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RESEARCH REPORT

A summary of staff and client experiences with the Black Social History pilot in the Ontario Region

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**A summary of staff and client experiences with the Black Social History pilot in the
Ontario Region**

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2025

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Executive Summary

Key words: *Black Social History, lived experiences, training and development, motivation and engagement.*

Black individuals are overrepresented in the Canadian criminal justice system, especially in Ontario. To help improve outcomes for Black incarcerated individuals, a group of Correctional Service Canada (CSC) staff members implemented the Black Offender Social History (BSH) pilot in the Ontario Region. The Black Social History (BSH) pilot aims to improve employees' understanding of the historic social, political, and systemic contexts surrounding the lived experiences among Black individuals under CSC's supervision, and to integrate this information into assessments and CSC decisions, among other aims. The purpose of the current report is to summarize staff and client experiences with the BSH in the Ontario Region.

To gather information on participants' experiences, online and paper-and-pencil questionnaires were distributed to Parole Officers and clients, respectively, in the Ontario Region. Online questionnaire responses were downloaded, whereas paper-and-pencil questionnaires were mailed to the Research Branch at National Headquarters and manually entered for data analysis.

Results revealed that staff found the BSH training materials to positively impact their knowledge and awareness of the contexts that have impacted the individuals on their caseload. However, the results also revealed a discrepancy between staff and client perceptions regarding how completing a BSH can impact staff's knowledge of their clients' social histories and offence cycles. More specifically, the proportion of staff who found the BSH process helpful in understanding their clients' histories (67.1%) was higher than the proportion of clients who felt that completing a BSH helped their CMT understand their offence cycle (38.9%). Another discrepancy between staff and client responses was observed when looking at how BSH impacted clients' motivation and engagement levels. Additional findings among both staff and clients indicate that there is a desire for more specialized roles within CSC and more Black-specific programming/supports.

The results are discussed within the context of future development and implementation of the BSH pilot.

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Introduction

Previous research has shown that Black people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system both in Canada (Justice Canada, 2022) and elsewhere (e.g., in the United States; Clark-Moorman & Velázquez, 2023). Regarding Correctional Service Canada (CSC) sites specifically, Black people make up 3.5% of Canada's population but 9% of CSC's incarcerated population (CSC, 2023). This overrepresentation is even more pronounced in the province of Ontario. According to Statistics Canada (2019), 4.7% of the population of Ontario was comprised of Black/Caribbean individuals in 2016. However, as of June 2024, Black/Caribbean individuals made up 17.4% of the federally incarcerated population and 16.3% of individuals under federal correctional supervision in the community (Corporate Reporting System—Modernized, 2024) in the Ontario region.

In addition to being overrepresented in the federal correctional system, previous reports have highlighted that Black individuals are more likely to experience a variety of negative experiences or outcomes while incarcerated or on community supervision. For example, a report from the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) found that Black individuals in CSC's custody were overrepresented in maximum security and segregation units, were more likely to incur a disproportionate number of institutional charges, and were more likely to be involved in use of force incidents (OCI, 2013). A similar pattern of findings was observed in a more recent report by the Correctional Service Canada, whereby Black individuals in custody were less likely to be placed at minimum security for their initial security level and were more likely to be 'Instigators/Associates' in institutional incidents compared to White individuals (CSC, 2022). Regarding security level, Smeth et al. (2024) found that Black men received security reclassifications at a slower rate than White men, even with key factors/differences controlled for. It has also been demonstrated that Black individuals in custody are less likely than White individuals to participate in CORCAN, which provides employment and vocational training to incarcerated individuals (CSC, 2022).

Despite the disparate in-custody outcomes detailed above, recent CSC research (Chadwick et al., 2024) highlighted that, after accounting for risk-relevant differences, Black men and women demonstrated better post-release community outcomes relative to White men and women. More specifically, Black men had a 35% lower likelihood of a return to custody for

any reason than compared to White men, and a 73% lower likelihood of a return to custody due to a new offence.

In order to help (1) address the concerns regarding sentencing disparity and overrepresentation and (2) further improve community outcomes for Black individuals, the Department of Justice Canada is working to develop a Black Justice Strategy, which is the federal government's response to address anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination that has led to the overrepresentation of Black individuals in Canada's criminal justice system. One example of a response that the Department of Justice has taken to address these issues is by supporting the implementation of pre-sentencing Impact of Race and Culture Assessments (IRCAs) across Canada. The goal of IRCAs is to explain to sentencing judges how lived experiences of racism and discrimination impact the individual, their offence(s), and their experience with the justice system (Justice Canada, 2021). In a systematic review, Eizadirad and Leslie (2024) state that IRCAs have the potential to create more equitable outcomes for Black individuals through promoting "community-based alternatives to custody which are correlated with reduced recidivism" (p. 42). However, because IRCAs are written at the pre-sentencing stage, additional work in this area is required by the jurisdictions under which Black individuals go on to serve their sentences. This, among other reasons, is the reason that a group of CSC staff from the Central Ontario District developed the Black Offender Social History (BSH) pilot. It is important to note that the BSH pilot was expanded to all institution and community sites in Ontario for men. Although work is underway to adapt the BSH pilot for women in CSC's custody, BSH has not yet been formally implemented in women's institutions.

The BSH pilot has several objectives. First, the pilot aims to improve CSC employees' understanding of the historic social, political, and systemic context surrounding the lived realities of Black individuals in custody at CSC's correctional institutions (or under community supervision). The pilot also aims to: (1) ensure that BSH information is used in assessments and CSC decisions, (2) expand access to cultural interventions and support, (3) improve working relationships between CSC staff and Black individuals in custody, and (4) ensure that the Correctional Interventions Board¹ considers BSH in their decisions. Currently, the BSH pilot is

¹ "Each institution has a Correctional Interventions Board (CIB). The Board's main role is to make sure that the programs assigned to offenders meet the program needs set out in their correctional plans. The board is responsible for any termination or suspension from those assignments as well. All the decisions and reasons for the decisions are recorded in the minutes and in the Offender Management System (OMS). The board also keeps track of all available

being applied in two parts: (1) information collection and assessment, and (2) expanded cultural interventions and support. Information collection and assessment is conducted by Parole Officers (POs) having a discussion with Black individuals on their caseload. POs rely on a set of guiding questions that relate to BSH in a Canadian context. These questions were developed in consultations with various ethnocultural groups and scholars who specialize in anti-racism. The BSH information is integrated into various case management reports, such as the Criminal Profile and Correctional Plan. In doing so, the BSH information is expected to help contextualize the factors that led to an individual's involvement with the criminal justice system and inform strategies to support individuals throughout their sentence to promote successful reintegration. The following are examples of the prompts to guide the discussion: "Where were you born? If not Canada, what is your country of origin and what has been you and your family's immigration experience?", "What was your family situation growing up?", "Did you graduate high school?", and "What has been your experience with police, the court system and corrections?". The goal of asking these types of questions is to better understand historical disadvantages that can be linked to crime and to summarize these experiences in official documentation.

It is important that an initiative such as the BSH pilot includes a research component to establish if it is working as intended (e.g., producing more positive outcomes for both staff and the men under CSC's supervision, such as improved working relationships, etc.). Feedback was collected through questionnaires from both CSC staff and Black men under federal supervision at CSC facilities and in the community to determine what is working well and what needs to be improved. The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings of these questionnaires and identify areas that warrant further consideration when expanding the BSH initiative across other regions. More specifically, the staff questionnaire aimed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Have staff engaged in BSH training opportunities and have they been helpful in gaining a better understanding of Black individuals' history, risk, and needs?
- 2) Do staff find it challenging to incorporate BSH into case management reports?

programs and all program needs" (CSC, 2024, para. 1).

- 3) Has BSH improved the working relationship between parole officers and Black individuals they supervise and has it led to changes in engagement and motivation? If so, has this impacted the outcomes for these individuals?

Additionally, the questionnaire that was distributed to incarcerated Black men or Black men under supervision in the community aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1) Are Black men under CSC's supervision (i.e., incarcerated or supervised in the community) aware of the BSH pilot, and if so, how did they find out about the pilot?
- 2) Among those who have had BSH applied to their case, do they believe that the questions accurately reflect their lived experiences?
- 3) Do Black men under CSC's supervision feel that the BSH pilot has increased their motivation and engagement with their correctional plan?
- 4) What additional supports can CSC provide to Black men to help address their needs?

The remainder of this report will summarize the research methodology, research results, and will discuss the implications of the results. The results will be used to help inform and potentially improve the BSH, as well as guide the possible expansion of the BSH initiative to other regions.

Method

Questionnaire Development and Data Collection

Questionnaire Development. Both versions of the BSH questionnaire (i.e., the staff and client² questionnaires) were developed in collaboration with the Ontario Region BSH Committee³, as well as stakeholders at Regional and National Headquarters. The staff questionnaire consisted of 14 questions (a combination of open ended and rating scale responses) that assessed engagement with BSH training opportunities, challenges incorporating BSH into case management reports, and engagement and motivation levels of the individuals on their caseload (see Appendix A). The client questionnaire included 24 questions (open ended and rating scale responses) that assessed awareness of the BSH initiative, their ethnocultural background, relationship with their Case Management Teams, their motivation to address their need areas, and overall engagement in their Correctional Plan (see Appendix B).

Data Collection. Staff Questionnaires were distributed to all Parole Officers (POs) in the Ontario Region in March 2024. The questionnaire was distributed via an email from regional management, which included a summary of the BSH pilot, details regarding the reason that questionnaires were being distributed, and a link to the questionnaire itself. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete and was available to staff online via Snap Survey software for four weeks. Participation in the questionnaire was voluntary, and participants remained anonymous. A total of 111 questionnaires were received, from the approximate⁴ 350 POs that were invited to participate, resulting in an approximate response rate of 32%. This is lower than what has been observed in a recent review of response rates across 1,071 online surveys (44.1%; Wu et al., 2022).

Client questionnaires were distributed in hard copy across all men's institutions and parole offices in the Ontario Region. Prior to distributing the questionnaire, study recruitment

² To use more inclusive language, we refer to incarcerated individuals and individuals under community supervision as 'clients' of CSC. If the term 'offender' is used (i.e., in the results/tables), it is because that is the terminology that was used on the questionnaire.

³ The BSH Committee is a group of CSC staff members in the Central Ontario District who developed – and continue to develop – the BSH initiative through meetings/feedback sessions with Black clients. Committee members are present at almost all sites across Ontario and include ad-hoc members from National Headquarters and the Atlantic Region (CSC, 2023).

⁴ Given that the recruitment strategy relied on senior management forwarding the questionnaire invitation to POs, the precise number of potential participants was unknown. The approximate number of POs is based on those who were employed as a PO in the Ontario Region at the time of questionnaire administration.

posters were made available, which displayed information about the BSH initiative and the upcoming opportunity to complete the questionnaire. In the institutions, posters were available in the inmate committee offices and in each unit. In the community, posters were available in the parole office. In addition to advertising the questionnaire, POs encouraged clients on their caseload to participate in the questionnaire if they were interested. Clerical staff at Ontario Regional Headquarters prepared and distributed packages that contained the paper-based questionnaire and pre-paid posted envelopes that could be sealed by participants once they had completed the questionnaire. Incarcerated individuals were asked to submit their completed questionnaires in the unit mailboxes, while individuals under community supervision placed their envelopes in community mailboxes. All envelopes were addressed and mailed to the Research Branch at National Headquarters. Responses were confidential and participants could remain anonymous. Initially, the data collection period ran concurrently to the staff questionnaire (March 2024 to April 2024) but was expanded to approximately May 2024 to bolster the number of completed questionnaires. At the time of distributing the questionnaire, there were approximately 400 Black men in-custody and 400 Black men in the community. A total of 119 completed questionnaires were received (15% response rate), but the vast majority of completed questionnaires came from men's institutions (104; 26% response rate). This is lower than what has been observed in previous research among individuals incarcerated at CSC institutions (48%; Zakaria et al., 2010).

Data Entry and Analysis

Responses from the staff questionnaire were downloaded off the Snap Survey website, while institutional and community client questionnaire responses were manually entered by one member of the research team into SPSS. Data cleaning and analysis of quantitative data was conducted with SPSS. Data cleaning included examining missing data, the range of responses on each question, checking for outliers, and ensuring the various skip logic patterns were correct throughout the questionnaire. Qualitative data analysis of the staff open-ended responses via thematic analysis was completed by three members of the research team. Each of the three staff members was responsible for reviewing all responses and developing related themes for one question. A similar approach was used to analyze the responses from individuals in the institutions and community. Any uncertainties or disagreements were resolved verbally among the three members of the research team.

Results

Staff Responses

One-hundred and eleven POs across the Ontario Region participated in the BSH staff questionnaire. Eleven (9.9%) of these participants were from a women’s site ($n = 9$ from Grand Valley Institution for Women; $n = 2$ from Downtown Toronto Women’s Supervision Unit). The remaining 100 (90.1%) worked at a men’s site at the time of participation (see Table 1 for a breakdown). Due to the small sample from women’s sites, responses from staff at women’s sites were removed from subsequent analyses. As such, responses below are based on the 100 participants from men’s sites. Where results are presented out of these 100 participants, only frequencies (and not percentages) are reported to avoid redundancy. There was an almost equal split between staff who worked in an institution ($n = 51$; 51.0%) and those who worked in the community ($n = 49$; 49.0%; see Table 1). It is worth mentioning that one participant indicated that they did not review the BSH Guidance Document; however, this participant’s responses were still retained in subsequent analyses.

Table 1

Frequency of work locations indicated by staff participants.

	$N = 100$
	n
Institutions	
Warkworth	15
Joyceville	13
Collins Bay	11
Beaver Creek	6
Other ^a	6
Community Sites	
Durham Parole Office	9
Ottawa Area Parole Office	7
Toronto Area Parole Offices ^b	6
Community Correctional Centres ^c	5
Other ^d	22

^a Includes Bath and Millhaven Institutions. ^b Includes Toronto East, Toronto West, and Downtown Toronto Area Parole Offices.

^c Includes Henry Trail and Keele Community Correctional Centres. ^d Includes Barrie, Brantford, Hamilton Area, Keele, Kingston, London, North Bay, Peterborough, Sudbury, and Windsor Area Parole Offices. Responses are not presented individually due to small cell counts (<5).

Training and Development Resources. Overall, the largest proportion of participants ($n = 51$; 51.0%) indicated that the BSH training and associated documentation was ‘Somewhat’

useful in affecting their level of knowledge and awareness of how Black historical factors can impact case management and correctional planning for Black individuals (see Table 2). In addition, most participants ($n = 71$; 71.0%) indicated that they did *not* have the chance to participate in a BSH Committee site visit. However, among the 29 participants who did participate in a BSH Committee site visit, the majority ($n = 20/29$; 69.0%) indicated that the site visit and information provided was helpful (i.e., responded ‘somewhat’ or ‘to a great extent’). Only a small proportion ($n = 5/29$; 17.2%) did not find the site visit and information helpful (i.e., responded ‘not at all’ or ‘very little’) or found the training to be ‘neutral’ ($n = 4/29$; 13.8%).

Table 2

Frequency of responses to “To what degree did BSH training and associated documentation affect your level of knowledge and awareness of historical factors of Black offenders and how they impact the case management and correctional planning for Black offenders?” indicated by staff participants.

	$N = 100$
	n
1 – Not at All	4
2 – Very Little	6
3 – Neutral	22
4 – Somewhat	51
5 – To a Great Extent	17

Regarding the 2023-2024 Parole Officer Continuous Development (POCD) training, 83 participants (83.0%) indicated that they attended the Ethno-cultural session that was led by a professor who provided context and guidance on BSH implementation. Among these 83 participants, the largest proportion indicated that the session had ‘Somewhat’ assisted with their understanding of BSH ($n = 42$; 50.6%), and another 22% ($n = 18$) indicated that it had assisted ‘To a Great Extent’. Similarly, 42 of these 83 participants (50.6%) also indicated that the session had ‘Somewhat’ assisted their ability to apply the BSH to their work and another 16% ($n = 13$) indicated it had assisted ‘To a Great Extent’ (see Table 3).

Table 3

Among staff participants who participated in the 23-24 Ethnocultural POCD session, responses to “To what extent do you think the training assisted your...”

	<i>N</i> = 83				
	1 – Not at all	2 – Very Little	3 – Neutral	4 – Somewhat	5 – To a Great Extent
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Understanding of BSH? ^a	1 (1.2)	5 (6.0)	15 (18.1)	42 (50.6)	18 (21.7)
Ability to apply BSH to your work? ^b	3 (3.6)	10 (12.0)	14 (16.9)	42 (50.6)	13 (15.7)

^aTwo participants had missing data on this question. As such, responses will not add up to 83/100%. ^bOne participant had missing data on this question. As such, responses will not add up to 83/100%.

Applying BSH to Reports. CSC staff were also asked how many Black individuals they had on their current caseload⁵. The largest proportion ($n = 62$) indicated that they had between one and five, and the second largest proportion ($n = 22$) indicated that they had between six to 10 Black individuals on their caseload. The remaining participants had between 11 to 15 ($n = 9$) or more than 15 ($n = 5$). When asked whether they had applied the BSH to any Black individuals on their caseloads, 85 responded ‘Yes’.

Among the 85 participants who had applied the BSH to individuals on their caseload, 46 (54.1%) applied it to between one and five individuals, 19 (22.4%) applied it to between six and ten individuals, five (5.9%) applied it to between 11 and 15 individuals, and 14 (16.5%) applied it to more than 15 individuals⁶. Furthermore, just under one-third of these participants ($n = 27/85$; 31.8%) found it difficult to summarize the BSH and incorporate it into various reports. Table 4 presents the responses regarding which reports were most difficult for CSC staff; the Correctional Plan was the most frequently selected option ($n = 23/27$; 85.2%).

⁵ Two participants had missing data on this question.

⁶ One participant had missing data on this question.

Table 4

Frequency and percentages of the types of reports that staff found challenging to incorporate BSH

<i>N = 27</i>		
	<i>n</i>	%
Preliminary Assessment	3	11.1
Criminal Profile	3	11.1
Correctional Plan	23	85.2
Assessment for Decision	16	59.3

Note: Participants were able to select more than one response options. As such, values do not add up evenly to 27/100%.

To support staff in writing their reports, participants were asked an open-ended question regarding what additional resources would help them to incorporate the BSH into these reports⁷. Fourteen staff provided a response, which were then grouped according to underlying themes. The most common response (7 of 14) identified the need for additional guidance on implementing BSH, including supplemental materials or examples, as well as further training. Two responses indicated that more time is needed to compile the information. There was one suggestion that it would be helpful to have dedicated staff with specific expertise in BSH support or complete the BSH assessment.

Impact of BSH. CSC staff who applied the BSH to their Black clients ($n = 85$) were asked the extent to which the BSH process improved certain outcomes for their Black clients (see Table 5). Approximately 31% of respondents indicated that the BSH process helped improve their working relationship with Black clients on their caseload (collapsing ‘somewhat’ with ‘to a great extent’). Responses indicated that POs agreed to some extent (51.0%) or to a great extent (16.0%) that the BSH process was effective at helping the case management team to better understand Black individuals’ history, risk, and needs. However, responses from staff on the remaining indicators suggested that, for the most part, BSH has not had the desired impact on their clients. For example, when asked about whether BSH has increased the motivation level of Black clients on their caseload, more than half of respondents indicated there had either been no change at all (31.8%) or very little (21.2%).

⁷ Two responses were unclassified as they did not relate to the themes that emerged across the remaining responses and did not directly respond to the question of incorporating BSH into case management reports.

Table 5

Frequency and percentage of responses to “To what extent do you think the BSH process...” indicated by staff participants.

	<i>N</i> = 85				
	1 – Not at all	2 – Very Little	3 – Neutral	4 – Somewhat	5 – To a Great Extent
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
Helped improved your working relationship between you and the Black offender(s) on your caseload?	16 (18.8)	18 (21.2)	25 (29.4)	18 (21.2)	8 (9.4)
Has increased the engagement level of Black offenders on your caseload?	23 (27.1)	17 (20.0)	20 (23.5)	22 (25.9)	3 (3.5)
Has increased the motivation level of Black offenders on your caseload? ^a	27 (31.8)	18 (21.2)	26 (30.6)	12 (14.1)	1 (1.2)
Has assisted the CMT to better understand Black offenders’ history, risk, and needs?	8 (9.4)	6 (7.1)	14 (16.5)	43 (50.6)	14 (16.5)
Led to different outcomes for Black offenders, such as increased culturally competent services and activities, reduced security classification, and conditional release?	21 (24.7)	18 (21.2)	31 (36.5)	9 (10.6)	6 (7.1)

^aOne participant had missing data on this question. As such, responses will not add up to 85/100%.

Staff from men’s sites and who had applied the BSH to clients on their caseload were asked – in an open-ended question – to provide general observations about their clients’ response(s) to having the BSH applied in their case. Responses fell into several different categories. The most common response among staff members (11 of 40) indicated that many of their Black clients found the BSH initiative to be racist and/or offensive⁸. Similarly, three

⁸ Although a large proportion of staff members indicated that their clients felt that the BSH pilot was racist/offensive, this theme did not emerge specifically among clients. When clients were asked for suggestions or comments on what CSC could do to help support Black offenders, 20 expressed that CSC as an organization needs to be held more accountable for racism/discrimination. For example, one client wrote: “Stop negative racial profiling

respondents stated that some Black individuals on their caseload felt as though they were being treated differently or were singled out for being Black, and another three others indicated that the individuals on their caseload expressed that the purpose of BSH was not clear to them. Three respondents stated that some individuals on their caseload felt that BSH was too general, failing to capture their unique experiences. Respondents also expressed that the purpose of BSH was not always clear to their clients. Some POs indicated a need for culturally relevant resources and programs that are specific to Black individuals to go along with BSH. Twelve of 40 POs provided some level of positive feedback, stating that BSH provided avenues to greater understand clients’ histories. Some also noted that their clients viewed the BSH as an opportunity to share their stories and feel heard.

All POs ($n = 100$) were asked the extent to which they believed the BSH process has the potential to have a positive impact on their clients’ engagement and results. Overall, the most frequently endorsed response was ‘Somewhat’ ($n = 40$; 40.0%). Participants were also asked the extent to which they believed they had sufficient support in implementing the BSH. The most frequently endorsed responses were ‘Neutral’ ($n = 34$; 34.0%) and ‘Somewhat’ ($n = 34$; 34.0%; see Table 6).

Table 6
Frequency of responses to feedback items by staff participants

	$N = 100$				
	1 – Not at all	2 – Very Little	3 – Neutral	4 – Somewhat	5 – To a Great Extent
	n	n	n	n	n
Do you believe the BSH process has the potential to have a positive impact on Black offender engagement and results?	4	16	22	40	18
To what extent do you feel you have had sufficient support in implementing the BSH?	4	14	34	34	14

- stop and understand that we are not a singular problem but individual cases that only get built upon because systematic racial profiling.” It is important to note that among the 20 clients who expressed this sentiment in their open-ended response, 13 were aware of the BSH pilot and only six had the BSH applied to their case. Other client responses to this question are presented on pages 20-21 and in Table 13.

Further Supports for BSH. Staff were asked the following open-ended question regarding the application of BSH: “What further supports could be provided to help with implementing BSH with your clients?”. In total, 42 POs from men’s sites provided a response, and several different themes emerged in the responses (although 5 responses, or 11.9%, were unrelated to the question). Note that some responses encapsulated multiple themes; thus, numbers will not add up to 42. Fifteen responses (out of 42; 35.7%) suggested that staff would like additional training, examples of scenarios to include in reports, and/or additional guidance when implementing BSH with the people on their caseload. Many responses ($n = 10$; 23.8%) also indicated that specialized CSC staff, such as a Black Liaison Officer, would be helpful. Another 15 (35.7%) responses recommended that there should be more support, interventions and/or resources (e.g., Black-specific correctional programs) for their Black clients. A small number of participants ($n = 4$; 9.5%) suggested that CSC should continue community in/outreach initiatives, and three participants (7.1%) alluded to the idea that all individuals under CSC’s custody should have their social history documented, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Client Responses

One-hundred and nineteen people under federal custodial and community supervision across the Ontario region participated in the BSH client questionnaire. Almost all ($n = 116$; 98.3%) identified as a man, with the remaining two (1.6%) identifying as female or another gender. Given that all questionnaires either came from a men’s site or an unspecified community parole office, all 119 participants were included in subsequent analyses. The largest proportion ($n = 104$; 87.4%) were incarcerated in an institution and the remaining 15 participants (12.6%) were serving a portion of their sentence in the community. The average age was 39.1 years old ($SD = 11.8$), with ages ranging from 20 to 72 years old. Nearly half ($n = 56$; 47.1%) of the participants had already served more than five years of their current sentence. Table 7 provides a full breakdown of all responses with respect to the number of years served on the current sentence.

Table 7

Frequency and percentage of client participants' number of years served on their current sentence.

Time served on current sentence	<i>n</i> (%)
Less than 1 year	17 (14.3)
1-2 years	27 (22.7)
3-5 years	18 (15.1)
More than 5 years	56 (47.1)

Note: One participant had missing data on this question. Results do not evenly add up to 119/100%.

Awareness and Application of BSH. Regarding the BSH pilot in Ontario, there was an even split between those who were aware and those who were not aware of the initiative ($n = 57$; 47.9% each)⁹. However, over half of the participants ($n = 73$; 61.3%) indicated that they had not been approached by their PO to discuss their BSH ($n = 43$; 36.1% were approached by their PO). Similarly, over half of the participants ($n = 82$; 68.9%) indicated that they had not approached their PO to discuss completing a Black Social History ($n = 33$; 27.7% approached their PO). Accordingly, just under one-third of the participants ($n = 36$; 30.3%) indicated that BSH had been applied to their case ($n = 83$; 69.7% either did not provide a response or indicated that BSH had not been applied to their case). Among the 36 participants who had the BSH applied to their case, 13 (36.1%) had it applied before their admission to federal custody, eight (22.2%) had it applied during intake, and 11 (30.6%) had it applied after they were placed to a parent site penitentiary.

Appropriateness of the BSH Questions. Among the 36 participants who had the BSH applied, over half ($n = 19$; 52.8%) felt that the BSH questions were an appropriate reflection of their cultural background. However, an equal number of participants indicated 'Yes' and 'No' to the question asking whether the BSH questions should be changed ($n = 15$; 41.7% each).

Participants were also asked whether they feel that the BSH pilot can support their unique cultural needs. Eighty-nine participants provided a response; however, eight (9.0%) were considered unclassified or unrelated to an identified theme. Eleven responses (12.4%) stated that BSH has the potential to help others understand Black individuals' experiences, and how those experiences shape their thoughts and behaviours. Five responses (5.6%) indicated that BSH has the potential to improve access to other culturally relevant resources, including products or services, and two responses (2.2%) specified that the BSH has helped to promote a sense of

⁹ Five participants had missing data on this question.

community/belonging. Several responses provided constructive feedback of the BSH pilot. Specifically, 10 responses (11.2%) stated that more culturally relevant services, interventions, or resources are needed in addition to BSH. See Table 8 for a summary of thematic responses to this question.

Table 8

Frequency and percentage of client participant responses to ‘Do you feel that the Black Social History process is able to support your unique cultural needs? Please explain.’

Thematic responses	N = 89 responses n (%)
Unsure that BSH could support their unique cultural needs/it is too soon to tell whether the BSH will have an impact.	17 (19.1)
BSH has the potential to help others understand Black individuals’ experiences, and how those experiences shape their thoughts and behaviours.	11 (12.4)
More culturally relevant services, interventions, or resources are still needed.	10 (11.2)
More Black staff members are needed.	8 (9.0)
BSH has the potential to improve access to other culturally relevant resources, including products or services.	5 (5.6)
Greater engagement/buy-in is needed from staff.	5 (5.6)
The BSH questions require modification to be more comprehensive.	5 (5.6)
BSH has helped to promote a sense of community/belonging.	2 (2.2)
Unclassified responses that do not directly answer the question.	8 (9.0)

Note: Some participants’ responses fell into multiple thematic responses. Therefore, the results presented in this table will not evenly add up to 89/100%.

Impact of BSH. The 36 participants who had BSH applied to their case were asked the extent to which they believed BSH process helped (1) their Case Management Team understand how their social history contributed to their offence cycle, and (2) their working relationship with their parole officer. The largest proportion ($n = 11$; 30.6%) indicated ‘Very Little’ regarding their Case Management Team and ‘A Lot’ ($n = 11$; 30.6%) regarding their relationship with their parole officer. Furthermore, participants were asked whether they felt that BSH helped (1) increase their motivation to address their need areas, and (2) increase their engagement in their Correctional Plan. For both questions, ‘A Lot’ was the most frequently endorsed response ($n =$

16; 44.4% for motivation and $n = 14$; 38.9% for engagement). Table 9 provides the overall response distribution for each of these questions.

Table 9

Frequency and percentage of client participant responses regarding the extent to which the BSH process helped in specific areas.

	$N = 36$				
	Not at all	Very little	Neutral	Somewhat	A lot
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Have the BSH questions and your answers helped your Case Management Team to understand how your social history contributed to your offence cycle?	6 (16.7)	11 (30.6)	2 (5.6)	8 (22.2)	6 (16.7)
Do you feel BSH discussions with your Parole Officer have increased your working relationship with him/her/them?	7 (19.4)	5 (13.9)	5 (13.9)	3 (8.3)	11 (30.6)
Do you feel that your participation in the BSH has increased your motivation to address your identified need areas?	1 (2.8)	4 (11.1)	7 (19.4)	7 (19.4)	16 (44.4)
Do you feel that your participation in the BSH has increased your level of engagement in your Correctional Plan?	2 (5.6)	4 (11.1)	6 (16.7)	9 (25.0)	14 (38.9)

Note: Each question has between 1 and 5 participants with missing data. As such, results will not evenly add up to 36/100%.

Just over two-thirds of the people who responded to the client questionnaire ($n = 81/119$; 68.1%) indicated that they believe BSH has the potential to help them on their rehabilitative journey. Participants were provided space to elaborate on their thoughts regarding the BSH pilot and their rehabilitative journey more broadly; 35 (29.4%) provided follow-up responses, which fell under six different themes. Among classified responses that fell into a theme related to the question, the largest proportion ($n = 8$; 22.9%) indicated that systemic change is required for Black individuals that extend beyond the BSH pilot. Table 10 provides a summary of thematic

responses to this question. Another common theme expressed was that there is a lack of support/understanding among staff ($n = 6, 17.1\%$).

Table 10

Frequency and percentage of client participant responses to ‘Do you feel the Black Social History process can help you on your rehabilitative journey? If no, why not?’

Thematic responses	$N = 35$ responses n (%)
Systemic change is required for Black individuals that extend beyond the BSH project.	8 (22.9)
There is a lack of support/understanding among staff.	6 (17.1)
Not familiar enough with the BSH pilot to be certain that it would help.	5 (14.3)
Lack of Black staff with lived experiences.	2 (5.7)
Lack of culturally relevant services/resources.	2 (5.7)
Unclassified responses that do not directly answer the question.	12 (34.3)

Note: Some participants’ responses fell into multiple thematic responses. Therefore, the results presented in this table will not evenly add up to 35/100%.

Additional Supports and Other Feedback. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were prompted with open-ended questions that allowed them to specify what additional supports they need and to provide feedback on the BSH pilot. More specifically, participants were asked what services CSC does not already provide that participants felt would help support them as Black individuals. Ninety-nine responses were provided; however, 13 (13.1%) responses said ‘nothing’ or ‘not applicable’, and seven (7.1%) responses were unclassified or unrelated to the question. Among the other responses that fell into specific themes, the largest proportion ($n = 31; 31.3\%$) included responses about the availability of more culturally specific programming, services, ceremonies, social groups, organizations, committees, and spaces. Table 11 provides a summary of thematic responses to this question. Another common theme was that participants suggested that there should be more Black staff members and/or a more diverse workforce ($n = 25, 25.3\%$).

Table 11

Frequency and percentage of client participant responses to ‘What are some services that CSC does not already provide that you believe would help support you as a Black offender?’

Thematic responses	<i>N</i> = 99 responses <i>n</i> (%)
Culturally specific correctional programming, services, ceremonies, social groups, organizations, committees, and spaces.	31 (31.3)
More Black staff members/a more diverse workforce.	25 (25.3)
Culturally specific canteen items	12 (12.1)
Additional education opportunities for staff and/or other offenders.	12 (12.1)
Additional release/re-integration planning and support.	9 (9.1)
Additional support for employment/training opportunities.	6 (6.1)
Greater prioritization of Black/ethnocultural initiatives.	6 (6.1)
An acknowledgment of systemic racism from CSC.	6 (6.1)
‘Nothing’, ‘not applicable’, ‘N/A’, etc.	13 (13.1)
Unclassified responses that do not directly answer the question	7 (7.1)

Note: Some participants’ responses fell into multiple thematic responses. Therefore, the results presented in this table will not evenly add up to 99/100%.

Another open-ended question asked whether respondents had participated in any initiatives or programs that addressed their cultural needs. Overall, 95 participants provided responses, two of which (2.1%) did not fall into a categorized theme. The largest proportion of responses ($n = 40$; 42.1%) indicated ‘No’, or that no culturally specific initiatives or programs are available to them. Among the responses from individuals who had participated in culturally specific initiatives or programs, Urban Rez¹⁰ ($n = 22$; 23.2%) was the most common response, followed by the Black Inmates and Friends Association (BIFA; $n = 9$; 9.5%), and/or Black

¹⁰ Urban Rez Solutions is a social enterprise that delivers a variety of programs and services to bring about positive change and prosocial development, education, and widespread community engagement.

History Month events ($n = 6$; 6.3%). Refer to Table 12 for a summary of all initiatives or programs that the participants mentioned.

Table 12

Frequency and percentage of client participant responses to ‘Have you participated in any initiatives of programs during your current sentence that are designed to address cultural needs (e.g., Urban Rez) that you would like to comment on?’

Thematic responses from Question 23	<i>N = 95</i> responses <i>n (%)</i>
No/There are no initiatives or programs that address Black cultural needs	40 (42.1)
Urban Rez	22 (23.2)
Black Inmates and Friends Association (BIFA)	9 (9.5)
Black History Month events	6 (6.3)
Rastafarian groups/other cultural gatherings	5 (5.3)
Keep6ix	3 (3.2)
The Forgiveness Project	2 (2.1)
Yes, indicated participation in culturally specific initiatives or programs, but did not fall within one of the above themes.	13 (13.7)
Yes, indicated participation in culturally specific initiatives or programs, but did not provide additional examples or details.	7 (7.4)
Unclassified responses that do not directly answer the question.	2 (2.1)

Note: Some participants’ responses fell into multiple thematic responses. Therefore, the results presented in this table will not evenly add up to 95/100%.

The final open-ended question asked for suggestions and comments regarding what CSC could do to help support Black individuals in CSC’s custody. In total, 102 individuals responded to this question. The largest proportion of responses ($n = 26$; 25.5%) suggested that CSC should hire more Black staff/staff with lived experience. The next most common responses mentioned establishing and maintaining programs, events, and interventions specific to Black individuals (n

= 21; 20.6%), and an acknowledgement from CSC that systemic racism exists within its institutions ($n = 20$; 19.6%). Table 13 provides a summary of thematic responses to this question.

Table 13

Frequency and percentage of client participant responses to ‘Do you have any suggestions or comments on what else CSC can do to help support Black offenders?’

Thematic responses from Question 24	<i>N = 102 responses n (%)</i>
Hire more Black staff/staff with lived experience.	26 (25.5)
Establish and maintain programs, events, and interventions specific to Black individuals.	21 (20.6)
CSC should acknowledge systemic racism and be accountable.	20 (19.6)
Staff should actively listen and be non-judgemental in order to understand Black clients' whole stories and allow them to feel heard.	16 (15.7)
Increased accessibility for culturally relevant products and goods, foods, etc.	13 (12.7)
More opportunities for employment/work release, education, reintegration planning.	12 (11.8)
Cultural sensitivity training for staff/additional training for working with Black individuals.	7 (6.9)
General positive feedback/comments.	7 (6.9)
CSC must account for the fact that there are many different cultures within the umbrella term of ‘Black’, and what applies to one Black individual might not apply to another.	4 (3.9)
Increase availability and access to mental health programming and interventions.	4 (3.9)
‘No’, ‘N/A’, ‘Nothing’, etc.	2 (2.0)
Unclassified responses that do not directly answer the question.	14 (13.7)

Note: Some participants’ responses fell into multiple thematic responses. Therefore, the results presented in this table will not evenly add up to 102/100%.

Discussion

The BSH pilot was developed in the Ontario Region to help address some of the inequities that are experienced by Black individuals who are federally incarcerated or under federal community supervision. The BSH project aims to accomplish this by collecting information pertaining to an individual's BSH and incorporating that information into assessments and CSC decisions. BSH information is also aimed at contributing to expanding access to cultural interventions and resources and is expected to improve the working relationship between CSC staff and Black individuals in CSC's custody and community supervision. The current study sought to gather feedback from CSC staff, incarcerated individuals, and individuals under community supervision about the BSH pilot in the Ontario Region. An online questionnaire was developed and distributed among POs to collect data on training and development resources, the application of BSH to various case management reports, and to examine the impact of BSH on correctional outcomes for their clients. In addition, paper-and-pencil questionnaires were distributed among Black incarcerated individuals and individuals under community supervision; they were asked about their awareness of the BSH pilot, the appropriateness of the BSH guiding questions, and the impact of BSH.

Regarding training and development resources for staff, the largest proportion indicated that the BSH training and associated documentation positively affected their knowledge and awareness of how BSH factors have impacted the individuals on their caseload. This finding was also observed among staff who had the opportunity to attend a BSH Committee site visit and/or the POCD session. That is, the staff who attended these training sessions found that their knowledge and awareness of BSH factors was enhanced by these opportunities. Furthermore, when asked what additional supports would help staff implement the BSH into their clients' reports, the most prevalent response related to the need for additional guidance on implementing BSH, including supplemental materials or examples, as well as further training. These findings highlight that training and learning opportunities are indeed beneficial and should continue to be offered to ensure that staff feel supported when completing BSH reports for their clients.

Incarcerated individuals and individuals under community supervision were asked whether the BSH questions helped their case management team (CMT) to better understand how their social histories contributed to their offence cycle. Interestingly, although staff felt that the

training and development resources were helpful in this regard, just over one-third of clients (38.9%) felt as though their CMT gained more insight into how their social histories contributed to their offence cycle. Different explanations might account for this discrepancy between staff and client responses. One explanation could be because the BSH pilot is still being rolled out in the Ontario Region and some staff require more time and experience with incorporating BSH factors into case management and correctional planning documents in a way that results in more obvious changes being observed by clients. Nevertheless, these results suggest that staff feel encouraged by the potential of the BSH even if clients are not yet observing the desired impacts.

Among all the open-ended responses received from staff, incarcerated individuals, and individuals under community supervision, multiple themes consistently emerged in the responses, most of which related to areas for improvement and opportunities for further expansion. For example, many questionnaire respondents indicated that there is a desire for a more diverse workforce, whether that includes hiring more Black individuals and/or creating specialized roles (e.g., a Black Liaison Officer). Similarly, some respondents expressed that having Black-specific programming streams and/or Black-specific supports would be beneficial. There was also some concern raised around the purpose of the BSH pilot. That is, some staff found the purpose of the BSH to be unclear and individuals under CSC's supervision expressed concern that the information within the reports might be used against them.

Lastly, 23 clients expressed that CSC needs to be held accountable for racism/discrimination, and 11 staff responses expressed that their clients reported the BSH to be racist and/or offensive. However, the results suggested that just over one-third ($n = 8$; 34.8%) of the clients who expressed this view had not interacted with the BSH pilot. As the BSH pilot (and other initiatives from the broader Black Offender Strategy) rolls out and more clients are exposed to it, desired outcomes include addressing inequalities that Black individuals face in the criminal justice system and improving working relationships between CSC staff and Black clients. Therefore, as the implementation of BSH continues in the Ontario Region, and when expanding BSH to other Regions, it is important that the purpose of BSH is clearly communicated and that discussions between staff and the individuals on their caseloads are done in a culturally sensitive manner. Taking these steps will contribute to ensuring that the BSH pilot is meeting its goals of addressing inequities rather than causing further harm.

Limitations and Future Directions

A few key limitations of this study must be noted. As is common with all self-report questionnaires, it is possible that many participants responded to questions with a social desirability bias. In other words, participants might have responded to questions in a way that appears more socially acceptable than what they actually believe. This limitation could potentially explain the discrepancy that was observed between staff and client responses regarding the impact of BSH on staff's knowledge and understanding of how Black historical factors impact clients' offence cycles. In other words, it could be that staff see the value of BSH and want to ensure that the results support the continued adoption and expansion of these efforts, which is then influenced in their responding. Interestingly, despite clients indicating that their POs understanding of their histories have not improved as a result of BSH, most respondents – both POs and clients – indicated that they believed there is potential for the BSH to have a positive impact. This represents a further limitation of the current findings, in that the reason for this disconnect from current impact to potential impact is unknown and therefore, it would be beneficial to try to obtain this information when gathering information to impact future implementation efforts.

A second limitation of this study is that, because a pre-test questionnaire was not implemented, it was not possible to measure changes in respondents' knowledge of BSH factors and opinions of the BSH pilot. Although some of the feedback skewed slightly negatively, it is still possible that the implementation of the BSH pilot improved individuals' experiences. However, without conducting a baseline assessment prior to the BSH pilot, it is unknown whether the responses indicate that an improvement has occurred. As such, one future direction for the BSH initiative would be to use a true pre-post design prior to rollout in other Regions. Doing so would potentially allow changes in respondents' opinions and knowledge to be measurable, and thus ensure that the BSH is indeed having a positive impact on CSC staff, incarcerated individuals, and individuals under community supervision.

Finally, it is important to note that approximately half of the participants who were under CSC's supervision were unaware of the BSH pilot. Furthermore, the majority of client questionnaires (87%) were from individuals who were incarcerated, rather than in the community. As a result, the findings from the current study might not be completely representative of the population of Black individuals under CSC's supervision in the Ontario

Region. Further BSH pilots should continue to make efforts to reach as many potential participants as possible. Doing so would ensure that the sample is representative while simultaneously spreading awareness about the advantages of participating in the BSH pilot.

Conclusion

The Black Social History (BSH) pilot project in the Ontario Region was developed to help address some of the inequities that Black individuals face while incarcerated or under community supervision at CSC. The current study sought to collect pilot feedback from these individuals as well as CSC staff members. Results indicated that individuals under CSC's supervision believe that BSH has the potential to increase their motivation and engagement, although they wish to see the pilot supplemented with additional supports (e.g., programming, more diverse staff). Staff members indicated that the training sessions and associated documentation helped improve their understanding of the BSH pilot but noted that there is still a need for additional guidance when incorporating BSH into their clients' documentation. Future steps for the BSH pilot should include continued communication regarding the purpose of the pilot and pre-post assessments when expanding to other Regions, if possible. Nevertheless, the continued expansion of the BSH pilot to other Regions will help to ensure that Black individuals' needs are being adequately met, thus improving their outcomes in correctional institutions and promote successful reintegration into the community.

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Appendix A: Staff Questionnaire

Staff Questionnaire: Black Social History (BSH)

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to complete a questionnaire being administered by Regional Headquarters, Ontario and the Research Branch at National Headquarters that focusses on your experiences with the Black Social History (BSH) pilot in Ontario.

Purpose of the Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather feedback from parole officers on their experiences with the BSH pilot in Ontario. Your responses will be used to understand the impact of the BSH pilot in Ontario and to support expansion to the other regions. Ultimately, the results from this questionnaire will be used to inform further BSH initiatives, with the aim of better addressing the needs and improving the experiences of offenders who self-identify as Black, both in custody and under community supervision.

Participation

At this time, you are being invited to participate in the BSH staff questionnaire. We anticipate that it will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire, which will assess your knowledge of and experience with the BSH pilot.

Potential Benefits

There are no direct benefits or compensation for participating in this questionnaire. However, the data you provide will be used to make informed decisions about the BSH pilot and future initiatives. By sharing your experiences with the BSH pilot, you will help us better understand how CSC can provide you with resources to learn about and implement BSH factors for your clients.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your response to the questionnaire will be anonymous, meaning that we will not be able to link your response back to you. Your response will also be kept strictly confidential and only accessed by the research team. Results from the questionnaire will be compiled and published in summary form within a research report.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary. You have the right to

decline to participate and to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time without any consequences. It is also important to note that you will in no way be penalized if you choose not to participate nor you will be rewarded if you choose to take part in this research. You may also choose not to answer any question. Your responses will solely be used for the research project.

Contact information for more information

If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please contact the research team at BSHResearch-rechercheASDN.GEN-NHQ@CSC-SCC.GC.CA.

By submitting this questionnaire, you are consenting to have your responses used for the purpose of examining the impact of the BSH pilot.

- I consent to participate, begin questionnaire
- I do not consent to participate

Instructions

Please note that this questionnaire cannot be saved and must be completed in one block of time.

The questionnaire link must be accessed on a computer connected to the CSC network.

We thank you in advance for taking the time to share your experiences.

Staff Questionnaire: Black Social History (BSH)

1. Where do you currently work?
 - Bath Institution
 - Beaver Creek Institution
 - Collins Bay Institution
 - Grand Valley Institution for Women
 - Joyceville Institution
 - Millhaven Institution
 - Regional Treatment Centre
 - Warkworth Institution
 - Barrie Parole Office
 - Brantford Parole Office
 - Downtown Toronto Area Parole Office
 - Downtown Toronto Women's Supervision Unit
 - Durham Parole Office
 - Guelph Parole
 - Hamilton Area Parole Office
 - Henry Trail Community Correctional Centre
 - Keele Community Correctional Centre
 - Keele Parole Office
 - London Parole Office
 - North Bay Parole Office
 - Ottawa Area Parole Office
 - Peterborough Parole Office
 - Sault Ste Marie Parole Office
 - St. Catherines Parole Office
 - Sudbury Parole Office
 - Toronto East Area Parole Office
 - Toronto West Area Parole Office
 - Windsor Area Parole Office

2. Have you reviewed the BSH Guidance Document?
 - Yes
 - No

3. To what degree did BSH training and associated documentation affect your level of knowledge and awareness of historical factors of Black offenders and how they impact the case management and correctional planning for Black offenders?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	Very Little	Neutral	Somewhat	To a Great Extent

4. Did you have an opportunity to participate in a BSH Committee site visit?

- Yes
 No

[If Q4 = 'yes'] To what degree was the BSH Committee site visit and information helpful?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	Very Little	Neutral	Somewhat	To a Great Extent

5. How many Black offenders do you have on your current caseload?

- 1 to 5
 6 to 10
 11 to 15
 more than 15

6. Have you applied the BSH to any Black offenders on your caseload?

- Yes
 No [If no, skip to Q11]

7. [If Q6 = yes] How many clients have you applied BSH to?

- 1 to 5
 6 to 10
 11 to 15
 more than 15

8. Did you find it difficult to summarize the BSH and incorporate it into reports?

- Yes
 No

[If Q8 = 'yes'] Which report(s) were most challenging?
(Select all that apply)

- Preliminary Assessment
- Criminal Profile
- Correctional Plan
- Assessment for Decision

[if Q8 = 'yes'] What would help you incorporate the BSH into these reports?

9. To what extent do you think the BSH process...

	1-Not at All	2- Very Little	3 - Neutral	4 - Somewhat	5 – To a Great Extent
Has improved your working relationship between you and the Black offender(s) on your caseload?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Has increased the engagement level of Black offenders on your caseload?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Has increased the motivation level of Black offenders on your caseload?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Has assisted the CMT to better understand Black offenders' history, risk, and needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Led to different outcomes for Black offenders, such as increased culturally competent services and activities, reduced security classification, and conditional release?	<input type="checkbox"/>				



Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. Please remember to hit submit to have your responses recorded.

Appendix B: Client Questionnaire

Offender Questionnaire: Black Social History (BSH)

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to complete a questionnaire being administered by Regional Headquarters, Ontario and the Research Branch at National Headquarters that focusses on your experiences with the Black Social History (BSH) pilot in Ontario.

Purpose of Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather feedback on your experiences with the BSH pilot in Ontario. Your responses will be used to understand the impact of the BSH pilot in Ontario and to support expansion to the other regions.

Why Have I Been Asked to Complete the Questionnaire?

We are asking all eligible Black offenders in the Ontario region to participate in order to collect as much information as possible. This includes people who have participated in the BSH pilot as well as those who have not participated in the pilot.

What Am I Being Asked to Do?

You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. The questions should take about 30 minutes to answer. The questions will be about your opinions and experiences with the BSH pilot.

Risks/Benefits

We don't expect any risks to you from being part of this study. However, being in the study may cause you to think about things that have happened in your life that were upsetting. If you feel upset, we ask that you tell a staff member.

There is no immediate direct benefit to you for being part of the study. By participating in the questionnaire, you will help us learn more about the experiences of Black offenders and the potential impact of the BSH pilot. This information will help us improve the services that CSC provides to Black offenders.

Participation is Voluntary

Your participation is completely voluntary. This means that it is up to you to decide if you want to be part of this study. In no way will you be penalized if you choose not to participate. There is also no reward if you choose to complete the questionnaire. If you participate, you can choose not to answer some questions. You also have the right to stop completing the questionnaire at any point without it having any impact on you.

Participation is Private

We will not collect any identifying information about you, so any responses that you provide will not be linked back to you. Once we receive the questionnaires, they will be securely stored and only accessible to people involved in the research.

By submitting this questionnaire, you are consenting to have your responses used for the purpose of examining the impact of the BSH pilot.

Offender Questionnaire: Black Social History (BSH)

1. How many years have you served on your current sentence?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 5+ years

2. Are you currently in an institution or in the community?

- Institution
- Community

3. How old are you?

_____ years

4. Do you self-identify as a...

- Male/Man
- Female/Woman
- Another gender/Prefer to specify: _____

5. Where did you grow up? If in Canada, please provide city and province. If outside of Canada, please specify country.

6. What term(s) do you prefer to use to describe your racial or ethnocultural identity?

7. How would you describe your cultural background? For example, are you connected to a particular community, engaged in specific activities, is your culture a large part of your identity?

8. Are you aware of the Black Social History pilot?

- Yes
 No

If yes, how did you become aware? (PO, COII, other offenders, etc.)

9. Has your PO approached you to discuss completing a Black Social History?

- Yes
 No

10. Have you approached your PO to discuss completing the Black Social History?

- Yes
 No

11. Has the Black Social History been applied in your case?

- Yes
- No

If no, why not?

12. If you have chosen not to have the Black Social History applied, what are the main reasons for your decision?

13. If the Black Social History has been applied in your case, at what point in your sentence was it first applied?

(Please select only one)

- Before admission to federal custody
- During intake
- After placed to parent site penitentiary

14. If you have had the Black Social History applied, do you think the questions appropriately reflected your cultural background?

- Yes
- No

15. In your opinion, should the Black Social History questions be changed?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe what should be changed.

16. On a scale of 1 to 5, have the Black Social History questions and your answers helped your Case Management Team to understand how your social history contributed to your offence cycle? **(Circle your response)**

- | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|---------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Not At All | Very Little | Neutral | Somewhat | A Lot | Does Not Apply |

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, do you feel Black Social History discussions with your Parole Officer have increased your working relationship with him/her/them? **(Circle your response)**

- | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|---------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Not At All | Very Little | Neutral | Somewhat | A Lot | Does Not Apply |

18. On a scale of 1 to 5, do you feel that your participation in the Black Social History has increased your motivation to address your identified need areas? **(Circle your response)**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Not At All	Very Little	Neutral	Somewhat	A Lot	Does Not Apply

19. On a scale of 1 to 5, do you feel that your participation in the Black Social History has increased your level of engagement in your Correctional Plan? **(Circle your response)**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Not At All	Very Little	Neutral	Somewhat	A Lot	Does Not Apply

20. Do you feel the Black Social History process can help you on your rehabilitative journey?

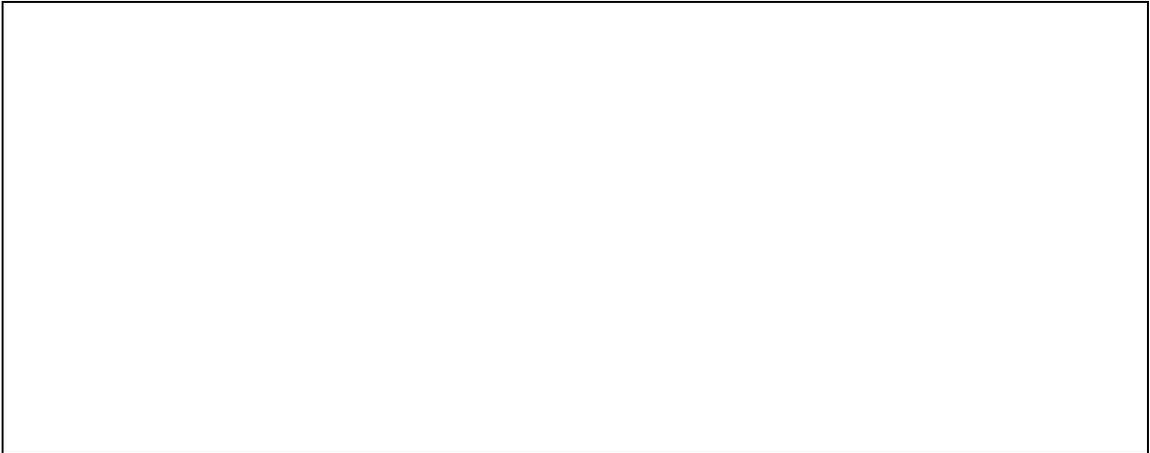
- Yes
- No

If no, why not?

21. Do you feel that the Black Social History process is able to support your unique cultural needs? Please explain.



22. What are some services that CSC does not already provide that you believe would help support you as a Black offender?



23. Have you participated in any initiatives or programs during your current sentence that are designed to address cultural needs (e.g., Urban Rez) that you would like to comment on?

24. Do you have any suggestions or comments on what else CSC can do to help support Black offenders?

Thank you for your participation!

If you are in an institution, please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal it, and drop it off at your unit mailbox. It will be gathered by institutional staff and forwarded to the research team at National Headquarters.

If you are in the community, please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal it, and either give it to your assigned Parole Officer who will forward the unopened envelope to the research team at National Headquarters or you can mail it directly using the preaddressed and paid envelope to the following address:

ATTN: Nicholas Chadwick
Correctional Service Canada, Research Branch
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Ottawa, ON
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