

# THE EVOLUTION OF EVIDENCED-BASED CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS IN CANADA

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Building a credible and efficient correctional system requires a detailed plan or outline of what is to be managed strategically. Correctional programming is but one of a number of critical areas that have to be laid out completely, correctly and clearly. Basically, correctional programs and/or interventions can be viewed as a structured set of learning opportunities provided to offenders so they can change for the better and remain crime-free. The approach assumes offenders have needs that contribute to their criminal behaviour; that we can identify those needs accurately; that appropriate intervention is available; that intervention strategies will reduce these needs; and that addressed needs will diminish criminal behaviour. The foregoing is consistent with both a Social Learning Theory perspective<sup>1</sup> on reducing reoffending and the correctional mandate to contribute to public, staff and offender safety. The following offers a problem statement for correctional programs, blueprints it, and actively pursues some solutions by advancing a set of case-based principles for intervention — risk, need, and responsivity — that are deemed effective.<sup>2</sup>

Correctional programs, whether in institutional or community-based settings, have a common objective: “the adjustment of behaviour from a pattern that is criminal or anti-social to one that is more law-abiding or pro-social.” For correctional systems, fostering positive change among offenders is the primary way of contributing to public safety. The task is more than making correctional programs available; it is actively encouraging and assisting offenders to participate in them. This means that an agency must make sure it has the best correctional programs available. These are correctional programs that concentrate on criminal recidivism, what causes it and what can be done to change it.

Program responsiveness or motivation has been operationally defined as “the probability that a person will enter into, continue, and adhere to a specific strategy.” Traditionally, motivation was defined as a personality characteristic or problem. However, this is now considered to be a narrow and simplistic view of motivation. Subject matter experts now take an “interactionalist” perspective that sees motivation as a dynamic variable and asserts that internal and external factors influence the personal change process. In this context, some responsibility falls to correctional service providers to motivate offenders. Therefore, institutional and community settings must strive to create effective motivational choices in order to increase the probability that offenders will respond favourably to correctional plans.

This discussion paper for the training course accompanies another paper broadly focused on offender

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Bandura, born in Alberta, Canada and currently at Stanford University, USA, is considered to be the most important contemporary theorist in the world. “Human functioning is the product of a dynamic interplay of personal, behavioural, and environmental influences.” His major works include: *Aggression: Social Learning and Personality Development* (1963); *Social Learning Theory* (1977); and *Social Foundations of Thought and Action* (1986). Since the late 1960s, behaviourism has given way to the “cognitive revolution,” of which Bandura is considered a part.

<sup>2</sup> Don A. Andrews is well known for having developed a general personality and social psychological perspective of criminal behaviour, which recognizes that “[r]ecidivism is predictable and can be influenced.” Together he and his colleagues (J. Bonta & R. Hoge) have evolved a theoretical model which emphasizes the importance of risk and need factors that form a bridge between offender assessment and treatment.

risk/needs assessment; this paper sets forth a problem statement (why correctional programs); presents the impetus for developing correctional programs; takes programs from theory and research to practice; suggests strategies to engage treatment-resistant offenders; promotes contingency management; raises training issues, emphasizes the need for accreditation (program integrity); and offers some anticipated results. Finally, a set of decision requirements is given to training course participants for consideration.

#### **A. The Problem Statement — Why Correctional Programs?**

Correctional program rooms, whether they are located in institutions or community-based settings, are viewed as essential areas in the home front of corrections. It is the place where offenders are called upon to engage in the personal change process. One can identify the focal issue by asking those who work there a straightforward question — “What challenges you most here?” Usually, correctional program delivery officers will list such key factors as the offenders themselves, other staff and public opinion. Raising awareness of the major trends in these three areas provides a clearer picture of the various challenges that are facing those delivering correctional programs on any given day.

First, statistical trends and correctional research indicate that there will not only be increasing caseloads to manage, but the offender population profile has been changing as well. More specifically, correctional caseloads are increasingly becoming higher-risk/higher-need, with serious addiction and/or mental health issues, as well as more violence prone, gang affiliated and culturally diverse. In addition, many in the offender population are not highly motivated to change and appear to be serving relatively shorter sentences than before. Recent research has focused beyond targeting offender risk and need(s) and providing appropriate programs and interventions; it has concluded/determined that motivation for treatment as well as length of time available to intervene are becoming the most significant factors in programming correctional populations. Indeed, higher-risk/higher-need offenders with poor motivation have the highest rates of failure on conditional release. While most correctional programs will be comprised of clientele motivated to engage in their correctional plans, there has been a rise in number of higher-risk/higher-need offenders whom many correctional practitioners would consider treatment resistant, non-engaged or at least unresponsive.

Fortunately, there is now an available body of scientific literature that focuses on motivation as an intermediate treatment target and provides guidelines for increasing offender motivation for intervention. As such, motivation for treatment should be considered as just one component of a thorough offender assessment for a correctional program. As well, offenders who are resistant to treatment may require pre-treatment priming (motivational counselling) in order for more formal programming to be effective.

Whereas the first factor affecting the delivery of correctional programs emphasizes offender characteristics, there is another important condition of program delivery that promotes positive change — namely, competent staff. The correctional program delivery model generally involves behavioural intervention, using techniques such as modeling, graduated practice, role-playing, reinforcement and cognitive restructuring. Within the cognitive-behavioural framework, services in institutional or community settings should be designed to match offender conceptual levels and personality styles. Clearly, it will be critical for institutional and community settings to promote and maintain positive staff-offender relationships. Therefore, administrators of correctional programs will have to take action to close any skills gap among staff and begin matching the service delivery styles of their staff with the learning styles of offenders. This could well lead to another major breakthrough in effective correctional practice.

The third factor likely to challenge correctional programs model is public opinion. Being acutely aware that the general public does not fully understand the inner workings of the correctional system, the correctional program administrator of today and even more so tomorrow will be called upon to provide ready responses and accurate information on the effectiveness and efficacy of offender programs that target education, employment, family violence, gang affiliation, substance abuse, violence prevention, sexual offending and pro-criminal attitudes. Given that public tolerance has been stretched to the limit for any failure means that correctional program delivery staff will have to learn everything there is to know about effective correctional programming and become actively involved in public relations.

To summarize the problem — offenders, staff and public opinion exert a significant influence over the

realization of correctional program objectives. In particular, the task of engaging offenders in the personal change process will continue to fall squarely on the shoulders of staff. These individuals will be called upon to deliver more sophisticated services to an offender population that is constantly changing and for a public that is doubtful, sceptical, and increasingly intolerant. Moreover, they must do so in as effective and efficient a manner as possible.

### **B. Blueprinting the Problem**

Before deciding whether or not to renovate any room in a home, it is common practice to examine the original blueprint. For corrections, laying out the decision to strategically manage a change begins with looking at the correctional programs being provided from up close, then from several angles, at long distance and finally with an eye on the objective — reducing the fear of the public in the offender population under federal supervision and restoring confidence in corrections.

As one enters the correctional program delivery site, they will find front-line workers gathering information, assessing risk and needs, developing plans, facilitating personal change, intervening when necessary and monitoring progress. These activities are the foundation of correctional programming in federal corrections. Any initiative that incorporates continuous improvement in these activities would necessarily result in quality correctional programming.

## **II. THE IMPETUS FOR THE “CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS MODEL” IN CANADA**

### **A. So Where Is Canada Today with the “Correctional Programs Model”?**

The short answer to that question would be significantly better off than it was well over twenty years ago when the Correctional Service of Canada launched the, then, very ambitious Correctional Strategy Initiative. This research-based initiative had successfully put into place a framework for the following:

- 1) establishing program priorities based on risk and need principles;
- 2) implementing and accrediting programs that focus on safe reintegration; and
- 3) allocating resources to meet the control and assistance needs of offenders.

### **B. How Did They Get Here?**

During the 1980s, Canadian public inquiries (Ruygrok, Conter, etc.) and Correctional Service Canada internal task forces illuminated the need for improved offender assessment, information sharing among the various components of the criminal justice system and correctional programs. Various recommendations were made aimed at improving offender management policy and procedures. Some of the major recommendations from these inquests and inquiries follow:

- a. The manner in which information is collected and shared in the corrections community must be improved;
- b. Upon admission to federal corrections, which is the earliest stage of the case management process, information must be collected, compiled and assessed and decisions made about institutional placement and program needs, the later stage of the process (case planning and treatment, release planning and release decision making), will continue these functions with each stage building on what has gone before.
- c. Correctional Service Canada must increase the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the description of offence histories on inmate files.
- d. Assessment of the risk that an offender represents to the community must be a priority concern to the Correctional Service Canada and National Parole Board (now Parole Board of Canada).

In 1989, in direct response to the second recommendation noted above, the case management process of Correctional Service Canada, which had already been undergoing extensive policy and procedural changes to address the recommendations, implemented nationally the Case Management Strategies (CMS). In CMS, a comprehensive profile of the offence was to be assembled from all available information sources as soon as possible, rather than at a later stage associated with a decision point, such as at the first eligibility for release. Gathering the information early decreases the possibility that a vital line of inquiry about the offender will be missed, and helps to ensure that all important information about the offender will be

available at the time of each critical decision.

In concert with the recommendations of the inquiries and consistent with the changes made to date, Correctional Service Canada launched a Correctional Strategy Initiative in 1992. A major component of the strategy was to design and develop an objective and comprehensive Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) model to standardize an overall orientation and integrated offender risk/needs assessment process throughout Correctional Service Canada. The OIA model also incorporated the Case Management strategies described above.

Further, in the development of the intake assessment and correctional planning process the provisions of Correctional Service Canada's governing legislation, the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, S.C. 1992, c. 20 ("CCRA") and the regulations were necessarily taken into account. More specifically:

- i. Section 24 of the CCRA requires that Correctional Service Canada take all reasonable steps to ensure that any information about an offender that it uses is as accurate and up to date and complete as possible.
- ii. Section 76 of the CCRA requires that Correctional Service Canada provide a range of programs to address the needs of offenders and contribute to their successful reintegration to the community.
- iii. Subsection 4(h) of the CCRA requires that correctional policies, programs and practices respect gender, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences and be responsive to the special needs of women and aboriginal peoples.
- iv. Section 80 of the CCRA requires that Correctional Service Canada provide programs designed particularly to meet the needs of aboriginal offenders.
- v. Standard Operating Procedure 700-04 and CD 840 — Psychological Services were developed following a number of inquiries, reports and studies completed in the 1980s and are a continuation of changes commenced in the early 1990s. They are directed at reducing the risk of an inmate committing a criminal offence when released from custody and increasing the odds of their positive offence-free reintegration into society.

Recognizing the many reintegration dividends that a systematic approach to offender risk and need assessment could yield, the Correctional Service Canada devised and implemented a fully automated Offender Intake assessment (OIA) and Correctional Planning process. OIA is a comprehensive and integrated risk and need(s) evaluation of the offender at the time of admission to the federal system. It involves the systematic collection and analysis of information on each offender's criminal and mental health history, social situation, education and other factors relevant to determining criminal risk and identifying offender need(s). This case-specific information provides the basis for determining the offender's institutional placement and developing an individualized correctional plan.

To be effective and efficient, correctional systems need to be able to produce meaningful and accurate profiles of the entire offender population. Recognising that estimates of the prevalence, nature and severity of problems being faced by offenders at time of admission to federal corrections would be invaluable in future years, the Service embedded provisions throughout OIA to collect proxy measures. The intent was these OIA indicators would permit Correctional Service Canada to estimate prevalence rates and track trends over time, and that these indicators would also be useful to alert correctional policy makers, program planners and deliverers, as well as staff, to cases where differential interventions might be warranted. Such information can and has been used to raise awareness about institutional and community supervision populations, and assemble basic statistics on both offender population profiles and social climate. More important, these data are helping to direct resources and controls to particular segments of the population to increase public, staff and offender safety.

### **C. The Changing Offender Population Profile**

Enhancing the public safety aspect of reintegrating criminal offenders into the community has been emerging as an even stronger theme in the accommodation and management of federal offender populations. Since 1994, tens of thousands of new offenders have been admitted to Canadian federal institutions. Eventually, almost every federal offender will be released from custody after serving the sentence prescribed by the courts. The challenge for Correctional Service Canada is to provide effective and efficient

correctional programs and services that will enable these offenders to safely reintegrate into the community.

To meet this challenge, it is essential to understand the composition of the federal custody population, and the obstacles faced by correctional administrators, staff and volunteers. These are the people who develop, organize and run correctional operations and programs — both in institutions and in the community. Correctional Service Canada's capacity to produce meaningful and accurate profiles of selected characteristics is being used to raise awareness about the composition of the federal offender population. If it serves to yield anything, OIA processes tell them they are facing some unprecedented correctional challenges in managing an increasingly diverse and complex federal offender population than before.

There are four emerging aspects of the federal offender profile to support this claim. First and foremost, the task of reintegrating federal offenders back into the community is being challenged by the amount of criminal justice system involvement prior to entering the federal system. Roughly 9 out of 10 offenders in federal institutions have a previous youth or adult court conviction. Fifty percent of these federal offenders have served a prior sentence as a youth. Clearly, it is a major challenge for the Service to safely reintegrate offenders into the community whose basic profile shows that the majority are repeat offenders. So far, these offenders have been unresponsive to criminal justice sanctioning.

Another characteristic of the federal custody population, considered to be static in nature (thereby unchangeable through active intervention), is the age composition. Recently, the relative proportion of offenders in federal institutions 50 years and over has been increasing and those under 30 have been declining. Consequently, many of the Service's accommodation and management strategies that were designed for a mostly youthful population will not only have to be maintained but perhaps adapted to better accommodate an aging offender population. Also, different age groups vary according to the levels of motivation for engaging in various correctional programs.

Secondly, the extent to which identified targets for correctional intervention can be identified at the earliest point in the offender's sentence and then addressed through appropriate treatment poses an even greater challenge in a constantly changing offender population profile. The Service's ability to match a particular intervention in a supportive environment is significantly impacted by the level of cognitive functioning, prevalence and nature of mental health problems and extent to which addiction issues prevail among the federal custody population.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the bulk of scientific evidence has shown that "structured cognitive behavioural" treatment appears to be the best approach to working with offenders. The Service's internationally accredited core programs use this method and have been achieving very good results. However, in recent years and in light of reintegration success, there have been some important changes in the residual composition of the federal custody population.

Over the last ten year period, the proportion of federal offenders in Canadian institutions who were assessed to be experiencing cognitive skills difficulties at the time of admission has continued to grow. By 2012, the majority have been assessed to be poor at problem solving, unable to generate choices and considered impulsive. It seems that a great majority of federal offenders do not possess the cognitive skills necessary to think before they become involved in illegal activities. Similarly, the proportion of offenders in federal institutions who were suffering mental health problems at the time of admission has increased. For addictions, the proportion of offenders in federal institutions who had abused alcohol and/or drugs prior to their admission has been increasing (80% abused alcohol and/or drugs). Clearly, the federal population profile is presenting a greater diversity of treatment challenges than before.

Thirdly, a well-established finding in criminological work is that having antisocial and/or delinquent associates is related to an increased risk of reoffending. In recent years, there have been a growing number of gang and organized crime members in federal institutions. Certainly, public, staff and offender safety issues are challenged by this federal offender profile change and these offenders require more careful attention during the reintegration process.

Fourthly, Aboriginal offenders are continuing to accumulate at an increased rate in federal institutions.

As a group, Aboriginal offenders in federal institutions are found more likely to be convicted of serious offences, have had extensive involvement with the criminal justice system as youth/adult and possess some unique needs at admission and on conditional release. These findings validate the need to continue offering more specialized programs and services to Aboriginal offenders. Other special populations such as women offenders and visible minorities are also starting to rise in their share of the federal custody population and forecasts suggest this trend will continue unabated into the near future. Hence, careful attention needs to be also paid to these individuals' motivation during the reintegration process.

In summary, *where is Canadian Corrections in its ability to predict and influence criminal behaviour?* There have been some important breakthroughs. What needs to be done next? Study how well correctional plans and interventions work for specific groups of offenders.

### III. PROGRAMS — FROM THEORY, RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

With the introduction of the Mission, the Correctional Service of Canada began a determined effort to develop and deliver evidence-based correctional programs that contribute to the safe and humane reintegration of offenders.

#### A. Theoretical Foundation

Social Learning Theory posits that criminal behaviour, like all other behaviours, is learned, and not genetic; in other words, the belief that no one is born criminal. Criminal behaviour results from an interaction between important personal factors and the situation that the offender encounters. There are many possible conditions which shape and support criminal behaviour, and the pathways to crime can change over time.

What determines whether a particular behaviour will reoccur is whether it is rewarded. People need to make that determination by assessing the rewards and costs of that specific behaviour. Over time, many reactions become automatic. But people's behaviours are based on their individual appraisal of what is rewarding and what is costly.

Social learning theorists suggest that criminal behaviour is often rewarding, not only because of illicit gains but also because of other criminogenic factors; for instance, criminal behaviour can be rewarded by the social support of criminal peers, by the excitement associated with the risk, by the reaffirmation of criminal attitudes, and through the acquisition of criminal skills. Social Learning Theory has become the framework for the assessment, treatment and management of offenders in Canada.

Canadian researchers have extended this theoretical perspective into a psychology of criminal conduct and a set of case-based principles for effective intervention — risk, need, and responsivity. First and foremost, the risk principle posits that treatment (programming) must match the offender's level of recidivism risk. When offenders are divided into groups according to risk level and provision of services aimed at reducing criminal behaviour, a significant pattern emerges. *What can reduce recidivism?* When lower-risk offenders receive minimal services, their rate of recidivism is low. When higher-risk offenders receive intensive services, then the rate of recidivism decreases. *What can increase recidivism?* When lower-risk offenders receive intensive services, then the rate of recidivism increases. When higher-risk offenders receive minimal services, then the rate of recidivism increases.

Correctional program content specifically addresses those risk factors related to reoffending. Correctional Service Canada program examples are: Education; Employment; Substance Abuse; Living Skills Training (Anger and Emotions Management, Reasoning and Rehabilitation); Counter Point; Sex Offender Treatment; Violence Prevention; Family Violence; Women Offender Programs (Women Offender Substance Abuse Program); and Aboriginal Offender Programs (including Aboriginal Offender Substance Abuse Program, Basic Healing, In-search of Your Warrior, High Intensity Aboriginal Family Violence Program, Circles of Change, Spirit of a Warrior, and Tupiq). Some of the new programs are targeted to large proportions of the offender populations who are at greater risk of recidivism. Reductions in reoffending of 20% to 60% have been reported for these programs.

## **B. Education**

Correctional Service Canada is determined to succeed in its goal of assisting offenders to reintegrate successfully into the community as law-abiding citizens by increasing education levels through the provision of provincially accredited or certified programs. To this end, the following educational programs are available in minimum-, medium-, and maximum-security institutions: Adult Basic Education (Grades 1 to 12), Vocational Education, and Library Services.

Post-secondary education is available for federal offenders who meet the criteria outlined in Commissioner's Directive 720 Education of Offenders. Financial responsibility for participation in education at this level remains primarily with the offender.

## **C. Employment**

Correctional Service Canada offers different "on-the-job" training programs to offenders. These programs are recognized and accredited by the Ministry of Education of each province, and they provide an official document to offenders as proof of the skills they acquired during their employment. Short programs to improve employability skills are also continuously developed and offered to offenders in the institutions and the community. These short programs meet the specific demands of the Canadian labour market.

In addition, employment and career planning programs are offered to inmates. These programs are developed in light of the employability skills profile described by the Conference Board of Canada and allow offenders to acquire skills, attitudes and behaviours valued by employers. More specifically, they include problem solving, critical thinking, punctuality, interacting with coworkers, being respectful of people's opinions and feelings, and dealing with authority figures.

## **D. Substance Abuse**

Correctional Service Canada provides a range of internationally accredited substance abuse programs to offenders whose dependence on substances is related to their criminal behaviour. The more significant the offender's problem, e.g. level of dependence, the higher the intensity of intervention provided. Offenders with substantial to severe problems are referred to an 89-session-high-intensity program and those with moderate need require a 26-session-moderate-intensity program. Offenders assessed as demonstrating a low-level dependence participate in a community-based, low intensity program. Moreover, there are substance abuse programs designed especially for women and Aboriginal offenders.

Maintenance and aftercare is provided in the institution and the community. Offenders participate in maintenance at a frequency that reflects their risk and need. Offenders no longer participate in maintenance when they have a demonstrated period of stability. Through their participation in the substance abuse programs and aftercare, offenders are taught strategies to manage their patterns of substance abusing with the ultimate goals of decreasing recidivism.

## **E. Living Skills Programming (Including Anger and Emotions Management and Reasoning and Rehabilitation)**

### **1. Anger and Emotions Management Program**

The Anger and Emotions Management Program is an accredited moderate intensity Correctional Program. The program teaches offenders to change their thinking patterns that trigger and feed emotions associated with their criminal behaviour. The aim is to help participants manage the intense emotions that lead to their criminal behaviour. It focuses on the following:

- *The factors that trigger anger, jealousy, depression, anxiety and aggression;*
- *Learning how to reduce levels of emotional arousal;*
- *Challenging the thinking patterns that feed these emotions;*
- *Learning techniques for resolving conflict without creating more problems; and*
- *Developing a relapse prevention plan.*

Following the anger and emotions management program, offenders who still have problems will be directed to the maintenance program. This is a structured intervention that assures maintenance of the skills learned and pursuing the intervention started in the Anger and Emotions Management Program. Presently, the

Anger and Emotions Management program is being replaced by a moderate intensity violence prevention program that will address a broader range of the targets related to violence.

## **2. Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program**

The Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program is an accredited moderate intensity Correctional Program. The program trains offenders in skills that address the socio-cognitive deficits linked to criminal behaviour. Socio-cognitive deficits are deep-seated, maladaptive thought processes and can be found in most offenders. The program teaches participants to think before they act; to anticipate problems and plan their reactions; to focus more on problems and solutions; to consider other people's points of view, and to be more flexible, open, rational and reflective in their way of thinking in general. More precisely, the areas targeted are self-regulation and self-management (impulsiveness and poor emotions, management); egocentrism/lack of social perspective; problems related to assertiveness and problematic social interactions; poor critical reasoning (easily influenced); rigid thinking (not learning from one's mistakes; always thinks the same way); and rarely questions values.

Following the Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program, offenders who still have significant socio-cognitive deficits will be directed to the Cognitive Skills Maintenance Program. This is a structured intervention that assures maintenance of the skills learned and continuing work on socio-cognitive deficits linked to criminal behaviour. Presently, the Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program (Revised) will be replaced by a program that addresses a broader range of targets associated with criminal offending. The Attitudes, Associates and Alternatives (AAA) Program is described below.

## **F. Counter-Point**

Counter-Point is an accredited moderate intensity community-based Correctional Program. Its principal goal is to help participants change their pro-criminal attitudes and take more responsibility for their criminal actions. Correctional research consistently shows that two factors in particular are linked to criminal behaviour. These two "key factors" are having pro-criminal attitudes and associating with antisocial peers. Reducing these factors is an important objective in effective correctional programming. The program focuses on the following themes: setting goals to change and lead a crime-free life; identifying tools that can help bring about the desired change and identifying the obstacles to such change; identifying the thinking patterns conducive to criminal behaviour; challenging the thinking patterns conducive to criminal behaviour; identifying a pro-social support network; solving interpersonal problems by pro-social means; and developing a relapse prevention plan. Presently, the Counter-Point program is being replaced by the Attitudes, Associates and Alternatives (AAA) Program that address a broader range of targets associated with criminal offending.

## **G. Attitudes, Associates and Alternatives**

The Attitudes, Associates and Alternatives (AAA) Program focuses on changing criminal attitudes and training on goal setting, but it will also include more detailed work on self-regulation problems by providing intensive training on decision-making, consequential thinking and problem solving. It will also have a greater emphasis on training on strategies and skills for avoiding criminal peers and establishing pro-social relationships. This program will target factors related to crime for gain such as robbery, theft, drug offences, fraud, etc.

## **H. Sex Offender Treatment**

Correctional Service Canada manages the sex offender population in accordance with a national sex offender strategy and a compliment of internationally accredited programs. All sexual offenders are initially assessed to determine the appropriate level of intensity required to address their specific criminogenic needs and risk levels.

The National Sex Offender Programs (NaSOP) are cognitive-behavioural interventions designed to be a therapeutic rather than solely didactic or psycho-educational programs. All programs are based on empirical research and best practice in the provision of services to sex offenders. Principles of effective correctional interventions, social learning, adult learning, group processes, therapeutic rapport and alliance, motivational enhancement, and skills development are respected throughout.

The programs also incorporate both group and individual work, and recognize learning that occurs



outside the formal treatment venue. The NaSOP uses a "menu" approach and targets criminogenic needs and known risk factors associated with individual offenders' patterns of sexual offending behaviour.

The program emphasizes the need for offenders to take responsibility for their actions, recognize the behavioural progression that proceeded and followed sexual offences, identify situations which place them at risk to reoffend, and assist them to develop strategies to prevent recidivism. The treatment of sexual offenders is a therapeutic and semi-structured intervention aimed at reducing the risk of recidivism through the use of effective self-management. In addition to the general self-management objective, the program components are cognitive distortions, deviant arousal and fantasy, intimacy deficits, anger and emotion management, empathy, and victim awareness.

The current NaSOTP has two levels of intensity, the Moderate Intensity Sex Offender Treatment and Low Intensity Sex Offender Treatment; both levels have a maintenance phase. A National High Intensity Program designed to replace the regionally developed high-intensity programs was piloted in two regions (Prairies and Atlantic) in 2007. It completed the compliment of nationally available and managed sex offender programs. In addition, women who have sexually offended are referred to the National Sex Offender Program for women.

### **I. Violence Prevention Programming**

The Violence Prevention domain consists of two types of interventions: Violence Prevention Programs and a Segregation Intervention Strategy.

#### **1. Violence Prevention Programs**

Aggression and violent behavioural problems are multidimensional. Given that targets of change are usually complex and multiple, the High Intensity Violence Prevention Program (HIVPP) is an intensive intervention for the highest risk offenders who have significant histories of violence. The Moderate Intensity Violence Prevention Program (MIVPP) was piloted in 2007, and offered to offenders who require intervention for their violent behaviour, but who were not significantly high risk to meet criteria for HIVPP.

Both Violence Prevention Programs integrate a variety of rehabilitative approaches. They focus on violent criminal activity and interpersonal aggression that do not exclusively result from anger or emotional control problems. The primary intervention approach is cognitive behavioural and skills-based, with an emphasis on relapse prevention. The intervention techniques are reinforced by a consistent strategy emphasizing self-control, social problem solving, education, self-management, role playing, and homework assignments. The goal of these programs is to improve the skills of the participants, and subsequently, to reduce the risk of future violence.

#### **2. Segregation Intervention Strategy**

The Segregation Intervention Strategy is comprised of the Motivation-based Intervention Strategy plus six skills workshops: self-monitoring, anger control, high-risk thinking, slips and cravings management, communication, and problem solving. The interventions are delivered individually or in small groups. They were designed to motivate participants to change problematic behaviours and motivate them to participate in their correctional plan. The skills workshops teach basic concepts in different areas to prepare offenders to participate in correctional programs. The overriding legislative principle of the segregation program is that the placement of offenders in the general population is the norm, as is the provision of adequate protection, control, programs, and services to offenders who cannot be maintained therein. In practical terms, this means that the goal is to assist offenders in returning to the general inmate population as early as possible, while providing rehabilitative program opportunities to offenders who have no short-term alternatives to segregation.

### **J. Family Violence**

Correctional Service Canada's national Family Violence Prevention programs are primarily focused on male offenders who have been abusive in their intimate relationships with female partners or ex-partners. The programs are based on the principle that responding with violence and abuse in intimate relationships is a learned pattern of behaviour that can be modified. The programs teach participants to understand the dynamics of their abusive relationships and train them in techniques that will allow them to replace their

abusive behaviours with approaches that are conducive to forming healthy non-abusive relationships.

The menu of Family Violence Prevention programs includes the following programs: High Intensity Family Violence Prevention Program, Moderate Intensity Family Violence Prevention Program, National Maintenance Program and the Treatment Primer "Roadways to Change."

## **K. Women Offender Programming**

### **1. Women Offender Substance Abuse Program (WOSAP)**

The Women Offender Substance Abuse Program (WOSAP) is a unique intensive gender-specific program that addresses the needs of substance abusing women offenders. The Program is based on a harm reduction model, as its purpose is to reduce the adverse consequences of alcohol and drug use. The program is founded on the principles of Social Learning Theory, Cognitive-Behavioural Theory, Relational Theory, a therapeutic model, and the Model of Change.

The program is designed to offer a continuum of care from admissions to warrant expiry. It consists of four modules:

*Module I* — Education and Engagement (Initial Engagement at Intake and includes 8 sessions). The purpose of this module is to provide women offenders with relevant knowledge and information about the impact of alcohol and drugs on their lives. At this stage, important linkages are made with health services, in response to growing concerns regarding infectious disease, pregnancy, fetal alcohol syndrome, medication, etc.

*Module II* — Intensive Therapeutic Program is co-facilitated and includes 20 cognitive-based sessions and 20 emotive-based sessions. This module entails two phases: therapeutic and cognitive-behavioural. Therapeutic sessions are structured in such a way as to encourage women to explore underlying issues, such as depression, anger, or anxiety, related to substance use. Psycho-educational sessions educate women about negative effects of substance abuse, and help women acquire the necessary knowledge and coping skills to change their alcohol- and drug-using behaviours as well as attitudes and beliefs. While cognitive and therapeutic sessions are divided, they are delivered in tandem.

*Module III* — Relapse Prevention and Maintenance (20 sessions). The relapse prevention and maintenance module offers on-going support to women in institutions as well as communities. The purpose of this module is to consolidate continued recovery by providing ongoing skill building, goal setting and support, as well as preparing women for successful transition from the institution to the community.

*Module IV* — Peer Support and Community Building (ongoing). In order to ensure continuous support to women, this module eases their transition from institution to community by providing them with access to resources/information relevant to their recovery. The peer support group offers mutual support and promotes a support network for women outside structured program times.

### **2. Women Who Sexually Offend**

A Sex Offender Program for Women is available at all women's federal institutions as well as in the community. There are five sex offender specific modules: self-management; deviant arousal; cognitive distortions; intimacy, relationships and social functioning; empathy and victim awareness. The primary goals of treatment for women who sexually offend are to learn to identify the factors that influenced their offences, and to learn how to deal more effectively with them, in order to reduce the risk of reoffending. Factors that influence offences of women who sexually offend may include past victimization and/or relationships with intimate partners.

A Protocol for the Assessment and Treatment of Women Who Sexually Offend has been implemented to ensure consistency in the assessment and treatment of this small group of women. In addition, a national consultant in the field of women who sexually offend is available for consultation on each of the cases. The intervention begins with a specialized assessment at the time of admission, is ongoing and includes maintenance in the institution and the community. Both short- and long-term evaluations will be carried out. In the absence of an empirically-based static and dynamic assessment tool, evaluation is based on responsiveness to treatment.

### 3. Violence Prevention Program for Women (VPPW)

Correctional Service Canada has developed a violence prevention program for women. The goal of VPPW is to help participants develop ways of living that are incompatible with violence. The main objectives of VPPW is to guide participants in developing a vision of change to empower them to live healthy and non-violent lifestyles; to help participants identify violence and its function in their lives; and to help women develop skills to manage emotions, to problem solve, to communicate, and to resolve conflict. The Program is to be founded on the principles of Social Learning Theory and a feminist model of change. The intervention models include Cognitive-Behaviour Intervention, Self-Efficacy and Change.

## **L. Aboriginal Offender Programming**

### 1. Aboriginal Offender Substance Abuse Program (AOSAP)

AOSAP is a moderate-high-intensity program for male Aboriginal offenders who present with considerable need in the area of substance abuse. The program runs 10-12 weeks in duration and consists of 65 sessions. The program represents an integration of Principles of Effective Corrections with traditional Aboriginal healing approaches. Aboriginal facilitators, Elders, spirituality and ceremony are integral to program delivery and design.

### 2. Aboriginal Basic Healing Program (BHP)

The Basic Healing Program is deemed to be a “culturally-appropriate alternative” to the Anger and Emotions Management Program as well as the Reasoning and Rehabilitation. It is a moderate intensity program for Aboriginal offenders who present with need in the areas of interpersonal problem solving, critical reasoning, self-control and self-management, rigid cognitive style, and cultural identity. The program has a duration of 3 months and consists of 60 sessions.

### 3. In Search of Your Warrior (ISOYW)

The ISOYW has been deemed to be a “culturally-appropriate alternative” to the national Violence Prevention Programs. ISOYW is a high-intensity program for male Aboriginal offenders with 2 or more convictions for violent offences. The program is 4 months in duration and consists of 75 sessions. It represents an integration of Principles of Effective Corrections with traditional Aboriginal healing approaches. Aboriginal facilitators, Elders, spirituality and ceremony are integral to program delivery and design. The program is emerging from demonstration mode with an eye towards national implementation. ISOYW has recently undergone a formal research evaluation with positive results. Native Counselling Services of Alberta are the Copyright holders and proprietors of this program.

### 4. High-Intensity Aboriginal Family Violence Program (HIAFVP)

The HIAFVP has been deemed to be a “culturally-appropriate alternative” to the mainstream National Family Violence Prevention Programs. The HIAFVP is a high-intensity program for male Aboriginal offenders at high risk of violence towards women with whom they have an intimate relationship. The HIAFVP is 3 months in duration and consists of 72 sessions. It represents an integration of Principles of Effective Corrections with traditional Aboriginal healing approaches. Aboriginal facilitators, Elders, spirituality and ceremony are integral to program delivery and design. The program is emerging from demonstration mode with an eye towards national implementation. Research is on-going.

### 5. Spirit of a Warrior Program (SOAW)

The Spirit of a Warrior Program was specifically designed to address the needs of Aboriginal women offenders. The Program is divided into four sections: introduction; childhood; adolescence; and adulthood/alternatives to violence. The Program consists of an in-depth intervention intended to reduce the risk of violent reoffending, reduce risk of relapse, improve family relations, improve ability to communicate with others, improve coping skills, and adapt Aboriginal culture and spirituality into all aspects of behaviour and everyday life. It is expected that with a more informed base of traditions, Aboriginal women will be better able to manage their lives.

### 6. Circles of Change Program

The Circles of Change Program is a unique and gender-specific program that addresses the criminogenic needs of Aboriginal women offenders. The *Circles of Change Program* includes three rehabilitative strategies: relational, cognitive-behavioural, and solution-focused. The modules include: the process of

change; increasing the knowledge of Canadian Aboriginal culture; communication styles; self-esteem and self-care issues; problem solving skills; woman's role in her family of origin; healthy and unhealthy relationships; and social injustice.

#### 7. Tupiq

The Tupiq Sex Offender Treatment Program is an Inuit-specific high-intensity holistic treatment program targeting moderate to moderate-high risk sexual offenders. The Program runs 22 weeks in duration with 328 contact hours per offender-participant and consists of 97 group sessions, 22 individual sessions and four weeks of pre-, mid- and post-assessment. The Program is delivered 5 days per week with both morning and afternoon sessions. The Program was developed in 1999 in order to meet the correctional needs of the majority of Inuit federal offenders nationally. It is a complex treatment and holistic approach incorporating multiple modalities and parallel intervention processes including Inuit Healing (an Inuit-specific therapy group), a sex offender therapy group adhering to national standards, an Inuit-specific critical reasoning skills group (which incorporates cultural and social values, problem management, emotion management, family violence prevention, substance abuse prevention and relapse prevention) individual counselling and links to the offender's home community.

The Tupiq Program is delivered bilingually in Inuktitut and English and all components are delivered by Inuit contracted staff with the exception of the Self Management Group (the sex-offender therapy group), which is delivered twice per week and is co-facilitated by Inuit and the Program's Clinical Supervisor, a contracted psychologist specializing in sex-offender treatment who is, at this time, not Inuit. The Tupiq Program provides intensive training and support of Inuit delivery staff prior to and throughout the program delivery.

The program is just emerging from demonstration mode with an eye towards wider implementation. A formal research report has been completed with positive results.

### **IV. STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE PROGRAM RESISTANT OFFENDERS**

From the behavioural science and correctional treatment literature there is a body of knowledge that informs strategies to modify offender behaviour. Approaches include the application of specific skills (e.g. pro-social modelling) by staff and the management of behavioural contingencies (e.g. positive reinforcement). In terms of staff intervention skills, these strategies include direct and indirect techniques intended to engage offenders, methods to build working relationships, practices to increase offenders' understanding about the outcomes of specific behaviours, and procedures to assist offenders to overcome obstacles to change.

- There is a range of approaches currently available that could be systematically applied by correctional staff to address offender resistance.
- Custody involves offenders living in social groups. Separating offenders whose behaviour is disruptive is consistent with Social Learning Theory application and correctional experience that indicate these offenders could have an undue negative influence on their peers.
- When applied to offenders, research has found that strategies such as motivational interviewing to be effective in increasing engagement, improving interpersonal relationships between staff and offenders, and improving program participation and completion.
- Some of this work on motivational interviewing has already been applied in higher-intensity programs and is being developed for use in the Special Handling Unit. The use needs to be expanded to include all members of the multidisciplinary team to ensure a consistent approach to offender accountability and behaviour change.
- The development of program primers (motivational interviewing) is important in order that offenders can receive the kind of correctional program that is responsive to their level of motivation.

### **V. CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT — CONSEQUENTIAL LEARNING**

In addition to specific interventions by staff, contingency management can also influence behaviour. This involves the consistent and systematic application of consequences to modify behaviour. There can be

differentiation in the contingencies for offenders who do or do not participate in their correctional plan. A broader range of contingencies (e.g. pay level, accommodation) that address control and assistance issues could increase the ability to actively encourage behaviour change by offenders while still maintaining concerns for offender rights.

- There is empirical evidence that the application of behavioural science principles in juvenile and adult correctional and mental health settings have yielded positive results in reducing disturbed and disruptive behaviour. Contingency management is an important component to the goal of modifying offenders' behaviour.
- Reinforcers of positive/pro-social behaviour can be *social* (e.g. verbal and written praise, engagement strategies, involvement in multidisciplinary team meetings), *activities* (leisure, TV, visits) and *tangible* (e.g. pay level, accommodation).
- Where possible providing the offender choice about reinforcers increases their relevance and effectiveness.

## VI. TRAINING ISSUES

Staff can and do play an important role in the implementation and success of correctional programs. There is, therefore, a need for staff training and quality control. Standardized training of frontline and supervisory staff is crucial to avoid misapplication of techniques.

- The quality of staff-offender interactions is key to perceptions of fairness in the application of correctional programs.
- The use of multidisciplinary teams introduces a need for increased communication among staff and with offenders in order to ensure consistency in the manner in which offenders are managed.
- Training materials from other jurisdictions and the pedagogical literature are currently available and could be adapted with relative ease. Effectiveness of training would be part of the evaluation.

## VII. THE NEED FOR PROGRAM ACCREDITATION PROCESSES

Program Accreditation is an approach originally developed by the Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS) of England and Wales and adapted by the Scottish Prison Service in the mid-1990s. It originated as a means of demonstrating accountability. The main themes of the approach were an emphasis on theoretically sound programs and empirical evidence of effects on recidivism. According to the "*What Works*" literature James McGuire states: "*The optimal route selected by a number of services is the development of procedures for accreditation of programs designed to reduce recidivism.*" Moreover, there should be a clear evidence-based theoretical model underpinning the program; program material should identify factors linked to offending; programs should be inter-linked with a case management process, and guidelines for implementation within services and program materials should include assessment and evaluation measures, and a framework for evaluation of the program's overall delivery, short-term, and long-term impact.

In October 1997, Correctional Service Canada adopted a strategy for accreditation that involved two separate phases: 1. *programs would be accredited through the use of International-Expert Panels that would utilize criteria derived by HMPS and 2) teams of Correctional Service Canada staff, using standards as part of the Program Accreditation, would conduct the audit of the program delivery sites.* The first Correctional Program Accreditation Panel in Correctional Service Canada was held in May 1998.

In Correctional Service Canada, programs are accredited in accordance with the following criteria: a) explicit, empirically-based model of change; b) targeting criminogenic need; c) using objective methods; d) skills oriented; e) address responsivity issues; f) program intensity; g) continuity of care; and h) ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

In terms of benefits, an accreditation process promotes high-quality correctional programs; provides internal and external (international) recognition; maintains program integrity; allows Correctional Service Canada to focus resources on effective, research-based programs; increase delivery of programs which have been proven to be effective in reducing recidivism; helps standardize program delivery across sites and regions; and allows for sharing of best practices.

## VIII. ANTICIPATED RESULTS

Anticipated results from the “correctional programs model” include:

### A. Attitudes

- Improved perceptions about a safe working environment (offenders and staff).
- Increased job satisfaction.
- Improved ratings of interactions with staff by offenders.
- Decrease in negative attitudes towards staff by offenders.

### B. Programs

- Increased enrolment and completion of correctional programs.
- Lower rates of program attrition (refusals and drop-outs).
- Improved ratings of program performance.
- Changes in level of motivation over the course of an offender serving his or her sentence.

### C. Outcomes

- Reduced time served in more secure settings.
- Reduced rate of offenders involved in institutional incidents, charges.
- A potential shift in the nature of grievances submitted.
- Improved parole grant rates.
- Reduced reoffending post-release.

### D. Decision Requirement

There are several key decisions for correctional programs that must be considered in terms of contingencies and level of motivation.

- The correctional system should commit to systematically assessing the level of offender motivation and incorporate it into a scheme of correctional “responsiveness” categories.
- The correctional system should target offender “responsiveness” through the systematic application of engagement strategies (motivational interviewing) and program primers (basic elements of core programs).
- The correctional system should undertake a series of well-controlled demonstration projects in the use of motivational enhancement strategies.

## IX. CONCLUSION

The evolution of the “correctional programs model” in Canada has led to a stage where it needs to reach beyond offender risk/need and focus efforts on integrating correctional program modalities and enhancing offender motivation to engage in their correctional plan. In practice, this means that the assessment of “correctional plan engagement” will serve to structure decisions being made regarding custody or security designations, program assignment, temporary and conditional release recommendations, and community supervision requirements.

While there exists for Correctional Service Canada a suite of well-designed correctional programs, delivery methods need to be reviewed to ensure they show consideration for gender, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences and are responsive to the special needs of women, Aboriginal peoples, and others with special requirements (i.e. learning disability, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder).

Strategies to decrease offenders’ resistance to participate in their correctional plans exist and should be incorporated into correctional practice. An expanded range of correctional program strategies to include primers should serve to reduce program attrition.

Reinforcers are important in modifying offender behaviour, but failing to differentiate consequences for behaviour reduces correctional effectiveness. The “correctional programs model” focuses on offender

behaviour that is both appropriate and problematic and relates it to progress in correctional plans. The use of consequential learning would be viewed as a systemic change for many correctional systems.

With the changing offender profile and implementation of new, integrated correctional program strategies, program staff roles and competencies will change. Training and supervision is a critical element to the success of correctional programming.

As correctional programs must meet recognized standards and sites must deliver them as designed to offenders that require them in a timely manner by qualified staff, a revamped accreditation process that is simplified, streamlined and utilizes program management monitoring tools is required to ensure integrity of delivery.

As before, there remains the requirement for Correctional Service Canada to measure a range of relevant correctional outcomes (effectiveness, efficiency and relevance) to demonstrate the impact of the “correctional programs model.”