

SECTION 3:  
PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMISSION ON FIRST NATION  
AND METIS PEOPLE  
AND JUSTICE REFORM

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA  
MAY 2003



In Saskatchewan, the Correctional Service of Canada has the highest proportion of Aboriginal offenders in the country. Over the past several years CSC has taken many measures to promote a correctional process that will respond to the needs of the Aboriginal offenders in our care as well as to the Aboriginal communities to which these offenders belong.

Among the measures we have taken, there are many that have had important impacts on the delivery of services to Aboriginal offenders. We know as well, that there are important issues we must yet improve upon or deal with in order for us to say that we are truly providing a service that responds to the needs of the Aboriginal community and the Aboriginal offenders.

Our objective in making this presentation to the Commission is to share with the Commission information about those initiatives that we feel have impacted positively on the safe reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. We also wish to provide comment on those areas where we can do a better job, and on those areas where CSC can contribute to the larger social agenda and criminal justice system that impacts on Aboriginal people in this province.

In so doing, we will keep in mind the three questions the Commission has asked:

- What concerns do you have with the justice system?
- What examples of successes or positive programs have you seen?
- How do you think the justice system can be improved?

SECTION 1	Mandate, Roles, and Responsibilities
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## SECTION I - MANDATE, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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### STRUCTURE

The purpose of the federal correctional system, as articulated in Section 3 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act 1992 is:

*‘..to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by:*

- (a) carrying out sentences imposed by courts through the safe and humane custody and supervision of offenders; and*
- (b) assisting the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens through the provision of programs in penitentiaries and in the community.”*

The Correctional Service of Canada, an agency within the Portfolio of the Solicitor General, is responsible for administering sentences for offenders serving sentences of two years or more. The Portfolio also includes the Solicitor General Secretariat, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the National Parole Board, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Office of the Correctional Investigator.

CSC currently manages 52 federal penitentiaries; 17 community correctional centres for offenders on conditional release; and 71 parole offices. In addition to federally-operated facilities, CSC manages a wide variety of exchange of service agreements with provincial correctional systems and with Aboriginal communities to provide correctional services and programs for federal offenders. CSC also contracts with non-government agencies which operate 170 community-based residential facilities to address the accommodation needs of released offenders. Each day, there are approximately 21,000 offenders under federal jurisdiction, of whom 12,600 are incarcerated. The remainder are under some form of supervision in the community.

Across the country, CSC is broken into 5 Regions; each managed by a Deputy Commissioner. The Prairie Region comprises Northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The following chart shows the breakdown of offenders in the Prairie Region and in Saskatchewan:

	Institution	M	F	Community	M	F
<b>Region</b>	3123	2988	135	1965	1839	126
<b>Aboriginal</b>	1328	1251	77	619	569	50
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	835	802	33	320	297	23
<b>Aboriginal</b>	512	485	27	166	148	18

The following chart shows the detailed population breakdown by facility in Saskatchewan:

Population Breakdown for Saskatchewan by Institution and District Office								
	First Nation		Metis		Inuit		Total Aboriginal	
	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop
Sask Pen	246	47.95%	73	14.23%	0	0%	319	62.18%
OOHL	20	71.43%	4	14.29%	0	0%	24	85.72%
Riverbend	42	42.00%	11	11.00%	0	0%	53	53.00%
RPC	68	36.75%	29	15.67%	5	2.70%	102	55.12%
Sask District	124	39.49%	37	11.78%	2	0.63%	163	51.90%

Saskatchewan has the highest proportion of Aboriginal offenders in Canada. The following chart shows the population breakdown for Saskatchewan compared to Manitoba, Alberta and Canada as a whole:

Aboriginal Inmate Population: Comparing Sask/Alta/Man with National Population								
	National		Saskatchewan		Manitoba		Alberta	
	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop
First Nation	1630	12.10%	376	45.52%	206	34.04%	338	19.76%
Metis	676	5.03%	117	14.16%	97	16.03%	177	10.35%
Inuit	89	0.66%	5	0.60%	1	0.16%	10	0.68%
Total Aboriginal	2395	17.79%	498	60.28%	304	50.23%	525	30.70%

Conditionally Released Aboriginal Offenders: Comparing Sask/Alta/Man with National Population								
	National		Saskatchewan		Manitoba		Alberta	
	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop	#	% of Pop
First Nation	812	8.69%	124	39.49%	115	24.46%	158	13.49%
Metis	327	3.50%	37	11.78%	61	12.97%	101	8.62%
Inuit	39	0.42%	2	0.63%	0	0.00%	14	1.19%
Total Aboriginal	1178	12.61%	163	51.90%	176	37.43%	273	23.30%

\*numerical differences between the above three charts and the chart on page 3 are attributable to different data sources.

## MANDATE

Consistent with the mandate given us by the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, our Mission reads as follows:

*“The Correctional Service of Canada, as part of the criminal justice system and respecting the rule of law, contributes to the protection of society by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane control.”*

The Mission provides focus for CSC in the two key areas of:

1. The safe care and custody of offenders; and
2. The safe reintegration of offenders back into society.

Safe care and custody of offenders is critical to our mandate to protect society, but in the long run, the safe reintegration of offenders is the aspect of our Mission that is paramount. As shown by the figures in the charts above, safe reintegration of the Aboriginal offenders in our care and custody is a critical piece of the work we do, and it is therefore the aspect of reintegration that we wish to focus on in our discussions with the Commission.

In fact, of the four Corporate Objectives CSC had set for itself over the 2002/2005 period, two of them are directly related:

### **1. To maximize the potential of offenders to safely reintegrate into the community.**

The Service will ensure that offenders are well prepared for safe and timely release and enhance their potential to succeed in the community. Our policies, programs and services will be gender specific and tailored to reflect and respect the diversity of our offenders and the communities from which they come. We will engage the members of the community and our national and international partners in the development of our policies and practices. We will encourage citizens to become actively involved in our efforts to contribute to the safety and well being of communities. We will keep staff and citizens informed about the federal correctional system, its commitments and its results.

### **2. To contribute to the reduction of the incarceration rate of Aboriginal offenders**

The Service will work with Aboriginal peoples, partners and the community to advance Government initiatives aimed at reducing the over representation of Aboriginal peoples within the criminal justice system within one generation, as stated in the Government’s Throne Speech delivered in January 2001. We will demonstrate leadership by sharing knowledge and expertise thus contributing to crime prevention efforts. We will create specific strategies and undertake collaborative initiatives to minimize the number of aboriginal offenders returning to criminal activity and to institutions. Working with Aboriginal peoples, we will ensure a continuum of Aboriginal-specific institutional and community developments in corrections.

Our ability to assist with the safe reintegration of Aboriginal offenders back into the community is dependent on our success in achieving these corporate objectives. The process of reintegration is a complex one, involving the interplay of a variety of resources and sectors, both public and government. Our business line description of the reintegration process describes the interplay of resources within CSC:

‘Provision of a range of services and programs both in the institutions and community settings designed to promote the reintegration of offenders, including case management, psychological and chaplain services, residential services, academic and vocational training, employment and occupational development, living skills, substance abuse and other personal development programs and other programs designed to address specific cultural, social, spiritual and other personal needs.’

## REINTEGRATION

In the early 1990's, CSC developed a Correctional Strategy to bring together key activities that promote safe reintegration. There are four main components:

- A comprehensive, baseline offender intake assessment to determine security needs, potential for safe reintegration and programming/service needs. This assessment, using research-based tools validated with the federal population, is the basis for developing a multi-disciplinary case plan for treatment and intervention throughout the sentence.
- Institutional intervention to address individual risk for reoffending, including the delivery of research-based programs that are demonstrated to be effective in reducing recidivism. A multi-faceted program model offers a broad range of institutional programs varying in intensity and designed to match offenders' needs to enhance treatment effectiveness.
- Risk reassessment for correctional decision-making throughout the sentence, to address public safety and to ensure the least restrictive measure consistent with public safety.
- Community supervision to provide continuity of the individual's correctional plan developed in the institution and to monitor offender progress, based on his/her assessed potential for safe reintegration.

The challenge for our correctional system is to provide services in each of these key areas that are relevant to the needs of Aboriginal offenders. Risk assessment, for example, assesses historical factors as one predictor of risk. Aboriginal offenders tend to have more severe and extensive histories of violence and, as a result, this will result in a higher level of risk using current actuarial tools. The issue of risk assessment for Aboriginal offenders is one that CSC is in the process of examining to determine if there are any specific cultural factors that should be taken into account.

The programming we offer to offenders has the reduction of re-offending behaviour as the primary objective. The correctional programs we provide to offenders are interventions designed to address those factors that contribute directly to criminal behaviour. The most prominent contributing factors are cognitive deficiencies (the mental process by which learning takes place), substance abuse, illiteracy, mental illness, sexual deviancy, family violence and antisocial values, attitudes and behaviours. An important initiative for CSC has been to develop programs that respond to the traditional and cultural values of Aboriginal offenders, and at the same time are seen to address these contributing factors. These efforts will be discussed further in this document.

The final element, that of community supervision, will be discussed throughout this document. We recognize that to achieve success in the safe reintegration it is essential that Aboriginal communities be active partners with CSC in assisting offenders while in the correctional system and beyond.

The Corrections and Conditional Release Act recognizes this and provides direction to CSC through the following sections:

80. Without limiting the generality of section 76, the Service shall provide programs designed particularly to address the needs of aboriginal offenders.

Not only, then, must CSC provide programming that respond to the traditional and spiritual needs of offenders for good correctional reasons of promoting safe reintegration; it is a legal responsibility.

81. (1) The Minister, or a person authorized by the Minister, may enter into an agreement with an aboriginal community for the provision of correctional services to aboriginal offenders and for payment by the Minister, or by a person authorized by the Minister, in respect of the provision of those services.



- (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), an agreement entered into under that subsection may provide for the provision of correctional services to a non-aboriginal offender.
- (3) In accordance with any agreement entered into under subsection (1), the Commissioner may transfer an offender to the care and custody of an aboriginal community, with the consent of the offender and of the aboriginal community.

Section 81 provides opportunities for CSC and Aboriginal communities to enter into formal partnerships. CSC has established some agreements that provide for the care and custody of Aboriginal offender. This is unique because it actually provides a means to transfer inmates from CSC custody to that of the Aboriginal community.

84. Where an inmate who is applying for parole has expressed an interest in being released to an aboriginal community, the Service shall, if the inmate consents, give the aboriginal community

- (a) adequate notice of the inmate's parole application; and
- (b) an opportunity to propose a plan for the inmate's release to, and integration into, the aboriginal community.

Section 84 places a legal responsibility on CSC to provide the Aboriginal community with the opportunity to participate in the release planning process. Engaging the community is a good correctional practice that CSC should be following in any event. This legislation reinforces that fact with respect to the engagement of the Aboriginal community in this process.

Some of CSC's activities in this area will be discussed further in this document.

## SECTION 2 – THE FEDERAL ABORIGINAL OFFENDER POPULATION

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The fastest growing segment of Canada's federal offender population are representative of the most socially-marginalized populations in Canada (e.g. Aboriginal people, women living in poverty and substance abusers) presenting many challenges for both institutional population management and reintegration management. The diversity of this population appears to reflect the cumulative effect of socio-economic trends, demographic changes, alternative measures and diversion programs, and sentencing reforms.

Continued over representation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada's criminal justice system is a major concern. While they represent approximately 13% of Saskatchewan's population according to Statistics Canada, they comprise 60% of the inmates in our federal institutions. When you consider the characteristics of the people who come into conflict with the law, it is no surprise. Poverty, lack of education and age demographics within the Aboriginal population are all consistent with the characteristics of our federal offender population.

This is not to suggest that these measures alone are the determinants of the over representation of Aboriginal people in our criminal justice system. Carol LaPrairie<sup>1</sup> proposes a multi-dimensional model incorporating cultural, structural, historical and contemporary dimensions. She notes that the demise of traditional interdependencies accompanied by an increased dependency on external institutions is at the heart of this model.

The fact is federal offenders come from our communities and the majority will return to those same communities. CSC has introduced, and will continue to introduce, programs and services to address the needs of First Nation and Metis offenders to the best of our ability, but these offenders will return to the community at some point. As LaPrairie<sup>2</sup> points out, there are two types of reintegration:

- Reintegration into home communities which are also the environments which caused their initial problems; or
- Reintegration into families and communities which promote behavioural change and the adoption of pro-social attitudes.

To assess the magnitude of the challenge we face in achieving the second type of reintegration we need only look at the Canada West Foundation<sup>3</sup> report's findings on the state of our Aboriginal population in Saskatoon:

- The percentage of the Aboriginal population that are single parents is 10.8% compared to 3.7% for the non-Aboriginal population;
- 48% of the Aboriginal population have attained less than grade 12 compared to 32% for the non-Aboriginal population;
- 25.1% of the Aboriginal population are unemployed compared to 6.8% of the non-Aboriginal population; and,
- 51.3% of the Aboriginal population 15 years and over report a total 1995 income below \$10,000 compared to 27.3% of the non-Aboriginal population.

The offender who returns to the first type of reintegration environment starts with a disadvantage. We see positive change as a result of the interventions carried out in our institutions, however the ultimate success in preventing a re-offence is dependent on the support structure in the community to which an offender returns. If the positive behaviours learned through CSC programming cannot be maintained and reinforced, the individual is at risk of returning to criminal behaviour.

<sup>1</sup>LaPrairie, 1996

<sup>2</sup>LaPrairie, 1996

<sup>3</sup>Canada West Foundation, 2001

The Nechi Institute<sup>4</sup> in their research 'Healing, Spirit and Recovery; Factors Associated with Successful Reintegration' noted that offenders who succeeded attributed their success to the influence of spirituality. Other factors were present, however, suggesting that the overall well being of the community into which they reintegrated played an important role in their success.

## SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF ABORIGINAL OFFENDERS

As is evident in the Canadian population generally, the population of Aboriginal offenders has unique characteristics that set it apart from the non-Aboriginal population. Although the offender population has characteristics that are common (substance abuse and addictions; lower levels of education; previous criminal history; poor employment history; and dysfunctional family history) the population of Aboriginal offenders stands out as having higher incidences of many of these characteristics:

- 72% of the Aboriginal offender population in the Prairie Region are serving sentences for offences under Schedule 1 of the CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT compared to 55% of the non-Aboriginal offender population. This is significant, as Schedule 1 offences are violent offences and offences against the person. This impacts on risk and need assessment and on the correctional planning process, often resulting in a requirement for more intensive programming to address needs.
- CSC assesses offenders at three levels of risk and need: low, medium and high. 63% of Aboriginal offenders are assessed as both high risk and high need offenders compared to 46% of the non-Aboriginal offender population assessed as high risk/high need.
- Despite the factors described above, Aboriginal offenders tend to be sentenced to shorter periods of incarceration on average than non-Aboriginal offenders. 63.8 % of Aboriginal inmates in the Prairie Region are serving sentences of 5 years or less compared to 60% of non-Aboriginal inmates.
- 20% of Aboriginal offenders in the Prairie Region are sentenced to a sexual offence compared to 15% of non-Aboriginal offenders. Again, this is significant as treatment issues for sex offending behaviour may require greater intensity. Public attitudes toward anyone with a sex offence present special challenges for reintegration.
- Aboriginal offenders have experienced greater dislocation from family. This can be seen in the high numbers of Aboriginal inmates who have been involved in the child welfare system at some point in their lives. Trevethan<sup>5</sup> found that 63% of Aboriginal inmates compared to 36% of non-Aboriginal inmates have been involved with the child welfare system. Also, 50% of Aboriginal inmates reported an unstable adolescence compared to 33.3% of non-Aboriginal inmates.
- Corrado and Cohen<sup>6</sup> found that other indicators of stability, such as family violence, drug/alcohol problems in the same home environment, were evident in young offenders. His research shows that 53.3% of Aboriginal males are victims of physical abuse and 75% of Aboriginal females are victims, while 44.5% of non-Aboriginal Males and 55.3% of non-Aboriginal females were victims. 19.3% of Aboriginal males and 57.6 % of Aboriginal females were subject to sexual abuse, where as 17.3% of non-Aboriginal males and 33.8% of non-Aboriginal females have had the same experience. The statistics for the Aboriginal youth offender show a troubling high rate of instability in their families as compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts.
- 76% of Aboriginal offenders were identified as having some needs in the area of substance abuse. When a link was made to the substance abuse as a contributing factor to their offence, 63% of Aboriginal offenders were found to meet that category. Figures for non-Aboriginal offenders are 60% and 41 % respectively.

<sup>4</sup>Nechi Institute and KAS Corporation Ltd., 1994

<sup>5</sup>Trevethan et al, 2001

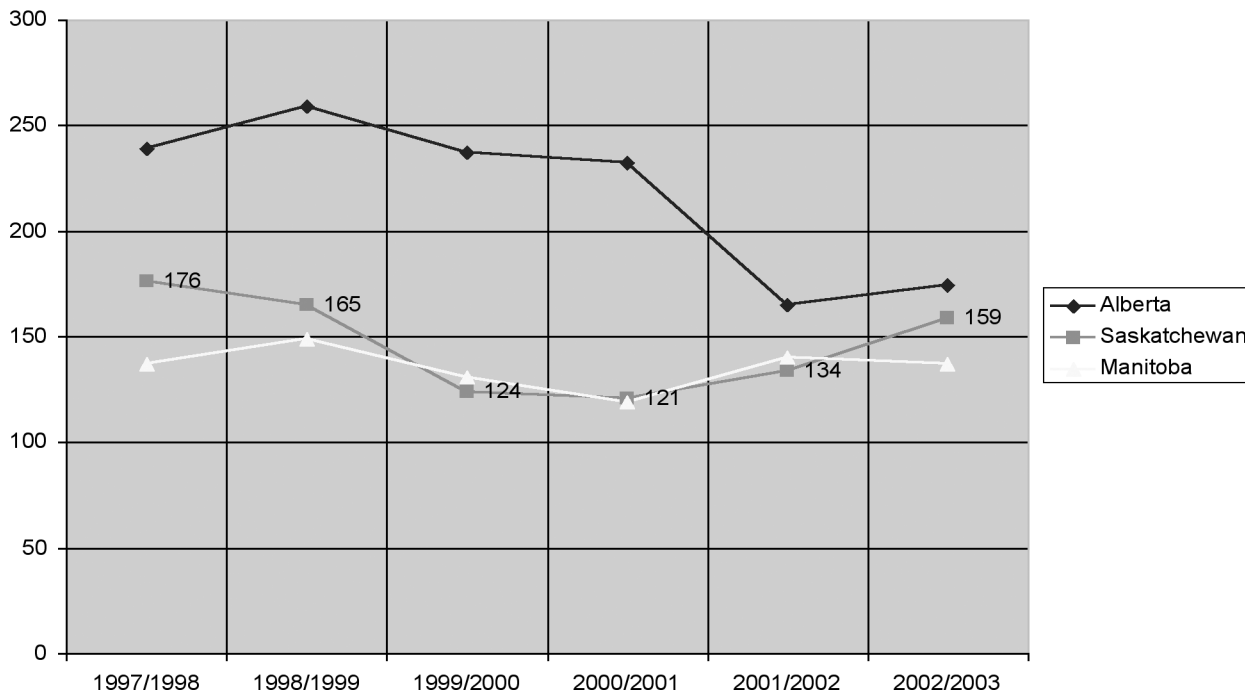
<sup>6</sup>Corrado and Cohen, 2002

- Based on tests administered to inmates at intake, only 13.6% of Aboriginal inmates tested at a grade 12 or higher level, compared to 32.6% of non-Aboriginal inmates. 50% of Aboriginal inmates tested at a level of at least grade 9 to grade 11 completion, compared to 51% of non-Aboriginal inmates. This means that 36.4% of Aboriginal inmates did not test beyond the level of grade 8 academic standing whereas 16.4% of non-Aboriginal inmates did not test beyond grade 8.

## SOME BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

The following chart shows the rate of intake of Aboriginal inmates from the courts over a 6 year period. Following a decline between 98/99 and 2000/01 the trend for admissions in Saskatchewan is again increasing and approaching levels from 98/99. As a percentage of total federal admissions in Saskatchewan Aboriginal offenders accounted for 68% (02/03), 58% (01/02), 58% (01/02) and 62% (00/01).

**Warrants of Committal Aboriginal Offenders by Province**



The following chart tracks the location of Aboriginal offenders on conditional release in Saskatchewan. About 65% of Aboriginal offenders reside in Prince Albert, Saskatoon or Regina. Many of the urban residents reside in Community Residential Facilities or at Oskana Centre in Regina on Day Parole or residency condition and some may return to rural communities. While there is a substantial grouping in the major urban centres there are also many Aboriginal offenders in small rural communities or reserves. The data is presented in this manner to show the numbers of communities affected throughout Saskatchewan. Offenders on conditional release have differing needs that must be met, and we must rely on the availability of services in these areas to meet those needs.

ABORIGINAL OFFENDERS ON CONDITIONAL RELEASE IN SASKATCHEWAN BY HOME COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY	INUIT	METIS	FIRST NATION	Grand Total
CHRISTOPHER LAKE	0	2	0	2
CUMBERLAND HOUSE	0	0	2	2
DESCHAMBEAULT LAKE	0	0	1	1
BUFFALO RIVER FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
DUCK LAKE	0	0	1	1
FORT QU'APPELLE	0	0	2	2
GALLIVAN	0	0	1	1
GREEN LAKE	0	1	0	1
GRENFELL	0	0	1	1
JAMES SMITH FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
KINISTINO	0	0	1	1
LA RONGE	0	2	3	5
LANGENBURG	0	0	1	1
LEBRET	0	0	1	1
LOON LAKE	0	0	1	1
MAPLE CREEK	0	0	1	1
MEADOW LAKE	0	1	1	2
MELVILLE	0	0	1	1
MISTAWASIS FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
MOOSE JAW	0	0	1	1
MOOSOMIN	0	1	0	1
MUSKODAY FIRST NATION	0	1	1	2
NIPAWIN	0	0	2	2
NORTH BATTLEFORD	0	0	2	2
PIERCELAND	0	0	2	2
PORCUPINE PLAIN	0	1	0	1
PRINCE ALBERT	0	8	15	23
PRUD HOMME	0	0	1	1
REGINA	0	12	31	43
RHEIN	0	0	1	1
SASKATOON	0	10	32	42
SPIRITWOOD	0	0	1	1
ST. WALBURG	0	0	1	1
STANLEY MISSION	0	0	1	1
WHITEFISH FN HOUSE	0	0	1	1
YELLOW QUILL FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
YORKTON	0	0	2	2
AHTAHKAKOOP FIRST NATION	0	0	2	2

COMMUNITY	INUIT	METIS	FIRST NATION	Grand Total
KAHKEWISTAHAW FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
RED PHEASANT FIRST NATION	0	0	2	2
MOOSOMIN FIRST NATION	0	0	2	2
POUNDMAKER FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
MUSCOWPETUNG FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
MINISTIKWAN FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
ONION LAKE FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
WAHPETON FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
PIAPOT FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
PEEPEEKISIS FIRST NATION	0	0	1	1
REGINA	1	0	0	1
Grand Total	1	39	130	170

Note: The highlighted cities includes residential facilities, CCCs & CRFs and not necessarily home addresses..

\* Differences in totals between this chart and those on pages 3 & 4 are attributable to different data sources.

The following chart provides an indication of where offenders have been sentenced. The data provides some indication of where the Aboriginal offenders in federal custody and on conditional release resided at the time of the commission of their offence.

Offenders from a Saskatchewan Place of Sentence				
CITY	RACE	FEMALE	MALE	Grand Total
BATTLEFORDS	METIS	0	9	9
	FIRST NATION	4	45	49
<b>BATTLEFORDS Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>58</b>
ESTEVAN	FIRST NATION	1	3	4
<b>ESTEVAN Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
LA RONGE	METIS	0	2	2
	FIRST NATION	0	14	14
<b>LA RONGE Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>
LLOYDMINSTER	METIS	0	3	3
	FIRST NATION	0	12	12
<b>LLOYDMINSTER Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
MEADOW LAKE	METIS	1	18	19
	FIRST NATION	0	42	42
<b>MEADOW LAKE Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>61</b>
MELFORT	METIS	0	5	5
	FIRST NATION	1	16	17
<b>MELFORT Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
MELVILLE	METIS	0	1	1
	FIRST NATION	0	2	2
<b>MELVILLE Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
MOOSE JAW	METIS	0	5	5
	FIRST NATION	0	2	2
<b>MOOSE JAW Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
PRINCE ALBERT	INUIT	1	0	1
	METIS	5	52	57
	FIRST NATION	21	131	152
<b>PRINCE ALBERT Total</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>210</b>
REGINA	METIS	0	35	35
	FIRST NATION	15	166	181
<b>REGINA Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>216</b>
SASKATOON	INUIT	1	0	1
	METIS	2	38	40
	FIRST NATION	11	120	131
<b>SASKATOON Total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>172</b>
SWIFT CURRENT	METIS	2	1	3
	FIRST NATION	6	3	9
<b>SWIFT CURRENT Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>
WEYBURN	FIRST NATION	0	1	1
<b>WEYBURN Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
WYNYARD	FIRST NATION	0	10	10
<b>WYNYARD Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
YORKTON	METIS	0	1	1
	FIRST NATION	3	25	28
<b>YORKTON Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>74</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>836</b>

Note: Three highlighted cities are the judicial Centres in Sask. Most Queen Bench sittings at these sites.

Note: Northern cases are usually sentenced in Prince Albert or North Battleford, not necessarily in their home towns.

\* the figures in this table reflect the numbers of Aboriginal offenders by sentence location. They do not reflect the numbers of Aboriginal offenders currently in Saskatchewan as offenders may have moved to other provinces, either through transfers as inmates, or while on conditional release. The data also includes offenders

who may not be from Saskatchewan, but who have been sentenced in the province. The data presented provides some indication of the extent to which communities have people from their area sentenced to a federal term of incarceration.



## SECTION 3 - PROMOTING A CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL OFFENDERS

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The Correctional Service of Canada has established an international reputation in the corrections community as a leader in the application of research based programs and services that promote the safe reintegration of offenders. Our Correctional Strategy provided a framework to integrate our case management, programming and community supervision elements.

This strategy is applicable to all offenders, however CSC has also developed initiatives that will more appropriately respond to the particular needs of Aboriginal offenders. Some of these initiatives will be discussed in this section. We wish to emphasize that the ultimate success of these initiatives will come from our ability to work in co-operation with people from the Aboriginal community in implementing these initiatives. The knowledge and skills reside in the communities. CSC must engage that knowledge and skill in a correctional environment that, by its very nature, is foreign to the culture and values of First Nations and Metis people.

### SPIRITUALITY, TRADITION AND CULTURE

The role of spirituality, tradition and culture has come to play an important role within CSC in our efforts to promote the safe reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. Organizationally, CSC has much to learn about the protocols and traditions of the Elders, however we have learned that they are a powerful and positive influence on those offenders who wish to learn their culture and apply its teachings in their everyday life.

It has been said in the past, and, unfortunately, remains true to some extent today, that the first exposure many offenders have to their culture and traditions is in Saskatchewan Penitentiary through the cultural and spiritual programs that are in place. For those offenders who choose to participate, the teachings of the Elders present opportunities for change.

Elders tell us that they fulfill many roles. We know that Elders have different talents and teachings, and that they work in different ways according to their individual protocols and traditions. One Elder described her role in this fashion (these are not her exact words but are paraphrased):

'Kookum' is the word most appropriate to this situation. Kookum acts as a psychologist, teacher, chaplain and ceremonialist. The women face an identity crisis and need to accept who they are as women. This takes a lot of work. There is also a need for intensive work with women who are FASD.

CSC has learned that Elders play a variety of roles in an Institution. The traditional teachings show offenders how to live a good life without resorting to criminal behaviour; the trust Elders are able to establish with offenders is critical to their ability to help offenders deal with their past; ceremonies provide a safe environment to deal with the issues that have been suppressed over many years; and Elders bring to our Institutions the principles of restorative justice to address conflict situations.

With the support and encouragement of Elders we have found that offenders are able to participate more effectively in the mainstream correctional programs and derive greater benefit. One study by the Native Clan Organization<sup>7</sup> in Winnipeg found that Aboriginal offenders completing sex offender treatment programming achieved similar successes in remaining crime free as non-Aboriginal participants. The non-completion rate of Aboriginal offenders, however, was substantially higher than the non-Aboriginal participants so the program, overall, was not benefiting this group as well as it should. By introducing a spiritual component to the program, Native Clan found that completion rates for Aboriginal participants increased, and that the outcomes for those completing remained consistent with the non-Aboriginal population.

Saskatchewan Penitentiary has established an approach that encourages offenders to develop a healing plan with the Elders. The Elders direct the activities of the offender through his healing plan and provide support and intervention throughout. This complements the offender's participation in other programs in the Institution.

<sup>7</sup>Ellerby and MacPherson, 2002

## ELDER'S HEALING PLAN PROGRAM

Elder Assessment process	One On One Counseling
Healing Plan	Who Spa Gan teachings
Pipe Ceremony	Alternatives to Segregation
Sweat Lodge Ceremony	Traditional Skills
Sacred Circle	Community Reintegration Program (Broken Wing)
Escorted Temporary Absence Program	Specialized Workshops

### Addressing Criminogenic Need Areas

The offender's personal history is researched, and the Elders make determinations on the root causes of the identified need areas.

### Elder Assessment

Based on these determinations the Elder will evaluate these root causes and develops a healing plan using traditional methods. This plan may or may not include escorted temporary absences for ceremonies in the community.

### Elder Healing Plans Objectives

The basic initial objective of the Elder Healing Plan is to gain the offender's confidence and trust so that the offender becomes more receptive to the advice and guidance of the Elder.

Once this objective has been achieved the next objective is for the offender to make personal effort and commitment to the Elder to start his healing plan. The offender will be expected to demonstrate this commitment to the Elder by his actions and participation in the initial phases of his healing plan.

Success can be demonstrated by compliance with the correctional plan, and positive behaviour in the institution. Elements of the plan can include one on one counseling sessions as well as active participation in the institutional ceremonies.

### Escorted Temporary Absences (ETAs)

Each ceremony on the ETA program of the Healing Plan has a very specific goal in addressing the offender's criminogenic needs. For example if successful the fasting ceremony should break down the offender's barriers of denial. As a result of this awareness he may demonstrate a deterioration in his mood and/or behaviours. The offender may experience bouts of depression and/or irritability. Should the offender be experiencing these symptoms it becomes imperative that he receive immediate treatment for them in the form of healing sweats. During these healing sweats the Elder assist the offender to accept responsibility for his actions and to make a commitment to improve his life style.

### Selection Criteria

Offenders selected must have demonstrated a sincere commitment and desire to the Elders to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve their healing strategy.

### Case Conferences and Elder Comments

As part of the correctional process, comments from the Elders on participation in the plan and change on the part of the offender are presented at case conferences discussing the offender's overall progress.

## ABORIGINAL HEALING UNITS

CSC is committed to establishing a correctional service responsive to the culture and traditions of Aboriginal offenders. Aboriginal Healing Units are an important initiative toward meeting that objective. CSC has established three pilot projects where ranges or units have been set aside to provide an environment of healing within the prison context. The units have been established at LaMacaza Institution in Quebec, Stony Mountain Institution in Manitoba, and Saskatchewan Penitentiary in Prince Albert.

The overall goal of the Healing Units in the Prairie Region has been established as follows:

To establish an environment within the Prairie Region where Aboriginal offenders may access services in a culturally appropriate manner through a continuum of aboriginal specific operations and programs from intake assessment to release to the community up to warrant expiry.

The specific objectives are:

- To facilitate healing
- To re-connect with aboriginal culture and history (self-identity has value)
- To create a safe environment of trust where people have an opportunity to change, to make better decisions, choose key, pro-social values.
- To establish a different culture within an institution which complements and links to existing institutional programs and work opportunities
- To promote a continuum of healing beyond the bounds of the unit. This can include the host institution itself, lower levels of security and the community.

The anticipated outcomes for evaluation purposes are as follows:

1. Engage in less illicit drug and alcohol activity while on the range.
2. Participate in fewer acts of violence.
3. Exhibit a higher degree of pro-social behaviour while on the unit.
4. Demonstrate higher levels of program participation.
5. Demonstrate greater success in employment programming.
6. Achieve higher rates of transfer to lower levels of security.
7. An improvement in readiness for conditional release.
8. Demonstrate a higher degree of satisfaction with the programs and services offered.

The Healing Unit provides opportunities for offenders to participate in programs and activities in a supportive environment where decision making, dispute resolution, and discipline is carried out through inclusive and restorative means. Inmates participate in the process under the supervision of an Elder using the Circle as a primary means of addressing issues. Although many activities are unit based, inmates participate in programs and activities in the main Institution. Programs specifically developed for Aboriginal offenders supplement unit activities but inmates also participate in the main CSC core programs as well.

The units have been in operation for just over one year now, and we have found that the restorative approaches applied on the units can be made to work within the rules and regulations of an institutional environment. Preliminary results suggest the units are achieving their objectives, and that inmates are demonstrating positive change.

The Healing Units will be subject to evaluation in the 04/05 fiscal year and based on the results of this evaluation we anticipate being able to promote expansion of the concept in other CSC institutions.

## ABORIGINAL HEALING LODGES

Over the past 6 years, CSC has introduced a new concept in federal corrections for Aboriginal offenders. Healing Lodges offer services and programs that reflect Aboriginal culture in a space that incorporates Aboriginal people's tradition and beliefs. In the Healing Lodge, the needs of Aboriginal offenders serving federal sentences are addressed through Aboriginal teachings and ceremonies, contact with Elders and children, and interaction with nature. A holistic philosophy governs the approach, whereby individualized programming is delivered within a context of community interaction, with a focus on preparing for release. In the healing lodges, an emphasis is placed on spiritual leadership and on the value of the life experience of staff members, who act as role models.

In the Prairie Region three CSC institutions are designated as Healing Lodges. Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge located on the Nekaneet Reserve opened its doors to women offenders in 1996, and Pe Sakastew, located on land owned by the Samson First Nation began operations in 1997. The Willow Cree Healing Lodge, created in collaboration with the Beardsy's Okanese First Nation will begin accepting offenders in the fall of 2003. Details on the operating principles of Okimaw Ohci and Willow Cree are appended to this document.

Under the provisions of Section 81 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act CSC has entered into agreements with Aboriginal communities to transfer offenders to Healing Lodges operated by the community or agency. Stan Daniels Healing Centre in Edmonton is operated by Native Counselling Services of Alberta; the Ochichakkosipi Healing Lodge is managed under an agreement with the Ochichakkosipi First Nation in Manitoba; and CSC accesses 5 beds at the Prince Albert Grand Council Spiritual Healing Lodge. The PAGC Spiritual Healing Lodge provides services for 20 Provincial and 5 Federal offenders.

## ABORIGINAL GANGS

Just over 10 years ago, Aboriginal gangs were insignificant in size among the federal inmate population in the Prairie Region. Today, there are approximately 300 Aboriginal men in Prairie institutions who belong to a gang. This group accounts for just less than 25% of the total incarcerated Aboriginal population but it exerts a very powerful influence over the remaining offender population. A considerable amount of time, energy, and resources is expended to manage these individuals and to protect those affected by them.

In this respect, life in our institutions is a microcosm of the issues facing our communities - a rapid growth of young men and women forming associations as gangs. As in the community, the phenomenon of gang membership has moved from east to west and is a factor in all of our federal institutions in the Prairie Region.

Historically, our efforts to manage this population have been focused on information gathering/sharing and the suppression of blatant gang affiliated activity. CSC's approach today involves a paradigm shift, which involves an increased focus on risk reduction. This integrated or balanced approach has, as an overall goal, the reduction of "violent" behaviours (physical and verbal intimidation, muscling, drug trafficking, and enforcement) associated with gangs and focuses less on suppression of gang membership or disaffiliation.

In the spring of 2000, Mr. Ovide Mercredi<sup>8</sup> prepared a report for CSC on Aboriginal Gangs that challenged the status quo perception of Aboriginal "gangs." The Mercredi Report suggested that the practice of "labelling" an Aboriginal man as a "gang" member should be limited or avoided altogether. Mercredi described a number of historical, political and socio-economic elements and characteristics unique to incarcerated Aboriginal people.

We have listened to Mr. Mercredi's counsel and are taking steps to change the way we approach the problems associated with gang activities in our institutions. This does not mean that we endorse violent or illegal

<sup>8</sup>Mercredi, October 2000

activities. In order to maintain safety and security in an institutional environment for staff and inmates alike, there is no tolerance for violent behaviour. Sanctions are imposed on individuals who violate rules or who behave violently, whether they are gang members or not. We have found that it is not possible to entirely avoid labelling gang membership, as the gangs themselves promote their gang affiliations, however, we target individual behaviour, not gang behaviour, as a focus of change.

Work done with members of Aboriginal gangs is difficult; it involves first of all establishing a level of trust and mutual respect. We have found that Elders and traditional people are best able to develop a trusting relationship and interventions by Elders have been an important aspect of our efforts to encourage these men to consider and apply alternatives to violence in their efforts to achieve their goals. Work within the context of traditional and spiritual values is complemented by programs designed to address the factors contributing to criminal behaviour. As our complement of Aboriginal core programs grows, we are increasingly able to offer the type of programming, delivered by an appropriate program facilitator, that Aboriginal offenders find to have meaning from their worldview perspective, regardless of whether they are gang members or not.

This approach, however, is intense and overwhelming due to the scope of work involved and the numbers of offenders affected. We must reach out for other approaches that more directly target the needs of gang members. In November 2001, CSC launched the Aboriginal Gang Initiative as a pilot program in Winnipeg. The initiative was developed as a response to the rapid growth of young Aboriginal men turning to gangs and as our effort to specifically target the needs of these men as they move through the correctional system and inevitably reintegrate to the community.

The specific mandate of the initiative, now known as **Bimosewin**, (Taking Responsibility for Your Path in Life) is : *“To disengage Aboriginal gang members from criminal activities and to assist in their successful reintegration into the community.”* An important element of the Bimosewin program is the partnerships we forge with the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg and Manitoba.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- Assist clients in their spiritual walk in life i.e., “Red Road”, wellness, stability, etc.
- Provide practical guidance and support away from criminal activity
- Provide Aboriginal teachings and cultural activities as taught by respected Elders
- Develop a positive outlook in life
- Change attitudes and beliefs away from crime and violence
- Seek and provide opportunities for personal change, training, education, and employment

The program will undergo evaluation in the 2004/05 fiscal year. We anticipate change in the following variables:

- Successful reintegration of former gang members into the community;
- Decrease in violent incidents and control exerted by gang members in Correctional facilities;
- Increased requests for and greater participation in programs;
- Greater movement of Aboriginal gang members to lower security levels and into the community;
- Greater chances for parole for Aboriginal gang members;
- Greater community links and supports for Aboriginal gang members.

**Bimosewin** has been operating now for over 18 months with the following preliminary results and signs of positive movement:

- 125 + Aboriginal Gang members and Ex-gang members have given their written commitment to work with Bimosewin (in the beginning - Sept 2001 - no gang members trusted us)
- 12+ Aboriginal individuals “helped out or kept out” of the gang
- Meaningful employment secured for more than 15 Aboriginal gang members
- A Safe Home has been supported and is now available for ex-gang members
- A Core Group of Ex-gang members is starting to emerge that we can mentor and work with
- Good credibility established with Aboriginal gang members in Stony Mountain Institution
- Gang members have greater exposure to Aboriginal role models

The results of this evaluation will provide us with the data to seek additional resources to expand this program into Saskatchewan and Alberta.

## ABORIGINAL CORE PROGRAMS

A critical piece to CSC’s strategy for safe reintegration is the development of a series of core programs that reflect the tradition and culture of the Aboriginal offenders that will address factors contributing to the offending behaviour. In consultation with partners in the Aboriginal community, we have embarked on this initiative.

Factors that significantly affect Aboriginal offenders include violence and aggression, family violence, and substance abuse. Based on our experience with the delivery of a substance abuse program developed by the Society of Aboriginal Addictions and Recovery, program facilitators in the Prairie Region are developing a new curriculum for an Aboriginal Substance Abuse program that will be implemented this fiscal year.

Through a long standing partnership with Native Counselling Services of Alberta, CSC has acquired the rights to deliver a program they have developed for Aboriginal offenders targeting violent behaviour. This program, In Search of Your Warrior is an intensive program delivered by Aboriginal program facilitators that assists offenders to begin to understand how violence is passed from generation to generation and teach them the skills they will need to reduce and ultimately eliminate their own violent behaviour. This program is now delivered in Saskatchewan Penitentiary as well as other federal institutions in the Prairie Region. A similar program based on the Warrior curriculum has been developed for women, and is being delivered at Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge. The impact of this program on offenders has been positive and we will be conducting an evaluation of the program in 2003/04.

Development is nearing completion for a family violence program. This program will apply traditional values and beliefs to change the behaviours and attitudes of Aboriginal men who engage in violence in the home. Also in the final development stages is a Healing program for Aboriginal men. The Healing program employs both traditional and contemporary processes to motivate participants to begin and maintain a healing quest. The program is developed to address the factors that contribute to criminal behaviour.

Research is underway for the development of sex offender treatment programming that will address the factors contributing to sex offending behaviour. Currently, at both Saskatchewan Penitentiary and at the Regional Psychiatric Centre, Elders play a key role in providing spiritual support and teachings to offenders who participate in the programming in those facilities.

## HOLISTIC HEALING MODEL

### FOR SEX OFFENDERS

Correctional Service of Canada, Prairie Region

In recognition of the need to provide culturally appropriate programming for Aboriginal offenders, a working group was established to develop a program model that meets their cultural, social and spiritual needs. The working group brought together Elders, Healers, Psychologists and Program officers to determine what this model might look like.

The premise of bringing together experts in their fields recognized that there are experts on issues related to sex offending behaviour, as well as on spiritual healing and wellness among Aboriginal people. Sharing this expertise, exploring common ground, and seeking out ways in which the two bodies of expertise complement one another facilitated the development of a model that can be quickly and readily established in correctional facilities.

Spiritual healing is a cornerstone of this model. The model does not purport to suggest exactly how Elders, Healers, or Elder Apprentices will provide this healing. The expertise resides now within the Elders who have spent their entire lives learning. Since dealing with sex offenders is a relatively new requirement for Elders, it is expected that they will wish to learn more about the unique characteristics of this group of offenders. Establishing programs throughout the Prairie Region where Elders work in close partnership with contemporary treatment therapists will greatly facilitate the learning process. This will create opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas amongst Elders, and between Elders and Psychologists ( or treatment therapists.)

Applying the elements of the model and working together with contemporary treatment staff form the basis for an action research project. This will provide us with baseline data to assist in further development of a long term program design for Aboriginal sex offenders.

The model described in this document recognizes three important principles:

1. *Elders, Healers and Elder Apprentices provide programs and services to offenders that are valid interventions responding to the criminogenic needs of aboriginal offenders.*

Elders are the carriers of a culture that promotes positive values and a positive lifestyle. They are highly respected and influential within their communities, and, because of this status, have a profound influence on the behaviour and attitude of many aboriginal offenders. In basic and fundamental terms Elders:

- teach ways of living in balance and harmony within the Aboriginal world view.
- pass on knowledge that is important for the survival of Aboriginal peoples in a spiritual and cultural sense.
- inculcate the sense of responsibility and accountability in offenders that 'The Way' encourages.

It is important to understand that the teachings of the Elders have an impact on criminal behaviour. These teachings promote a lifestyle that is crime free, and are entirely consistent with CSC programming objectives. The teachings, through ceremonies and counselling, contribute significantly to a supportive environment in which Aboriginal offenders are better able to deal with those factors contributing to their criminal behaviour.

2. *The Elder and the Psychologist are equal partners in efforts to prevent sex offending on the part of the aboriginal offender.*

Contemporary interventions are designed to teach people how to predict their future behaviour so that they can prevent the recurrence of inappropriate behaviour. The success of these interventions depends in large part on the desire of the offender to prevent these behaviours. Elders have told us that healing must begin before these interventions can be effective. By showing how to live in balance and harmony, Elders establish a frame of mind and a motivation for offenders to make the changes lives required to lead a law-abiding life style.

3. *Elimination of inappropriate sexual behaviour is the goal: this is achieved holistically by addressing underlying factors that contribute to the behaviour.*

Aboriginal healing does not recognize the separation between the spiritual and the physical world. In the traditional view, body, mind and spirit are inseparable. Spirituality is the core concept of healing and wellness. The holistic viewpoint recognizes that there are many factors which impact on how people behave, and these must all be addressed. This is consistent with the contemporary model for treating sex offenders, which also recognizes that, for each individual, there are usually causative factors which must be addressed before the behaviour can be corrected.

Extract from a CSC working document, 1995

## ABORIGINAL STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

For the past four years the Prairie Region has had a dedicated regional recruitment team whose mandate included Employment Equity recruitment with particular emphasis on Aboriginal recruitment and retention initiatives due to the large Aboriginal community representation and the abnormally high Aboriginal offender population in this region. The offender population is over 40% Aboriginal in this region and Aboriginal correctional staff are needed as positive role models. CSC approved a national Aboriginal Recruitment Strategy in 2000 with the Prairie Region taking a leading role. Today, 14.2% of all CSC Prairie staff are of Aboriginal ancestry including 18.7% of Correctional Officers and 16.2% of Parole and Program Officers. The challenge will be to continue this growth, to retain these staff and to promote succession planning.

Aboriginal recruitment initiatives have targeted an increase in the number of qualified applicants seeking a career with CSC, identifying and removing barriers to recruiting these applicants, increasing the number of qualified Aboriginal staff, and retention. Some of the key activities and initiatives in achieving these goals have included:

- Targeted outreach to Aboriginal communities, organizations and learning institutions;
- Changing negative stereotypes to attract applicants with CSC values;
- Creating recruitment inventories based on Employment Equity groups;
- Including Aboriginal members on all assessment teams and staffing boards;
- Establishing *partnerships* with Aboriginal organizations to achieve recruitment goals;
- Conducting Aboriginal specific competitions for Parole and Program Officers;
- Recruiting three new staff to an Aboriginal Management Development program; and
- Conducting initiatives to reinforce CSC Values in the workplace.

A partnership that has been particularly successful has been the Correctional Officer Pre-Recruitment Training Program. It was observed that only 10% of Aboriginal applicants who met the screening requirements were successful in the CSC recruitment assessments. The recruitment team developed a curriculum based on the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the recruitment process and included a supervised work experience at a Correctional Institution. Partnerships were established with Aboriginal organizations to deliver this program through their training and development funds and with the assistance of the Recruitment Officer and testing was conducted during or shortly after the training was completed.

The training developed applicant skill levels, increased their confidence and understanding of the CSC environment and the results of applicants taking this training increased to a 70% success rate. This course is being delivered in various formats in each of the three Prairie provinces with First Nations, Metis and Aboriginal training centre organizations who have agreed to partner with the CSC in recruitment.



Recruitment initiatives and partnerships have been successful in recruiting qualified Aboriginal staff. This is particularly evident by the increase in Aboriginal Correctional Officer staffing from 13% in the first year to over 30% during the past two years and the strong working relations that have developed with Aboriginal partners.

## SECTION 4 - COMMUNITY BASED ACTIVITIES / LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Previous discussion has provided background on initiatives within CSC - many of them institutionally focused. In addition to providing culturally relevant assessment and intervention strategies for Aboriginal offenders in institutions, CSC's strategy also addresses the need for culturally appropriate post-release mechanisms and services to assist in the successful reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. The discussion in this section will emphasize the work done through the efforts of the District Parole office in Saskatchewan to improve the delivery of services to Aboriginal offenders who are on conditional release.

CSC has worked hard to improve the level of service delivery for Aboriginal offenders in our institutions. Our overall reintegration strategy, along with enhancements made in the provision of culturally relevant services provides inmates with the tools they need to succeed on release. We work continually to improve the level of service in all areas, however we take pride in the success of our accomplishments. The transition of offenders to the community, however, places a heavy reliance on our ability to access programs and services in the community.

As much as behaviour change can be initiated in institutions, the significant challenge is when the offender returns to the community. What works for the offenders will only succeed if the community has the capacity to provide the necessary support services. We wish to emphasize our strong belief that a significant challenge facing us all (CSC, all levels of government, First Nation, Metis and private agencies alike) is how we can better coordinate our activities to make the best use of the resources that presently exist. In smaller communities and reserves throughout the Province the added challenge is the development of community infrastructure to allow communities to meet these challenges.

CSC is aware that many Aboriginal communities have a desire to become involved in corrections initiatives. Much work is currently done by volunteers. We appreciate however, that communities, particularly, but not exclusively, smaller rural communities and reserves have large demands on limited financial and human resources.

Being the District with the highest proportion of Aboriginal offenders in the Region, the Saskatchewan District has placed much emphasis on the development of Aboriginal post-release initiatives. The Saskatchewan District's post-release initiatives have three basic thrusts:

1. **Optimizing our ability** to develop release plans and supervision strategies that respond appropriately to the needs of our Aboriginal offender population.
2. **Working with Aboriginal communities** to help them learn more about the CSC and how we operate and to encourage and support Aboriginal communities to play a greater role in the correctional process through participation in release planning and supervision of Aboriginal offenders.
3. **Developing specific projects and partnerships** with Aboriginal communities and Government agencies directed towards successful reintegration of Aboriginal offenders.

## I. OPTIMIZING OUR ABILITY

One of the most critical responsibilities of the Saskatchewan Parole District is to provide offenders with the support, supervision and control necessary to successfully reintegrate back to the community as law abiding citizens. The CSC recognizes that the way in which this is accomplished with Aboriginal offenders must be culturally relevant to that population in order to succeed. It also requires that we engage the Aboriginal community in a meaningful way.

Some of the ways we have pursued this goal include:

- Establishing the District Aboriginal Community Development Officer and Community Liaison Officer positions.
- Increasing the proportion of District staff of Aboriginal ancestry.
- Developing a procedure for preparing and tracking cases for release planning under the provisions of Section 84.
- Delivering awareness sessions to institutional and community Parole Officers and Parole Board members.
- Providing CSC staff with awareness sessions delivered by Aboriginal community resources like the Prince Albert Grand Council Aboriginal Healing Project.
- Exploring innovative supervision and support services for Aboriginal Offenders in remote rural areas of Saskatchewan.

For the last two years CSC staff from the Prince Albert Parole Office have organized Reintegration Fairs at Saskatchewan Penitentiary and Riverbend Institution. These bring together representatives from the province's three Area Parole Offices, the Oskana Community Correctional Centre as well as representatives from many of the community based agencies and services who work with offenders on conditional release in Saskatchewan. The fairs are presented to the staff and inmates at these two institutions to inform them of programs and services available in the community that could be considered as part of their release planning. Programs and services specific to Aboriginal offenders are included. The Aboriginal Community Development and Community Liaison Officers are present to inform offenders and staff about Section 81 and 84 possibilities.

### ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER INITIATIVES

The overall objective of the Aboriginal CDO initiative is to promote safe reintegration of Aboriginal offenders by enhancing residential and program opportunities for offenders in Aboriginal communities. This will be done by the following:

1. Increase awareness of S. 84 within CSC.
2. Encourage more Aboriginal communities to take responsibility for the care of Aboriginal offenders.

Result:

An increase in safe and early releases to Aboriginal urban and rural communities.

An increase in the number of urban resources for the offenders

These activities benefit CSC staff, offenders and communities.

Anticipated benefits to staff include a greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of:

- traditional ideas of work and family relationships
- the effects of residential schools
- the challenges facing Aboriginal offenders on their healing paths
- community based support services available to Aboriginal offenders

Anticipated benefits to Aboriginal offenders include:

- Aboriginal offenders are able to serve some or all of their sentences in their First Nation community.
- Aboriginal offenders can be granted day parole to their First Nation community rather than to an urban CCC/CRF.
- Aboriginal offenders are supervised with more consideration for the realities of their traditional lifestyles.

Anticipated benefits for the community include:

- Community involvement in the process enhances successful outcomes through increased safety in communities.
- Important family and community relationships are supported and preserved.

The specific geography and demography of Saskatchewan give rise to significant challenges. The Saskatchewan District is divided into three large parole areas according to the three major urban centres of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina. The largest of which is the Prince Albert area that covers about half the province. Not only are these huge areas but the Aboriginal peoples and communities are diverse.

The Prince Albert Parole Area is the largest of the Districts three areas. This area includes the largest number of First Nation communities. Prince Albert is home to two federal prisons, two provincial correctional centres and two Healing Lodges; one operated by CSC the other is a Section 81 facility. For these reasons the District's Aboriginal Community Development and Community Liaison Officers are both stationed in Prince Albert. While their work extends to the other two parole areas it is understandable that the benefits of their work are felt mostly in the Prince Albert Parole Area.

## 2. WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The CSC recognizes that values and traditions found within many Aboriginal communities are key elements for the successful reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. Aboriginal peoples are finding correctional methods in communities that are very different from mainstream corrections. These approaches incorporate concepts such as healing, reconciliation, spirituality, respect, accountability, balance and restoration.

A major component of the Saskatchewan District's strategy is to help Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan learn about the CSC and identify the resources they have already or need to develop in order to build their capacity to accept and support their members returning on conditional release.

Some of the activities that help us accomplish this are:

- Establishing and maintaining links with First Nation Justice Committees.
- Delivering awareness sessions to Aboriginal communities about the CSC and how we operate.
- Inviting Aboriginal communities to participate in the release planning for offenders from their communities.
- Providing assistance to Aboriginal Communities under the Aboriginal Community Reintegration Program to defray costs involved in release planning for federal Aboriginal offenders. Limited funding exists under this program to cover costs such as travel for representatives of an Aboriginal community to attend institutions to re-connect with incarcerated community members and participate in their release planning with the offender and the CSC case management team.
- Providing technical assistance to communities in the development of release plans for offenders under the provision of Section 84 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.
- Participate in the Northern Justice Symposium presenting information to Northern Metis Community Representatives.

In March of 2002 CSC partnered with the Prince Albert Grand Council and the Prince Albert Correctional Centre to present a facilitated workshop to Community Justice Representatives from various Aboriginal communities. The focus to provide awareness of the work being done by each of these three agencies toward justice issues.

Benefits of these activities include a wider involvement on the part of Aboriginal communities in the release planning for their incarcerated residents, leading to more timely releases and successful outcomes.

While the CSC has significant expertise in corrections and reintegration of offenders we acknowledge that the expertise in working effectively with Aboriginal people lies within Aboriginal communities. The challenge is to balance the CSC's mandate and accountability with an increasing ownership of Aboriginal corrections issues by Aboriginal communities.

With well over one hundred First Nations and Metis communities in Saskatchewan, it is a significant challenge to establish and maintain meaningful links with these communities.

CSC continues to explore ways to better connect with Metis communities in order to develop the kinds of relationships we are pursuing with First Nation communities.

### 3. DEVELOPING SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Aboriginal communities have now started to come forth with initiatives to assume the care and custody of their peoples and offer services that are more consistent with community-based, culturally-specific methods of healing and balance. Aboriginal communities are indicating that they can do a better job at healing Aboriginal offenders than the corrections system will. The CSC recognizes the benefit of creating partnerships with Aboriginal communities and agencies in developing programs and services directed toward the reintegration of Aboriginal offenders.

Furthermore we recognize the need to develop partnerships and bridges with other federal and provincial government departments. In particular there have been numerous instances of effective exchanges and collaborations with Saskatchewan Provincial Corrections. More can and must be done to work in concert with each other to address Aboriginal issues in corrections.

To this end the Saskatchewan Parole District is developing concrete agreements, contracts and partnerships with

Aboriginal communities and agencies as well as other government agencies around specific projects directed toward the reintegration of Aboriginal offenders.

Some examples of this include:

- Developing private home placements to accommodate offenders released to First Nation communities
- Developing a Section 81 Agreement with Gordon's First Nation
- Establishing a contract with Piapot First Nation to provide cultural and spiritual services to conditionally released offenders in Regina
- Facilitating contacts with community Elders to provide services to offenders
- Use and development of Aboriginal community based residential treatment facilities
- Facilitating referrals to the Prince Albert Grand Council Aboriginal Healing Project for Aboriginal offenders being released to Prince Albert
- Participating in the Regina Demonstration Project
- Participating in the Regina Inner City Project
- Seconding a CSC staff member to the Prince Albert Grand Council (1999/2000)
- Discussing with Piapot First Nation opportunities for the establishment of a CRF/Healing Lodge for Women and with the Ochapowace First Nation for a CRF for men (Late 1990's). and more recent discussions with Piapot First Nation regarding a Section 81 Agreement.
- Developing an Aboriginal Post Release Initiative with the Yorkton Tribal Council (Late 1990's)
- Participating on the Steering Committee for Metis Family and Community Justice Services (MFCJS). MFCJS is conducting a research project to assess the needs of Metis Offenders inside the institution and their possible reintegration into their communities. The outcome would include how Section 84 can be facilitated in those communities.
- Funding support for release planning development for offenders from Onion Lake, Mistawasis, English River, Canoe Lake, and Cote.

In 1998 CSC was approached by two individuals with previous experience in managing Community Residential Facilities (CRF's) for Aboriginal offenders to open a CRF in Saskatoon. We recognized the need for such a facility and agreed to provide assistance to the contractor in getting established. At the time, a concern we had was that, under the law governing conditional release, there was no guarantee that there would be sufficient clientele to permit the contractor to cover expenses. We encouraged them to explore other sources of clients and income.

CSC made an initial contribution to assist in the development and start up of the facility and the contractor took the necessary steps to obtain approvals to establish the facility. Unique amongst our experience in opening up CRF's for offenders, this project actually obtained an endorsement from many of the neighbours and from City Council.

Anticipated benefits of these activities to Aboriginal offenders includes:

- Increased opportunities to reintegrate into their home communities when their home communities are not urban communities.
- Increased accessibility to their traditional lifestyle.
- Increased access to cultural and spiritual activities.

- Starting to identify and fill service gaps for Metis and Aboriginal female offenders.

Anticipated benefits to the community include:

- Communities become active partners working toward the reintegration of their own members.
- Experience and expertise developed to support offenders is transferable to work with other community members.
- Individuals who receive certain CSC training can put that training to work in their own communities. (an example of this is facilitator training for the In Search of Your Warrior program)

Three years ago, CSC contracted for the delivery of facilitator training in the In Search of Your Warrior program. This was done in a four way partnership. CSC contracted for the delivery of the training with Native Counselling Services of Alberta who developed the program. Through an arrangement with the Aboriginal Corrections Branch of the Solicitor General of Canada, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations acquired 5 seats at this training. The end result of the training was that CSC has program facilitators qualified to deliver In Search of Your Warrior to offenders, and Saskatchewan has benefited through the development of expertise in the community. As offenders are released to the community there is an increased opportunity for CSC to access these skilled resources to provide support services for these offenders. Discussions are now underway for the modification of the program to be more appropriate to the needs of the community. The long term benefits of this arrangement are skilled resources are available to provide prevention services in their community. Prevention, in the form of aftercare and maintenance to conditionally released Aboriginal offenders (Federal and Provincial) can also be achieved when these offenders access these services.

#### BROKEN WING PROGRAM

This is a program where Aboriginal offenders in Saskatchewan Penitentiary are given the opportunity to reintroduce themselves, apologize to their communities, and give something positive back. This program is available to offenders who are eligible for escorted temporary absences, who are following their correctional plan, working with the Elders and are making positive choices. The offenders are given the opportunity to address students, teachers and communities about their life story and what has occurred since that time and how they have managed to make positive changes. The offenders give their version of life in an institution and the negative side of gang affiliation, penitentiary life and the struggles he is faced with daily. Since the offenders who go on this program are active in the cultural centre, they give the positive aspect of working with the Elders.

The second portion involves the Correctional Officer giving his version of life in the institution and the laws that he is required to uphold and his interactions with offenders. The Correctional Officer also provides an overview of the negative side of prison life from strip searches to altercations and other areas in which they are involved.

The last portion involves participation from the audience with a question and answer period.

The development of these initiatives is time consuming. Saskatchewan is a large province and its peoples are diverse. Communities are spread out and the needs vary depending on a host of factors. It takes someone familiar with the local needs to develop effective projects. These are challenges for the Saskatchewan Parole District.

#### Changing Expectations

CSC's mandate and resourcing limits its interventions to those offenders serving sentences of two years and more. Forward thinking in corrections now reflects what the Aboriginal communities have been telling us for many years: we must adopt a more holistic view to truly effect change:

- CSC is now involved in restorative approaches to justice, and the role of victims and their rights are becoming much more integrated into our day to day business.
- We are applying traditional healing practices in our institutions and we know that healing one part of the unit is not effective unless the other parts also follow a healing journey. Our inmates who benefit from interventions in institutions may return to their family to find that they have not had the same opportunity;
- Characteristics of offenders exhibiting symptoms of FASD are not remarkably different from those of non-offenders with these symptoms, particularly when those offenders are on conditional release. Common needs present opportunities for agencies to work collaboratively to maximize the use of the resources we have.

CSC and all Federal Government Departments are being challenged to seek ways to better integrate services and resources to better meet the needs of Canadians. CSC is involved in various activities that involve inter-departmental collaboration however we recognize that a paradigm shift in our thinking and that of other government departments and other governments is going to be necessary for us to gain the greatest benefit from what is available to us.

**GOVERNMENT OF CANADA CONTRIBUTES \$129,557  
TO ABORIGINAL FAMILY REINTEGRATION PROJECT**

The Government of Canada has awarded \$129,557 to fund a project in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. This project will work with children and families of Aboriginal offenders to help stop the cycle of offending from being passed from generation to generation.

The federal Department of the Solicitor General is contributing \$129,557 to the Prince Albert Grand Council for the Family Reintegration Project, an initiative that will work with offenders and their families to develop a supportive community environment. The project will offer Aboriginal offenders and families counselling services, workshops and training sessions, as well as community-based conflict resolution and mediation. In addition, the project will coordinate the delivery of community resources and make referrals to professional services, as required.

A full-time family reintegration worker will work with existing programs and services operated by the Prince Albert Grand Council, to ensure an integrated approach.

The Prince Albert Grand Council Justice Program has been operating for approximately seven years and oversees the operation of the Spiritual Healing Lodge, Justice Workers, Community Justice Committees, the Urban Alternative Measures Program and the Aboriginal Courtworker program.



## ON THE HORIZON

While there are still significant challenges facing us; Saskatchewan is an exciting place to be in terms of the development of innovative initiatives regarding corrections. There is a long history in Saskatchewan of collaboration between provincial and federal corrections. Saskatchewan's Aboriginal communities are at various stages in identifying and solving their own social and economic problems. Municipal, provincial and federal governments are taking steps toward acting in concert to solve significant problems.

Given this climate there are opportunities that the Saskatchewan Parole District would like to pursue:

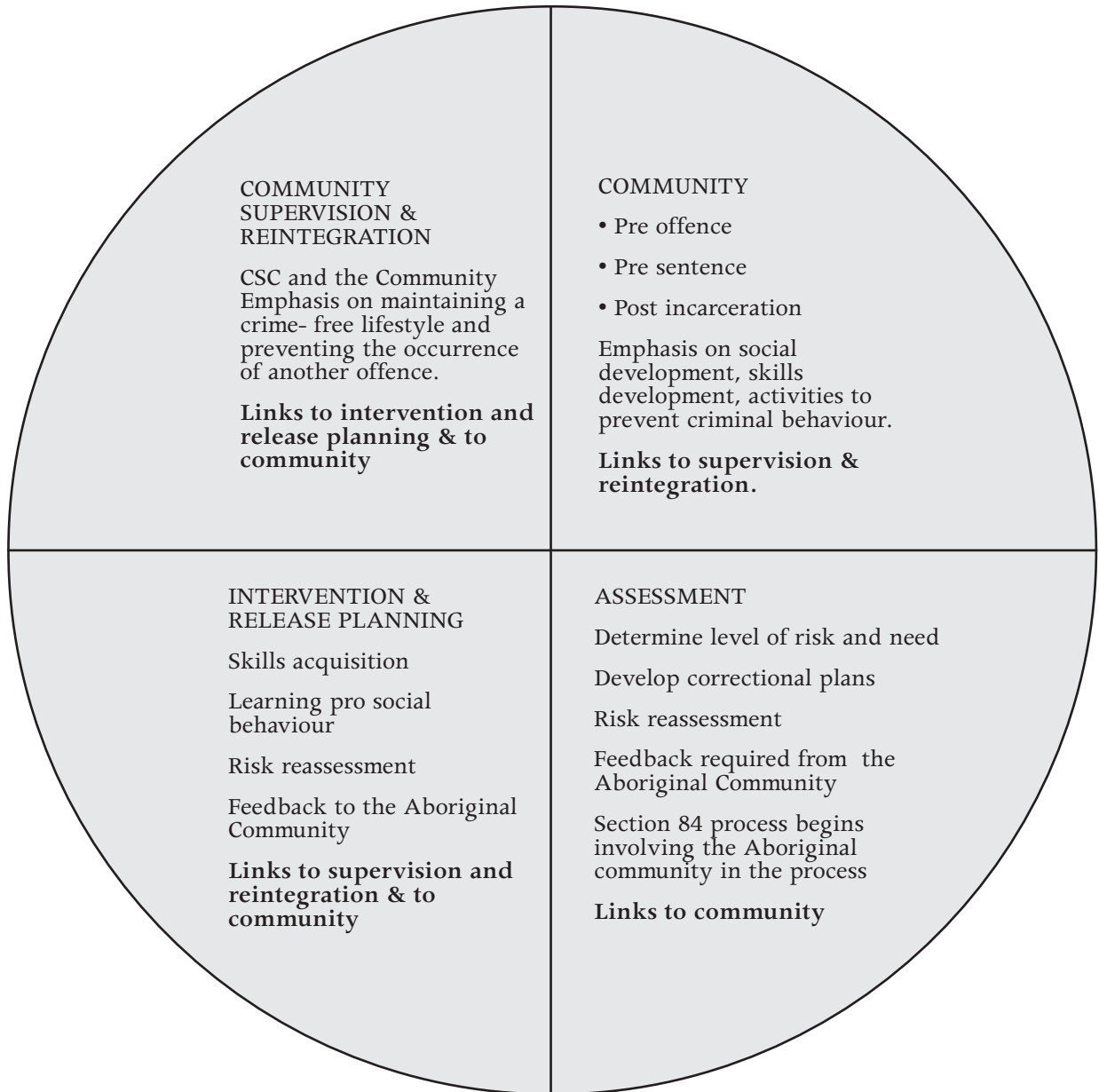
- The Honorable Ralph Goodale, Federal Interlocutor for Aboriginal Peoples, has initiated three Demonstration Projects in Canada to explore the ability of federal government departments to work in concert to address some local issue. One of these projects is in Regina where all federal government departments are taking on the challenge of improving the results of education in the inner city. Recognizing that crime and community safety is one of the factors affecting this issue the CSC is participating in this initiative. The successful development of these horizontal working relationships between federal government departments opens the door to exciting possibilities for the CSC to partner with other government agencies like HRDC and the National Crime Prevention Centre to target and address Aboriginal community needs that coincide with CSC initiatives and identified priorities such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), parenting skills, effects of residential schools, and lack of services in First Nation communities.
- A spin off of the Regina Demonstration Project is the Regina Inner City Project where municipal, provincial and federal departments in conjunction with an inner city Regina neighbourhood will develop a comprehensive plan to address the social and economic problems in that neighbourhood. CSC is participating in this initiative as an active partner in keeping our communities safe.
- Provincial Corrections faces many of the same challenges in working with Aboriginal offenders as the CSC. Our two agencies have a very good working relationship, but we must work even more closely toward enhancing a working relationship that draws on each other's strengths and avoids duplication.
- The Saskatchewan District is working on a project to build a new facility for the Oskana Community Correctional Centre in Regina. The new facility will incorporate all the lessons learned through 30 years of experience delivering residential service to offenders on conditional release. It is being planned with a Cultural Room and appropriate ventilation to allow smudging. Its versatile layout will allow for the delivery of specialized services and programming for offenders suffering from conditions like FASD.
- Current work being done regarding FASD is suggesting that a significant proportion of offenders, particularly Aboriginal offenders, suffer from this condition. The Saskatchewan Parole District would like to pursue the provision of specialized services and programming for offenders identified as suffering from FASD throughout the province. The potential need not stop here, however, as our clients share similar needs as clients of other social service agencies who are FASD as well. There is good potential in this high need area to create synergy by drawing on the skills, knowledge and resources of many organizations.
- Recognizing that many Aboriginal offenders were not living in a First Nation community before entering prison and intend to return to an urban community upon release the District Aboriginal Community Development Officer will focus on the development of services in urban centres during 2003/04.
- The Saskatchewan Parole District wishes to expand the work being done on First Nation communities to include Metis communities and support communities for women offenders.

In conclusion Corrections today is not and cannot be isolated from the community in which it operates. We will continue to promote greater integration of services between CSC, Aboriginal communities, other government departments and non-government agencies. 63% of federal Aboriginal offenders incarcerated in Saskatchewan are serving sentences of 2 to 5 years. With the potential for conditional release, time spent in institutions is not as long as it might first appear. In fact, there is much we must do to provide offenders with the skills they need to live a crime-free lifestyle, and, equally importantly, the incentive to apply those skills.

We wish to emphasize a continuum of care model that integrates the provision of services and the timely exchange of information and opinions between CSC and the community that will eventually see the return of an offender. To achieve this, we must improve our abilities to integrate the services and resources available in our communities. We must, overall, work to establish infrastructure in those First Nation and Metis communities that have the desire to take on greater responsibilities in the continuum of care circle.

An integrated continuum of care model can be portrayed in many ways. This circle is just one way of demonstrating the similarities and overlaps between community interventions at a pre-crime or preventative level, and post crime corrections activities at an intervention level:

**CONTINUUM OF CARE MODEL  
INTEGRATING THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY  
AND CORRECTIONAL PROCEDURES**



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