings								
Low	28.7	2,981	13.2	657	31.6	519	49.8	799
Low-Moderate	23.6	2,447	20.0	994	27.6	453	23.6	378
Moderate	18.4	1,907	20.0	992	15.5	254	12.9	207
High-Moderate	12.9	1,338	15.0	746	12.4	204	6.7	108
High	16.4	1,706	31.7	1,572	13.0	213	7.0	112
Sentence number								
1 <sup>st</sup>	70.4	7,311	67.7	3,360	79.6	1,307	85.9	1,377
2 <sup>nd</sup> or more	29.6	3,068	32.3	1,601	20.5	336	14.2	227
Statutory release	44.6	4,632	63.6	3,157	50.0	821	38.2	613
Correctional program completion	57.7	5,990	62.2	3,086	56.7	931	46.5	746
Serious or violent offence	60.1	6,233	73.7	3,654	68.1	1,119	53.9	864
Schedule II drug offence	24.3	2,517	13.4	667	26.5	436	38.8	622

	White men ( <i>N</i> = 10,379)		Indigenous men ( <i>N</i> = 4,961)		Black men ( <i>N</i> = 1,643)		Other Ethnocultural men ( <i>N</i> = 1,604)	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age at release	40.8	13.1	35.3	10.6	34.0	10.1	36.1	11.1
Number of conditions	5.4	2.1	5.9	1.9	5.0	2.1	4.9	2.1
CRI	13.1	7.8	16.9	7.7	12.1	7.4	9.2	7.0
DFIA-R domains req. intervention	3.6	1.8	4.8	1.7	3.5	1.7	3.2	1.8

*Note.* OSL = offender security level. DFIA-R domains req. intervention = the number of DFIA-R domains that required intervention. CRI = Criminal Risk Index.  
*M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard Deviation

### **First release outcomes for men**

The rates of community outcomes during first release are presented in Table 4 for men across ethnocultural groups. It is important to note that these rates do not account for differences in the length of follow-up in the community<sup>14</sup> or risk profiles across the groups. On average, the follow up period for all men offenders was 19.5 months ( $SD = 11.2$ ), with variations across ethnocultural group. Indigenous men had the shortest follow-up period ( $M = 18.1$  months,  $SD = 10.6$ ), followed by White ( $M = 19.6$ ,  $SD = 11.0$ ), Black ( $M = 21.0$ ,  $SD = 11.9$ ) and Other ethnocultural men ( $M = 22.0$ ,  $SD = 12.4$ ). Results indicated that Indigenous men had the highest rate of any return to custody (52.8%), followed by White (33.2%), Black (29.6%), and Other ethnocultural men (22.6 %). Returning to custody without a new offence was the most common reason for a return. As a result, a similar pattern was evident across ethnocultural groups for revocations without an offence. Rates of revocation with a new offence were considerably lower across all ethnocultural groups but remained highest for Indigenous men (12.2%, compared to 5.3%, 2.9% and 2.2% for White, Other ethnocultural, and Black men respectively). Less than one percent of White, Black, and Other ethnocultural men returned to custody with a new violent offence. Further analysis of differences across ethnocultural group is limited due to the low occurrence of this outcome.

Overall, the descriptive rates of the various community outcomes highlighted that differences exist across ethnocultural groups for men. Notably, Indigenous men consistently had the highest rates across each community outcome. White men and Black men tended to have comparable rates of any return to custody and revocation without an offence, but Black men had lower rates of revocation with a new offence (2.2%) relative to White men (5.3%).

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<sup>14</sup> An examination of community outcomes using a fixed follow-up of 12 months yielded a comparable pattern of results, such that Indigenous men had the highest rates of any return to custody (41.7%), followed by White men (22.1%). Lower rates were observed for Black men (16.5%) and Other ethnocultural men (14.1%). Given that variable follow-up periods were permitted in the survival analysis models, the descriptive rates using variable follow-up are presented in text.

Table 4

*Rates of outcomes on first release for men across ethnocultural group*

	White (N = 10,379)		Indigenous (N = 4,961)		Black (N = 1,643)		Other (N = 1,604)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Any return to custody <sup>1</sup>	33.2	3,450	52.8	2,617	29.6	486	22.6	362
Revocation without offence <sup>2</sup>	29.2	2,867	45.1	1,964	27.3	438	19.6	305
Revocation with any new offence	5.3	548	12.2	603	2.2	36	2.9	46
Revocation with new violent offence <sup>3</sup>	0.7	73	1.1	56	0.3	5	--	--

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Represents any return to custody, regardless of the reason. As a result, rates of revocation without offence and rates of revocation with any new offence do not sum to the rates of any return. <sup>2</sup>Those with a revocation due to a new offence were not included in the calculation of the base rates for revocation without offence (total group sizes are as follows: White = 9,831; Indigenous = 4,358; Black = 1,607; Other = 1,558). <sup>3</sup>-- Indicates that values were suppressed due to small frequencies.

Given the differences in risk and need profiles that were noted across the ethnocultural groups for men (see Table 3), it is important to examine whether observed differences in community outcomes remain after accounting for these differences. The relevance of several potential control variables was explored to best isolate the relationship between ethnocultural group and community outcomes. The CRI, the number of DFIA-R domains assessed moderate or high need for intervention, age at release, completion of correctional programming, and release type emerged as relevant predictors of community outcomes that would be useful to control. The total number of conditions associated with community supervision and the number of federal sentences the individual has served did not meaningfully improve the prediction of returns to custody, so were not included in the overall model. As a result, the presence of a relationship between ethnocultural group and the community outcome indicates that it is not due to pre-existing differences on the risk and need variables, which are also included in the model.

### **Any return to custody**

Results from a survival analysis that examined the relationship between ethnocultural group and the likelihood of any return to custody are presented in Table 5. Results indicated there were statistically significant differences in the likelihood of any return to custody for men

across ethnocultural groups.<sup>15</sup> Compared to White men, Indigenous men had a 17% higher likelihood of any return, while holding the effects of the remaining variables constant. Both Black men and Other ethnocultural men had significantly lower likelihood of any return to custody compared to White men (Black men 35% lower; Other ethnocultural men 34% lower). Although ethnocultural group was the primary variable of interest, results for the remaining variables included in the model are informative as well and were all significantly related to the likelihood of any return to custody. Increases on the CRI and the number of DFIA-R domains rated as moderate or high were associated with increased likelihood of any return to custody. Every one-year increase in the age at release was associated with a 3% decrease in the likelihood of any return to custody. Completion of correctional programming was associated with a 15% decrease in the likelihood of a return to custody, relative to those who did not complete correctional programming. Lastly, compared to those on discretionary release (i.e., DP or FP), being on statutory release was associated with an over two times increase in the likelihood of any return to custody.

In addition to exploring the relationship between ethnocultural group and any return to custody, the average time to the return to custody for each group was examined. On average, among those with a return to custody for any reason, Indigenous men were in the community for the fewest number of months ( $M = 7.6$ ,  $SD = 5.8$ , median = 6.0), followed by White ( $M = 8.9$ ,  $SD = 6.7$ , median = 7.0), Other ethnocultural ( $M = 10.7$ ,  $SD = 8.7$ , median = 8.0) and Black men ( $M = 11.2$ ,  $SD = 8.3$ , median = 9.0).

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<sup>15</sup> Exploratory analyses were conducted to determine whether the relationship between Ethnocultural group and the likelihood of any return to custody was modified by CRI scores or the number of DFIA-R domains requiring intervention. For example, it could be that the relationship between ethnocultural group and outcome is stronger for one ethnocultural group (e.g., Indigenous men) when CRI levels are high compared to low (this is known as a moderation effect). There was no evidence of a significant moderation effect for either the CRI or the number of DFIA-R domains requiring intervention. This suggests that there is a direct effect for ethnocultural group on the likelihood of any return to custody. However, models that explore interactions with other covariates and the inclusion of other relevant variables may be useful to more fully understand the relationship between ethnocultural group and any return to custody.

Table 5

*Multivariate survival analysis examining relationship between ethnocultural group and any return to custody for men*

Variable	Coeff.	SE	Wald	<i>p</i>	HR	95% CIs	
Race group (vs. White)							
Indigenous	0.16	0.03	33.75	<.0001	1.17	1.11	1.24
Black	-0.43	0.05	77.85	<.0001	0.65	0.59	0.71
Other Ethnocultural	-0.41	0.06	53.49	<.0001	0.66	0.60	0.74
CRI	0.05	0.00	780.26	<.0001	1.05	1.05	1.06
DFIA-R domains	0.14	0.01	276.60	<.0001	1.15	1.13	1.17
Age at release	-0.03	0.00	589.31	<.0001	0.97	0.97	0.97
Completion of correctional programming	-0.17	0.03	45.52	<.0001	0.85	0.80	0.89
Statutory release	0.78	0.03	711.10	<.0001	2.18	2.06	2.31

*Note:* 6,915 men were returned to custody for any reason. Proportional hazards assumption was violated for correctional programming, suggesting that the effect varies over time. Coeff. = Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, HR = hazard ratio, CI = confidence interval, CRI = Criminal Risk Index, DFIA-R = number of domains on the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis, Revised requiring intervention.

### **Revocation without an offence**

Similar results were obtained when examining returns to custody without a new offence (i.e., due to a breach of conditions; see Table 6). While holding the effects of risk-relevant control variables constant, Indigenous men had a 14% higher likelihood of having a revocation without an offence compared to White men. Conversely, Black men and Other ethnocultural men had a significantly lower likelihood of a revocation without an offence, relative to White men (31% for Black men, 33% for Other ethnocultural men). The pattern of results for the control variables was consistent with the model examining any return to custody. Similarly, the average amount of time between release and the revocation without an offence was consistent with any return to custody. On average, among those with a revocation without an offence, Indigenous men were in the community for the fewest number of months ( $M = 7.6$ ,  $SD = 5.9$ , median = 6.0), followed by White ( $M = 8.6$ ,  $SD = 6.4$ , median = 7.0), Other ethnocultural ( $M = 10.7$ ,  $SD = 8.3$ , median = 9.0) and Black men ( $M = 11.4$ ,  $SD = 8.3$ , median = 9.0).

Table 6

*Multivariate survival analysis examining relationship between ethnocultural group and revocation without an offence for men*

Variable	Coeff.	SE	Wald	<i>p</i>	HR	95% CIs	
Race group (vs. White)							
Indigenous	0.13	0.03	18.20	<.0001	1.14	1.07	1.21
Black	-0.38	0.05	52.96	<.0001	0.69	0.62	0.76
Other Ethnocultural	-0.41	0.06	44.59	<.0001	0.67	0.59	0.75
CRI	0.05	0.00	639.35	<.0001	1.05	1.05	1.06
DFIA-R domains	0.15	0.01	257.67	<.0001	1.17	1.14	1.19
Age at release	-0.03	0.00	447.82	<.0001	0.97	0.97	0.97
Completion of correctional programming	-0.17	0.03	37.11	<.0001	0.84	0.80	0.89
Statutory release	0.76	0.03	556.52	<.0001	2.14	2.01	2.28

*Note:* 5,574 had a revocation without an offence. Those with a revocation due to a new offence were excluded from this model. *N* total = 17,354. Proportional hazards assumption was violated for correctional programming, suggesting that the effect varies over time. Coeff. = Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, HR = hazard ratio, CI = confidence interval, CRI = Criminal Risk Index, DFIA-R = number of domains on the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis, Revised requiring intervention.

### **Revocation with a new offence**

Lastly, the relationship between ethnocultural group and the likelihood of being revoked to custody with a new offence was examined. As presented in Table 7, results were consistent with the previous models examining returns to custody for any reason and without an offence. Specifically, while holding the effects of the control variables constant, Indigenous men had a 57% increase in the likelihood of a revocation with a new offence relative to White men. The likelihood of a revocation with a new offence was 73% lower for Black men compared to White men, and 48% lower for men belonging to the Other ethnocultural group. The pattern of results for the control variables was consistent with the model examining any return to custody. Although the pattern of results for the average time between release and the revocation with an offence was consistent with the other community outcomes, there was more variability in the average across the groups, which is at least partly due to the lower frequency of events. On average, among those with a revocation with an offence, Indigenous men were in the community for the fewest number of months ( $M = 8.2$ ,  $SD = 5.5$ , median = 7.0), followed by White ( $M = 10.5$ ,  $SD = 8.1$ , median = 8.0), Black ( $M = 11.7$ ,  $SD = 7.8$ , median = 10.0) and Other ethnocultural men ( $M = 12.2$ ,  $SD = 11.6$ , median = 7.0).

Table 7

*Multivariate survival analysis examining relationship between ethnocultural group and revocation with an offence for men*

Variable	Coeff.	SE	Wald	<i>p</i>	HR	95% CIs	
Race group (vs. White)							
Indigenous	0.45	0.06	53.01	<.0001	1.57	1.39	1.77
Black	-1.31	0.17	57.31	<.0001	0.27	0.19	0.38
Other	-0.66	0.15	18.30	<.0001	0.52	0.38	0.70
CRI	0.07	0.00	287.48	<.0001	1.08	1.07	1.09
DFIA-R domains	0.11	0.02	29.57	<.0001	1.12	1.07	1.16
Age at release	-0.05	0.00	236.32	<.0001	0.95	0.94	0.96
Completion of correctional programming	-0.15	0.06	6.69	0.01	0.86	0.76	0.96
Statutory release	0.92	0.07	165.63	<.0001	2.51	2.18	2.89

*Note:* 1,233 men had a revocation due to a new offence. Proportional hazards assumption was violated for correctional programming, suggesting that the effect varies over time. Coeff. = Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, HR = hazard ratio, CI = confidence interval, CRI = Criminal Risk Index, DFIA-R = number of domains on the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis, Revised requiring intervention.

The offence category tied to the most serious offence that resulted in the return to custody was examined across ethnocultural groups (see Table 8). Across all ethnocultural groups, the most common offence type associated with a return to custody with an offence was ‘other non-violent’.<sup>16</sup> Notably, among those returned to custody with a new ‘other non-violent’ offence, the majority of Indigenous men were convicted of an offence for being unlawfully at large (68%) compared to 45% of White men. Drug offences were less common among Indigenous men (7.0%), whereas 21.7% of Other ethnocultural men who were returned to custody with an offence were convicted of a drug offence. Property offences were more common among White and Other ethnocultural men (21.4% and 21.7%, respectively), compared to 13.3% of Indigenous men. The proportion of men convicted of a serious violent offence was low across all ethnocultural groups, with some results having to be suppressed due to low cell counts. The low occurrence of returns to custody with a new violent offence prevented further analysis of this outcome.

<sup>16</sup> The most common offences in the ‘other non-violent’ category were unlawfully at large and obstructing a public/peace officer.



Table 8

*Offence category associated with revocation with a new offence by ethnocultural group*

	White		Indigenous		Black		Other	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Homicide related	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Assault	6.8	37	7.8	47	--	--	--	--
Sexual offence	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Robbery	4.6	25	3.2	19	--	--	--	--
Other violent offence <sup>1</sup>	8.2	45	11.6	70	22.2	8	10.9	5
Property offence	21.4	117	13.3	80	--	--	21.7	10
Drug offence	10.2	56	7.0	42	13.9	5	21.7	10
Other non-violent offence <sup>2</sup>	46.7	256	56.7	342	41.7	15	39.1	18

*Note.* Based on those with a revocation with a new offence. White, *n* = 548; Indigenous, *n* = 603; Black, *n* = 36; Other, *n* = 46.<sup>1</sup>The most common offences included in this category were weapons related, such as possessing a prohibited or restricted firearm, carrying a concealed weapon, possessing a weapon contrary to prohibition order.<sup>2</sup> The most common offences included in this category were unlawfully at large and obstructing a public/peace officer. -- Indicates that values were suppressed due to small frequencies. If a result was suppressed, the result associated with the next lowest populated category was also suppressed to prevent potential identification.

## Summary

Both descriptive rates of first release outcomes and results from survival analyses were examined to respond to Research Question 1. Overall, results indicated that there was a relationship between ethnocultural group and outcomes on first release. Across all types of returns to custody examined (i.e., any return, revocation without an offence, and revocation with a new offence), Indigenous men had higher rates relative to White men. Conversely, Black men and Other ethnocultural men tended to have lower rates relative to White men. These relationships remained after accounting for pre-existing differences between the groups, suggesting that the results are not solely attributable to the risk and need profile of each ethnocultural group. In addition, an examination of the time between release and the return date for those with a return to custody for any reason indicated that Indigenous men had the fewest number of months in the community compared to the remaining ethnocultural groups. On average, Indigenous men returned to custody after less than 8 months, followed by White (approximately 9 months), and Other ethnocultural and Black men (approximately 11 months for both groups).

Returns to custody due to revocation with a new violent offence occurred infrequently, ultimately preventing an examination of the relationship between ethnocultural group and this outcome while accounting for relevant covariates. Descriptive rates were 1% or lower across all groups. The findings highlight that although the rates of revocation during first release vary across ethnocultural groups, the majority of these returns were due to violations of conditions of supervision, and when new offending occurred, it was rarely considered a serious or violent offence (i.e., Schedule 1 or homicide), and was often due to offences against the administration of justice, especially for Indigenous men.

### **Cohort characteristics for women**

Sentence and risk information was compared across ethnocultural groups for women included in the cohort (see Table 9). The majority of White (79.4%), Indigenous (75.3%), and Other ethnocultural women (67.6%) were serving a sentence of two to four years, compared to less than half of Black women (48.4%). A sizeable proportion of Black and Other ethnocultural women were serving a sentence of between six and 10 years (20.9% and 16.7%, respectively) compared to 6.8% of White women. Across the ethnocultural groups, most women were rated as minimum OSL at the time of release. The average number of DFIA-R domains requiring intervention was lower for Black women ( $M = 2.0$ ,  $SD = 2.2$ ) and Other ethnocultural women ( $M = 3.1$ ,  $SD = 2.2$ ), relative to White ( $M = 4.1$ ,  $SD = 2.0$ ) and Indigenous women ( $M = 5.5$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ). The majority of Other ethnocultural and Black women were assessed as Low on the CRI (64.8% and 61.5%, respectively), compared to 36.7% of White women, and 17.3% of Indigenous women. Nearly all women were serving their first federal sentence. Across ethnocultural groups, most women were released on DP or FP, with Indigenous women representing the highest proportion on statutory release (33.2%). A greater proportion of Indigenous women completed a main correctional program while in the institution (77.3%) compared to 34.1% of Black women.<sup>17</sup> The majority of Indigenous women were convicted of a serious or violent offence (62.8%), compared to 37.8% of White, 37.0% of Other ethnocultural, and 27.5% of Black women. Conversely, nearly two-thirds of Black women were convicted of a Schedule II drug offence (64.8%), compared to 43.0% of White, 34.3% of Other ethnocultural, and 24.2% of

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to highlight that not all women are eligible for correctional programming, and this result does not consider eligibility. Given that a larger proportion of Black women had low level ratings on the CRI and DFIA-R, it is likely the case that a greater proportion of Black women were not eligible for main correctional programming, resulting in a lower proportion of Black women who completed a main correctional program in the institution.

Indigenous women. On average, Black and Indigenous women were 34 years old at the time of release, compared to an average of 38 years old for White and Other ethnocultural women. Indigenous women had a higher average number of conditions associated with their supervision (approximately six), followed by White (five conditions), Other ethnocultural (four conditions), and Black women (three conditions).

Overall, results highlight key differences in sentence and risk characteristics across ethnocultural groups for women. Identifying these differences is helpful to understand why certain groups may have different rates of returns to custody during their release. Further, analyses that account for variables that demonstrate differences across the groups provide a better estimate for the relationship between ethnocultural group and community outcomes.

Table 9

*Sentence and risk information across ethnocultural groups for women*

	White women ( <i>n</i> = 780)		Indigenous women ( <i>n</i> = 600)		Black women ( <i>n</i> = 91)		Other Ethnocultural women ( <i>n</i> = 108)	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Sentence length								
2 to 4 years	79.4	619	75.3	452	48.4	44	67.6	73
4 to 6 years	12.4	97	15.7	94	29.7	27	11.1	12
6 to 10 years	6.8	53	6.5	39	20.9	19	16.7	18
10 or more years	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Indeterminate	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
OSL at release								
Minimum	64.1	500	54.8	329	79.1	72	73.2	79
Medium	33.1	258	36.7	220	--	--	--	--
Maximum	2.8	22	8.5	51	--	--	--	--
CRI ratings								
Low	36.7	286	17.3	104	61.5	56	64.8	70
Low-Moderate	11.3	88	13.7	82	11.0	10	9.3	10
Moderate	23.5	183	27.5	165	8.8	8	16.7	18
High-Moderate	18.1	141	19.8	119	9.9	9	--	--
High	10.5	82	21.7	130	8.8	8	--	--
Sentence number								
1 <sup>st</sup>	88.3	689	83.7	502	92.3	84	94.4	102
2 <sup>nd</sup> or more	11.7	91	16.3	98	7.7	7	5.6	6
Statutory release	17.4	136	33.2	199	9.9	9	11.1	12
Correctional program completion	67.6	527	77.3	464	34.1	31	49.1	53
Serious or violent offence	37.8	295	62.8	377	27.5	25	37.0	40
Schedule II drug offence	43.0	335	24.2	145	64.8	59	34.3	37

	White women ( <i>n</i> = 780)		Indigenous women ( <i>n</i> = 600)		Black women ( <i>n</i> = 91)		Other Ethnocultural women ( <i>n</i> = 108)	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age at release	38.3	11.4	33.7	8.6	33.9	10.7	38.3	12.4
Number of conditions	5.2	2.0	5.8	1.6	3.2	2.0	4.1	2.0
CRI	9.5	6.9	12.8	7.6	6.7	7.1	5.5	5.4
DFIA-R domains req. intervention	4.1	2.0	5.5	1.6	2.0	2.2	3.1	2.2

*Note.* OSL = offender security level. DFIA-R domains req. intervention = number of domains on the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis, Revised requiring intervention. CRI = Criminal Risk Index. *M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard Deviation. -- Indicates that values were suppressed due to small frequencies. If a result was suppressed, the result associated with the next lowest populated category was also suppressed to prevent potential identification.

### **First release outcomes for women**

The rates of community outcomes during first release are presented in Table 10 for women across ethnocultural group. It is important to note that these rates do not account for differences in the length of follow-up in the community<sup>18</sup> or risk profiles across the groups. On average, the follow up period for all women offenders was 21.6 months ( $SD = 11.3$ ), with variations across ethnocultural group. Indigenous women had the shortest follow-up period ( $M = 20.1$  months,  $SD = 11.1$ ), followed by White ( $M = 21.5$ ,  $SD = 10.8$ ), Other ethnocultural ( $M = 25.3$ ,  $SD = 11.9$ ), and Black ( $M = 28.2$ ,  $SD = 12.9$ ) women. Results indicated that Indigenous women had the highest rate of any return to custody (48.5%), followed by White women (28.1%), Other ethnocultural women (22.2%), and Black women (14.3%). Returns to custody without a new offence were the most common reasons for a return. As a result, the same pattern was evident across ethnocultural groups for revocations without an offence. Rates of revocation with a new offence were considerably lower across all ethnocultural groups but remained highest for Indigenous women (9.5%). Less than five percent of Other ethnocultural women (4.6%) and 3.5% of White women were returned to custody with a new offence. The rate of revocation with a new offence among Black women had to be suppressed because there were too few instances. Returns to custody with a new violent offence were rare, and ultimately had to be suppressed since counts were less than five for each group.

Overall, the descriptive rates of the various community outcomes highlighted differences across ethnocultural groups for women. Notably, Indigenous women consistently had the highest rates across each community outcome. White women had higher rates of a revocation without a new offence compared to Other ethnocultural women, but relatively comparable rates of a revocation with a new offence. Black women consistently had the lowest rates of the community outcomes relative to all other groups.

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<sup>18</sup> An examination of community outcomes using a fixed follow-up of 12 months yielded a comparable pattern of results, such that Indigenous women had the highest rates of any return to custody (33.0%), followed by White women (15.2%). Lower rates were observed for Other ethnocultural women (10.1%) and Black women (3.6%). Given that variable follow-up periods were permitted in the survival analysis models, the descriptive rates using variable follow-up are presented in text.

Table 10

*Rates of outcomes on first release for women across ethnocultural groups*

	White (N = 780)		Indigenous (N = 600)		Black (N = 91)		Other (N = 108)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Any Return to custody <sup>1</sup>	28.1	219	48.5	291	14.3	13	22.2	24
Revocation without Offence <sup>2</sup>	25.1	189	42.4	230	13.3	12	18.5	19
Revocation with any new offence	3.5	27	9.5	57	--	--	4.6	5
Revocation with new violent offence	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

*Note.*<sup>1</sup>Represents any return to custody, regardless of the reason. As a result, rates of revocation without offence and rates of revocation with any new offence do not sum to the rates of any return. <sup>2</sup>Those with a revocation due to a new offence were not included in the calculation of the base rates for revocation without offence (total group sizes are as follows: White = 753, Indigenous = 543, Black = 90, Other = 103). -- Indicates that values were suppressed due to counts of less than five.

**Any return to custody**

The relevance of several potential control variables was explored to best isolate the relationship between ethnocultural group and community outcomes. The CRI, the number of DFIA-R domains assessed as moderate or high need for intervention, age at release, and release type emerged as relevant predictors of community outcomes that would be useful to control. The total number of conditions associated with community supervision, completion of correctional programming<sup>19</sup>, and the number of federal sentences the individual has served did not meaningfully improve the prediction of returns to custody, so were excluded from the overall model. As a result, the presence of a relationship between ethnocultural group and the community outcome indicates that it is not due to pre-existing differences on the risk and need variables also included in the model.

Results from a survival analysis that examined the relationship between ethnocultural group and the hazard of any return to custody are presented in Table 11. Results indicated there

<sup>19</sup> The lack of a relationship between the completion of correctional programming and community outcomes, while accounting for other covariates, should not be interpreted as correctional programming being ineffective for women. In the current study, the need for correctional programming was not accounted for, which would be an important component to an examination of overall program effectiveness. Additionally, the results suggest that other covariates are more relevant for predicting community outcomes. A potential explanation for this could be that those who had an identified need for correctional programming had completed it, ultimately reducing variation and the ability for this variable to distinguish those who are more likely to have a community outcome.

were statistically significant differences in the hazard of any return to custody for women across ethnocultural groups. Compared to White women, Indigenous women had a 25% higher likelihood of any return, while holding the effects of the remaining variables constant. Results for Black women indicated a 47% lower likelihood of any return to custody relative to White women, whereas Other ethnocultural did not statistically differ in their likelihood of any return to custody relative to White women.

Although ethnocultural group was the primary variable of interest, results for the remaining variables included in the model are informative as well and all were significantly related to the likelihood of any return to custody for women. Increases on the CRI and the number of DFIA-R domains rated as moderate or high were associated with increased likelihood of any return to custody. Every one-year increase in the age at release was associated with a 4% decrease in the likelihood of any return to custody. Compared to those on discretionary release (i.e., DP or FP), being on statutory release was associated with a more than 200% increase in the likelihood of any return to custody. In addition to exploring the relationship between ethnocultural group and any return to custody, the average time to the return to custody for each group was examined. On average, among those with a return to custody for any reason, Indigenous women were in the community for a slightly shorter period of time ( $M = 9.3$  months,  $SD = 6.6$ , median = 7.0) compared to White women ( $M = 10.0$ ,  $SD = 6.9$ , median = 8.0), followed by Black ( $M = 11.3$ ,  $SD = 9.2$ , median = 9.0), and Other ethnocultural women ( $M = 12.2$ ,  $SD = 8.5$ , median = 10.5).



Table 11

*Multivariate survival analysis examining relationship between ethnocultural group and any return to custody for women*

Variable	Coeff.	SE	Wald	<i>p</i>	HR	95% CIs	
Race group (vs. White)							
Indigenous	0.22	0.09	5.52	0.02	1.25	1.04	1.50
Black	-0.64	0.29	4.81	0.03	0.53	0.30	0.93
Other Ethnocultural	-0.09	0.22	0.16	0.69	0.92	0.60	1.40
CRI	0.06	0.01	84.97	<.0001	1.06	1.05	1.07
DFIA-R domains	0.16	0.03	25.92	<.0001	1.17	1.10	1.24
Age at release	-0.04	0.01	50.42	<.0001	0.96	0.95	0.97
Statutory release	0.72	0.10	50.80	<.0001	2.06	1.69	2.51

*Note.* 547 women were returned to custody for any reason. Coeff. = Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, HR = hazard ratio, CI = confidence interval, CRI = Criminal Risk Index, DFIA-R = number of domains on the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis, Revised requiring intervention.

### **Revocation without an offence**

Results from a survival analysis that examined the relationship between ethnocultural group and the hazard of a return to custody without an offence are presented in Table 12. Results differed from the model examining any return to custody, in that the likelihood of a revocation without an offence was statistically comparable across ethnocultural groups.<sup>20</sup> Otherwise, the pattern of findings for the control variables was consistent with the model examining any return to custody for women. The average time to a return to custody due to a revocation without an offence was also comparable, which is not surprising given that the majority of returns to custody were due to a revocation without an offence.

<sup>20</sup> Although the effects for Indigenous women and Black women were not statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , the magnitude and direction of the effects were consistent to the model for any return to custody. The number of women included in the model decreased as a result of removing those with a return to custody with an offence, which may have reduced the ability to detect significant effects.

Table 12

*Multivariate survival analysis examining relationship between ethnocultural group and revocation without an offence for women*

Variable	Coeff.	SE	Wald	<i>p</i>	HR	95% CIs	
Race group (vs. White)							
Indigenous	0.19	0.10	3.58	0.06	1.22	0.99	1.49
Black	-0.55	0.30	3.28	0.07	0.58	0.32	1.05
Other Ethnocultural	-0.09	0.24	0.15	0.70	0.91	0.57	1.47
CRI	0.06	0.01	65.01	<.0001	1.06	1.04	1.07
DFIA-R domains	0.17	0.03	24.36	<.0001	1.18	1.11	1.26
Age at release	-0.03	0.01	37.15	<.0001	0.97	0.96	0.98
Statutory release	0.73	0.11	42.96	<.0001	2.08	1.67	2.60

*Note.* 450 women had a revocation without an offence. Those with a revocation due to a new offence were excluded from this model. *N* total = 1,489. Coeff. = Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, HR = hazard ratio, CI = confidence interval, CRI = Criminal Risk Index, DFIA-R = number of domains on the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis, Revised requiring intervention.

### **Revocation with a new offence**

A survival analysis for revocation with a new offence was not conducted due to the low occurrence of this outcome among women. As mentioned previously, Indigenous women had a higher rate of revocations with a new offence (9.5%) compared to White women (3.5%) and Other ethnocultural women (4.6%; refer to Table 10). Notably, the results for Black women had to be suppressed because there were too few instances of a return to custody with an offence. Similarly, the number of revocations with a violent offence was also suppressed due to low numbers in each group, which prevented an examination across ethnocultural groups for women.

The examination of the type of offence associated with the revocation was limited to White and Indigenous women, due to the low occurrence of the event. The most serious offence associated with the revocation was most frequently classified as ‘other non-violent’<sup>21</sup> for both Indigenous (54.4%) and White women (40.7%). A greater proportion of White women were returned to custody with a conviction for a property offence (29.6%) relative to Indigenous women (21.1%). Returns to custody with a new drug offence were relatively comparable between White and Indigenous women (18.5% and 15.8%, respectively).

<sup>21</sup> The most common offences in the ‘other non-violent’ category were unlawfully at large and obstructing a public/peace officer.

## Summary

A descriptive analysis of first release outcomes indicated that rates of returns to custody for any reason varied across ethnocultural groups. Specifically, nearly half of Indigenous women (48.5%) had a return to custody, followed by White (28.1%), Other ethnocultural (22.2%), and Black women (14.3%). When relevant control variables were considered, Indigenous women had a significantly higher likelihood of returning to custody for any reason relative to White women, whereas Black women had a significantly lower likelihood. Other ethnocultural women had a comparable likelihood of a return to custody as White women. Additionally, an examination of the time from release to return to custody for any reason indicated that Indigenous women were returned after the shortest period of time (approximately nine months), followed by White (10 months), Black (approximately 11 months), and Other ethnocultural women (approximately 12 months).

Results for revocation without an offence among women indicated that ethnocultural group was unrelated to the outcome. In other words, all ethnocultural groups experienced statistically comparable likelihoods of a revocation without an offence when taking risk-relevant variables into account. Returns to custody with a new offence occurred infrequently, which prevented a statistical examination that accounted for risk-relevant differences. Descriptive rates indicated that a greater proportion of Indigenous women returned to custody with a new offence compared to White and Other ethnocultural women. Notably, the results for Black women had to be suppressed because there were too few instances of a return to custody with an offence. Notably, a large percentage of reoffences among the Indigenous and White women returning to custody with a new offence were for other non-violent offences, which tended to include offences against the administration of justice, particularly for Indigenous women.

## Discussion

### Summary of Findings

The purpose of the current study was to examine whether community outcomes differed across ethnocultural groups for federal men and women released between April 2017 and March 2022. In doing so, this study supplemented the recent CSC (2022) examination of a variety of indicators measuring the experiences of the federal offender population in custody and in the community. Results from the current study examined community outcomes over a longer period of time for a larger cohort of offenders, which facilitated reporting results for Black and Other ethnocultural women and allowed for a comparison of descriptive results and results from statistical models that accounted for risk-relevant differences between groups. Descriptive results obtained in the current study are largely consistent with the recent CSC (2022) examination. Namely, Indigenous men and women demonstrated higher rates of returning to custody during their first release relative to White men and women. Black men and women, and individuals comprising the Other ethnocultural group, had lower rates of a return to custody for any reason compared to White men and women. Additionally, Indigenous men and women with a return to custody often spent fewer months in the community prior to the return relative to White men and women. Rates of revocation with an offence were lower across all groups but remained highest among Indigenous men and women. Rates of revocation with an offence were slightly lower among Black men and Other ethnocultural men relative to White men. For women, Other ethnocultural and White women had comparable rates of a revocation with an offence, while this outcome was rare for Black women.

It is important to emphasize that the descriptive rates of community outcomes do not account for differences in risk, need, and sentence characteristics. As previous research has also demonstrated (e.g., CSC, 2022; Keown et al., 2015; OAG, 2022; OCI, 2022), results from the current study highlighted that risk and need profiles differ across ethnocultural group. Indigenous men typically demonstrated higher levels of risk and need relative to White men and were more likely to be released on statutory release. Black men generally had comparable risk, need, and sentence characteristics relative to White men, however, a greater proportion of Black men were serving a sentence for a serious or violent offence. Black men were also more likely to be serving longer sentences. Also of note was that the average age of Black men was nearly seven years

younger than White men. Other ethnocultural men generally appeared to have lower levels of risk and need relative to all other groups. The vast majority of Other ethnocultural men were serving their first federal sentence and most were released on parole.

For women, a greater proportion of Black women were serving a sentence of either four to six years or six to 10 years, compared to all other groups of women. However, Black women were most likely to be released with a minimum offender security level rating and were most commonly rated as low on the CRI. Additionally, Black women had the lowest average number of DFIA-R domains that required intervention compared to the remaining groups of women. Black women also had the lowest proportion of serious or violent offences relative to the other groups of women, and rather, the highest proportion of convictions for offences classified as Schedule II drug offences. Other ethnocultural women tended to appear to have lower levels of risk and need relative to White women. Trends for Indigenous women indicated higher levels of risk and need relative to White women, but comparable sentence lengths.

These findings provide important context for understanding the discrepant rates of community outcomes. However, analyses accounting for risk-relevant differences largely produced consistent results for men. Specifically, Indigenous men had a significantly greater likelihood of returning to custody for any reason relative to White men, while Black and Other ethnocultural men had significantly lower likelihood of any return to custody. A similar pattern of results was obtained when examining returns to custody without an offence as well as returns to custody with an offence. The magnitude of the relationship between ethnocultural group and community outcomes was strongest from the model examining revocations with a new offence, where, relative to White men, Black and Other ethnocultural men had significantly lower likelihoods of a revocation with a new offence (73% and 48%, respectively).

When accounting for risk-relevant differences for women, results indicated that Indigenous women had a significantly higher likelihood of any return to custody compared to White women, and Black women had a significantly lower likelihood, relative to White women. The likelihood of a return to custody for any reason was statistically comparable between Other ethnocultural and White women. Results from the prediction of returns to custody without an offence indicated that the likelihood of the outcome did not vary across ethnocultural group. Due to smaller group sizes and low frequency of returns to custody with a new offence, analyses were restricted to any returns to custody and revocations without an offence.

## **Implications, Limitations, and Future Directions**

The core implications from this study are that, even after accounting for a variety of risk-relevant differences, men and women belonging to different ethnocultural groups demonstrated differences in the likelihood of being returned to custody. For men across all community outcomes examined, when controlling for differences in risk and need, Indigenous men were more likely than White men to be returned to custody, while Black men and Other ethnocultural men had a lower likelihood. Among women, Indigenous women demonstrated a significantly higher likelihood of returning to custody relative to White women, while Black women had a lower likelihood and Other ethnocultural women had a comparable likelihood. Although the potential causes of these differences remain unknown, the results highlight that differential community outcomes are not solely the result of differing risk and need profiles or sentence characteristics.

A potential explanation for the current findings is that the relationship between the risk and need variables that were accounted for in the analyses may be differentially relevant across ethnocultural groups (i.e., there may be a moderating/interaction effect for certain variables). In other words, the relationship between each variable and the outcome was accounted for in the results; however, beyond exploring whether the CRI or the number of DFIA-R domains that required intervention modified the relationship between ethnocultural group and outcome for men,<sup>22</sup> examining other potential moderators was beyond the scope of the current study. It is plausible that certain covariates are more relevant in predicting community outcomes for specific ethnocultural groups. For example, previous research on the DFIA-R domains indicated that the relationship between having a domain rating of high need and returning to custody tended to be lower for Indigenous men relative to non-Indigenous men (CSC, 2017). Further, research examining predictors of criminal behaviour for Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders indicates that the salience of predictors differs across offender subgroups (e.g., Gutierrez et al., 2013; Perley-Robertson et al., 2019). It is also possible that there are additional risk factors and strength factors (i.e., factors that are associated with successful reintegration) that may provide a

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<sup>22</sup> The results from the interaction model indicated that the relationship between ethnocultural group and any return to custody for men did not depend on (i.e., was not moderated by) either the CRI or the number of DFIA-R domains that required intervention. This suggests that, for men, there was a direct relationship between ethnocultural group and the likelihood of any return to custody. However, it is important to highlight that there could be other more nuanced interactions that help explain this finding. These analyses should also be explored for women when sample sizes are larger to ensure that statistical power is adequate.

greater explanation for discrepant community outcomes across ethnocultural groups. For example, in an examination of factors that contribute to successful reintegration for Indigenous offenders released from CSC custody, Heckbert and Turkington (2001) found that most respondents believed that having strong personal values and a sense of identity positively contributed to their transition from crime. Future research that explores the utility of additional measures such as identity, and research that examines the relationship between ethnocultural group and community outcomes, across different levels of risk-relevant covariates may provide a more in-depth understanding of any group-level differences observed in the current study. In the meantime, the findings from the current study highlight that further rehabilitative support is needed for Indigenous men and women.

It is important to note that participation in additional programs and interventions was unaccounted for in this study, so the results do not inform whether targeted interventions are achieving their objectives. Further, the inclusion of main correctional program completion as a control variable did not consider eligibility for correctional programming. Given the risk and need profiles across ethnocultural groups, it is likely that there are differential rates of individuals who demonstrate a need for correctional programming. Accounting for the need for correctional programming and information pertaining to additional programming and interventions may contribute to explaining the observed differences in community outcomes across ethnocultural groups. It is also important to reiterate that findings from CSC (2022) highlighted that participation rates in community maintenance programs were lower among ethnocultural men when compared to White men. Although Indigenous men were more likely to participate in a community program, they were also observed to have the lowest completion rate. Further, Indigenous men were less likely to have at least one period of community employment within eight months of release, less likely to have at least one positive employment outcome, and more likely to have at least one negative employment outcome. Among women, less than half of women identifying as Black or Indigenous had a period of community employment and were less likely to have a positive employment outcome compared to White women (CSC, 2022). The lower rates of participation in community programming and employment opportunities among Indigenous men and women could provide context to the higher rates of unsuccessful periods of community supervision observed for these groups in the current study, but are inconsistent with the finding that Black women tended to have more positive community outcomes than compared

to White women. As a result, future research would benefit from exploring this further, by accounting for involvement in community programs and employment opportunities to understand observed differences in community outcomes across ethnocultural groups.

Additionally, there are several other interventions and services that support reintegration that are either provided by CSC directly (e.g., CSC's Indigenous Intervention Centers [IICs], education and vocational programming, and cultural and spiritual services) or offered through partners, volunteers, and other non-governmental organizations (e.g., addiction counselling, employment programs, religious and spiritual activities). It is also important to consider the numerous actions within CSC's Anti-Racism Framework (CSC, 2021) that aim to enhance CSC's capacity to respond to the needs of ethnocultural offenders. For example, one initiative highlighted in the Anti-Racism framework is the Black Offender Social History tool, which provides guidance to parole officers in how they consider the needs and cultural interests of Black offenders in correctional planning. Accounting for engagement in these interventions, services, and initiatives may provide insight into why certain ethnocultural groups have differential rates of community outcomes, as well as why some groups return to custody more quickly than others. Encouragingly, recent research on IICs highlights that Indigenous men and women who participate in IICs are demonstrating positive institutional outcomes compared to non-participants, including accessing correctional programming in a timely manner, transitioning to lower security levels earlier in their sentence, as well as accessing discretionary release earlier in their sentence (Hanby et al., 2023). Future research should consider whether accounting for participation in IICs, in addition to risk and need variables, provides an enhanced explanation for the relationship between ethnocultural group and community outcomes. Lastly, although there are limitations to collecting information related to participation in third-party services and interventions in a systematic manner, the potential to change or allow for this, would lead to a more comprehensive understanding of an individual's engagement in various services and interventions throughout the reintegration process.

As a next step, a qualitative analysis of the reason for return to custody across ethnocultural groups could provide an indication as to whether there are specific challenges or barriers that are related to returning to custody for certain groups. For example, a recent study that examined the impact of risk and protective factors on returns to custody and successful releases in the community could serve as a foundation to expand from (Brown et al., 2023).



Although results were based on a small number of participants and only disaggregated for Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, they identify areas in need of additional support to potentially improve community outcomes. Core findings from this study highlighted that risk for readmission to custody was highest among Indigenous offenders with substance misuse problems who lack family, cultural, or community supports, whereas Indigenous offenders who were successful reported having access to mental health supports and felt connected to their spirituality and culture. Similarly, Greco and colleagues (2022) interviewed offenders to assess their participation in programs and services, participation in social programs, in-custody experiences, and release from custody. Results highlighted that the majority of men and women interviewed participated in correctional programming and services and were able to use the acquired skills and strategies in the community. Nearly all men and women indicated that they were prepared for returning to the community (88% and 93%, respectively). However, most indicated that there were additional services or resources that they would have liked to receive but they did not have the opportunity to participate. Similar studies in the future could more thoroughly examine the relevance of supports and services in promoting reintegration and would benefit from expanding the number of offenders interviewed to explore whether findings are consistent across various ethnocultural groups.

An example of one component that would be useful to explore through qualitative interviews would be the relevance of conditions imposed on release. Although the number of conditions did not appear to be related to community outcomes in the current study once other risk-relevant variables were included, it would be worthwhile to examine the conditions of release that are associated with a return to custody across offender subgroups. This could provide insight into whether additional support could be provided to prevent breaches or challenges with adhering to the conditions of release. In addition to conditions of release, it would also be valuable to interview offenders from various ethnocultural groups to identify what differentiates those who are successful in the community versus those who are returned, while controlling for a variety of risk-relevant characteristics that would otherwise lead us to expect the same outcome. Lastly, it would be useful to further explore the types of offences that are associated with a return to custody across ethnocultural groups. Results from the current study indicated that, most commonly, readmissions to custody with a new offence were for offences considered non-violent that were often related to being unlawfully at large. This was most pronounced among

Indigenous men, where 57% of those returned to custody with a new offence were returned with a new non-violent offence compared to 47% of White men. Further, the majority of Indigenous men (68%) who were returned to custody with a non-violent offence were convicted of being unlawfully at large relative to 45% of White men. These findings are consistent with previous research that indicated that, among those returned to custody with a new offence while under supervision, Indigenous offenders often committed less severe offences relative to non-Indigenous offenders (Rubinfeld & Shanahan Somerville, 2017). Identifying the circumstances and context surrounding the revocation with a new offence will provide insight into how to enhance reintegration supports to reduce the frequency of these outcomes.

It is also important to emphasize that the current study was limited in the conclusions that can be drawn related to Other ethnocultural individuals, given the heterogeneity that exists within this group. Similarly, results associated with the core ethnocultural groups in this study (White, Black, Indigenous, Other ethnocultural) also represent generalizations that are unable to account for within-group differences. Group sizes largely dictate whether results can be disaggregated. As more data become available, it will be important to disaggregate results by more refined ethnocultural groups. For instance, Southeast Asian men are over-represented when compared to the general Canadian population (CSC, 2022), yet results for this group are limited due to the small number of offenders that comprise this group. An additional limitation of the ethnocultural data available through the OMS is that individuals self-identify one category on a variable that captures race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or geographical region. For research purposes, this information is then categorized to permit analyses. This categorization assumes that the individual would agree with this more general categorization (i.e., Black instead of Caribbean), which may inadequately capture how the individual would have preferred to self-identify. The discussion of results and implications of the study also imply that individuals comprising the various ethnocultural groups in fact meet the definition of an ethnocultural offender at CSC, which requires that the individual has a desire to preserve their cultural identity and practices. If this is not the case for a large portion of individuals comprising the various ethnocultural categories, then targeted, culturally specific services and interventions are unlikely to contribute to improving outcomes. To address this shortcoming, it should be considered whether data collection could be improved to obtain more refined information pertaining to an individual's ethnocultural identity.

## **Conclusion**

Research examining the experiences of various ethnocultural groups in CSC's offender population contributes to ensuring that appropriate services and interventions are available to support safe and effective reintegration to the community, and to ultimately reduce the likelihood of returning to custody. Results from the current study highlighted that the likelihood of community outcomes differed across ethnocultural groups. Specifically, Indigenous men and women had poorer community outcomes compared to other ethnocultural groups, indicating further rehabilitative support is required. Further, among those who returned to custody during first release, Indigenous men and women returned after the shortest period of time in the community, relative to the other ethnocultural groups. Future research is needed to understand why differences may exist, as they were not fully explained by differences in risk and need levels or sentence characteristics. Such future research would be informative for identifying what supports are in place that contribute to improved outcomes for certain ethnocultural groups, while also identifying the barriers faced by others.

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