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RESEARCH REPORT

Volume 2: Institutional Supports and Release Planning: Findings from The 2025 Creating Choices and Women's Corrections Questionnaire

2026 - N° SR-26-03

Cat. No.: PS83-8/2026-2E-PDF
ISBN: 978-1-100-00079-4



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**Volume 2: Institutional Supports and Release Planning: Findings from The
2025 Creating Choices and Women's Corrections Questionnaire**

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2026

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Background

The Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women was established in 1989 to examine the lives and experiences of federally sentenced women in Canada, which included the commission of a national survey (Shaw et al., 1991). The Research Branch revisited this work in *Twenty Years Later: Revisiting the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women* (Barrett et al., 2010), which also drew on findings from a revised questionnaire that was administered in the fall of 2007 to all people in-custody in women's institutions, covering areas such as health and wellbeing, interpersonal relationships, education and employment, correctional environments, community connections and release, and programming. The report by Barrett et al. (2010) highlighted changes in women's corrections within the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) since the completion of the national survey in 1991. Since the 2007 questionnaire, the correctional landscape has continued to change. As such, a new questionnaire was developed and administered at all women's correctional institutions, offering current insight into federal women's corrections and informing future policy and program development.

Purpose

Since the 2007 questionnaire, the correctional landscape has continued to change. As such, a new questionnaire was developed and administered at all women's correctional institutions, offering current insight into federal women's corrections and informing future policy and program development. This special report specifically focuses on the institutional supports available within women's correctional institutions, as well as the services and supports provided to assist with release planning.

Overview

A self-report questionnaire titled *The 2025 Creating Choices and Women's Corrections Questionnaire* (see Appendix A) was administered to all individuals incarcerated in a federal women's institution or at the CSC-operated Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge.¹ Data collection took place across all six institutions between September and November 2025, and all individuals in custody at these locations were invited to participate.² At the time of administration, approximately 800 people were incarcerated in federal women's institutions. A convenience sampling approach was used, with participation based on individuals' willingness to complete the questionnaire.³ In total, 454 people participated, representing roughly 56% of the federal women's correctional institutional population.

1 Individuals housed in Indigenous healing lodges under section 81 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA, 1992) were not eligible to participate (e.g., Buffalo Sage Wellness House and Eagle Women's Healing Lodge). As well, individuals located at the Regional Psychiatric Centre in Saskatoon were not eligible to participate nor were individuals located at Institut Philippe-Pinel de Montreal.

2 Although all people in custody in women's institutions were invited to participate, the questionnaire was only available in English and in French.

3 People who wished to participate but had literacy challenges were still able to do so with assistance from the research study coordinator at each site.

The questionnaire included 62 items, consisting of both open- and closed-ended questions. Content areas reflected key components of women's corrections, including the Creating Choices principles (empowerment; meaningful and responsible choices; respect and dignity; supportive environment; shared responsibility) ⁴, education, employment, programming, children and the Mother-Child Program, family and community supports, institutional support and release planning, cultural supports and resources, and gender diversity. The questionnaire and its administration procedures received approval from a Community Research Ethics Board.

⁴ For more information on the Creating Choices principles, please see: Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (1990). Creating choices: Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women. Correctional Service of Canada.

Results

Among the 454 participants, the largest proportion identified as Indigenous (n = 201; 44.3%) and 197 identified as White (43.4%). When asked about current security level, the most common response was medium security (n = 272; 59.9%) and half were serving a sentence of 2 to 5 years (n = 223; 49.1%). The largest proportions of participants were from Grand Valley Institution (GVI; n = 155; 34.1%) and Edmonton Institution for Women (EIFW; n = 99; 21.8%). Notably, 63 participants identified as either gender diverse or Two-Spirit (13.9%). See Table 1 for a detailed breakdown of participant demographics.

To assess how representative the study sample was of the population incarcerated at the six women's institutions, population data were obtained from CSC's Corporate Reporting System (CRS). The CRS data reflect the population as of March 15, 2026, which was approximately four to six months post questionnaire data collection, and comprised 812 individuals in custody at women's correctional institutions.⁵

The distribution of participants across institutions closely mirrored the population.⁶ A slightly higher proportion of participants were from Grand Valley Institution (GVI) compared to the population (34.1% vs. 27.0%), while slightly lower proportions were from Joliette Institution (13.9% vs. 16.9%) and Nova Institution (11.2% vs. 13.9%). These differences were minimal and did not alter overall trends. Security level distributions were also comparable. Within the population, 53.3% of individuals were classified as medium security and 9.2% as maximum security. Similarly, among study participants, 59.9% were medium security and 7.9% were maximum security. Finally, the racial and ethnic composition of the sample closely reflected that of the population. Among participants, 43.4% identified as White, 2.6% as Black, and 44.3% as Indigenous, compared to 44.9% White, 4.2% Black, and 45.0% Indigenous in the population.

Table 1. Participant demographics (N = 454).

Demographic information	n	%
Race/ethnicity (a)		
Indigenous	201	44.3
White	197	43.4
Black	12	2.6

⁵ The 812 individuals in custody at women's correctional institutions does not include individuals housed in Indigenous healing lodges under section 81 of the CCRA (1992) such as Buffalo Sage Wellness House and Eagle Women's Healing Lodge or the CSC operated healing lodge, Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge. As well, individuals located at the Regional Psychiatric Centre and those located at Institut Philippe-Pinel de Montreal were also not included as part of the 812 individuals.

⁶ For more information about on women's correctional institutions, please see <https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/programs/offenders/women/womens-facilities.html>

Other/missing	44	9.7
Gender Diverse	29	6.4
Two-Spirit	34	7.5
Age (b)		
Under 25	22	4.8
25 to 34 years old	148	32.6
35 to 44 years old	156	34.4
45 to 54 years old	71	15.6
55 and older	53	11.7
Identify as having a disability (c)	98	21.6
Location		
Nova Institution	51	11.2
Joliette Institution	63	13.9
Grand Valley Institution	155	34.1
Edmonton Institution for women	99	21.8
Fraser Valley Institution	55	12.1
Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge	31	6.8
Security Level (d)		
Minimum	141	31.1
Medium	272	59.9
Maximum	36	7.9
Sentence Length (e)		
Less than 2 years	11	2.4
2 to 5 years	223	49.1
>5 to 10 years	99	21.8
>10 years or more	32	7.0

Indeterminate	82	18.1
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Note. (a) Other includes the following response options: South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, mixed race, or other, as well as those who selected multiple race groups and were considered biracial or multiracial. However, individuals who identified as 'Indigenous', even if other response options were selected, were included in the Indigenous category. (b) Missing age information for four participants (0.9%). (c) When asked if identified as having a disability, 66 participants indicated that they preferred not to answer, had a missing response, or did not know (14.5%). (d) Five participants had missing information on security level (1.1%). (e) Seven participants had missing information on their sentence length (1.5%).

Institutional Support

Participants were asked about what is most important to them when thinking about correctional institutions.⁷ Over two-thirds of participants reported that having access to the programs they need was most important to them (n = 313; 68.9%), and just under two-thirds indicated that access to employment and education programs was most important to them (n = 289; 63.7%) as well as feeling safe in the institution (n = 277; 61.0%). Notably, there were differences in responses between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Specifically, a larger proportion of Indigenous participants than non-Indigenous participants indicated that it was important to be in a culturally responsive environment (56.2% versus 18.8%) and have access to cultural supports (63.2% versus 19.2%). See Table 2 for a breakdown of participant responses.

When asked about whether their current institution meets the needs that they identified as most important to them, 14.8% of participants responded 'Yes' (n = 67), just under half of participants responded 'Somewhat' (n = 202; 44.5%) and just under a third said 'No' (n = 142; 31.3%). Participants who reported that their needs were either unmet or only somewhat met provided additional explanations. Five main themes emerged and are presented in order of most frequent to least frequent. The first theme that emerged was having limited or insufficient access to programs and training—especially related to employment. Specifically, one participant indicated that "...employment/education programs do not provide [participants] with any practical employment experience". A second theme that emerged was lack of cultural supports and programs for both Indigenous and other racialized groups (e.g., "...lack of cultural food and hair products"). The third theme that emerged was that participants do not feel safe or had some concerns around safety. The fourth theme that emerged was that participants felt as though they were far from home (e.g., "I feel safe and have access to some programs, but I am very far from home, supports, and my children"). Finally, the fifth theme that emerged was around the need for improved health care and resources such as substance use supports and mental health supports.

⁷ Responses are not mutually exclusive. Participants could select multiple responses to answer what is most important to them in a correctional institution. Note that 26 participants had missing responses (5.7%).

Table 2. Participants' responses to what is most important in a correctional institution by Indigenous status.

What is most important to you in a correctional institution?	Total Sample (N = 454)	Total Sample (N = 454)	Indigenous (N = 201)	Indigenous (N = 201)	Non-Indigenous (N = 245)	Non-Indigenous (N = 245)
Participant responses	n	%	n	%	n	%
Being as close to home as possible	240	52.9	110	54.7	128	52.2
Being close to my social supports	213	46.9	100	49.8	112	45.7
Being close to my children	227	50.0	103	51.2	120	49.0
Being in a culturally responsive environment	162	35.7	113	56.2	46	18.8
Having access to programs that I need	313	68.9	139	69.2	172	70.2
Having access to supports and services in my official language of choice	127	28.0	65	32.3	60	24.5
Having access to cultural supports	178	39.2	127	63.2	47	19.2
Having access to employment and/or education programs of interest	289	63.7	131	65.2	155	63.3
Being with people serving sentences like mine	115	25.3	55	27.4	58	23.7
Feeling safe	277	61.0	120	59.7	153	62.4
Other (a)	45	9.9	22	10.9	23	9.4

Note. Responses are not mutually exclusive; participants could select multiple response options. Missing information on Indigeneity for 8 participants, thus the total number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants do not add up to the total sample size. Missing responses from 26 participants (5.7%). For non-Indigenous participants, 15 had missing responses on this question (6.1%). For Indigenous participants, 9 had missing responses on this question (4.5%). (a) Other responses included: access to church and spiritual practices, access to volunteer opportunities, cleanliness, access to online education, access to extracurricular activities, accessibility and having disability needs met, and access to mental health services.

Table 3 presents the results from each women's institution, summarizing participants' views on what they consider most important in a correctional setting. With the exception of FVI, participants across institutions indicated that having access to programs that they need is most important for a correctional Institution. For FVI, participants most often identified feeling safe as the most important aspect of a correctional institution. Notably, participants from GVI were more likely to identify access to employment and education programs as an important aspect of a correctional institution, and participants from OOHL were more likely to identify being in a culturally responsive environment and having access to cultural supports as important aspects of a correctional institution.

Table 3. Participants' responses to what is most important in a correctional institution by women's site.

Most important in a correctional institution?	Nova (N = 51)		Joliette (N = 63)		GVI (N = 155)		EIFW (N = 99)		OOHL (N = 31)		FVI (N = 55)	
Responses	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Close to my home	31	60.8	19	30.2	84	54.2	59	59.6	19	61.3	28	50.9
Close to social supports	21	41.2	22	34.9	82	52.9	45	45.5	15	48.4	28	50.9
Close to my children	23	45.1	19	30.2	83	53.5	56	56.6	19	61.3	27	49.1
Being in a culturally responsive environment	15	29.4	12	19.0	46	29.7	49	49.5	17	54.8	23	41.8

Having access to programs that I need	37	72.5	35	55.6	119	76.8	67	67.7	24	77.4	31	56.4
Access to support/services in language of choice	20	39.2	18	28.6	40	25.8	30	30.3	12	38.7	7	12.7
Access to cultural supports	17	33.3	13	20.6	60	38.7	44	44.4	17	54.8	27	49.1
Access to employment and education programs	35	68.6	28	44.4	114	73.5	60	60.6	19	61.3	33	60.0
Being with people serving sentences like mine	17	33.3	15	23.8	46	29.7	21	21.2	7	22.6	9	16.4
Feeling safe	35	68.6	27	42.9	99	63.9	60	60.6	20	64.5	36	65.5
Other (a)	5	9.8	0	0	15	9.7	10	10.1	0	0	11	20.0

Note. Responses are not mutually exclusive; participants could select multiple response options. GVI = Grand Valley Institution. EIFW = Edmonton Institution for Women. OOHL = Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge. FVI = Fraser Valley Institution. Missing data across locations are as follows: missing responses from two participants at Nova (3.9%), missing responses from 12 participants at Joliette (19.0%), missing responses from six participants at GVI (3.9%), missing responses from four participants at EIFW (4.0%), and missing responses from one participant at both OOHL (3.2%) and FVI (1.8%). (a) Other responses included: access to church and spiritual practices, access to volunteer opportunities, cleanliness, access to online education, access to extracurricular activities, accessibility and having disability needs met, and access to mental health services. Cells with frequency counts of less than 5 are suppressed (represented by 0).

As seen in Table 4, most participants indicated that they ‘Usually’ or ‘Always’ felt safe and secure at their current institution (n = 283; 62.3%). However, it is important to note that just under a third of participants did not feel safe or secure at least some of the time (n = 137; 30.2%). Findings were similar for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Upon examination of open-ended responses from participants, the most common concerns around safety and security reported by participants include the following⁸: 1) how correctional staff interact with incarcerated people (e.g., “Staff are very inconsistent. Some seem loud and angry, and some seem to nitpick about things that are inconsequential in community. Their first response seems to be to lock us up and then not communicate anything to us

⁸ Note that qualitative responses are presented from most to least frequently reported by participants.

which ramps up the fear and anxiety here.”). 2) the other people they are housed with (i.e., many different personalities, a large number of people in one house). For example, one participant said: “We are living in houses with 10 or more people. Sometimes things get tense and are uncomfortable”. As well participants mentioned being housed with gang members (e.g., “There are a lot of gang members that try to control people or even bully people...”). 3) the use and sale of substances within the institution, and 4) poor emotional well-being (i.e., re-traumatized by situations, triggers, poor access to mental health supports, etc.). Participants also indicated feeling less safe in general population as opposed to minimum security units. Importantly, gender diverse individuals reported feeling unsafe both with staff and with other incarcerated people. However, participants also reported feeling unsafe living with gender diverse individuals.

Participants were asked about whether the information in their correctional plan and reports accurately reflect their needs, who they are, and their time in custody. Importantly, less than 20% of participants responded ‘Yes’ to this question (n = 83; 18.3%). Findings were similar for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants (see Table 4). Open-ended responses indicated that participants felt their correctional plans and reports focused heavily on past negative behaviours, with limited attention given to their strengths or achievements. One participant stated that:

“[correctional plans are] mostly about my past and how I seen and wanted things to be when I first got here. Not how I am seeing things in a different way each program and everyday being involved in ceremonies and spiritual practices. I feel like its different that how I’m seen on paper than how I really am in person.”

Another participant stated:

“My reports don’t ever say anything good I’ve been doing it is only what I’ve done wrong, not the good choices I make everyday, just the bad choices I make like once every couple of months.”

Participants also expressed concern that the individuals preparing these plans often made assumptions or took things out of context and provided little opportunity for them to review or correct the information recorded. Additionally, they emphasized a desire for greater input and the ability to review and revise their documents.

More than half of participants reported being familiar with the inmate grievance process (n = 237; 52.2%), with familiarity slightly higher among Indigenous participants (n = 116/201; 57.7%) than non-Indigenous participants (n = 117/245; 47.8%). As well, an additional 20% of participants reported being somewhat familiar with the inmate grievance process (similar for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants; see Table 4). Among those who indicated that they were familiar or somewhat familiar with the grievance process (n = 333), half would describe the process as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ (n = 168/333; 50.5%) and just over a quarter would describe the process as ‘acceptable’ (n = 80/333; 24.0%). Less than 10% reported that the process was ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (n = 22/333; 6.6%). Specifically, participants expressed frustration with the grievance process, stating that the process is difficult to navigate and is quite lengthy, and that it takes a long time to get a response. Many participants expressed frustration and a lack of trust in the process and were often concerned about staff being aware of their grievances—resulting in hesitancy to file a grievance. Participants felt as though grievances are always denied and felt pressure to try mediation as opposed to filing a grievance.

When results were examined by institution, most participants from OOH reported ‘Always’ or ‘Usually’ feeling safe and secure (n = 25/31; 80.6%). In contrast, participants from EIFW and FVI were less likely to report ‘Always’ or ‘Usually’ feeling safe and secure (see Table 5). Participants from FVI were more likely to report ‘Rarely’ or ‘Never’ feeling safe and secure at their institution. Interestingly, participants

from FVI were also more likely to report familiarity with the inmate grievance process (n = 36/55; 65.5%). Participants from Joliette institution were less likely to report being familiar with the inmate grievance process (n = 21/63; 33.3%). See Table 5 for a breakdown of findings by correctional institution.

Table 4. Participants' institutional needs and supports by Indigenous status.

Institutional needs and supports	Total Sample (N = 454)	Total Sample (N = 454)	Indigenous (N = 201)	Indigenous (N = 201)	Non-Indigenous (N = 245)	Non-Indigenous (N = 245)
Feel safe and secure at current institution	n	%	n	%	n	%
Never	15	3.3	6	3.0	8	3.3
Rarely	25	5.5	12	6.0	12	4.9
Sometimes	97	21.4	48	23.9	48	19.6
Usually	176	38.8	64	31.8	110	44.9
Always	107	23.6	55	27.4	51	20.8
Not sure/missing	34	7.4	16	8.0	14	5.7
Correctional plan and reports accurately reflect your needs, who you are, and your time in custody	n	%	n	%	n	%
No	153	33.7	72	35.8	79	32.2
Somewhat	150	33.0	65	32.3	84	34.3
Yes	83	18.3	35	17.4	47	19.2
Not sure/missing	68	14.8	29	14.5	35	14.3
Familiar with the inmate grievance process	n	%	n	%	n	%

No	81	17.8	25	12.4	55	22.5
Somewhat	96	21.1	44	21.9	51	20.8
Yes	237	52.2	116	57.7	117	47.8
Not sure/missing	40	8.8	16	8.0	22	9.0

Note. Missing information on Indigeneity for 8 participants, thus the total number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants do not add up to the total sample size.

Table 5. Participants' feelings of safety and familiarity with the grievance process by women's institution.

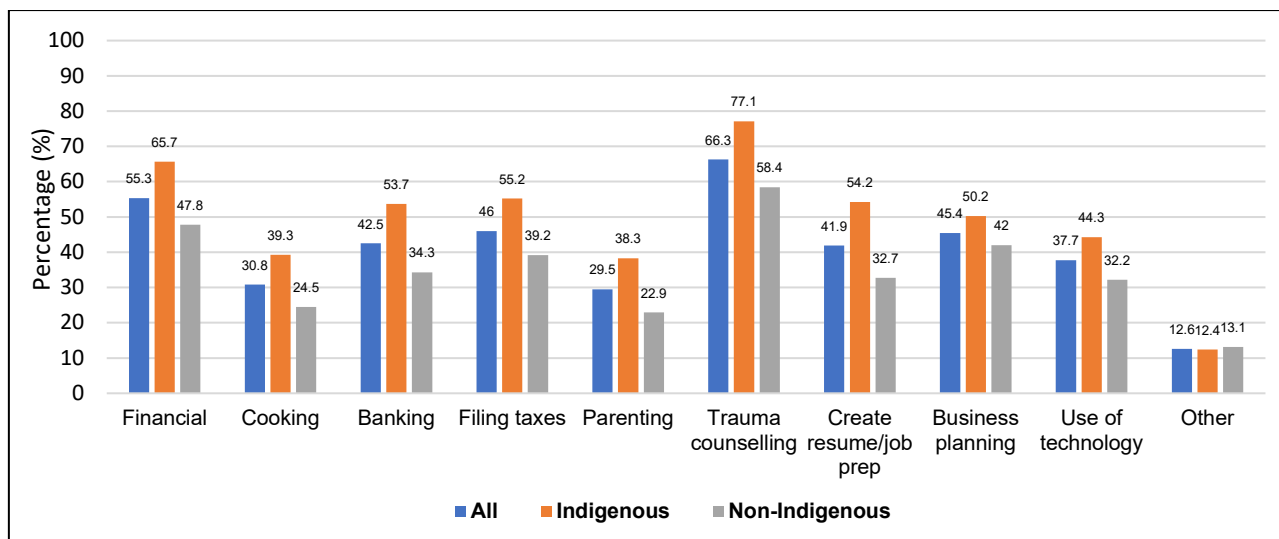
Institutional needs and supports	Nova (N = 51)	Nova (N = 51)	Joliet (N = 63)	Joliet (N = 63)	GVI (N = 155)	GVI (N = 155)	EIFW (N = 99)	EIFW (N = 99)	OOHL (N = 31)	OOHL (N = 31)	FVI (N = 55)	FVI (N = 55)
Feel safe at current institution	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Never or rarely	0	0	5	7.9	15	9.7	8	8.1	0	0	9	16.4
Sometimes	10	19.6	6	9.5	36	23.2	29	29.3	0	0	12	21.8
Always or usually	34	66.7	40	63.5	98	63.2	55	55.6	25	80.6	31	56.4
Familiar with grievance process	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No	12	23.5	17	27.0	25	16.1	16	16.2	0	0	7	12.7
Somewhat	11	21.6	13	20.6	39	25.2	19	19.2	5	16.1	9	16.4
Yes	24	47.1	21	33.3	82	52.9	55	55.6	19	61.3	36	65.5

Note. GVI = Grand Valley Institution. EIFW = Edmonton Institution for Women. OOHL = Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge. FVI = Fraser Valley Institution. Cells with frequency counts of less than 5 are suppressed (represented by 0). Missing and 'Not sure' responses range across site, with Joliette having the most missing responses (approximately 19.0%). Missing information is factored into the denominators.

Release Planning, Skills, and Services

Participants were asked which life skills and supports they would find helpful during incarceration to prepare for release. Trauma counselling was the most frequently identified support (n = 301; 66.3%), followed by financial skills (n = 251; 55.3%). Notably, a larger proportion of Indigenous participants selected each life skill and support area compared with non-Indigenous participants, with the exception of the 'other' category (see Figure 1). Other skills/supports identified by participants included: budgeting skills, communication skills, navigating housing and cost of living, and trades programs.

Figure 1. Life skills participants identified as helpful to learn during incarceration.

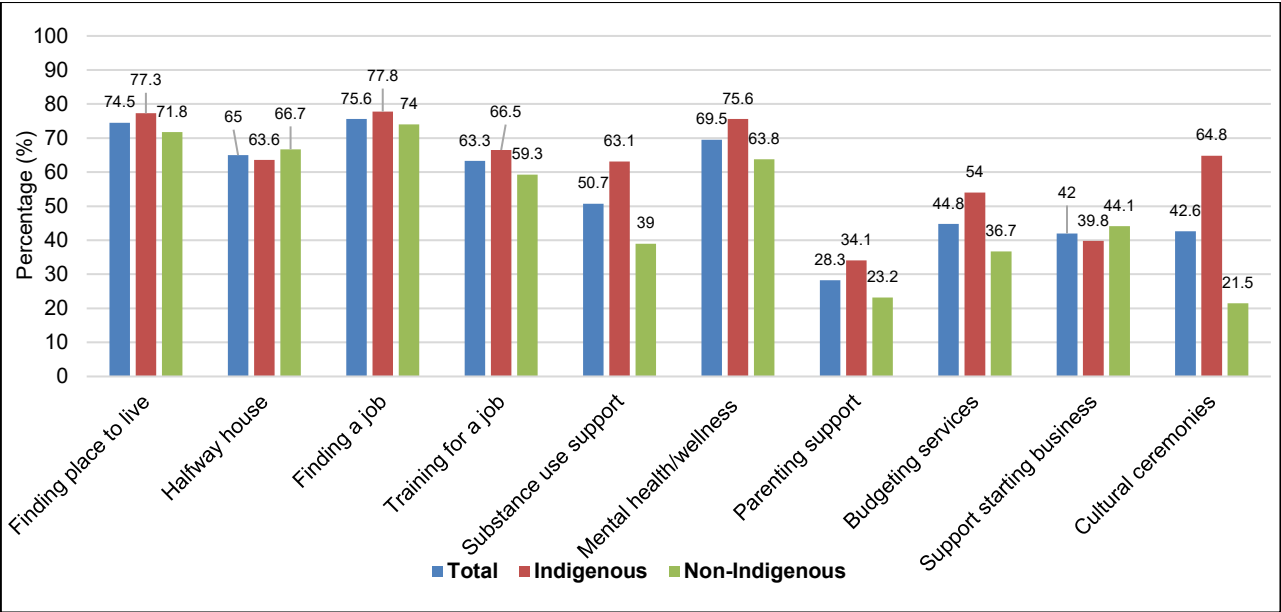


A chart depicting the life skills that participants identified as helpful to learn during incarceration. Life skills identified include financial, cooking, banking, filing taxes, parenting, trauma counselling, creating resumes and preparing for jobs, business planning, use of technology, and other. Responses are provided for all participants as well as separated out specifically for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Trauma counselling was identified as important by two-thirds of the participants, financial services were identified as important by 55.3% of participants, and filing taxes was identified by 46.0% of participants. Note. Indigenous (N = 201); Non-Indigenous (N = 245); Eight participants were missing information on Indigenous status.

Participants were asked about whether they would use community services once they are released into the community. The majority of participants indicated that they would use community services upon release (n = 357; 78.6%). Of those who indicated that they would use community services upon release, the majority reported that a service to help them find a job would be important (n = 270/357; 75.6%) as well as a service to help them find a place to live (n = 266/357; 74.5%) and help with mental

health and wellness (n = 248/357; 69.5%). A larger proportion of Indigenous participants selected each community service compared with non-Indigenous participants. Notably, 8.4% of participants identified “other” community services that they would like to use upon release into the community. This includes 2SLGBTQIA+ groups, senior living, and supports with finding a doctor and navigating health care. As well, support locating religious communities and churches was also identified. See Figure 2 for the community services that participants deem important for use upon release.

Figure 2. Community services that participants identified as important upon release.



A chart depicting community services that participants identified as important upon release. The community services identified include finding a place to live, halfway houses, finding a job, training for a job, substance use support, mental health and awareness, parenting support, budgeting services, support starting a business, and cultural ceremonies. Responses are provided for all participants as well as separated out specifically for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Finding a job and finding a place to live were both identified as important upon release for three-quarters of participants. Mental health and wellness was identified as important upon release for 69.5% of participants. Note. Indigenous (N = 176); Non-Indigenous (N = 177); Four participants were missing information on Indigenous status.

Just under half of all participants reported that community services are available in the community they wish to be released to (n = 218; 48.0%). Importantly, 18.3% indicated that community services were somewhat available in the community they wish to be released to (n = 83) and just under a quarter of participants were not sure (n = 99; 21.8%). Only 4.6% of participants indicated that community services were not available in the community they wish to be released to (n = 21). While many participants indicated that they were not sure where they would be released to, participants mentioned concerns around the lack of halfway houses and the lack of mental health support, mainly grief counselling and trauma counselling, had concerns with finding employment and housing, and had concerns around the lack of financial support upon release.

Over half of participants reported that they would prefer to return to the community they lived in prior to incarceration (n = 238; 52.4%), whereas 26.9% of participants indicated that they did not prefer to return to the community they lived in prior to incarceration (n = 122). Among those who would prefer to return to their home community (i.e., community they lived in prior to incarceration), many indicated that this is because they want to be close to family, children, and established community and/or social supports; as well, some participants indicated that they own a house and want to return to it. Among those who indicated that they do not want to return to their home community, the main reasons were to get a fresh start and remove themselves from potential triggers, to avoid negative associates, and to go to a place with the support and services they need (e.g., halfway house).

Release Planning and Cultural Supports

Participants were asked about whether they had worked with an Ethnocultural Liaison Officer. Overall, 15.2% of participants indicated that they had worked with an Ethnocultural Liaison Officer (n = 69). Among those 69 participants, 47.8% indicated that the Ethnocultural Liaison Officer provided them with good information about what to expect upon release (n = 33/69), and 21.7% indicated that the Ethnocultural Liaison Officer 'Somewhat' provided them with good information (n = 15/69). When asked about whether the Ethnocultural Liaison Officer provided participants with information about the available community resources, 39.1% (n = 27/69) responded 'Yes' and 20.3% (n = 14/69) responded 'Somewhat'.

Indigenous participants (N = 201) were asked about whether they were advised of the Section 81 and Section 84 release options⁹. It was found that over three-quarters responded 'Yes' they were advised of these release options (n = 152/201; 75.6%). When asked about their interest in Section 81 and Section 84 release options, among Indigenous participants, 70.1% (n = 141/201) indicated that they were interested in these options. Indigenous participants were also asked about whether they have worked with an Indigenous Community Liaison Officer (ICLO). Overall, just over half worked with an ICLO (n = 114/201; 56.7%) and of those who did, 49.1% (n = 56/114) indicated that their ICLO provided them with information on what to expect upon release, 43.9% (n = 50/114) indicated that their ICLO provided them with information about available community resources, and 35.1% (n = 40/114) indicated that their ICLO linked them to an Indigenous community and/or their home community.

⁹ Section 81 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA, 1992) establishes the mechanism for Indigenous-run healing lodges and other community-based correctional services. An Indigenous person in custody at CSC may be transferred to the care and custody of a facility in an Indigenous community. In addition, the Section 81 facility may supervise on day or full parole or statutory release. Section 84 of the CCRA provides a process for involving Indigenous communities in release planning when an Indigenous offender intends to return to their community. This applies to people in custody who want to serve their eventual conditional or statutory release in an Indigenous community, or with the support/direction of an Indigenous organization.

Summary of Findings

Results from the 2025 Creating Choices and Women's Corrections Questionnaire indicate that access to programming, particularly employment and education, as well as culturally relevant supports, and feeling safe within the institution, were among the most important needs identified by women in custody. Most participants reported that these needs were either fully or partially met in their current institution. However, nearly one-third of respondents indicated that their needs were not being met, suggesting that additional attention to program and service availability at the site level would be beneficial.

Importantly, while the majority of participants said they “usually” or “always” feel safe and secure, just under one-third reported feeling unsafe at least some of the time. Research has demonstrated that many women have experienced abuse and violence prior to incarceration, shaping how they perceive and navigate the prison environment (Scherer et al., 2020; Wanamaker et al., 2022). Such findings highlight the importance of implementing trauma-informed approaches within correctional settings (Gaber et al., 2025). Additionally, questionnaire results show a strong interest in trauma-specific supports that are used to directly target trauma. When asked which life skills and supports would be helpful during incarceration to prepare for release, trauma counselling was the most frequently selected option, identified by approximately two-thirds of participants.

Another important support that was identified by participants as being helpful in preparation for release is financial literacy training. This aligns with research that has demonstrated that women who are released into the community often struggle with financial instability, and many have limited financial knowledge which makes it challenging to secure housing and maintain financial independence (Sanders, 2016). Importantly, participants felt as though the information in their correctional plans do not accurately reflect their needs, who they are, or their time in custody. Specifically, many felt that their correctional plans focused solely on past negative behaviour with limited discussions around strengths and positive improvements. Research has found that it is important for case plans for incarcerated women to integrate strengths-based items like coping skills, positive relationships, and competencies in order to improve engagement and outcomes (Fedock & Covington, 2022). In terms of the grievance process, many participants found the process to be complicated, difficult to navigate, and lengthy. Additional supports and/or information around the grievance process may be beneficial.

In terms of release planning, most participants reported that they would like to access community-based services upon release. In particular, they highlighted a need for support in finding employment, securing stable housing, and accessing mental health and wellness services, which they felt would help them successfully transition back into the community. This aligns with previous research, which has found that women leaving custody tend to face substantial barriers and challenges related to securing employment and housing (National Institute of Justice, 2025). As well, women require access to mental health and substance use services as part of effective reentry supports (National Institute of Justice, 2025). A large proportion of participants indicated that they want to return to their home community in order to be close to social and community supports like family, children, and friends. This is not surprising as research has demonstrated that family and close social supports provide emotional support, financial assistance, and housing during re-entry (Smith et al., 2025), underscoring the importance of returning to one's home community when possible.

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Appendix A: 2025 Creating Choices and Women's Corrections Questionnaire

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to complete a questionnaire being administered by the Research Branch and the Women Offender Sector at National Headquarters that focuses on your experiences with women's corrections.

Purpose of Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to hear directly from people incarcerated in women's institutions regarding experiences and perspectives on programs and services offered. This includes questions focusing on the Creating Choices principles, education and employment, community supports, family and children, institutional environment, release planning, and cultural supports and resources. The results of this questionnaire will help indicate which areas of women's corrections require further improvement.

Why Have I Been Asked to Complete the Questionnaire?

We are asking people who are currently serving a sentence in a women's federal institution to participate so we can collect as much information as possible. Your views are important to us and any feedback is greatly appreciated.

What Am I Being Asked to Do?

You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. The questions should take approximately one hour to answer. If participation in the study requires an absence from a program assignment, that hour will be calculated as worked hours. If you require additional time to complete the questionnaire, please let the study coordinator know and additional time will be provided.

Risks/Benefits

Some of the questions include sensitive material and may cause you to think about things that have happened in your life that were upsetting. If you feel upset, we ask that you please seek assistance from a staff member, an institutional psychologist, an Elder, an Elder helper, or peer support (for example, a Peer Mentor who is trained and prepared to assist you).

There is no immediate direct benefit to you participating in this study. By completing this questionnaire, you will help us identify key areas that are lacking or need improvement within the correctional system. This information will help us improve the services that Correctional Service Canada (CSC) provides to people in custody in women's institutions.

Participation is Voluntary

You will be given an hour to complete the questionnaire. However, your participation is completely voluntary. This means that it is up to you to decide if you want to be a part of this study, and you can choose whether to answer all or any of the questions in that hour. You will not be penalized if you choose not to participate. There is 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 any negative consequence.

Withdrawal of participation

You have the right to withdraw your consent up until your questionnaire is double sealed and handed in. There is a check box on the front page that you can select if you would like to have your questionnaire destroyed and your answers will not be counted. In either case no onsite staff or residents will be able to see your answers.

Participation is Private

Although we will be asking for some basic demographic information, we will not be collecting information that can be used to directly identify you (i.e., we will not be collecting your name, date of birth, FPS number, etc). As such, any responses that you provide will not be linked back to you and will not be included in your CSC file. Your responses will not be seen by institutional staff or other residents. Only staff from the Research Branch at National Headquarters will see your responses. The completed questionnaires will be securely stored at the Research Branch and only accessible to people involved in the research study. Completed questionnaires will be stored for seven years before being securely disposed. Electronic datasets will be stored on a secure drive only accessible to the research team.

How Will the Collected Questionnaire Information be Used?

The results of this study will be published in an academic journal and on the CSC website in the form of research reports that are available to the public and participants upon request. These results will also be shared with the Native Women's Association of Canada as well as the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies. Results will be made available to you in the form of an infographic or summary document upon completion of the study (for example, a fact sheet posted in common areas within the institution highlighting key overall findings).

Use of questionnaire information may occur at a later time point to answer specific questions pertaining to women's corrections. As well, this information may be used at a later date to examine changes and improvements over time within women's corrections.

How Do I Submit my Completed Questionnaire?

Your questionnaire will be sent directly to the Research Branch at National Headquarters and will not be shared with anyone at your institution. Once you have completed the questionnaire, please return it to the study coordinator at your site, sealed in the two envelopes provided.

Thank you for sharing your experiences with us!

Study Consent

Please read the following carefully and complete to show that you understand your rights as a voluntary participant in this study.

I understand that this questionnaire is examining the experiences, views, and concerns of people serving sentences in women's federal correctional institutions. I also understand that some of the questions may be sensitive or upsetting.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I am aware that I can refuse to answer any questions and will not be penalized if I choose to stop participating. I understand that I will not be rewarded for participating in this questionnaire. I also understand that I cannot withdraw from participation after submitting my completed questionnaire to the study coordinator.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my answers will be kept private and will only be used for the purposes explained above. I also understand that the responses of all participants will be combined in a written report and my individual responses cannot be identified.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand and agree to the use of my responses on this questionnaire.

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand and agree to the use of direct quotes in the final report and that all included quotes will not be identifiable.

☐ Yes ☐ No

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Community Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in our information, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during this project, you may contact the Chair, Community Research Ethics Board, at: Centre for Community Based Research | Attn: Community Research Ethics Office | c/o Conrad Grebel University College | 140 Westmount Road North, Waterloo ON N2L3G5 or by email: creoadmin@communityresearchethics.com

2025 Questionnaire on Creating Choices and Women's corrections

Demographic Information

How much time in total have you spent federally incarcerated in your lifetime?

YEARS: MONTHS: __ ____

How long have you been residing at your current institution?

YEARS: MONTHS: _____

3) How long is the sentence you are currently serving?

Less than 2 years

- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11+ years
- ☐ life sentence

4) How much time have you served on your current sentence?

YEARS: _ MONTHS: _ _____

5) What are the dates of your day and full parole eligibility:

- Day parole eligibility: _____
- Full parole eligibility: _____

6) What is your current security level?

- ☐ Minimum
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Maximum

7) Are you...? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Inuit/Inuk
- ☐ Métis
- ☐ First Nations
- ☐ White

- ☐ South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Latin American
- ☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
- ☐ West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Other group (please specify): _____

8) Do you self-identify as...

- ☐ Cisgender woman
- ☐ Transgender woman
- ☐ Cisgender man
- ☐ Transgender man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ Other: _____

9) Do you identify as a person with a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

10) How old are you?

- ☐ under 25
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65 or older

11) Have you heard of the five principles of Creating Choices (i.e., empowerment, meaningful and responsible choices, respect and dignity, supportive environment, and shared responsibility)?

☐ Yes

Somewhat

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

Please review the five principles of Creating Choices:

Empowerment: increased self-esteem enhances the ability to accept and express responsibility for actions taken and future choices. Accepting and expressing responsibility for oneself promotes strength, good self-esteem, and confidence especially in controlling one's own life. For example, setting meaningful and achievable goals and/or making important decisions.

Meaningful and responsible choices: increased choices both for people who are federally sentenced and for those helping and supporting people who are federally sentenced leads to a more positive future. Responsible choices allow people to gain control over their own lives. For example, feeling supported in making responsible choices.

Respect and dignity: mutual respect is needed among people who are federally sentenced, among staff, and between those who are federally sentenced and staff, to gain both self-respect and respect for others. Respect for oneself and for others is necessary, to take responsibility for the future. For example, feeling that efforts are made to understand and respond to people's different background and individual needs.

Supportive environment: an environment that is positive and mutually supportive that encourages the self-esteem, empowerment, dignity and respect for oneself and others. The quality of an environment can promote physical health, psychological health, personal development, and a meaningful life for people who are federally sentenced. For example, residing in a facility that is designed to support mental and physical needs.

Shared responsibility: development of support systems and continuity of service enables people who are federally sentenced to take responsibility for their lives and be more connected with their communities. Independence and self-reliance will allow people who are federally sentenced to take responsibility for their past, present, and future actions. For example, having opportunities to build a support network.

12) Based on your experience with CSC, how well does your current institution as a whole support each of the five principles of Creating Choices?

(For each of the five Creating Choice principles, please select only one response: Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never)

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Empowerment					
Meaningful and responsible choices					
Respect and dignity					
Supportive environment					
Shared responsibility					

If you wish, please take an opportunity to tell us more about how you rated the institution's support of the principles of Creating Choices:

13) Do you feel that these five Creating Choices principles are important today for women's corrections:

a) Empowerment?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe/it depends
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

b) Meaningful and responsible choices?

- ☐ Yes

☐ Maybe/it depends

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

c) Respect and dignity?

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe/it depends

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

d) Supportive environment?

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe/it depends

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

e) Shared responsibility?

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe/it depends

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

Section 2: Education, Employment, and Programs

14) What was the highest level of schooling that you completed before you began serving your current sentence?

- ☐ Some middle school (up to and including grade 8 but not completing grade 8. In Quebec, this corresponds to primary and secondary education, however, just up to secondary 2, but not completing it)
- ☐ Completed middle school (completed grade 8. If in Quebec, completed secondary 2)
- ☐ Some high school (grades 9-12 or 13/OAC but not completing high school. In Quebec, secondary 3 to 5, but not completing secondary education)
- ☐ Completed high school (completed grade 12 or 13/OAC. If in Quebec, completed secondary education)
- ☐ GED or high school equivalency certificate
- ☐ Some university/college
- ☐ Completed university/college
- ☐ Other (please specify):

15) Are you currently employed or have you previously been employed while at your current institution?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, what type of work assignment did you participate in? (select all that apply)

- ☐ CORCAN shop
- ☐ Non-CORCAN facility
- ☐ Work release
- ☐ Cleaning
- ☐ Kitchen/cooking
- ☐ Maintenance
- ☐ Inmate committee
- ☐ Peer Mentor
- ☐ Peer Advocate
- ☐ Community Services and Stores
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

16) What type of work would you like to do upon release? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Services (e.g., retail, food service, cleaner, esthetician)
- ☐ Food and culinary arts
- ☐ Administration, finance, and entrepreneurship
- ☐ Construction and general labour
- ☐ Health and safety
- ☐ Manufacturing and transportation
- ☐ Information Technology
- ☐ Data analytics
- ☐ Social services/helping sector/peer-based mentorship
- ☐ Graphic design
- ☐ Marketing/sales
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Textiles
- ☐ Managerial/executive
- ☐ Working on the land (i.e., hunting, trapping)
 - ☐ Apprenticeship/Trades (e.g., concrete, electrical, masonry, plumbing, welding, mechanics)
- ☐ Homemaker/parent
- Child-care provider
- Teacher/educator
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

17) What kind of course(s) would be useful to you to help gain employment in the community? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Basic education (i.e., Adult Basic Education, language)
- ☐ Financial Literacy
- ☐ Self-employment courses or courses for building businesses
- ☐ On-the-job training
- Apprenticeship/Trades (e.g., concrete, electrical, masonry, plumbing, welding, mechanics)
- ☐ Vocational training/certification (e.g., First Aid, WHMIS, working at heights, food, culinary arts, esthetician, hair)
- ☐ Business skills
- ☐ Fundamental computer skills (typing, saving documents, using the internet)
- ☐ Digital software training (Microsoft word, Microsoft Excel, adobe)
- ☐ Soft skills (e.g., essential employability skills: communication, time management, writing)

Higher education (e.g., college, university)

- ☐ Educational programs for or about Indigenous peoples, culture, language, etc.
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify):

18) Have you accessed the services of a Peer Mentor at your institution?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

If yes, how did you hear about the Peer Mentorship Program at your institution? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Social Program Officer
- ☐ Correctional Program Officer
- ☐ Behavioural Interventionist
- ☐ Primary Worker
- ☐ Parole Officer
- ☐ Peers or other incarcerated people
- ☐ Inmate Handbook
- ☐ Poster/flyer or other promotional material
- ☐ Community organization
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

19) Have you been a peer mentor before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

If yes, how would you describe that experience?

Section 3: Children and the Mother Child Program

20) Are you the parent of minor children, or are you currently pregnant?

(For this questionnaire, minor children refer to children under the age of 18)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

→ If yes, how many minor children do you have? _____

NOTE: IF YOU DO NOT HAVE CHILDREN, PLEASE SKIP AHEAD TO SECTION 4 (Page 12)

21) Have you applied to the Mother-Child Program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you did not apply to the Mother-Child Program, please explain why:

NOTE: IF YOU HAVE NOT APPLIED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MOTHER-CHILD PROGRAM, PLEASE SKIP AHEAD TO QUESTION #30 (page 10)

22) How did you hear about the Mother-Child Program? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Parole Officer
- ☐ Mother-Child Program Coordinator
- ☐ Primary Worker
- ☐ Peers or other incarcerated people
- ☐ Inmate Handbook
- ☐ Poster/flyer or other promotional material
- ☐ Community organization
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

23) Have you participated in the on-site component of the Mother-Child Program? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Yes – Full time
- ☐ Yes – Part time
- ☐ Yes – during private family visits with no accompanying adult

☐ No

24) Have you participated in the “other bonding services” component of the Program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

If yes, please describe:

25) Did you face any of the following challenges to parenting during the application process (before your child was born/approved to enter the institution)? (select all that apply)

☐ There were no challenges

☐ Difficulty with the application process

☐ Difficulty to provide for my child(ren) financially, emotionally, or physically

☐ Difficulty accessing community support

☐ Lack of preparation before birth (appointments, birth plan, building a support system)

☐ Difficulty transporting my child(ren) to the institution for regular visits

☐ Difficulty maintaining phone communication

☐ Limited availability in the Private Family Visit (PFV) Units (part-time participants only)

☐ Other (please specify): _____

→ If you indicated that there was limited availability in the PFV units, please explain why there was limited availability (if known):

26) Did you face any of the following challenges while taking part in the Mother-Child Program?

(select all that apply)

☐ There were no challenges

- ☐ Difficulty to provide for my child(ren) financially, emotionally, or physically
- ☐ Difficulty accessing community support
- ☐ Difficulties in the institution
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

27) Do you believe that participation in the Mother-Child Program was beneficial for your child?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Please explain:

28) Do you believe that participation in the Mother-Child Program was beneficial for you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Please explain:

29) Do you think there are problems with the Mother-Child Program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

→ Please explain:

30) If you have not taken part in the Mother-Child program, what are the reasons for why you did not participate? (Select all that apply):

- ☐ I am not eligible for the program
- ☐ I do not want to remove my child[ren] from their community
- ☐ I do not think that prison is a place for children
- ☐ I do not think my child[ren] will be safe with me in prison
- ☐ Child Welfare Agency not supportive
- ☐ Child Welfare Agency supportive, but not the Case Management Team
- ☐ The application process was not completed on time
- ☐ No transportation for the child(ren) (part-time participants only)
- ☐ Withdrawal of application
- ☐ Limited availability
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

→ If you selected “Withdrawal of application”, please explain why you withdrew your application:

31) How much contact have you had with your minor child(ren) since you have come to prison?

(For this questionnaire, minor children refer to children under the age of 18). If response differs by child, you can select all that apply.

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly

- ☐ Yearly
- ☐ They live with me as part of the Mother-Child program
- ☐ None
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

32) Have you experienced any challenges with keeping in contact with your minor child(ren)?

(For this questionnaire, minor children refer to children under the age of 18)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

If so, what kind of challenges have you faced? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Accommodation (e.g., hotels or access to Private Family Visits)
- ☐ Location of institution
- ☐ Coordination with current caregiver
- ☐ Costs of caregiver travel
- ☐ Cost of communication (e.g., telephone or internet)
- ☐ Institution-related (e.g., lockdowns, COVID-19 restrictions)
- ☐ Emotional (e.g., children get upset)
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

33) How important is it for you to have custody of your minor child(ren) upon release?

(For this questionnaire, minor children refer to children under the age of 18)

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not at all important
- ☐ Not applicable

Please explain:

34) Do you have any other worries about your minor child(ren) upon your release?

(For this questionnaire, minor children refer to children under the age of 18) (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Financial support
- ☐ Accommodation/housing
- ☐ Access to the children/custody
- ☐ Getting to know them again
- ☐ Emotional challenges
- ☐ Parenting skills
- ☐ I don't have any worries
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Section 4: Family and Community Supports

35) How much contact have you had with your family (excluding your minor children), friends or community supports since your incarceration?

(For this questionnaire, minor children refer to children under the age of 18)

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Yearly
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Specifically, who have you been in contact with? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Spouse/common-law/partner
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Relatives/extended family

- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Community advocacy group/representative/justice committee
- ☐ Elder(s) or Spiritual Advisor(s)
- ☐ Chaplain or spiritual leader
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Has this contact been through: (Select all that apply)

- ☐ In-person visits
- ☐ Private Family Visits (PFV)
- ☐ Family day at the institution
- ☐ Letters
- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Video calls/virtual visits
- ☐ Temporary absence (ETA/UTA)
- ☐ Social event at the institution
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

36) How often do you receive in-person visits?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ 2-5 times per year
- ☐ 6-10 times per year
- ☐ Yearly
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ Does not apply

37) What factors influence the frequency of in-person visits you receive? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Distance for my visitors to travel to the institution
- ☐ Transportation and/or accommodation costs for my family/friends/community supports
- ☐ The institutional environment/environment of the visiting area
- ☐ Visitor approval process

- ☐ Accessibility of the institution/visiting space for my family/friends/community supports
- ☐ The timing of visits (for example: visits take place in the daytime and visitor works full time)
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

38) Have you experienced any challenges to keeping in touch with family (excluding your minor children), friends, or community supports during your incarceration? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Costs (e.g., long distance calls, stamps and envelopes)
- ☐ Availability of Private Family Visits
- ☐ Institution-related (e.g., lockdowns, COVID-19 restrictions)
- ☐ Emotional difficulties
- ☐ Technological challenges (e.g., family has limited access to technology)
- ☐ Suspension of visits
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Section 5: Institutional Support and Release Planning

39) What is most important to you in a correctional institution? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Being as close to home as possible
- ☐ Being close to my social supports
- ☐ Being close to my children
- ☐ Being in a culturally responsive environment
- ☐ Having access to programs that I need
- ☐ Having access to supports and services in my official language of choice
- ☐ Having access to cultural supports
- ☐ Having access to employment and/or education programs of interest
- ☐ Being with people serving sentences like mine
- ☐ Feeling safe
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

40) Does your current institution meet the needs most important to you (identified in question 39)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat

- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

41) Do you feel safe and secure at the institution where you currently live?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never
- ☐ I don't know

Please explain:

42) Do you feel that the information recorded in your correctional plan and reports accurately reflects your needs, who you are as a person, and your time in custody?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

43) Are you familiar with the inmate grievance process?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

☐ I am not sure

If so, how would you describe the inmate grievance process?

☐ Very good

☐ Good

☐ Acceptable

☐ Poor

☐ Very poor

☐ Unsure/haven't used before

Is there anything we should know about the process? Please explain:

44) In preparation for release, what life skills would be of assistance to you to learn while incarcerated?

☐ Financial budgeting

☐ Cooking

☐ Banking

☐ Filing taxes

☐ Parenting

☐ Trauma counselling

☐ Creating a resume/completing a job application

☐ Business Planning/entrepreneurship

☐ Use of technology

☐ I am not sure

☐ None of the above

☐ Other (please specify): _____

45) Do you think you will use community services once you are released (i.e., to find a job, to find accommodation)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

If yes, what community services will be important to you? (Select all that apply)

☐ Help finding a place to live

☐ Half-way house

- ☐ Help finding a job
- ☐ Training for a job
- ☐ Help with substance use and relapse prevention
- ☐ Help with mental health/mental wellness
- ☐ Parenting help
- ☐ Budgeting services
- ☐ Assistance starting own business
- ☐ Cultural ceremonies and events
- ☐ Other (please specify):

46) To your knowledge, are the community services you require available in the community you wish to be released to?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

47) Is it preferable to return to the community that you were living in before you were incarcerated (e.g., your home community)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

48) Have you worked with an Ethnocultural Liaison Officer?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

If yes, has this person provided you with good information about what to expect upon release?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

If yes, has this person provided you with information about what community resources are available to you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

Please read:

Section 81 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) allows an Indigenous community to provide correctional services to incarcerated Indigenous peoples. An Indigenous person in custody at CSC may be transferred to the care and custody of a facility in an Indigenous community. In addition, the Section 81 facility may supervise on day or full parole or statutory release. A Section 81 facility incorporated Indigenous values, Indigenous traditions, and Indigenous beliefs, as well as Indigenous concepts of justice and reconciliation. The approach to corrections is holistic and spiritual and programs include guidance and support from Elders and Indigenous communities.

Section 84 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) applies to people in custody who want to serve their eventual conditional or statutory release in an Indigenous community, or in an urban area with the support and direction of an Indigenous organization. It also applies to people who are subject to long-term supervision orders (LTSOs).

49) Were you advised of the Section 81 and/or 84 release options?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

50) Are you interested in Section 81 or 84 release options?

- ☐ Yes

- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

51) Have you worked with an Indigenous Community Liaison Officer?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

If yes, has this person provided you with good information about what to expect upon release?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

If yes, has this person provided you with information about what community resources are available to you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

If yes, has this person linked you to an Indigenous community or your home community?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

Section 6: Cultural Supports and Resources

52) Do you feel that you have access to Indigenous Interventions within your site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

53) Do you feel that you have access to Indigenous resources at your site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

54) Do you feel that you have the opportunity to:

a) engage with an Elder/Spiritual Advisor/Elder Helper?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

b) participate in the Pathways Initiative?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

c) participate in Indigenous program streams?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Not applicable

d) practice your culture?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

☐ Not applicable

55) Are you aware of the Indigenous Continuum of Care?

☐ Yes

☐ Somewhat

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

☐ Not applicable

56) Are you aware of the Pathways Initiative?

☐ Yes

☐ Somewhat

☐ No

☐ I am not sure

☐ Not applicable

57) What Indigenous activities do you engage in that support your overall well-being?

a) smudging:

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

b) prayer:

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

c) sweat lodge:

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

d) other (please specify): _____

58) Overall, Do you feel that your current institution meets your spiritual needs?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Usually
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never
- ☐ I am not sure

59) Is there anything else we should know about your experience with Indigenous Corrections:

Section 7: Gender Diversity

Please read:

Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has a duty to accommodate based on gender identity or gender expression, regardless of a person's anatomy (i.e., sex) or their gender/sex marker on their identification documents.

60) Does the institution where you currently live meet the needs of gender diverse federally incarcerated individuals?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

Please explain:

61) With respect to gender diversity, which areas do you believe requires improvement?

(Select all that apply)

- ☐ Use chosen first and/or middle name(s)
- ☐ Use of chosen pronoun(s)

- ☐ Search protocol
- ☐ Urinalysis protocol
- ☐ Access to private and safe showers and/or toilets
- ☐ Observation protocol
- ☐ Decontamination shower protocol
- ☐ Voluntary nudity protocol
- ☐ Medical escort protocol
- ☐ Type of facility requested
- ☐ Support from institutional staff
- ☐ Gender affirming clothing
- ☐ Gender affirming products (e.g., hygiene products, wigs)
- ☐ Other gender-related accommodation (please specify): _____

Please explain:

Section 8: General Improvements

What would you change or improve about your current institution to further support you and/or better align with the principles of Creating Choices?

Thank you for your participation!

