

**From The Inside Out:
Healing Within Aboriginal-Specific Correctional Programs**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objectives

Prior to contact with European settlers, Aboriginal peoples had absolute authority over their lives and their ways of caring for their peoples (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 24). However, “colonization strategies [...] have touched everything, including dispute resolution, and are making it difficult for many communities to break free of punitive approaches and re-root themselves in restorative approaches instead” (Ross, 2006, p. 11).

This report explores how Aboriginal-specific prison programs are facilitating the rehabilitation of Aboriginal offenders in Western Canada. The over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system has been a major issue in Canada for the past decade and statistics show that this trend continues to rise (Office of the Correctional Investigator [OCI], 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 3). Aboriginal adults (First Nation, Métis or Inuit) account for 23.2% of federally sentenced inmates even though they represent only 4% of the Canadian population (OCI, 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 1; Statistics Canada, 2011, p.1). Between 2000 and 2013, the federal Aboriginal inmate population has increased by 56.2%, rising from 17.0% of the inmate population in 2000 to 23.2% in 2013 (OCI, 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 1).

To in part address this trend, over the past three decades, Aboriginal-specific programs, which blend aspects of traditional Aboriginal spirituality with Western approaches to treatment, are now offered to Aboriginal offenders inside federal correctional facilities (Trevethan, Moore & Allegri, 2005, p. 4). These programs are based on a number of traditional Aboriginal worldviews and values, and incorporate a holistic approach to rehabilitation (Zellerer, 2003, pp.185, 187).

Research suggests that the integration of Aboriginal culture and spirituality into correctional programs can be conducive to the healing, rehabilitation and reintegration of Aboriginal offenders (Waldram, 1994, p. 200; Trevethan et al., 2005, pp. 14, 16; Trevethan, Crutcher & Rastin, 2002, p. 61; Ellerby & MacPherson, 2002, pp. 57-58; Johnston, 1997, pp. 65-67; Heckbert & Turkington, 2001, p. 56-57; Sioui & Thibault, 2001, p. 48; Trevethan, 2003, p. 198; Zellerer, 2003, p. 187; Milward, 2012, p. 29). Despite this research, there remains a critical lack of understanding among Canadians about what interventions are available for Aboriginal offenders and how these interventions contribute to the rehabilitation and reintegration of Aboriginal offenders (N.J. McLaren, personal communication, November 1, 2013). It is essential for Canadians to understand what interventions are available, as well as how these interventions are making positive changes in the lives of offenders because the continuation of delivery of these interventions depends on public and government support. Furthermore, it is equally important to educate Canadians about the underlying historical factors that have contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in

corrections in order to reshape the negative images and stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples that are prevalent in Canadian society.

To help inform Canadians of these issues, Norma-Jean McLaren, Adjunct Professor at the University of British Columbia and Consultant from 42nd Street Consulting, is creating an educational film that will feature Aboriginal-specific correctional programs that are making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal offenders in British Columbia and Alberta.

This 45 minute film, entitled *From the Inside Out*, aims to educate the general Canadian public on the underlying, systemic issues that have led to the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in Canada, the history of Aboriginal-specific programming in Western Canada, and the Aboriginal-specific interventions that are available both inside correctional institutions and in the community to facilitate the healing and reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. By highlighting these interventions, the film can also be a powerful tool in showcasing the possible benefits of following a healing-based program for non-Aboriginal inmates as well as Aboriginal inmates.

The purpose of this report is to inform the educational film by exploring how Aboriginal-specific programs are facilitating the rehabilitation of Aboriginal offenders in British Columbia and Alberta. More specifically, this report aims to uncover what features of Aboriginal-specific programs are key to the healing of Aboriginal offenders. To narrow the scope of this project, I will incorporate a case study on the In Search of Your Warrior (ISOYW) program, which is an intervention developed by the Native Counselling Service of Alberta for federally-sentenced male Aboriginal offenders with a history of violence. I focus on this program because it has been considered an exemplary Aboriginal-specific program in its ability to incorporate traditional Aboriginal culture and spirituality within a correctional institution (Amellal, 2005, The Program section, para. 2; Trevethan et al., 2005, pp.14, 16 & 37). To address the research question, I will review literature on Aboriginal-specific programming, discuss publicly-available government documents on the ISOYW program, and share stories of individuals who were involved in the development and/or delivery of Aboriginal-specific programming. By exploring how Aboriginal-specific programs facilitate the healing and rehabilitation of Aboriginal offenders, this report highlights features that are instrumental to Aboriginal-specific programs and should be considered in future correctional programming for Aboriginal offenders.

Methodology

This study incorporates a qualitative case study within a decolonizing framework, which considers Indigenous perspectives, processes, knowledge, and ways of learning as focal points in the research and emphasizes the healing and empowerment of Indigenous communities (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp.116, 128, 142 &146; Liamputtong, 2010, pp. 21-23). In line with this framework, I rely primarily on qualitative research methods, conducting open-ended, participatory interviews with three individuals who have experience designing and/or delivering Aboriginal-specific programs in Western Canada. These informal discussions explore their perspectives about “what works” in correctional

programming for Aboriginal offenders. They have knowledge of traditional Aboriginal culture and spirituality and have insight into how Aboriginal-specific programs can promote healing within corrections. To support the interviews, I conducted a document scan of public government documents relating to the ISOYW program.

Findings

First, I share a story from one of the interviews about how programming for Aboriginal offenders was initially introduced into federal correctional institutions. This story is important because it has never before been recorded and acknowledges those who were instrumental in shaping contemporary Aboriginal-specific programs. Next, I explore the development and delivery of the ISOYW program, focusing on how it aims to heal Aboriginal offenders inside federal institutions. From the public government documents and interviews, I discover that the ISOYW program was originally developed as a community-based program by the Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) (Trevethan et al., 2005, p.12-13). The program was built around a four-part film series entitled "RAGE," which chronologically documents the lives of Aboriginal offenders (Trevethan et al., 2005, p.13). The program was developed in consultation with Elders, program specialists, staff, and inmates (LaBoucane-Benson, 2002, p.41; Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013).

From the document review and interviews, I also learn that the ISOYW program is founded on the values of Natural Law (kindness, sharing, honesty, and strength) and on the holistic Aboriginal belief that all things are connected: the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of an individual must be engaged for sustainable change to occur (Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013; Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013; NCSA, 2010, Warrior Programs section, para. 1). Through an experiential learning model, the facilitation team incorporates a variety of cultural and spiritual methods (drumming, singing, sweating, dancing, storytelling, and ceremonies) to help offenders address their deep-rooted issues (Trevethan et al., 2005, pp. 17, 40; Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013; Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013). The facilitation team, which often includes an Aboriginal Elder, guides program sessions and ceremonies and acts as role models for the offenders (Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013; Trevethan et al., 2005, p.17). To further support Aboriginal offenders, Pathways Healing Units, which provide a traditional living environment and cultural supports, are available within correctional facilities for offenders who demonstrate a serious commitment to their healing journey (CSC, 2004, p. 54; CSC Commissioner's Directive, 2012).

Research evaluations of the ISOYW program have shown that the program can reduce Aboriginal offenders' need for correctional programming, increase their likelihood of discretionary release, and reduce their risk of readmission upon community release (Trevethan et al., 2005, p.29; CSC, 2009, pp. 101-106). While these results are promising, the evaluations also found that the post-program ratings and general re-admission rates of ISOYW participants were not significantly different from the comparison group consisting of those who did not participate in the program (Trevethan

et al., 2005, p. 29). This suggests that although the ISOYW program participants scored better on a number of outcome variables following involvement in the program, the comparison group also showed improvement.

In conducting this research, I also discovered that Correctional Service Canada (CSC) is currently undergoing a shift in programming. Until recently, the CSC has been operating within a multi-program model that offered specialized programs aimed at addressing specific, need-targeted areas (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1). The ISOYW program was one of these specialized programs. However, to improve efficiency and reduce program redundancies and overlap, the CSC is moving towards an Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM) (OCI, 2011, p. 45; CSC, January 2010, Integrated Program Model section, para. 1). The ICPM collapsed and replaced a number of previously separate need-targeted programs within the multi-program model, including the ISOYW program (OCI, 2011, p. 45). The ICPM is cognitive-behavioural based and consists of three program streams for offenders: multi-target, Aboriginal multi-target (referred to as the AICPM), and sex offender (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1). The ICPM appears to be meeting its efficiency objectives in terms of increasing program access, availability, and participation, while reducing wait times and costs. However, by collapsing a number of specialized programs into only three program streams, the ICPM may not have the capacity to effectively address the individual needs of offenders in general, and Aboriginal offenders more specifically (OCI, 2011, p. 45).

After presenting these findings, I then conduct a thematic analysis of the findings from the interviews and document scan to draw out common themes related to Aboriginal offender healing and rehabilitation. I uncover six themes as being instrumental for healing, which include: (a) collaboration during program development; (b) exploration of underlying issues, including issues of identity; (c) holistic approaches to healing through experiential learning; (d) culture and spirituality in the form of Elders, ceremonies and Aboriginal values; (e) commitment of the facilitation team; and, (f) support from peers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this report, I present six recommendations for my client to consider in developing her educational film.

1. The educational film should include an in-depth exploration of the history of Aboriginal-specific programming from an Aboriginal perspective that discusses traditional Aboriginal dispute resolution processes, the link between colonial policies and contemporary issues, and the development of Aboriginal-specific programs.
2. The educational film should highlight the importance of ceremony, Elders, and experiential learning tools (drumming, singing, storytelling, and art) in Aboriginal offender healing.

3. The educational film should address the CSC's current shift in programming and question the AICPM's inclusion of cultural and spiritual activities, level of intensity, and shift in program objectives.
4. My client should develop a marketing and communications strategy which identifies the target audience, goals and objectives, key message, budget, and distribution methods for the film.
5. A discussion guide should be developed to accompany the film when presented at schools and other public forums to provide audiences a post-viewing space for dialogue.
6. Further research should be undertaken to explore Aboriginal-specific programs for federally-incarcerated women as well as reintegration programs for both Aboriginal men and women.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Objectives

Prior to contact with European settlers, Aboriginal peoples had absolute authority over their lives and their ways of caring for their peoples (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 24). However, “colonization strategies [...] have touched everything, including dispute resolution, and are making it difficult for many communities to break free of punitive approaches and re-root themselves in restorative approaches instead” (Ross, 2006, p. 11).

The purpose of this report is to inform the educational film by exploring how Aboriginal-specific programs are facilitating the rehabilitation of Aboriginal offenders in British Columbia and Alberta. More specifically, this report aims to uncover what features of Aboriginal-specific programs are key to the healing of Aboriginal offenders.

To narrow the scope of this project, I will focus on the In Search of Your Warrior (ISOYW) program, which is an intervention developed by the Native Counselling Service of Alberta for federally-sentenced male Aboriginal offenders with a history of violence. I have chosen to focus on the ISOYW program because it has been considered an exemplary Aboriginal-specific program in its ability to incorporate traditional Aboriginal culture and spirituality within a correctional institution (Amellal, 2005, The Program section, para. 2; Trevethan et al., 2005, pp.14, 16 & 37). The research question that is asked is: what features of Aboriginal-specific prison programs are key to the healing of Aboriginal offenders?

It is of note that the ISOYW program was adapted in 2001 to meet the needs of federally-sentenced Aboriginal women in the form of the “Spirit of a Warrior” program. However, there is limited research available on this adapted program and on other Aboriginal-specific correctional programs for women. Due to limitations in time and resources, this study does not investigate gender and the experiences of Aboriginal women in corrections. Therefore, there is a need and opportunity for future researchers to focus on the over-representation of the female Aboriginal inmate population, along with healing interventions that are designed to address their specific needs both inside the correctional institution and outside in the community.

To answer the research question, I conducted a literature review on Aboriginal-specific programming and analyzed publicly government documents on the ISOYW program. In terms of primary research, I interviewed individuals who were involved in the development and/or delivery of Aboriginal-specific programming. By exploring how Aboriginal-specific programs facilitate the healing of Aboriginal offenders, this project highlights features that are instrumental to Aboriginal-specific programs and should be considered when making future changes to correctional programming for Aboriginal offenders.

1.3 Problem Definition

The over-representation of Aboriginal¹ people in the criminal justice system has been a major issue in Canada for the past decade and statistics show that this trend continues to rise (Office of the Correctional Investigator [OCI], 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 3). Although only 4% of the Canadian population, Aboriginal adults (First Nation, Métis or Inuit) account for 23.2% of federal inmates (Statistics Canada, 2011, p.1; OCI, 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 1). Between 2000 and 2013, the federal Aboriginal inmate population has increased by 56.2%, rising from 17.0% of the inmate population in 2000 to 23.2% in 2013 (OCI, 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 3). These statistics highlight the severity and relevance of the issue of Aboriginal over-representation in Canadian corrections and underline the need for interventions to address this issue.

To in part address this trend, over the past three decades, “Aboriginal-specific programs,” which blend aspects of traditional Aboriginal spirituality with Western approaches to treatment, are now offered to Aboriginal offenders inside federal correctional facilities (Trevethan et al., 2005, p.4). These programs are based on a number of traditional Aboriginal worldviews and values, and incorporate holistic approaches to rehabilitation (Zellerer, 2003, p.185, 187). Research suggests that the integration of Aboriginal culture and spirituality into correctional programs can be conducive to the healing, rehabilitation and reintegration of Aboriginal offenders (Waldram, 1994, p. 200; Trevethan et al., 2005, pp. 14, 16; Trevethan, Crutcher & Rastin, 2002, p. 61; Ellerby & MacPherson, 2002, pp. 57-58; Johnston, 1997, pp. 65-67; Heckbert & Turkington, 2001, pp. 56-57; Sioui & Thibault, 2001, p.48; Trevethan, 2003, p. 198; Zellerer, 2003, p. 187; Milward, 2012, p. 29) The inclusion of traditional Aboriginal spirituality into correctional programming can help alleviate deep-rooted Aboriginal identity issues, which are critical components in the healing process (Waldram, 1994, p. 200; Ellerby & MacPherson, 2002, pp. 57-58). Despite this research, there remains a critical lack of understanding among Canadians about why this over-representation exists, what interventions are available for Aboriginal offenders and how these interventions contribute to the rehabilitation and reintegration of Aboriginal offenders (N.J. McLaren, personal communication, November 1, 2013). It is essential for Canadians to understand what interventions are available, as well as how these interventions are making positive changes in the lives of offenders because the continuation of delivery of these interventions depend on public and government support. Furthermore, it is equally important to educate Canadians about the underlying historical factors that have contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in corrections in order to reshape the negative images and stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples that are prevalent in Canadian society.

¹ In this report, the term ‘Aboriginal peoples’ refers to “ a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people: Indians (commonly referred to as First Nations), Métis and Inuit. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs” (Correctional Service Canada, 2013, Aboriginal Peoples and Communities section, para. 1).

1.4 The Client

To help inform Canadians of these interventions, Norma-Jean McLaren, Adjunct Professor at the University of British Columbia and Consultant from 42nd Street Consulting, is creating an educational film that will feature Aboriginal-specific correctional programs that are making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal offenders in British Columbia and Alberta. This 45 minute film, entitled *From the Inside Out*, aims to educate the general Canadian public on the underlying systemic issues that have led to the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in Canada. The film will also address the history of Aboriginal-specific programming in Western Canada and the Aboriginal-specific interventions that are available both inside correctional institutions and in the community to facilitate the healing and reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. By highlighting these interventions, the film can also be a powerful tool in showcasing the possible benefits of following a healing-based program for non-Aboriginal inmates as well as Aboriginal inmates.

1.5 Self-Location

Self-location is an important process in Aboriginal research in which the researcher identifies his/her voice within the research to ensure that he/she is accountable for his/her positionality (Absolon & Willett, 2005, p.97). I approach this research as a 3rd generation settler. My grandparents on my mother's side immigrated to Vancouver, Canada from London, England in 1957. My grandparents on my father's side immigrated to Vancouver, Canada from Gottchee,² Yugoslavia in 1949. I am still learning about how my grandparents' struggles to provide a better life for their children in Canada have shaped their identity and the identity of my family. I am grateful for their struggles; but acknowledge that in immigrating to Canada, they settled on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam First Nation that is now known by its colonized name as Vancouver, British Columbia. I was born in Ascot, England, but was raised on the traditional territory of the Kwikwetlem First Nation (pronounced kwayh-quit-lam) now referred to by its colonized name as Port Coquitlam, British Columbia. Although my house was located only ten minutes away from one of two reserves belonging to the Kwikwetlem First Nation, I grew up with no knowledge of their history and culture, and little interaction with their peoples. In highschool, I did not adequately study the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and continue to struggle with the fact that I did not learn about the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools until I began my Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution degree in 2011.

1.6 Report Outline

This report is divided into eight sections. In Section 1, I introduce the issue and rationale for this report and locate myself in the research. In Section 2, I discuss Aboriginal values, worldviews and approaches to justice to acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples had their

² Gottchee was a German province in Yugoslavia prior to WW2 that was established by migrants from the Black Forest region, Germany, in the 1300s.

own ways of being and of addressing crime and conflict prior to contact with European settlers. This discussion sets the tone for the report as it explores the traditional principles that underpin contemporary Aboriginal-specific programs.

In Section 3, I provide the background for this report, which includes a profile of Aboriginal offenders, a discussion on the historical, social, economic and political factors that have contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in federal corrections, as well as an overview of the legislation that has been put in place to address the unique circumstances of Aboriginal offenders. This section develops an appreciation for the issue of Aboriginal over-representation and honours the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, which is critical to valid Aboriginal research.

In Section 4, I review the academic literature on Aboriginal-specific programming. This helps the reader gain a better understanding of the philosophical assumptions that underlie Aboriginal-specific interventions, as well as of the literature that exists on Aboriginal-specific interventions to date.

In Section 5, this study includes a qualitative case study within a decolonizing framework methodology and research methods. I approach this case study within a decolonizing framework, which considers Indigenous perspectives, processes, knowledge, and ways of learning to be focal points in the research and emphasizes the healing and empowerment of Indigenous communities (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp. 16, 116, 128, 142; Liamputtong, 2010, pp. 21-23). In line with this framework, I rely primarily on qualitative research methods and conduct participatory interviews with three individuals who have experience designing and/or delivering Aboriginal-specific programs in Western Canada. These informal discussions explore their perspectives about “what works” in correctional programming for Aboriginal offenders. They have knowledge of traditional Aboriginal culture and spirituality and have insight into how Aboriginal-specific programs can promote healing within a correctional environment. To support the interviews, I conduct a document scan of public government documents relating to the ISOYW program.

In Section 6, I present the findings from the interviews and document scan. First, I share a story from one of the interviews about how Aboriginal programming was initially introduced into federal correctional institution. This story is important because it has never before been recorded and acknowledges those who were instrumental in shaping contemporary Aboriginal-specific programs. Next, I explore the ISOYW program, focusing on how it contributes to the healing of Aboriginal offenders inside federal institutions. I then conduct a thematic analysis of the findings from the interviews and document scan to draw out themes related to Aboriginal offender healing.

In Section 7, I discuss the six themes that were identified from the findings as being key for healing. These themes include: (a) collaboration during program development; (b) exploration of underlying issues, including issues of identity; (c) holistic approaches to healing through experiential learning; (d) culture and spirituality in the form of Elders, ceremonies and Aboriginal values; (e) commitment of the facilitation team; and, (f) support from peers. In Section 8, I provide recommendations and final reflections.

2.0 CONTEXT: ABORIGINAL APPROACHES TO JUSTICE

Prior to contact with European settlers, Aboriginal peoples had absolute authority over their lives: they had their own ways of knowing, of being and of caring for their peoples (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 24). They had their own approaches to justice which reflected traditional Aboriginal values and worldviews, and shaped how Aboriginal peoples addressed conflict and crime. After contact with European settlers, many of these Aboriginal approaches were lost and replaced by adversarial Western approaches to justice (Ross, 2006, p. 11). However, many contemporary Aboriginal-specific programs are reclaiming traditional Aboriginal approaches by blending aspects of traditional spirituality with Western treatment (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 4). Therefore, it is crucial to explore Aboriginal values, worldviews and approaches to justice to develop an appreciation for traditional Aboriginal ways of addressing crime and to gain a better understanding of the philosophical assumptions that underpin Aboriginal-specific programs.

It is important to note there are many variations between and within Aboriginal cultures in Canada. Each Aboriginal community is unique with distinct histories, customs, beliefs, and approaches to conflict. Further, it is important to recognize the uniqueness of each individual within and outside Aboriginal communities as people have different degrees of acculturation relative to mainstream society based on how and where they were raised, as well as how they were affected by colonization (residential schools, child welfare, adoption). Having said that, there are several worldviews, values and approaches that are common among Aboriginal communities in Canada that have influenced the design of Aboriginal-specific programs.

2.1 Aboriginal Values and Worldviews

Ross (2006), a non-Aboriginal criminal prosecutor, spent three years travelling and working with remote Aboriginal communities to experience and uncover a number of Aboriginal approaches to justice. He succinctly identifies a number of Aboriginal values as they relate to (a) approaches to conflict, (b) communication, and (c) Aboriginal ways of life (p. 279). These values include: (a) sharing, cooperation, equality, consensus decision-making, patience, modesty, privacy, and harmony; (b) careful listening, quietness, heart speaking, moderation in speech, physical and non-verbal communication, humility; (c) family and community, self-determination, cultural heritage, holism, honesty, kindness, respect for elders, spiritual connectedness, relativity of time, and honouring different perspectives (p.279).

Furthermore, Lane, Bopp & Bopp (1984) identify Twelve Teachings of the Sacred Tree that represent foundational aspects of Indigenous worldviews (pp. 26-30):

1. Wholeness. Everything in the universe is interrelated and connected to everything else.
2. Change. All things are in a constant cycle of change. Change occurs in two connected ways: things come together (development) and things come apart

(disintegration).

3. Change occurs in cycles or patterns. These cycles and patterns are not random and may be difficult to see.
4. The seen and the unseen. Both the physical world and the spiritual world are real and make up one reality. Although these worlds are governed by separate laws, both laws must be honoured to attain a balanced life.
5. Human beings are spiritual as well as physical.
6. Human beings can always acquire new gifts, but they must struggle to do so. The process of developing new qualities requires “true learning.”
7. There are four dimensions of “true learning.” A person is composed of four aspects, which reflect the four points in the Medicine Wheel. All four dimensions of a person must be engaged for that person to learn in a whole and balanced way.
8. The spiritual dimension of human development may be understood in terms of four related capacities: the capacity to respond to non-material realities; the capacity to accept those realities as a reflection of unknown or unrealized potential; the capacity to express these non-material realities through symbols; and, the capacity to use this expression to guide future action.
9. Human beings must be active participants in the unfolding of their own potential.
10. All must pass through the doorway of the will (volition) if they wish to become more or different than they are now. A person must choose to take the journey.
11. Anyone who sets out on a journey of self-development will be aided.
12. The only source of failure on a journey will be the traveller’s failure to follow the Scared Tree teachings.

Another Aboriginal teaching that is integrated into Aboriginal-specific programs is the Medicine Wheel. Lane et al., (1984, p. 9) note that this symbol can be used to help understand and see the unseen: ideas, concepts, and things that are not easily understood because they do not represent tangible things. The Medicine Wheel shows that there are four aspects to a person’s nature: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual (Lane et al., 1984, p. 12). For an individual to be healthy and well-balanced, these aspects must be equally developed through the use of volition (Lane et al., 1984, p. 16). While the Medicine Wheel is a well-known teaching that is used by many cultures, it is important to emphasize the diversity and variations that exist within this teaching.

2.2 Approaches to Justice

Perhaps the most prominent tenets on which Aboriginal-specific programs are founded are Aboriginal approaches to justice. Aboriginal approaches to justice differ in many respects to a number of Western approaches to justice, especially in terms of their perceptions of justice, their perceptions of a wrongdoing (crime) and a wrongdoer (criminal), and their perceptions of ways to address the wrongdoing and wrongdoer. While I draw these comparisons to highlight the differences in approaches, it is important to acknowledge that a number of approaches exist within both Aboriginal and Western justice systems.

Lee (2005) suggests that Western justice is a case-processing enterprise that aims to

maintain and administer law and order (p. 100). Rooted in force and punishment, many Western approaches to justice seek to uphold a list of Western societal norms that have been deemed either “right” or “wrong” through a process that is considered impartial and fair (McCaslin, 2005, p. 16; Lee, 2005, p. 104; Guest, 2005, pp. 337-341). Contrary to this, a tenet of Aboriginal justice is “justice as healing,” which aims to restore balance in communities and individuals (Ross, 2006, pp. 61, 198; Lee, 2005, p. 105). Dumont (1996) describes Aboriginal approaches to justice as “the pursuit of a true judgment required to re-establish equilibrium and harmony in relationship, family, and society – a judgment which is [...] straight and honest, while at the same time being [...] respectful of the integrity of all persons, both the wronged and the wrongdoer” (p.69 as cited in the RCAP, 1996). In a similar vein, Zion (2005) notes that traditional Aboriginal justice approaches are based on consensus and equality, and integrates spirituality throughout all stages of the process (pp. 69-70).

2.2.1 Perception of crime and criminal

From some Western perspectives, a harmful act or wrongdoing is viewed as a “crime” that has been committed by a bad person labelled a “criminal” (Ross, 2006, pp. 1, 242). In general, the Western justice system focuses on finding facts that can be proven in court to determine how a specific act occurred, who is at fault, and how the wrongdoer should be punished for the crime (Lee, 2005, p. 103). Lee (2005) notes that the concept of “free will” is central to the Western criminal justice system, assuming that the accused voluntarily chose to commit the act and, thus, is blameworthy and deserves to be punished (p. 103). Once guilt has been assigned to the accused, he/she is then labelled an “offender”, which can actually stigmatize and reinforce the negative identities behind the acts and contribute to recidivism (Ross, 2006, p. 104).

Aboriginal approaches to justice, on the other hand, perceive a wrongdoing as a “misbehaviour that requires teaching or an illness which requires healing” (Ross, 2006, p. 1). Ross (2006) refers to a Position Paper from Hollow Water to provide an overview of how many Aboriginal communities perceive a wrongful act:

People who offend against another... are to be viewed and related to as people who are out of balance – with themselves, their family, their community and their Creator. A return to balance can best be accomplished through a process of accountability that includes support from the community through teaching and healing. The use of judgment and punishment actually works against the healing process. An already unbalanced person is moved further out of balance (p. 178).

As illustrated above, the concept of balance and community involvement are key when discussing misbehaviours. Hurtful actions are interpreted as signs of imbalances within the community (Guest, 2005, pp. 338-340). McCaslin (2005) notes that rather than placing the blame solely on the offender, it is acknowledged that the whole community played a role in shaping what has become the harmful act; consequently, it is the community’s responsibility to repair the harm (p. 89). From this perspective, while the

harmful act itself must be condemned, it is even more critical to publicly show that the offender remains a valued community member and has the potential to change (Guest, 2005, p. 339). Shame the act, but respect the actor.

2.2.2 Processes of addressing harm

When discussing the Western criminal justice system, Ross (2006) describes how the accused and the victim must participate in a series of adversarial court processes, where blame and denial are used to turn the offender and victim against one another in search of the “truth” (pp. 69, 101). He explains that there is an assumption that a single, objective reality exists and is discoverable and most Western criminal justice processes focus on uncovering that single reality (p. 102). He further notes that throughout the criminal justice process, the accused may be encouraged to plead “not guilty” and deny all responsibility to receive a lighter sentence (p. 36). Victims are then forced to face their victimizer and share their side of the story in the courtroom (p. 36). This process can re-victimize the victim as his/her feelings are disregarded and his/her truthfulness and credibility are questioned during cross-examination (p. 211). There is no heart-felt dialogue between parties since the offender and victim are not allowed to speak to one another. If the accused is found guilty, he or she may be sentenced to jail where he or she will be isolated without having to face the aftermath of his or her crime (Ross, 2006, p. 10). Lee (2005, p. 104) and Ross (2006, p. 10) suggest that incarceration is used as punishment for the offender, as deterrence for others, and as means of protecting other members of society. However, this “eye for an eye” approach is motivated by anger, revenge, and hurt, seeking to punish rather than find a healthy solution for the harm that has occurred (Lee, 2005, p. 104; Ross, 2006, p. 10). Jail is not intended to make the offender a better person but instead creates an environment that reinforces relationships based on power and force (Ross, 2006, p. 192). The Hollow Water Position Paper agrees with this assertion, stating that the threat of incarceration also prevents people from coming forward and taking responsibility for the harm they have caused. This reinforces the silence and perpetuates cycles of violence (Ross, 2006, p. 36).

Unlike certain aspects of the Western criminal justice system, which aim to punish and deter, many Aboriginal justice systems seek to restore the peace and balance within the community, and to reconcile the accused with the victim, the victim’s family, as well as with his own conscience (Lee, 2005, p. 100; Guest, 2005, pp. 339-341). Reflecting the Aboriginal concept of “justice as healing,” the best way to respond to wrongful acts is not to punish the offender but rather to heal and teach all parties (Ross, 2006, pp. 178, 217; Guest, 2005, pp. 338-341). Lane, Bopp, Bopp & Norris (2005) define healing as:

[...] a process of development aimed at achieving balance within oneself, within human relationships, and between human beings and the natural and spiritual worlds. It has to do with choosing to live in harmony with the basic values and teachings that are the core of Aboriginal (as well as other) cultures (p. 386).

Healing focuses on moving individuals and communities toward reconnection, wholeness

and balance (Ross, 2006, p. 140; Lane et al., 2005, pp. 386-387). Healing is also deeply connected to spirituality as it aims to unite and maintain a balance between all four aspects (the physical, the spiritual, the mental, and the emotional) of a person's being (Lee, 2005, pp. 102-103; Ross, 2006, p. 145). The healing process should involve everyone affected by the incident, including community members, healers, Elders, the victim, the offender, and the friends and families of both the victim and the offender (Ross, 2006, pp. 144-145; McCaslin, 2005, p. 89). Involving the whole community is key because the best and most effective solutions come from those involved (McCaslin, 2005, p. 88). Ross (2006) notes that the victim and his family should be included in the healing process because it permits the offender to hear the real, raw emotion and grief from the victim and his family as they express how the offender's actions have affected them (p. 144). Equally important is the inclusion of the offender's friends and families so that he can see how his actions have also impacted those closest to him (Ross, 2006, p. 144; Guest, 2005, pp. 340-341). This helps the offender understand – in a feeling way – the widespread impact of his actions and reinforces the notion that all of our actions have consequences for the community of which the offender is part (Guest, 2005, p. 341). Hearing all these people directly express, in a non-blaming way, how the offender's actions have profoundly affected their lives helps him to *feel* the ripple effect of the harm he has caused (Ross, 2006, p. 192). Only after the offender truly understands the impact he has had on both strangers and those close to him can he take responsibility for his actions and begin the healing process (Guest, 2005, pp. 340-341).

Additionally, Elders play a critical role in the healing process as they can offer traditional teachings, guidance, and encouragement (Milward, 2012, p. 32; Ross, 2006, p. 237; Lee, 2005, p. 98). Taking on the role of therapeutic healer and spiritual guide, Aboriginal Elders can instruct the offender on his place in the world and situate his pain within a broader context of colonialism, racism, and social conditions (Milward, 2012, p. 32). Given the Elder's cultural and spiritual authority, the Elder can also guide the offender on his spiritual path and help him connect with ancestral spirits, the Creator, the natural world, and with interpersonal relationships (Milward, 2012, p. 32).

Unlike many court processes within the Western justice system that focus primarily on the single act or crime that occurred, the healing process within many Aboriginal justice systems examine the root causes that led up to the harm or crime (Ross, 2006, pp. 95-101; McCaslin, 2005, p. 89). Thus, during the healing process, a number of issues must be addressed: Has the offender been abused and is distancing himself as a result? Has the offender ever been in valuable relationships that dissolved and, thus, made him afraid to develop new relationships in fear of being abandoned? Has the offender ever even been in valuable relationships or was he raised without any connections whatsoever? Has the offender only known relationships based on abuse, control, and manipulation? Once these questions have been answered, the next step in the healing process is to find ways to deal with the negative feelings of anger, pain, guilt, and shame that are inhibiting the offender from making healthy relationships. The offender must then confront the events and relationships that led to those negative feelings and learn to discuss them openly to begin to understand how the relationships broke down and disintegrated (Ross, 2006, pp. 140-141).

While the offender's history and past victimization must be considered, they are *never* to be taken as justifications or excuses for the harm that has been committed. Ross (2006) explains that past victimizations are perceived as "forces the offender has given in to, forces he or she has a responsibility to confront, deal with and resolve" (p. 195). Under no circumstances can the offender escape responsibility for his actions; no matter what negative past experiences influence him, he is capable of overcoming them as long as he acknowledges his pain and seeks help to address these experiences (Ross, 2006, p. 195).

Within many Aboriginal justice processes, parties come together where they are free to tell stories and openly express, one by one, their anger, tears, frustrations, and guilt, releasing their pain into the circle without judgment or blame (Ross, 2006, p. 155). This honest and raw process brings out the pain and burdens that all those affected have been carrying around with them and allows everyone to see one another as people who have struggled with their own demons and healing journeys. Once the emotions and the impact of the act have been thoroughly discussed, all members in the circle (including the offender and the victim) provide input and reach a consensus on how the balance can be restored for the offender, the victim, and the entire community (Guest, 2005, pp. 339-341). To supplement the circle process, other tools, such as sacred fires, fasting, ceremonies, and prayer are often used to help a person heal and come to terms with his/her actions (Ross, 2006, p. 239). One of the most powerful of these tools is the sweat lodge, which involves praying, singing and sweating (Ross, 2006, p. 142). This can be powerful as it provides the offender with a non-verbal way of dealing with issues and a way to connect the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of the offender (Ross, 2006, p. 142).

2.3 Summary

In sum, the healing process is designed to make the offender actually feel some portion of the harm he has caused, which can be very painful (Ross, 2006, p. 175; Breton, 2005, pp. 18-19). The offender cannot hide from his actions and emotions in a jail cell; he must both tell and hear hard realities (Breton, 2005, pp. 18-19). He must begin to heal his psychological wounds by uncovering traumatizing experiences and facing the demons of his past (Breton, 2005, pp. 18-19). He must engage with the raw emotion that comes from facing the victim, as well as his friends and family and hearing how his actions have deeply affected their lives (Ross, 2006, pp. 180, 186). He must be stripped of all of the lies and excuses he has been hiding behind and finally take responsibility for his actions (Ross, 2006, p. 188). It is of note that the healing process is not a viable option for everyone. Some offenders may not be physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually ready to engage with their issues and put in the work that is required for sustainable healing. Thus, those who are not ready for, or capable of, healing may not benefit from the healing process. If these people pose a threat to society, incarceration may be the best option to ensure the safety of the community (Ross, 2006, p. 240).

3.0 BACKGROUND

The delivery of correctional services in Canada is shared by federal, provincial and territorial governments and covers custody and community services (Perreault, 2009, pp. 7-8). An adult offender falls under federal jurisdiction if he/she is sentenced to custody terms of two years or more. Correctional Service Canada (CSC) provides all federal correctional services and is responsible for administering sentences and supervising offenders (Perreault, 2009, pp. 7-8). For the purpose of this report, the focus will be on offenders and correctional programs that fall under federal jurisdiction. This section includes a profile of Aboriginal offenders, a discussion on the historical, social, economic and political factors that have contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in federal corrections, as well as an overview of the legislation that has been put in place to address the unique circumstances of Aboriginal offenders. This section develops an appreciation for the issue of Aboriginal over-representation and honours the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, which is a critical component in valid Aboriginal research.

3.1 Aboriginal Offenders in Canada

While Aboriginal people comprise approximately 4% of the Canadian population, they represent 23.2% of the federal inmate population (OCI, 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 1; Statistics Canada, 2011, p. 1). There are approximately 3,400 Aboriginal offenders in federal penitentiaries, approximately 71% are First Nation, 24% Métis and 5% Inuit (OCI, 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 1). Between 2000 and 2013, the federal Aboriginal inmate population increased by 56.2%, rising from 17.0% of the inmate population in 2000 to 23.2% in 2013 (OCI, 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 3). Through 2010-11, Aboriginal adults in Canada were incarcerated an estimated 10 times more than non-Aboriginal adults (OCI, 2013, High and Growing Incarceration Rates for Aboriginal People section, para. 2). This over-representation is particularly evident in the Prairie region, where Aboriginal inmates accounted for 46.4% of all inmates between 2010 and 2013 (OCI, 2013, Regional Aboriginal Offender Rates on the Rise section, para. 1).

Below is a profile of Aboriginal inmates. Although I present these trends to provide context for the current situation of Aboriginal peoples in corrections, I do not wish to portray or perpetuate dysfunctional images of Aboriginal peoples, as these have historically been used as social mechanisms to justify paternalism and reinforce unequal power relations. I acknowledge the diverse and complex reality of Aboriginal peoples in corrections as well as the strength and resiliency of Aboriginal communities who work hard to lower these statistics. Nevertheless, it is important to present an Aboriginal offender profile:

- Aboriginal offenders tend to be younger (under 30), have lower education and higher unemployment than non-Aboriginal offenders (CSC, 2009, Key Results section, para. 2; Trevethan, 2003, p. 196).
- Among offenders under federal supervision, Aboriginal offenders were more likely to

be incarcerated than non-Aboriginal offenders (72% compared to 60%) and less likely to be under community supervision (28% compared to 40%) (CSC, 2012 Strategic Plan, p. 5).

- In 2008/09, compared to non-Aboriginal offenders, Aboriginal offenders had lower reintegration potential (59%) and had a prior youth or adult sentence (93%) (CSC, 2009, Key Results section, para. 2; Trevethan, 2003, p. 196; Trevethan, Moore & Rastin, 2002, Extensive Criminal History section, paras. 1, 2 & 6).
- A higher percentage of Aboriginal offenders are serving sentences for committing violent offences than non-Aboriginal offenders (78% compared to 65%) (CSC, 2012 Strategic Plan, p. 5).
- Aboriginal offenders have needs predominantly in the area of substance abuse and personal/emotional orientation issues (Trevethan, 2003, p. 196; Trevethan et al., 2002, Present A Variety of Needs section, para. 1).
- Between 1996/97 and 2006/2007, the proportion of Aboriginal offenders with mental health problems increased from 5% to 14% (CSC, 2009, Changing Mental Health section, para. 1).
- Aboriginal offenders have more conditional release breaches (51%), are more often sentenced for sex offences (15%), and fewer are sentenced for drug-related offences than non-Aboriginal offenders (15%) (CSC, 2009, Changing Breaches of Trust section, para. 1 & Changing Offence Categories, paras. 4 & 5).
- In 2008/2009, most new Aboriginal offender admissions were serving shorter sentences compared to non-Aboriginal offenders (51%) (CSC, 2009, Changing Length of Sentence, para. 1).

This profile highlights the dire circumstances and over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in Canadian corrections. After having reviewed this profile, it is important to now discuss the factors that have contributed to their over-representation.

3.2 Factors for Aboriginal Over-representation

To better understand what has led to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in corrections, it is important to consider a number of demographic, socio-economic, and other dynamic factors, which can alone or in combination, increase the risk of offending (Perreault, 2009, p. 10; Moore, 2003, pp. 1-9). Since these factors can be understood as *symptoms* rather than underlying causes for over-representation, I will also address the deep-rooted, systemic issues that have oppressed, and continue to oppress, Aboriginal peoples in Canadian society.

3.2.1 Socio-economic factors

Age and socio-economic conditions are linked to the over-representation of Aboriginal adults in custody³ (Moore, 2003, p. 14; Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts & Johnson, 2006, p. 3;

³ It is of note that factors that have been linked to involvement in the criminal justice system are often more common among the Aboriginal population in general. For example, the Aboriginal population in Canada is relatively young compared to the rest of the Canadian population (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts & Johnson, 2006, p.3; Perreault, 2009, p.11).

Perreault, 2009, pp. 11-13; Trevethan, 2003, p. 196; LaPrairie, 1997, pp. 41, 47, 49-50.) Aboriginal peoples have higher rates of poverty and lower levels of education and employment than non-Aboriginal peoples (Moore, 2003, p. 15). Perreault (2009, p. 13) suggests that lacking a high school diploma and employment are contributing factors to the current over-representation of Aboriginal people in federal penitentiaries. Furthermore, poverty, poor living conditions and economic deprivation also contribute to disproportionate prison rates (LaPrairie, 1997, p. 41). These socio-economic conditions are more common among the Aboriginal population than the non-Aboriginal population, which could explain why these factors have been associated with the higher overall incarceration rates among Aboriginal adults (Perreault, 2009, p.13).

3.2.2 Dynamic factors

A high percentage of Aboriginal offenders (80 %) began using drugs and/or alcohol at an early age (OCI, 2006, Factors Impacting the Overrepresentation of Aboriginal People in Prison section, para. 3; Moore, 2003, p. 20). This high percentage of substance abuse has, in turn, contributed to a higher incidence of health problems (OCI, 2006, Factors Impacting the Overrepresentation of Aboriginal People in Prison section, para. 3). Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a common health issue among the inmate population in general, but is disproportionately prominent among Aboriginal offenders (Bracken, 2008, pp. 29-30). Research also suggests that Aboriginal offenders, more so than non-Aboriginal offenders, suffer from psychological and emotional problems linked to childhood abuse: a high percentage of Aboriginal offenders report having experienced physical abuse (45%), sexual abuse (21%), and parental absence or neglect (41 %) during childhood (OCI, 2006, Factors Impacting the Overrepresentation of Aboriginal People in Prison section, para. 3; Moore, 2003, p. 20). Moreover, Aboriginal offenders are more likely to have experienced family disruption, childhood instability and poor relations with family members than non-Aboriginal offenders (LaPrairie, 1997, p. 50).

While the above-mentioned factors have been directly linked to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canadian corrections, they can be understood as symptoms of much deeper-rooted, systemic social inequality and discriminatory policies that have been, and continue to, impoverish Aboriginal peoples in Canadian society.

3.2.3 Colonialism

Extensive research suggests that the social and economic conditions of many Aboriginal communities today, including their over-representation in the criminal justice system, are the result of colonialism (Rudin, 2002, p.1410; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996, p. 309; Bracken, Deane & Morrissette, 2009, p. 66). Aboriginal peoples in Canada have faced cultural and social oppression through long-standing political, economic, religious, and educational policies designed to forcibly assimilate Aboriginal peoples into Canadian mainstream society (Rudin, 2002, p.1410; Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003, p. 16; Bracken et al., 2009, p. 66). As Bracken (2008) suggests, the over-representation of Aboriginal people in federal corrections “is not due to any natural

inclination toward crime among Canada's Aboriginal people, but rather because the causes of Aboriginal criminal behaviour are rooted in a long history of discrimination and social inequality that has impoverished Aboriginal people and consigned them to the margins of [...] society" (p. 27). In brief, the longstanding history of racism and colonialism in Canadian society can be linked to the conditions in which many Aboriginal peoples in general, and Aboriginal offenders specifically, find themselves today.

Colonialism can manifest structurally through "the complete domination of one group by another, and the exercise of power through formal institutions (the treaties, the Indian Act, the reserve system, etc)" (Kellough, 1980, p. 343, as cited in Bracken et al., 2009, p. 66). This type of colonialism is evident in the structural barriers to Aboriginal peoples, including (but not limited to) the outlawing of traditional customs, the prohibition of Aboriginal people to own reserve land, the loss of Aboriginal status when relocated off reserve, and the implementation of residential schools and the child welfare system (Bracken et al., 2009, p. 66). Colonialism can also manifest culturally in ways that are more subtle and informal (Bracken et al., 2009, p. 67). This form of colonialism involves the devaluation and replacement of the colonized peoples' values and traditions with the values and customs of the colonizers (Kellough, 1980, as cited in Bracken et al., 2009, p. 67). The delegitimising of cultural ways of life, language and culture, can, in turn, establish an environment of self-delegitimization and internalized racism (Bracken et al., 2009, p. 67).

To further illustrate how the Canadian government's colonial policies have irreparably impacted the future of Indigenous people, I will now provide a few brief examples of specific policies that were intentionally and systematically implemented to override Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

3.2.3.1 *Indian Act*

The *Indian Act* of 1876 replaced traditional Aboriginal governments and exemplified how the lives and activities of Aboriginal peoples were to be managed and institutionalized through federal policy (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 17). The *Indian Act* defined Aboriginal peoples as wards of the Crown for whom the federal government must be the guardian (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 17; Menzies, 2006, p. 2). Through this policy, many traditional ceremonies (including the Sundance and the Potlatch) were outlawed and social categories of identity were created to differentiate "status" and "non-status" Indians (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 17). In effect, the government determined one's identity as opposed to one's cultural affiliation and heritage. The differentiation of status and non-status Indians was an exclusionary tactic which created stratifications within Aboriginal communities, especially marginalizing Aboriginal women (Lawrence, 2004, pp. 220-222). Status Indians had access to certain resources, including education, health care and the right to live on reserve. Until 1985, Indian status was patrilineal and passed down based on the man's Indian status (Lawrence, 2004, pp. 82-101). If a status Indian man married a non-status woman, his wife, along with any children they may have, would obtain Indian status

(Lawrence, 2004, pp. 82-101). However, if a status Indian woman married a non-status man, she would lose her Indian status and her children would not be entitled to status (Lawrence, 2004, pp. 82-101). Once an Aboriginal woman has lost her status, she would then lose the right to live on reserve and, consequently, be forced to leave her family and community (Lawrence, 2004, pp. 82-101). Status Indians were not allowed to vote, attend post-secondary school, own land, or enter into a public bar unless they rescinded their Indian status (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 17; McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 516). Yet, the most enduring and widespread consequences of the *Indian Act* are its creation of the reserve and Indian Residential School systems.

3.2.3.2 Reserve System

The *Indian Act* governed every aspect of a status Indian person's life: the *Indian Act* legislated that Aboriginal people be relocated to reserves and holding compounds designed so traditional lands could be seized and people could be segregated from economically productive farmland and emerging urban centres (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 515; Menzies, 2006, p. 2; Bracken, 2008, p. 27). The negative impact that resulted from the reserve system is still evident in contemporary reserves, which are often small and geographically isolated, on unprofitable lands, alienated from mainstream society, lacking resources (educational, employment, financial, etc.), and access to community programs and opportunities (LaPrairie, 1997, pp. 41, 43-45).

3.2.3.3 Indian Residential Schools and Child welfare system

Perhaps the most devastating form of colonialism is the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) (Bracken et al., 2009, p. 67; Bracken, 2008, p. 28; Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 19). Established in the late 19th century and continuing into the late 20th century, Indian Residential Schools functioned as institutions to “civilize” and Christianize Aboriginal children (Kirmayer, et al. 2003, p. 17; McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 516). These children were forcibly removed from their families and sent to isolated schools funded by the Government of Canada and run by missionaries. At these schools, Aboriginal children were strictly disciplined and forbidden to speak their respective languages, practice their beliefs, and wear traditional clothing (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 17; Bracken et al., 2009, p. 67). By attempting to destroy Aboriginal social and cultural identity, Indian Residential schools tried to assimilate Aboriginal people so that the government would not have to compensate them for seizing their land (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 516). Research also shows that more than seven generations were subject to rampant physical, sexual and psychological abuse as well as other trauma, including medical experiments, forced sterilization, starvation, emotional torture, and so on (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 516).

The forcible removal of children from their families went beyond the Indian Residential Schools system. In 1951, the federal government amended the *Indian Act* to transfer the jurisdiction of a number of services, including child welfare services, to the provincial government (Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991, Chapter 14, para. 11). Despite this transfer of jurisdiction to the provinces, the federal government provided no

additional funding to help offset the cost of providing these new services and responsibilities, which resulted in an inconsistent delivery of provincial child welfare services (Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991, Chapter 14, para. 11). By the 1960s, a significant number of Aboriginal children were apprehended from their parents and placed in foster care (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 17). Referred to as the “Sixties Scoop”, the removal of children was based on disingenuous premises similar to those of the Residential School system: Aboriginal parents were unfit to raise their children and on-reserve conditions required state intervention (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 17). These children were then placed in non-Aboriginal families throughout Canada and the United States often without their location being disclosed to the biological parents (Bracken et al., 2009, p. 66). Raised in the margins of two worlds, many children experienced severe difficulties with self-esteem, identity and mental health (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 17; Menzies, 2006, p. 3). Menzies (2006) describes the long-term effects of removing children from their families and placing them outside their culture: “forced to assume the values of another culture that derided their own belief system, Aboriginal children were left in a cultural vacuum, relating neither to mainstream culture nor to their own community” (p. 3).

In brief, by removing Aboriginal children from their families, communities and cultures, the child welfare system became yet another tool for the federal and provincial governments to colonize Aboriginal peoples, having a devastating impact on Aboriginal children and their families. The Indian Residential School system and the Sixties Scoop has impacted more than 100,000 survivors in Canada today, as well as the numerous successive generations of Aboriginal families and communities that grew up in the aftermath of these legacies (Menzies, 2006, p. 3; Bracken et al., 2009, pp. 67-68).

3.2.3.4 Intergenerational Trauma

The genocidal policies of forced assimilation and the trauma that resulted from the Indian Residential school system have had significant intergenerational effects on Aboriginal peoples (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 19; Bracken, 2008, p. 27-28). Trauma has had an immediate impact on the people who attended these schools but has also been transferred to their children and grandchildren. The intergenerational trauma that has resulted from family and community dislocation has affected the ability of Aboriginal peoples to achieve balance in their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Bracken, 2008, p. 28). Often, this post-traumatic stress disorder has manifested in the form of anxiety disorders, alcohol and substance abuse, depression, suicide, disempowerment and low self-esteem –all common issues among Aboriginal inmates - and has led to the destruction of communities in some cases (Menzies, 2006, p. 4; Bracken, 2008, p. 28). When trauma and its symptoms are experienced by more than one generation, it can become entrenched within a family (Menzies, 2006, p. 4). When multiple families within a community experience similar circumstances, the community is left without a collective capacity to effectively address these social issues (Menzies, 2006, p. 4).

Referring to the intergenerational trauma caused by the IRS legacy, McCormick & Wong (2006) explain that the sexual, physical, and psychological abuse experienced by

residential school survivors leads to trauma, which “undermines the basic sense of trust that is normally established in the first few years of life as well as leaving the victim with a sense of abandonment, alienation, and disconnection which will affect all future relationships” (p. 517). In cases such as residential schools and child welfare where abuse occurred over long periods of time, victims experience post-traumatic stress, where their psychological structures can break down and cause them to lose their former identity (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 517). McCormick & Wong go on to explain that “if the children’s interpersonal boundaries are violated and they are not provided with adequate care and protection, then they are likely to adopt coping mechanisms, such as isolation, dissociation, hyper-sexuality, hyper-aggression, and sensation seeking” (p. 517). Unless repaired, their childhood trauma and negative coping mechanisms can make them abusive or exploitative and can become incorporated into the next generation’s patterns of family life (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 517).

The concept of “internalized oppression” has also been used to explain the cycles of violence and abuse that occurred in the aftermath of colonization and residential schools. When a victim loses all sense of power, he or she will attempt to take on the power of the oppressor, which can lead to self-hatred (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 517). If internalized, self-hatred can lead to alcoholism or suicide; if externalized, self-hatred can lead to the physical or sexual abuse of others (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 517). Another explanation is that these experiences can lead to lateral sexual and physical abuse. Similar to internalized oppression, lateral abuse occurs when a victim is abused by an oppressor who is perceived as all-powerful (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 518). Since the victim cannot retaliate against the oppressor, the rage and anger that stem from the abuse are re-directed to those closest to the victim in the form of sexual, emotional and physical abuse (McCormick & Wong, 2006, p. 518).

3.2.4 Contemporary Racism

The impact of policies of forced assimilation has filtered through generations and has shaped current relationships between Aboriginal peoples and mainstream Canadian society. Racism is still widespread, although subtle, and stereotypes of the “drunken Indian” continue to pervade the media. Furthermore, there remains a lack of awareness of the historical experiences of Aboriginal peoples and the intergenerational impact of colonisation on their social, economic and psychological well-being, which has contributed to much of their over-representation in Canadian corrections (Kirmayer et al., 2003, p. 18).

Research suggests that racism is institutionalized by government and other systems limiting the rights and/or opportunities of Aboriginal peoples through public policy, health care, education, housing, and social and commercial services framework (Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991, Chapter 7, para. 1; Nielsen & Robyn, 2003, pp. 30, 31, 35 & 36). Some authors argue that Aboriginal people are subject to differential treatment at most stages in the criminal justice system, stating that racism exists in processing charges, bail, prosecutions, convictions, sentences and releases (LaPrairie, 1997, pp. 40-

42; Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991, Chapter 7, para. 1). In fact, the Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba found that:

There is evidence of systemic discrimination against Aboriginal people within the justice system. Aboriginal people are under-represented on juries, due to the manner in which potential jurors are selected and the manner in which they can be removed. Factors which case law has directed judges to take into account when deciding whether to deny or grant bail, or when considering the question of sentencing, often work against Aboriginal people (Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991, Chapter 7, para. 13).

Although less overt than the assimilation policies, media has also played, and continues to play, a role in perpetuating racist ideologies against Aboriginal people. Historically, the media presented stereotypes of Aboriginal people in order to justify the treatment of “savages.” According to Nielsen & Robyn (2003), the subordinating process through media in contemporary society is more complicated and effective:

The [North American] media perpetuate stereotypes of and disrespect for Indigenous Peoples. This can range from the TV broadcasts of old Westerns in which Native Americans are portrayed as ignorant and savage; to the misrepresentation of Indigenous issues and the lack of Indigenous points of view in news stories; to inaccurate and disrespectful portrayals of Indigenous cultures in day to day broadcastings (pp. 37-38).

The recent media coverage on the Idle No More protest movement, a grassroots Indigenous sovereignty movement, further illustrates this point. This movement, which stemmed from and was organized through social media, quickly spread across Canada in fall 2012, in response to the Conservative government’s two omnibus budget bills. Many Indigenous peoples argue that these bills reduce the environmental protection of waterways and infringe upon First Nations’ right to self-govern (Idle No More website, March, 2013). While most of the movement manifested through peaceful protests, the media paid significant attention to major roadblocks and Attawapiskat Chief Spence’s hunger strike. By shifting the focus to - and questioning the legitimacy of - the hunger strike and high-profile protests, many of the key issues at the heart of the movement were overlooked.

There has also been recent media coverage regarding the issue of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. The Office of the Correctional Investigators tabled a report in Parliament that re-emphasizes the failure of the criminal justice system in addressing the issue of Aboriginal over-representation in Canadian corrections. While the report *Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (OCI, 2012, p. 11) draws attention to the severity and current relevance of Aboriginal over-representation, public response to this report demonstrates an overall lack of awareness of Aboriginal issues as well as the prevalence of prejudice that still exists towards Aboriginal people. To illustrate this point, I have drawn on public opinion commentaries that were posted in response to a Globe and Mail online news article (March 7, 2013) that

discussed the release of the Spirit Matters report. While these social media excerpts do not represent the opinion of all Canadians, they do demonstrate that a lack of understanding of the issues and circumstances faced by Aboriginal peoples in corrections still exists among Canadians.

Its time these people become part of Canada and help themselves like every other person living in Canada. It amazes me how we gave so much to these Natives and yet they still scream how unfair they have been treated. Time for your Native nation to step up to the plate, the nation cannot afford to babysit you any longer. - diver

Were they unjustly convicted? If not, they are where they belong. When I raised my kids I always tried to keep them busy to keep them out of mischief obviously they have too much time on their hands. – Cabo

Don't want to go to prison? Don't commit crimes. - geologist1

The fact of the matter is that our courts are more inclined to let them go than other members of Canada's criminal population. There are laws that force judges to consider their social problems and history when they pass sentencing. They often get easy terms and the opportunity to serve in novel ways on their reserves instead of incarceration. In spite of this, they continue to wind up in prisons. They need jobs. Type "joblessness and crime" into your search engine. You will be blown away by the number of studies that demonstrate this obvious truth. Instead of fighting pipelines and resource development they should be out there yelling for it. They need jobs. - 4thought

To reiterate, this section discussed how the effects of colonial policies, especially the intergenerational trauma that resulted from the reserve system and Indian Residential Schools, and contemporary discriminatory policies and stereotypes of Aboriginal people that are perpetuated by the media have contributed significantly to the systematic breaking down of families and communities, emotional and psychological issues, economic disparities, unemployment, mental health issues, alcohol and substance abuse and other dynamic factors. When a number of these factors are combined and left untreated, it is possible to see how these conditions might lead to deviant behaviour among the Aboriginal populations resulting in an over-representation in the criminal justice system.

3.3 Legislation

Legislation has evolved to address the failures of previous legislation and accommodate the particular circumstances of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system with the introduction of Aboriginal-specific programs into federal policy. It is important to note that this section only covers the development of policy within the CSC and does not discuss the development of Aboriginal-specific programs before being introduced into

federal policy and offered within CSC institutions. Unfortunately, information on the “early days” of Aboriginal-specific programming pre-CSC delivery is not well documented and must therefore be acquired through interviews with those involved in the early development of these types of programs. I am fortunate that some of the people who have been involved in the early development of Aboriginal-specific programs pre-CSC delivery have agreed to participate in this study, and I will share their stories in the Findings section of this report.

The 1992 *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) was the first in a series of legislative reforms that redefined the criminal justice system and the relations between Corrections Canada and Aboriginal peoples (CSC, 2006, p. 6). The CCRA outlines the rights and responsibilities regarding the transfer of offenders, prison discipline, administrative segregation, search and seizure, programs, health care, religion, programs designed to meet the needs of women offenders, and programming for Aboriginal offenders (CSC, n.d., *Corrections and Conditional Release Act 1992*, para. 4). The CCRA marked the first Canadian law to give Aboriginal people a voice in the development and delivery of federal correctional programs, policies and services, and includes provisions (Sections 79-84) that give Aboriginal offenders the right to have access to traditional spirituality and culture (CSC, n.d., *Aboriginal Elders in Federal Penitentiaries 1972*, para. 4). Of relevance to this study are the following Sections: Section 83, which gives Aboriginal Elders the same status as other religious leaders and allows Aboriginal cultural and spiritual practices to take place inside prison walls; Section 80, which requires the CSC to provide programs that address the specific needs of Aboriginal offenders; and, Section 81, which allows the CSC to enter into agreements with Aboriginal communities to provide care and custody for Aboriginal offenders at the community level and allows Aboriginal communities to play a key role in delivering programs within correctional institutions (S.C. 1992, c. 20).

The Commissioner’s Directive 702, which was first developed in 1995 and updated in 2012, implements a policy to accommodate the practice of Aboriginal spirituality and provide a more culturally appropriate environment (CSC, *Commissioner’s Directive 702*, 2012, pp. 1-7). Among other components, the policy includes procedures for Elder reviews and cultural interventions; ensures that healing components are incorporated into the Correctional Plan; and provides a description of Pathways Units and its implementation (CSC, *Commissioner’s Directive 702*, 2012, pp. 1-7).

Despite these legislative reforms, the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples highlighted the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in federal corrections, acknowledging that the justice system failed Aboriginal people (CSC, 2006, p. 5; RCAP, 1996, p. 309). Consequently, the Parliament amended Section 718.2(e) of the *Canadian Criminal Code* to provide that “all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all offenders, with particular attention to the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders” (Criminal Code, 1996). In the 1999 decision *R. v. Gladue*, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Section 718.2(e) did apply and requested that, when sentencing Aboriginal offenders, judges consider the following: any unique systemic or background factors that may have influenced the

particular circumstances of Aboriginal offenders; and the types of sentencing procedures and sanctions which may be appropriate for the offender given his/her Aboriginal heritage (CSC, 2006, p. 5). *R. v. Gladue* was thus a critical court decision.

In 1997, the CSC approved a national strategy for Aboriginal corrections, with a focus on strengthening Aboriginal offender programming; enhancing the role of Aboriginal communities in corrections; increasing Aboriginal human resources; enhancing partnerships; and ensuring adequate resources (CSC, 2006, p. 7). In 1999, the Framework for Enhancing the Role of Aboriginal Communities was introduced and formed the *Effective Corrections Initiatives* - a five year plan that focused primarily on developing additional healing lodges (CSC, 2006, p. 7). By 2002, it became evident that there was a need for Aboriginal-specific programs that would be delivered inside the correctional facilities in order to help prepare Aboriginal offenders for the Healing Lodges (CSC, 2006, p. 7). It is important to note that although Healing Lodges are used in several regions, other regions may incorporate different cultural activities. As part of the effort to provide Aboriginal-specific programs, the CSC explored ways of integrating Aboriginal cultural and spiritual practices into programs that are delivered in correctional facilities. The current programs mentioned above are intended to meet these objectives.

Finally, the CSC Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Corrections 2006-2011 focuses on the following: the full development and implementation of the Continuum of Care model, which emphasizes the need for spiritual and cultural interventions as well as national correctional programs based on Elder teachings; an increase in collaboration between the CSC and other government departments, Aboriginal communities, and stakeholders; and, an improvement in the CSC's cultural competence and ability to address the system barriers faced by Aboriginal peoples (CSC, 2006, pp. 1-22).

Despite the CSC's implementation of a number of positive initiatives and policies, the CSC has failed to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in Canadian corrections. An investigation by the Office of Correctional Investigator (OCI) in 2012 found that "the CSC has failed to make the kind of systemic, policy and resource changes that are required in law to address factors within its control that would help mitigate the chronic over-representation of Aboriginal people in federal corrections" (p. 6). The investigative report *Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (2012) shows that the CSC has not fully implemented Sections 81 and 84 of the CCRA, thus perpetuating the discrimination and disadvantaged circumstances of Aboriginal offenders. Some of the findings from the report include: under-resourcing for Aboriginal-controlled Healing Lodges; limited awareness and understanding of Aboriginal peoples, cultures, spirituality within the CSC; limited understanding and uneven application of *Gladue* principles; and, funding limitations that impede the Elder's ability to provide support and teaching. An earlier investigation by the OCI (2010, p. 46) found similar results, adding that a lack of access to programs for Aboriginal offenders continues to be a problem for the CSC.

3.4 Summary

This section provided a profile of Aboriginal offenders, a discussion on the deep-rooted factors that have contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in federal corrections, as well as a brief overview of the legislation that relates to Aboriginal offenders. This section helps the reader link the effects of colonial policies and practices to the current over-representation of Aboriginal offenders and develop an appreciation for the complex issues that need to be addressed through Aboriginal correctional programs.

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Aboriginal-specific programs are interventions that incorporate elements of Aboriginal culture and spirituality while addressing the specific needs of Aboriginal offenders to assist in their healing and reintegration (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 2). These programs are based on a number of traditional Aboriginal worldviews, values, and approaches (Zellerer, 2003, pp. 185, 187). Having discussed some of these Aboriginal values, worldviews and approaches in Section 2.0 of this report, I will now review the available literature on Aboriginal-specific programming. Interestingly, this literature is relatively limited compared to the literature on the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in the criminal justice system. This lack of literature may reflect how relatively new this area of research is within the research community. This lack of literature may also illustrate how, until the late 1990's, research focused more so on the negative issues surrounding Aboriginal peoples and their over-representation in the criminal justice system than the culturally-appropriate ways of addressing these issues. Nevertheless, the available literature on Aboriginal correctional programming expresses support for Elders' services, traditional ceremonies such as sweat lodges, and other spiritual and cultural activities. The literature also highlights the need for more resources, availability of and access to Aboriginal-specific programs and services both inside and outside correctional facilities.

Much of the literature on Aboriginal corrections discusses the importance of incorporating spirituality into correctional programming, with an emphasis on the involvement of Aboriginal Elders. Waldram (1994) highlights the therapeutic value of prison programs that are centred on Aboriginal spirituality, arguing that, with the help of Elders and the sweat lodges, these programs can have a significant impact on the well-being and mental health of Aboriginal offenders (p. 200). He contends that spirituality in programming can provide a method for coping with the stress of prison conditions, for reducing disputes between inmates and between inmates and staff, and for introducing the offender to other correctional programs (pp. 200-201). Waldram emphasizes the importance of having Elders as a support for spiritual programs. First, he describes how Elders take on the role of therapists, cultural educators and spiritual guides (p. 200). He suggests that many Aboriginal offenders could build trust with Elders more easily as they have a better understanding of the issues faced by Aboriginal communities and peoples (p. 200). This idea is reiterated by Trevethan, Crutcher & Rastin (2002, p. 61), who found that having Elders and spiritual advisors at the Healing Lodge is conducive to the healing process as offenders are more likely to respect and listen to the Elders than other staff.

Waldram further notes the ability of spiritual programs and Elders in addressing culturally-specific mental health problems (pp. 200-201). He states that some offenders believe that bad medicine has been cast upon them, leading them to harm. Some also believe that dreams contain messages, which are there to guide the offender in his journey (pp. 200-201). Elders are able to address these concerns by using traditional healing to treat bad medicine and by interpreting the hidden messages within dreams (pp. 200-201).

Finally, Waldram found that Elders and spiritual programs can educate offenders about Aboriginal culture and history to help alleviate identity issues often prevalent in Aboriginal inmates (p. 201). The need to address Aboriginal identity in programming is echoed by Ellerby & MacPherson (2002, p. 58), who found that core aspects of Aboriginal identity (Aboriginal language, culture, teachings and ceremonies) are critical to healing. Therefore, they argue that it is essential to provide Aboriginal offenders with the opportunity to participate in programs that introduce and develop an understanding of Aboriginal cultures and identity (p. 58).

The literature also highlights the importance of providing culturally-appropriate activities to increase program participation and completion. In an Aboriginal offender survey, Johnston (1997, pp. 66-67) found that there was a high degree of participation in Aboriginal cultural activities and an overall desire for more access and availability of Aboriginal-specific programs. Similarly, in a study on program retention for Aboriginal offenders, Ellerby & MacPherson (2002, p. 57) discovered that program completion rates increased once culturally-appropriate programs that blended contemporary treatment strategies with traditional healing approaches became available. This suggests that providing a blended approach to healing had some success in retaining Aboriginal offenders in the treatment programs.

The integration of Aboriginal values and worldviews into all aspects of a program was another theme noted in the literature. When discussing elements of a successful program, Benson & LaBoucane (2000, pp. 51-52) highlight two key features: the underlying beliefs and assumptions that frame the Aboriginal-specific programs, and the uniqueness and specificity of each individual program. Benson & LaBoucane suggest that the Aboriginal values and worldviews on which a program is founded must be incorporated into all aspects of the program, including program design, program delivery, and program implementation (pp. 51-52). Given the variations in customs and cultures among and between Aboriginal communities, it is also critical that the program reflect the unique values and beliefs that are specific to those participating in the programs (pp. 51-52). However, this can be problematic on a national level as program delivery is supposed to be consistent to ensure program reliability and validity across the nation (pp. 51-52). The authors, therefore, recommend that validity and reliability be viewed in terms of the specific program being evaluated, rather than compared to other programs across the country (pp. 51-52).

The inclusion of culture and spirituality was also noted in the literature as having a positive influence on the reintegration potential of Aboriginal offenders. In a study on the successful reintegration of Aboriginal offenders, Heckbert & Turkington (2001, pp. 56-57) found that programs that incorporated Aboriginal culture and spirituality, especially Elder services and Aboriginal ceremonies, were key components to helping offenders change their unacceptable behaviours (p. 56). For example, the authors found that 71% of inmate respondents had participated in Aboriginal spiritual activities and ceremonies inside prison, and 72% of respondents stated that Elders had a positive effect on changing their lives (p. 56). When it came to staying out of trouble, 94% of participants said that their personal values and identity were influential factors: family (94%), friends (87%),

staying sober (91%), employment (74%), and education and training (71%) were all cited as positive influences that helped offenders stay crime-free (p.56). Finally, 71% of respondents stated that participation in Aboriginal ceremonies, and spiritual activities and cultural activities (68%) had an impact on keeping them out of jail (p.56). In a similar vein, several authors concluded that Aboriginal-specific programs and services could potentially be predictors of recidivism and promote reintegration (Sioui & Thibault, 2001, p. 48; Trevethan, 2003, p.198). For example, Sioui & Thibault (2001) discovered a significant correlation between participation in cultural and spiritual activities and a reduction in the recidivism rate⁴ (p. 43).

Much of the literature supports a blended approach of traditional and contemporary approaches to treatment. Zellerer (2003) found that programming for Aboriginal offenders is most effective when programs combine contemporary treatment methods with traditional Aboriginal approaches to healing (p. 187). Highlighting the holistic nature of culturally competent programs, the author refers to the Medicine Wheel as a powerful symbol and emphasizes the importance of involving all aspects of the individual (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual) in the healing process (p. 187). The author underlines the need for appropriate training and cultural competence for all Aboriginal program services providers with a focus on developing an understanding and respect for Aboriginal cultures and values, as well as an understanding of the ongoing impact of colonization (p. 187). Furthermore, Zellerer recommends that Aboriginal peoples be involved in all phases of program development, implementation and evaluation, and that partnerships be developed between community organizations and the criminal justice system to promote a greater respect and understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities (p. 187).

While the majority of the literature on Aboriginal-specific programming is focused in the late 1990s and early 2000s, more recently Milward (2012) advocates for Aboriginal-specific programs that focus on healing. The author argues that Aboriginal spiritual healing can, in fact, promote the effective rehabilitation of Aboriginal inmates and calls for greater resources to be invested into Aboriginal-specific programming (pp. 29, 54). The author expresses concern that the Canadian government does not allocate enough of its budget to the delivery of rehabilitative programs (only \$27 million of its \$1.8 billion budget in 2008) and there are not enough Aboriginal-specific halfway houses in Canada (only 24 halfway houses in 2012) (pp. 38-39). In light of this fact, Milward recommends that the Canadian government “spend now, save later,” suggesting that they “invest greater budgetary allocations to increase the culturally appropriate rehabilitative programming available to Aboriginal inmates, within federal institutions, within halfway houses, and for community resources post-release” (p. 39). He argues that funding effective rehabilitation programs is more cost effective in the long term than incarceration: Aboriginal inmates who successfully reform and reintegrate represent a better long-term investment than Aboriginal inmates who remain locked up in prison year after year (p. 40). Recognizing that political obstacles can and will arise when trying to implement more rehabilitative approaches in prisons, Milward trusts that if the Canadian

⁴ Sioui & Thibault found that spiritual activities had more of an impact on recidivism than cultural activities (p.44).

public were made aware of the long-term cost-effectiveness of Aboriginal-specific programs, there could be more political buy-in regarding the implementation of such reforms (pp. 52-54).

Although most of the literature on Aboriginal-specific programs supports the argument that these types of programs can affect recidivism rates, a meta-analytical study by Usher & Stewart (2011) on the effectiveness of correctional programs found slightly different results (pp. 11-13). The study found that while Aboriginal offenders who participated in some form of correctional programming were approximately one and half times less likely to recidivate than those who did not participate in any programs, the magnitude of success for Aboriginal offenders that participated in the generic programs was greater (1.48, 99%) than for those who attended Aboriginal-specific programs (1.39, 99%) (pp. 11-13). However, the difference between the two types of programs was not significant (pp. 11-13).

Overall, this literature supports the argument that Aboriginal-specific programs can be conducive to the healing, rehabilitation and reintegration of Aboriginal offenders. The literature cites overwhelming support for Elders' services, the sweat lodge, traditional ceremonies, and other spiritual and cultural activities that help educate and reconnect offenders with their Aboriginal history, culture and identity. The literature also expresses a need for more resources, availability of and access to Aboriginal-specific programs and services both inside and outside correctional facilities.

5.0 FRAMEWORK & METHODS

5.1 Decolonizing Framework

I approach this study from a decolonizing framework, which emphasizes that Indigenous peoples' interests, values, experiences, and knowledge remain at the forefront of the research process and outcome (Porsanger, 2004, p. 109; Liamputtong, 2010, pp. 21-23; Rigney, 1999, pp. 116-118). Decolonization is based on a process of “valuing, reclaiming, and foregrounding indigenous voices and epistemologies” (Swadener & Mutua, 2008, p. 31). By incorporating a decolonizing lens, the researcher accepts Indigenous perspectives, processes, knowledge, and ways of learning while focusing on healing and empowering Indigenous communities (Porsanger, 2004, pp. 108-109; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp. 16, 116, 128, 142; Liamputtong, 2010, pp. 21-23). When undertaking Indigenous research, it is critical to consider epistemological, cultural, colonial, historical, and contemporary contexts (Absolon & Willett, 2005, p. 123). In brief, a decolonizing framework aims to recognize and remediate the damage caused by colonization by creating research that respects, empowers, and liberates Indigenous peoples for the ultimate purpose of achieving Indigenous self-determination (Potts & Brown, 2005, p. 260).

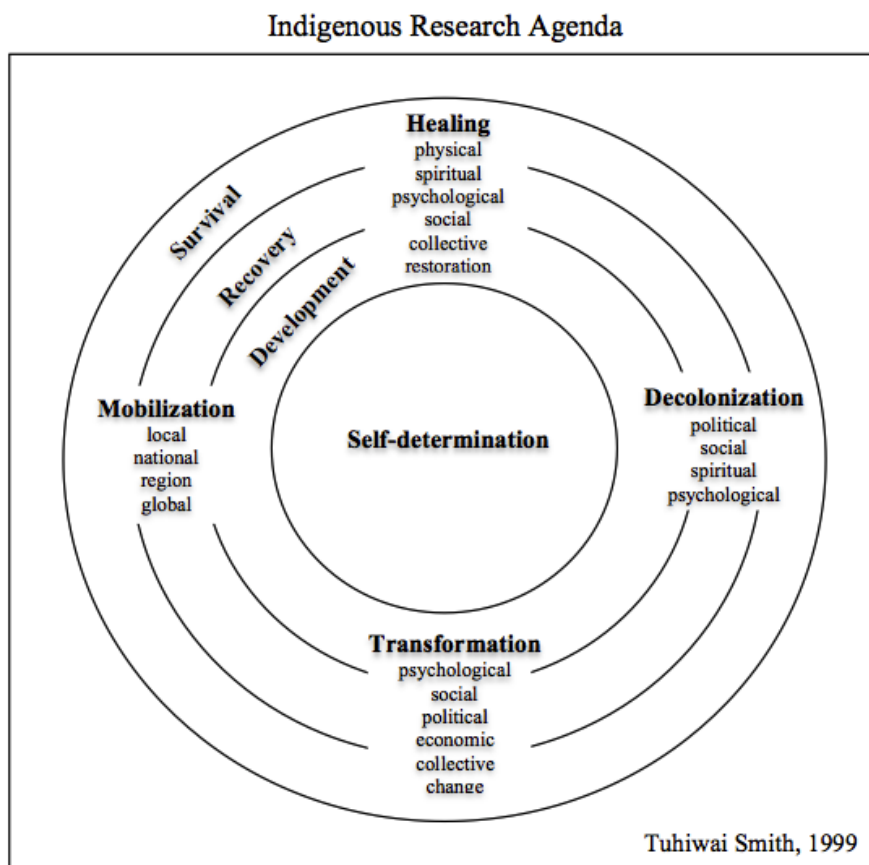
I have chosen to follow a decolonizing framework because it corresponds with the purpose of my report: to uncover features of Aboriginal-specific programs that facilitate the healing of Aboriginal offenders. By identifying key features for healing, I highlight the value of incorporating Aboriginal approaches into rehabilitation programs within the correctional system and acknowledge effective traditional Aboriginal practices that have been silenced for decades. By discussing the historical, social, and political factors that have shaped and cultivated the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and their over-representation in corrections, this study also exposes the historical contexts that have, and continue to, oppress Aboriginal peoples.

5.1.1 Research Agenda

In addition to respecting Aboriginal processes, ethics and protocols, decolonizing research should also be congruent with a broader Indigenous research agenda that connects local, regional and global efforts in a movement towards Indigenous self-determination (Regan, 2010, p. 27; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp. 115-118). According to Tuhiwai Smith (1999), a research agenda constitutes a “set of approaches that are situated within the decolonization politics of the indigenous peoples' movement” and focuses on the self-determination of Indigenous people (p. 115). Figure 1 represents Tuhiwai Smith's proposed Indigenous research agenda which consists of four directions: decolonization, healing, transformation, and mobilization (p. 116). These four directions represent processes that can be integrated into practices and methodologies to help connect, advise and clarify tensions at the local, regional, and global levels (p. 115). The research agenda

also consists of four tides: survival, recovery, development, and self-determination. These tides represent the states of being through which Indigenous communities are transitioning (p. 116). Survival – the basic prioritization of the survival of physical peoples, of languages, of social relationships, of cultural and spiritual practices, and of the arts (p. 116). Recovery – the recovery of histories, Indigenous rights, and territories and the acknowledgement that Indigenous cultures have irreparably changed (p. 116). Development – development is ongoing and is neither sequential nor linear. Self-determination – as a focal point of the research agenda, self-determination becomes a goal of social justice that is expressed through psychological, social, cultural, and economic domains, and involves processes of transformation, decolonization, healing, and mobilization. These processes, approaches and methodologies are essential elements of the research agenda (p. 116).

Figure 1: Indigenous Research Agenda



My research follows Tuhiwai Smith’s model by integrating the four processes of this Indigenous research agenda: decolonization, healing, transformation, and mobilization. Decolonization – my research supports decolonization by drawing attention to the traditional cultural and spiritual methods employed by Aboriginal-specific correctional programs to rehabilitate Aboriginal offenders. My research also acknowledges the individuals who were influential in developing and delivering these programs by sharing their stories, experiences, and perspectives. Moreover, the context of this study

recognizes the historical, social, economic, and political inequalities that have contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian corrections.

Healing – my research provides a comparison of Aboriginal and Western approaches to justice, advocating that Aboriginal approaches, which aim to heal rather than punish, are valid means of addressing conflict and cycles of violence within families and communities. I also discuss how the ISOYW program’s holistic model aims to heal all aspects (the mental, the physical, the emotional, and the spiritual) of a person. I argue that a holistic healing model should be upheld in future correctional programs for Aboriginal offenders.

Transformation – my research explores how certain program features are helping transform Aboriginal offenders into healthy, contributing members of society. My research will also contribute to the transformation of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples by providing information for an educational film entitled *From the Inside Out*. “Education is not simply about the transfer of knowledge but is a transformative experiential learning that empowers people to make change in the world” (Regan, 2010, p. 23). *From the Inside Out* aims to educate Canadians by presenting the historical factors that have led to the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in corrections and by featuring programs that are helping heal Aboriginal offenders. The film will showcase and share the experiences of individuals who have been affected by Aboriginal corrections, including Aboriginal ex-offenders who have transformed their lives as a result of correctional programming. By educating non-Aboriginal people about the history and realities of Aboriginal peoples in general – and of Aboriginal offenders specifically – as well as the interventions that are making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal offenders, the film and this study hope to raise awareness around key Aboriginal issues that continue to be relevant in contemporary society.

Mobilization – By disseminating my research through an educational film, my client and I hope to educate and raise awareness around a number of Aboriginal issues. By sharing Aboriginal perspectives on these issues, we hope to bridge Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worldviews, bringing people together to fight for social change.

The four tides that represent the states of being through which Aboriginal people are moving – survival, recovery, development, and self-determination – are prevalent in all First Nation issues, especially the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in corrections. My research supports the ongoing struggle to acknowledge Aboriginal approaches and processes as legitimate ways of addressing Aboriginal issues and conflicts, thus, arguing that these approaches be upheld in future Aboriginal programming. The struggle to give the control and decision-making power back to Aboriginal communities to deal with their own people represents one of many larger, more global struggles for the survival, recovery, development and self-determination of Indigenous peoples.

5.2 Methodology

This report features a qualitative case study of the In Search of Your Warrior program to explore how Aboriginal-specific prison programs can facilitate the healing of Aboriginal offenders. A case study is an appropriate methodology for this research because it facilitates an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon by using a variety of sources (Kenny, 2004, p. 32; Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 127). Within a case study methodology, the researcher can use corporate literature, public documents, magazine and newspaper articles, scholarly publications and interviews to examine their unit of analysis (Kenny, 2004, p. 32). Given the importance of context in any Aboriginal issue, a qualitative case study methodology is appropriate as it allows multiple facets of a phenomenon to be understood in a holistic and meaningful way while considering a number of contexts and backgrounds (historical, cultural, political, social, economic, political, and ethical) (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544; Yin, 2009, p. 4; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, 127).

While a qualitative case study is an appropriate methodology for this study, this approach encompasses a number of challenges. First, the case study is a method commonly utilized in the Social Sciences and follows a set of specified procedures to examine empirical topics (Yin, 2009, p. 21). At times, the rigidity of this approach does not align with aspects of the decolonization framework. For example, a case study methodology follows Western research protocols in terms of validity, credibility and data analyse, whereas a decolonizing framework follows protocols of culture and ethics. Given the topic of this study, I adhered to the research protocols of the decolonizing framework, which are outlined in sections 5.6 and 5.7.

5.3 Methods

From an Indigenous perspective, the way that research is conducted can be more important than the research results (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 128). Decolonizing research must respect Indigenous ethics and worldviews, the goals of the research, as well as the impact of the outcomes of the research on the Indigenous community (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp. 118, 128, 136-137; Absolon & Willett, 2005, pp. 107, 122). Therefore, I incorporated culturally-appropriate qualitative research methods aiming to reveal the identities, stories, and meanings behind the stories from the participant's perspective, are often promoted in decolonizing research (Kenny, 2004, pp. 18-19, 25; Liamputtong, 2010, p. 11).

These methods, including in-person interviews, narratives, storytelling, and so on, are appropriate for Aboriginal research because they reflect Aboriginal cultural protocols and values by encouraging relationality and honouring the oral traditions of many Aboriginal communities (Kenny, 2004, pp. 19-20, 26). Qualitative research methods also promote the gathering of stories in a respectful way, transforming the stories into text so that they can be shared, analyzed and archived as part of Aboriginal history (Kenny, 2004, p. 35). Furthermore, qualitative research does not rely on objective, linear, scientific facts or attempt to prove certainty; instead, this research presents ideas in circular ways that are rich in description (Fraser, 2004, p. 183; Plummer, 2001, pp. 395-406). Finally, qualitative methods are appropriate because they allow participants to speak for themselves in their own words, making the research process itself a decolonizing process,

giving the power back to the participant (Kenny, 2004, pp. 25-26; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp. 150-151; Kovach, 2005, p. 31; Regan, 2010, p. 33).

Therefore, in line with a decolonizing framework, I conducted qualitative research methods in the form of in-person interviews. I conducted collaborative, open-ended interviews with three participants who have experience developing and/or delivering Aboriginal-specific interventions in Western Canada.

5.3 Participants

The participants for this study are three individuals who have worked extensively with Aboriginal-specific programs that incorporate traditional Aboriginal culture and spirituality to promote the healing of Aboriginal offenders within a correctional setting.

Michael (KA-WHYWA-WEET) is a nationally recognized Metis teacher of Anishinabi First Nations philosophy, tradition and culture. He is widely credited for his ability to use traditional knowledge and viewpoints to address contemporary issues. Michael was invited to participate in this study because he was one of the first Aboriginal trainers to deliver Aboriginal-specific programs inside a correctional institution in the Prairie Region. He was influential in the decision-making around how original Aboriginal-specific programs would be delivered, and he has influenced how contemporary Aboriginal-specific programs have been shaped. These stories about the “early days” of Aboriginal-specific program development have never before been documented yet constitute a valuable piece of Aboriginal history that deserves recognition.

Carola was the Warden at Stan Daniels Healing Centre in Alberta, which is a minimum security Community Correctional Centre as well as a Section 81 facility run by the Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA). I invited Carola to participate in this study because she was one of the original writers of the ISOYW program and worked closely with NCSA to develop it. Her knowledge of the ISOYW program, as well as her experiences and challenges in developing the program, are integral to this study.

Lois is a Metis woman who has spent most of her life working in Native communities across Canada as an Aboriginal trainer and program facilitator. I invited Lois to participate in this study because she facilitated several ISOYW programs at William Head Institution in Victoria, British Columbia. She has experience delivering the ISOYW program and can share stories about the benefits and challenges of facilitating the ISOYW program inside a federal institution.

5.4 Recruitment Process

For the recruitment process, my client contacted eight prospective participants to request their participation in the project. My client is acquainted professionally with the participants through years of professional practice as a consultant, trainer and adjunct professor in the field of Aboriginal relations. If the participants verbally expressed

interest in participating in my study, my client provided me with their telephone numbers. I then contacted each participant by telephone to further explain the project and the expectations of their participation. Participants were given the option to refuse contact from me at any time. If possible and if requested, I met with participants in-person to further discuss the project and their potential role as a participant. Once all participants had been contacted by telephone or in-person, and had expressed interest in participating in the research, I then sent each participant an Invitation to Participate (Appendix A) via email.

I originally recruited eight participants who were involved in the development, delivery and administration of Aboriginal-specific interventions in Western Canada, five of whom are current employees of the CSC. The eight participants were recruited by the above-mentioned process and all of them agreed to participate. I then sent them an Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) via email, which they all signed and returned to me. However, before I began the interviews, it came to my attention that I required the CSC's internal permission to interview the five current CSC employees. Although I had inquired as to whether I would need the CSC's permission, I was misinformed and told that no permission was required. As soon as I discovered that the CSC's permission was needed, I submitted a research application to the CSC to obtain permission. Unfortunately due to administrative pressures, the processing of my application would take significantly longer than expected and I would not be able to carry out the interviews and prepare the final report in time for my March defence deadline. Therefore, I made the difficult decision to withdraw my research application from the CSC, not interview the current CSC employees and proceed with only three interview participants. I contacted the five CSC participants to explain why I could no longer interview them; they were understanding and expressed continued support for this project.

5.5 Data Collection

Given the participants' locations, I conducted two interviews in-person in Vancouver and Victoria and one interview by telephone as the third participant lives in Alberta. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. In keeping with my decolonizing framework, the interview questions (Appendix C) were open-ended and intended to guide a casual discussion rather than reach a specific set of conclusions. I wanted participants to be able to share whatever stories they considered to be important. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by me. An important component of ethical research is that the research process be collaborative and inclusive. The process of "reporting back" at several stages of the research process is necessary to ensure that participants remain actively involved throughout the research process and continue to have control over how their stories are interpreted and presented in the research findings (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 16; Strega, 2005, p. 229; Kenny, 2004, p. 20, 26). To ensure that participants had full control over their stories, once transcribed, I submitted the verbatim interview transcripts back to participants for their review and edits. However, none of the participants wished to review the verbatim transcripts. Therefore, after I had interpreted their stories and drawn themes, I prepared a summary of the verbatim transcripts that presented my interpretations by theme. Two participants reviewed and accepted the summary

document. The third participant did not wish to review the summary document but only wanted to see how my interpretations of his stories were presented in the context of this report. Next, I submitted the first draft of my Findings and Discussion sections to the participants for their review and approval. Each participant reviewed and approved the sections with little or no requested changes. To supplement the interviews, I also conducted a document scan of public government documents from the CSC, including policy documents, evaluations, newsletters, backgrounders, etc. of the ISOYW program.

5.6 Data Analysis

Coding is a tool used in qualitative research to categorize data for the purpose of identifying themes (Bird et al., 2009, p. 20). Once interviews had been manually transcribed verbatim, I coded each transcript to draw out key concepts relevant to the research question. The concepts from each transcript were then sorted into six broad themes, including five sub-themes, relating to key program features for healing, as well as three other themes that emerged across the interviews. After determining the themes, I reported back to consult with each participant regarding the selected themes as well as my interpretations of their stories in relation with these themes. The themes and sub-themes were then connected to the findings from the academic literature review and government document review.

5.6.1 Validity

Validity is important in research; however, what is considered valid from many Western research approaches differs significantly from Indigenous research approaches. From a number of Western research perspectives, research must be neutral and objective, free of any bias from the researcher, and evaluated based on measures of rigour and validity (Regan, 2010, p. 26-27; Strega, 2005, p. 202). Contrary to this perspective, Aboriginal and decolonizing approaches to research, which emphasize subjectivity and engagement, perceive neutrality and objectivity to be Eurocentric and unethical, and argue that such Western measures of rigour and validity should be discarded as evaluative criteria (Regan, 2010, p. 76; Strega, 2005, p. 228). Strega (2005) questions the very notion of validity in Indigenous research:

We must ask what use the notion of validity is to research that discards the notion of objective truth and researchers who wish their work to be valuable to who are neither accepted nor accorded status as authorities (p. 228).

In return, Strega proposes three standards by which Indigenous research may be assessed (pp. 229-230). The first standard refers to “social justice validity” and evaluates the political implications and usefulness of what is being produced by the study for marginalized communities. Are the needs and standards of the community at the forefront of the research? The second standard is to disseminate the results of the study back to the participants and the communities in a culturally-appropriate manner, ensuring that the

research is communicated through an accessible format with language that is easily understood. The question, “for whom is this research being done?” must be considered and addressed. The third is to measure the reflexivity and complicity of the researcher. Has the researcher adhered to ethical protocols and personal accountability? Has the research process been carried out in a culturally-appropriate and respectful manner? According to Strega, if these standards are met, the research can be considered valid and legitimate from an Indigenous perspective (pp. 229-230).

This study adheres to the social justice validity and addresses the needs of the community by contributing to the education of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples about programs that integrate Aboriginal approaches to help heal Aboriginal offenders. By illustrating how programs that are designed, developed and delivered by Aboriginal people can achieve positive change in communities, this study also hopes to instil a sense of pride around being Aboriginal. In this study, the needs of the community are represented, in some capacity, by my participants, who have all been involved in Aboriginal corrections and are influential stakeholders in their communities. This research allows their voices to be heard and their stories to be shared.

This study adheres to Strega’s second standard of validity by disseminating its findings back to Aboriginal communities in the form of an educational film entitled *From the Inside Out*. Both this study and the film allow participants to share their stories in their own voices which reflects a storytelling approach that is common in many Aboriginal communities. Also, disseminating this study’s findings in a film is an accessible way of disseminating information as not everyone is capable or interested in reading academic research reports.

Finally, I adhered to Strega’s third standard by remaining reflexive throughout the research process and report. I located myself at the onset of this study to acknowledge my lens and complicity as a settler researcher. I further respected ethical protocols by following a decolonizing framework, offering tobacco to the Elder before speaking with him, and reporting back to participants throughout the research process.

5.7 Ethics

Research has traditionally been used as a tool to perpetuate colonization by exploiting and misrepresenting Aboriginal peoples in academia (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp. 7-8, 24-25; Regan, 2010, p. 33; Liamputtong; 2010, p. 23). Therefore, Indigenous ethics and protocols play a critical role in research and are inextricable from the research process. A fundamental principle in decolonizing research is for the researcher to locate himself/herself in the research (Absolon & Willett, 2005, p. 97). Location involves “identifying, at the outset, the location from which the voice of the researcher emanates [and] is an Aboriginal way of ensuring that those who study, write and participate in knowledge creation are accountable for their own positionality” (Absolon & Willet, 2005, p. 97). This process of self-location helps avoid ethnocentric writing by revealing who is doing the research, how the research is being done, and how the research will serve the community (Absolon & Willett, 2005, pp. 97-98, 107). At the beginning of this report, I

located myself within this research to explain the perspective from which I approach this research and from where my voice and biases originate.

The first step in conducting ethical research is to obtain consent from the community or peoples involved in the study (Absolon & Willett, 2005, p. 106; Kenny, 2004, p. 28). In Indigenous research, meeting cultural protocols is far more important than signing written consent forms (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 136). In fact, protocols of respect require that the researcher build relationships and trust with his/her participants (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 136; Potts & Brown, 2005, p. 269). It can be perceived as rude to ask directly for signed consent to interview without having taken the time to develop a rapport with participants (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 136). Therefore, I consulted in-person with one of the ISOYW program's facilitation teams in British Columbia to receive their support. I also consulted a number of CSC key informants who expressed support for this project. Furthermore, I met with participants in-person (when possible) to carry out the interviews; however, one interview was conducted over the telephone due to the participant's location. In many Aboriginal communities, it is also cultural protocol to offer a culturally significant gift to Elders before interviewing them to show respect for the knowledge that they will share and assure that research will be done in a respectful way (Lavallée, 2009, p. 27). Therefore, I offered a tobacco gift to Michael, an Elder, before our in-person interview.

Another criteria for ethical Indigenous research is that the control and dissemination of the research be in the hands of the community or participants through culturally-appropriate ways and accessible language (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp. 160-161; Strega, 2005, p. 229). As mentioned, this study will inform an educational film that will feature Aboriginal-specific correctional programs that are making a difference in the lives of offenders. By filming participants directly, the film gives credit to the storytellers, allowing their stories to be told in their own voices (Regan, 2010, p. 33; Kenny, 2004, p. 25). The film will also disseminate the findings in a way that is visual, accessible and widespread to help educate Canadians about the realities of Aboriginal inmates, the underlying factors that have contributed to their incarceration, and the programs that are helping heal and rehabilitate offenders.

In addition to the Indigenous ethical protocols that need to be met, I must also meet the ethical requirements of the University of Victoria. I received a Certificate of Approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board. I also prepared Informed Consent Forms, which described the research project and its objectives, the benefits and risks of participation, as well as the terms of confidentiality and participation, for participants to sign before they participated in interviews. Although participants were offered the option to remain anonymous in the dissemination of results phase, I also offered participants the option to be identified in the research. The stories belong to the participants, not to me; therefore, the choice belonged to the participants whether or not they wish to remain anonymous.

5.8 Challenges

As a non-Aboriginal researcher conducting research on an Aboriginal issue, I struggled with my role in researching this topic. Do I have the right to conduct this research? Do I have the knowledge and background to adequately explore this topic? Where do I start and how do I navigate the issues associated with this topic? When I began researching “decolonizing research,” I was uncomfortable and intimidated. However, the more I read, the more I realized that there was no way that I could not follow a decolonizing framework. So, I decided to approach this project from a colonizer-ally perspective, aiming to “learn [...] from rather than about the Other, from an unfamiliar place of not knowing” (Regan, 2010, p. 27). Regan argues that as non-Indigenous researchers, “we must risk interacting differently with Indigenous people – with vulnerability, humility, and a willingness to stay in the decolonizing struggle of our own discomfort” (p. 13). Aboriginal research conducted by a non-Aboriginal is filtered through the researcher’s lens, which is inherently laced with the researcher’s cultural and societal biases, preconceptions, and beliefs (Regan, 2010, p. 27). Although this is unavoidable, I dealt with this issue by informing myself as much as possible about Indigenous ethics and protocols through research and discussions. I also followed my own ethical code, trying to stay humble, respectful and open-minded as I navigated the entire research process, while trying to stay aware of my biases by constantly questioning my own assumptions. Throughout the research process, I asked myself several questions: How are my own lenses and worldviews affecting this research? Who is benefiting from this research? What are the possible negative outcomes of this research? Is this research presented in a way that is accessible to the intended audience? Does this research adequately address the issues in an in-depth and meaningful way?

5.9 Limitations

It is important to note the number of limitations within this present study. Due to limitations in time and resources, and its focus on the ISOYW program for federally-sentenced male Aboriginal inmates, this study does not account for gender and the experiences of incarcerated Aboriginal women. While the ISOYW program was adapted in 2001 to meet the needs of Aboriginal women in the form of the “Spirit of a Warrior” program, there is limited available literature on this program and on other Aboriginal-specific correctional programs for women. A separate study is thus necessary in order to adequately capture the experiences of federally-incarcerated Aboriginal women, as well as the culturally-appropriate interventions that are available for Aboriginal women both inside correctional institutions and outside in the community. Research in this field would benefit from a case study that explores in-depth the experiences of Aboriginal women in Canadian corrections, as well as a comparative analysis of the Aboriginal-specific interventions and healing strategies that are available for both genders within corrections.

6.0 FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from the interviews and document scan. First, I share a story about the inception of Aboriginal-specific programming as it has never before been recorded. Next, I explore the development, delivery, and future of the ISOYW program in Canadian corrections.

6.1 Inception of Aboriginal-specific programming

In the background section of this report, I discuss how Aboriginal-specific programming was introduced into federal legislation from the CSC's perspective (Section 3.3); however, that section does not consider how Aboriginal-specific programs came to be introduced into federal institutions before becoming federal policy. I share these stories because they represent part of the history of Aboriginal-specific programming - from an Aboriginal perspective - that has never before been recorded in academic literature. I have chosen to share stories of the "early days" to acknowledge some of the individuals who played an integral role in ensuring that cultural and spiritual interventions be provided to Aboriginal offenders inside correctional institutions. The first participant, Michael, was one of the founding individuals and the following is his story.

After moving to Edmonton from the United States, Michael began working with the Nechi Training, Research and Health Institute, which offers specialized training to addictions counsellors working in Indigenous communities. In the late 1960s/early 1970s, Michael met with Eric Shirt, the Director of the Nechi Institute, who had the idea to start offering alcohol and drug programming inside the penitentiaries. At that time, there was no such programming available within the institution; yet there was a clear link between alcohol and drug use and incarceration. While Michael supported the idea of offering such a program, he understood alcohol and drug abuse to be only symptoms of the problem; in order to effectively reduce recidivism, the underlying causes of the symptoms also needed to be examined and addressed (Michael, interpersonal communication, June 24, 2013).

Before entering the institution to deliver programming, Michael and the other facilitators/trainers needed proper training. Consequently, the Nechi Institute brought in a number of trainers from the United States to train them how to go out and train others to deliver these programs in the institutions and communities. These American trainers were specialists in their field and had exceptional skills and experience. Part of Michael's training involved a two-day session where the trainers-in-training were put together in one room for 48 hours:

48 hours will push a lot of people's limits if you put them all in one room. And the object was to do that: push those limits. Push the people behind

them, so that they know, for sure, where their limitations are. We're going to send you out to work in a community that is very, very sick. You can't be a short stop. You *gotsta* be good. You can't fall apart, you can't fade. You have got to be the rock. So we have to find out if you're any good or not (Michael, interpersonal communication, June 24, 2013).

Michael emphasized that finding people who have what it takes to train other trainers is incredibly rare. He suggests that great trainers require more than skills and competence; they need heart and significant life experience. Elders were also introduced into the programs to help educate the trainers on delivering culture and spirituality. Michael and a small group of other people comprised the first group of Aboriginal trainers in the Prairie Region. They decided to "pilot" their first alcohol and drug program in Prince Albert penitentiary, Saskatchewan, because it was the toughest, highest security prison of the facilities in the Prairie Region: if they could succeed in Prince Albert, they could succeed anywhere. On the first day, although they had negotiated a contract with the CSC ahead of time, the training group arrived at Prince Albert, but the guards would not open the gates to let them in. "We stood out there for two hours at 48 degrees below zero and never moved. We ain't leaving until you open that freaking gate" (Michael, interpersonal communication, June 24, 2013). Ralph Bouvette (former Prison Program Director), Michael and his team refused to leave until the guards eventually opened the gate. The CSC staff alleged that no one had informed them that the trainers were coming to deliver a program. After several discussions, the group of trainers was finally allowed in and managed to deliver a 6-week program. During their time inside Prince Albert penitentiary, six Aboriginal inmates died, yet the trainers had never seen the Director of the penitentiary. Michael's experience in Prince Albert gave him insight into how dysfunctional the penitentiary system was at that time, comparing it to the military. More importantly, Michael experienced the resistance of allowing Aboriginal people to offer their own programming to their own people. He was also exposed to the awful treatment faced by Aboriginal offenders within the institutions. Despite the challenges and resistance they encountered, Michael and his team persisted, paving the way so that future programs that are designed by Aboriginal people and that employ Aboriginal approaches could be offered inside an institution. Michael and many others dedicated their lives to reducing recidivism among Aboriginal peoples yet received no credentials or academic recognition for what they accomplished. "We slept on the office floor, we worked 20 hours a day, eight days a week. We never stopped, we just kept going, and building it, and building it, and building it" (Michael, interpersonal communication, June 24, 2013). As a result of Michael and his team's persistence on using Aboriginal culture and spirituality to address the root causes of alcoholism and drug abuse, the CSC eventually recognized and offered Aboriginal-specific programs inside correctional institutions across Canada (Michael, interpersonal communication, June 24, 2013).

Now that I have acknowledged a piece of Aboriginal-specific programming history that had gone unrecognised for decades, I will now shift my attention to a contemporary Aboriginal-specific program – the ISOYW program. The next section provides a detailed description of the ISOYW program. The information was gathered from interviews and from publicly-available sources, including the CSC government website, backgrounders,

policy documents, newsletters, research reports, as well as public sources from the Office of the Correctional Investigator and the NCSA websites.

6.2 In Search of Your Warrior Program

The In Search of Your Warrior (ISOYW) program is a high intensity healing and violence prevention program that integrates aspects of traditional culture and spirituality into Western approaches to rehabilitation for federally-incarcerated Aboriginal⁵ men caught in the cycle of violence (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 4; LaBoucane-Benson, 2002, p. 40). The program was created to break the cycle of abuse by addressing traumatic experiences that resulted from violence and abuse (Amellal, 2005, A Choice Dictated by Faith section, para. 2). The ISOYW program employs a holistic healing approach that includes the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of an individual in the healing process (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 12). The program aims to help offenders understand how violence evolves and becomes intergenerational; develop skills to reduce violent behaviour; and acquire strategies for self-management (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 12).

6.2.1 Program Development

The ISOYW program was created, developed, and implemented by the Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) over a five-year period (LaBoucane-Benson, 2002, p. 40). The program was originally designed as a community-based program to address the needs of minimum-security Aboriginal offenders with a history of violence (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 13). Carola, one of the participants in this study, was one of the original writers of the ISOYW program.

In 1992, Carola and the NCSA produced a film in partnership with the Solicitor General of Canada's Aboriginal Corrections Policy Unit that showed the chronological manifestation of violence from the perspective of inmates (LaBoucane-Benson, 2002, p. 40). The film, entitled "RAGE", was an in-depth, four-part documentary that followed the stories of seven men with high profile cases at the Stan Daniels Healing Centre⁶ (SDHC) who had experienced childhood violence and grown up to repeat the cycle of violence as adults (LaBoucane-Benson, 2002, p. 40; Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013). Carola met with these men to ask them what they thought they needed in order to understand their issues. Through conversations, she discovered that these men needed to go back to their original soul scar where they were first wounded (Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013). Therefore, "RAGE" chronologically documents the men's lives, beginning with their childhoods, as many of them had traumatizing experiences during childhood (physical abuse, sexual abuse, residential schools, abandonment, alcohol and drug addiction at home) (Carola, personal communication,

⁵ While the ISOYW program targets Aboriginal men with a history of violence, it is of note that being Aboriginal is not a mandatory entrance criterion. However, offenders who participate in the program must be committed to the Aboriginal healing journey.

⁶ At the time of production, the SDHC was known as the Stan Daniels Community Correctional Centre.

July 10, 2013). “RAGE” became a powerful educational tool to help violent offenders understand how violence evolves and becomes intergenerational (LaBoucane-Benson, 2002, p.40). Given the strong responses provoked by the film series, a post-viewing debriefing session was necessary in conjunction with the viewing. As a result, the sessions and program material were developed by a researcher in consultation with Elders, program specialists, staff, and residents (LaBoucane-Benson, 2002, p. 41; Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 13).

In developing the ISOYW program sessions to accompany the “RAGE” documentaries, Carola and her team decided that first, inmates needed to understand who they are as Indigenous people. Therefore, after consulting the Elders, Carola and her team decided to return to traditional Aboriginal teachings and incorporate the Medicine Wheel and traditional Aboriginal ceremonies throughout the program. Next, they explored issues that arose during childhood (physical abuse, sexual abuse, abandonment, etc.) and built a healing component around these issues (Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013).

In 1999, the ISOYW program was piloted at the Stan Daniels Healing Centre in Alberta (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 13). By 2003, the program was offered in a number of institutions within the Pacific, Prairie, and Quebec regions (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 13). The ISOYW program was also adapted to meet the needs of federally-incarcerated Aboriginal women in 2001 in the form of the “Spirit of a Warrior” program (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 13). While the ISOYW program has been offered at federal prisons across Canada, the Native Counselling Services of Alberta remain the proprietors and copyright holders of the program (CSC, 2009, In Search of Your Warrior Program section, Introduction subsection, para. 1).

6.2.2 Program Delivery & Activities

The ISOYW program is a high-intensity program delivered over 6 weeks and includes daily ritual, frequent ceremony, and experiential learning sessions that focus on exploring underlying causes of violent behavior. These sessions help inmates identify their own cycles of violence, develop skills to overcome their violent behaviours, and stay committed to their life-long healing journey (Native Counselling Services of Alberta [NCSA], 2010, Training section, Warrior Programs subsection, para. 1).

The ISOYW program provides therapeutic sessions, activities, and resources for inmates committed to a holistic healing journey (NCSA, 2010, Training section, Warrior Programs subsection, para. 3). The program is founded on the basic principles of Natural Law (Kindness, Strength, Honesty and Sharing) and on the largely prevalent and holistic Aboriginal belief that all things are connected: the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of an individual must be engaged for sustainable change to occur (Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013; Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013; NCSA, 2010, Training section, Warrior Programs subsection, para. 3). Carola reiterates the need for a holistic approach:

We're four layered people. We come with four pieces of ourselves that have to be cared for: that's our spiritual being, our physical being, our emotional being, and our mental being. Everything has to be looked after when we're in healing. And that's the way the program was designed. Everyday we always incorporated something spiritually, everyday we incorporated something physically, and absolutely we were working on their mental and emotional wellbeing.

To address the emotional aspects of a person, the ISOYW program focuses on exploring underlying issues of violent behavior: childhood experiences with violence and neglect; shame; trauma; grief and loss; triggers for violence; and the intergenerational effects of colonization on the Aboriginal individual, family, and community (NCSA, 2010, Training section, Warrior Programs subsection, para. 3). Lois, one of the participants who has experience facilitating the ISOYW program, illustrates the program's ability to explore the emotions that underlie issues around rage, childhood, relationships, parenting, and criminality (Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013). Lois states that:

the program was designed to help [...] inmates reach a place of emotional change as opposed to just [mental/cognitive] understanding. [...] They know that if alcohol is ruining [their] life, stop using alcohol. But it's the feelings that would cause them to go out and use alcohol anyway [...] We went in to what is underneath, so you have to look at childhood, you have to look at that really painful stuff.

To address the mental aspects of self, Carola, in developing the ISOYW program, included explanations about trauma and brain function, emphasizing that offenders' brains need healing along with their hearts. According to Carola, when an individual has experienced violence for a long period of time, a part of his/her brain – the Amygdala – stays open. She states that normally the Amygdala only opens when an individual is in trouble or in fear and needs to move quickly. However, for people who have experienced extensive violence over a long period, their Amygdala remains open, so they are on high alert all the time. This causes stress on the brain and body. She notes that turning to drugs is a way to stop this hyper-vigilance. She believes that by talking and working through the ISOYW program, the Amygdala will eventually close and the individual will be better able to cope with stress (Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013).

To support the spiritual and physical aspects of healing, spiritual activities and ceremonies were built into the program through an experiential learning model so that offenders had alternate ways of moving through their issues, such as drumming, singing, dancing, storytelling, and art therapy (Trevethan et al., 2005, pp. 17, 40; Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013; Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013). According to Lois, ceremony is an integral component of the ISOYW program because she believes that ceremony is part of human nature: "Those guys are going to keep doing ceremonies, whether it's positive ones or whether they are ceremonies/rituals of addiction." Therefore, the inmates participated in weekly ceremonies, including pipe ceremonies, water ceremonies, sweat lodges, and mask ceremonies (Lois, personal

communication, Sept. 25, 2013; Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013). It is important to note that the types of ceremonies accompanying the ISOYW program vary by region. For example, the water ceremony is a Westcoast ceremony and, thus, performed in the Pacific region but not in the Prairie region. The sweat lodge is an important spiritual element of the ISOYW program as it allows participants to purge themselves of the pain and anger buried inside them. The ISOYW also incorporated ceremony into mealtime. “[The inmates] would sit together and have breakfast. Sitting around with a group of your peers is pretty common, but not in prison, not in a comfortable and social way with somebody preparing good food” (Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013). Perhaps one of the most influential ceremonies is the Mask Ceremony. While developing the program, Carola searched for a ceremony to end the program that would help the men let go of all the emotions, scars, and ugliness that had built up in their lives. She found a book entitled *The Mask* that originated from the South Western United States and was written from an Indigenous perspective about a ceremony around making a mask. In consultation with the Elders, Carola decided to adapt this mask ceremony for the ISOYW program:

We’re going to have them make this mask and while we’re making this mask, I’m going to ask them to let go of all that stuff. Let go of everything and put it into that mask as that mask is being formed on your face [...] then the next day we would take the mask and we went out onto the land. I told them to go gather – it doesn’t matter what it is, rock, acorn, sticks, etc. - whatever it is to symbolize those things, those big things that you’ve done in the program that you’ve really decided to let go. Then, we’re going to take your masks and lay them in the earth with all those things around them. As you put your mask in the earth, you’re going to put those things that symbolize what you’re finally letting go – your anger, your pain, your mom, your dad, your kokum. [...] Then we left those masks in the earth overnight and we asked Mother Earth to take it, take it somewhere where it couldn’t hurt anyone. Then, they picked up their masks and they took them back and now we’re going to paint that new warrior – that new warrior, who we are, we’re going to paint that on the face. [...] Then, after they were painted, we went into the sweat lodge, they sat in that sweat lodge and we did that ceremony to welcome that new warrior home into their being.

6.2.3 Facilitation Team

The six-week program delivered by two skilled facilitators and an Elder over 42 consecutive days is intense for both offenders and the facilitation team. Facilitators are responsible for more than simply providing the sessions. The ISOYW program “requires that it be staffed by really excellent quality people with excellent skills” (Michael, personal communication, June 24, 2013). The facilitators must be able to build an environment of trust so that offenders are willing to share their personal and painful stories. Facilitators must also be adept at navigating and delving into the core of the offenders’ issues, while having the skills to be able to move the offenders through their pain so that they are healthier than when they started (Lois, personal communication,

Sept. 25, 2013). As well, facilitators act as positive role models and, in doing so, often take on the role of a grandparent (Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013). Carola admits that the concept of re-parenting was incorporated into the program because “so many of them didn’t get parented, they weren’t told what was right, what was wrong, what was acceptable, what wasn’t acceptable.” By demonstrating kindness, strength, sharing, and honesty in their everyday interactions with offenders, with other team members, and with other facility staff, facilitators exemplify the values on which the program is built (Lois personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013; Michael, personal communication, June 24, 2013).

To assist in the delivery of cultural and spiritual activities, Aboriginal Elders provide spiritual guidance and traditional teachings to the inmates to support the therapeutic sessions (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 14). Elders also deliver ceremonies and provide support and spiritual consultation to the program facilitators (Michael, personal communication, June 24, 2013; Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013). It is of note that Elder involvement in the ISOYW program varies across institutions based on Elder availability, time, resources, and security restrictions, and that the extent of contact between inmates and Elders is ultimately determined by the program facilitator (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 14).

6.2.4 Pathways Healing Units

To assist those committed to following a healing journey, Pathways Healing Units have been established to provide a traditional living environment and cultural supports within correctional facilities (CSC, 2004, p. 54). In defining Pathways Units, the CSC Commissioner’s Directive 702 (2012) states that:

a Pathways unit/range provides a path of healing within institutions for offenders who make a commitment to follow traditional healing as a way of life, 24 hours a day. Pathways units/ranges provide [...] a healing and supportive environment, an environment committed to following the Aboriginal traditional and spiritual way of life. Only offenders who have already made a serious commitment to pursue their healing journey, and who have worked significantly with Elders/Spiritual Advisors to address areas of healing, are to be placed on a Pathways unit/range (p. 30).

Once offenders have been placed in a Pathways Unit, they gain access to intensive Elder/Spiritual Advisor services, programming and interventions that are designed for an individual’s personal healing path (CSC Commissioner’s Directive 702, 2012, p. 42). These units are not exclusive to Aboriginal offenders but are available to any offender who demonstrates a serious commitment to following a traditional Aboriginal healing way of life (CSC Commissioner’s Directive 702, 2012, p. 42). Offenders participating in Pathways interventions are responsible for their own healing journey; they must remain substance free, relinquish any active gang membership and be prepared to address their intensive personal issues (CSC Commissioner’s Directive 702, 2012, p. 42). According to the CSC’s Strategic Plan (2006-2011), Aboriginal offenders who resided in Pathways

Units had lower post-release re-offending rates (17%) compared to Aboriginal offenders who did not participate in a Pathways Unit (35%) (p. 14). Pathways Units also had lower violent incidents and drug use, fostering a safer environment for both staff and offenders (CSC, 2006).

6.2.5 Program Evaluation

There have been two formal reviews and two evaluations of the ISOYW. Couture (1999) conducted the first program review, which consisted of a critical analysis of the program's materials and curriculum (cited in Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 5). Although I could not access this unpublished report, reviews of Couture's study suggested that the ISOYW program has significant potential, and support the involvement of Elders and ceremonies (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 5). The program curriculum was then restructured to reflect Couture's recommendations (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 5). The second study, conducted by Mason, Sterling, McDonald and Pentland (2001), is also unpublished and, thus, could not be accessed. However, reviews of this study indicate that it praised the program for having contributed to positive changes for the Aboriginal offenders who had participated in the ISOYW program but suggest improvements are needed in program delivery, environment, staffing and quality assurance (cited in Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 6).

The most comprehensive and accessible evaluation of the ISOYW program was conducted by Trevethan, Moore & Allegri (2005) within the CSC. After interviewing inmate participants, facilitators, Elders, and key respondents, the authors found a high level of satisfaction with the ISOYW program as all respondents believed it contributed to positive change for the offenders who participated in the program (p. 30). Respondents suggested that ceremonies and spiritual activities are imperative to the success of Aboriginal programming (p. 30). All parties felt that the program addresses the key criminogenic needs of offenders and helps to improve the offender's behaviour both inside the institution and upon release (p. 30). In terms of program outcome, the study found that the program "had an impact on reducing offenders' need for correctional programming and improving their potential for successful release into the community" (p. 37). In fact, over two thirds of those who participated in the ISOYW program were not re-admitted to prison within one year of release (p. 26). Of those who did recidivate, fewer ISOYW participants were re-admitted for a new violent offence compared to the comparison group (7% versus 57%) (p. 26). This may indicate that the program had an influence on the participants' tendency to commit violent acts.

While these results were promising, the post-program ratings and general re-admission rates of ISOYW participants were not significantly different from the comparison group consisting of those who did not participate in the program (p. 37). In other words, there were no significant differences between the ISOYW program participants and the comparison group in terms of need for correctional programming, reintegration potential or motivation for intervention (p. 37). This suggests that although the ISOYW program

participants scored better on a number of outcome variables following involvement in the program, the comparison group⁷ also showed improvement.

Finally, in 2009, the CSC conducted an evaluation on a number of the CSC's programs, including the ISOYW program. Although less comprehensive than the 2005 evaluation, this study found that participation in the ISOYW program increased Aboriginal offenders' likelihood of discretionary release (2.4 times more likely) and reduced their risk for readmission (by 19%) upon release into the community (p. 101). However, the study showed no significant differences between groups regarding the likelihood of returning with a new offence or with a new violent offence (p. 101). Among the 22 recommendations, the study suggested that the CSC provide a greater range of Aboriginal specific programming, more Aboriginal content in programming, more resources (Elders, therapists, etc), and more contact with facilitators and Elders (p. 170).

6.2.6 Future of the ISOYW program in corrections

While undertaking research for this study, I discovered that the CSC is currently undergoing a shift in programming. Until recently, the CSC has been operating within a multi-program model that offered specialized programs aimed at addressing specific, need-targeted areas (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1). The ISOYW program was one of these need-targeted programs. Under this multi-program model, inmates participate in various programs to separately address their needs (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1). While this multi-program model was responsive to the unique needs of offenders, it also presented several challenges, including financial resource allocation, lack of access to programs, and lack of capacity to respond to offender profile changes (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1). In an attempt to address these challenges, the CSC developed an Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM) to improve efficiency (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1; CSC, January, 2010, Integrated Program Model section, para. 1). To reduce program redundancies and overlap, the ICPM collapsed and replaced a number of previously separate need-targeted programs within the multi-program model (OCI, 2011, pp. 44-45). Despite its positive influences on the healing of Aboriginal offenders (Trevethan et al., 2005, p. 37), the ISOYW program is one of these need-targeted programs being replaced⁸ by the ICPM (OCI, 2011, p. 45). Piloted in the Pacific Region in 2010, the ICPM consists of three program streams for offenders: multi-target, Aboriginal multi-target (referred to as the AICPM), and sex offender (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1). The new model is cognitive-behavioural based and includes skills-based preparatory at intake, institutional and community maintenance programs, motivational components, and continuous intake. (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1; CSC, 2012 Strategic Plan, p. 8; McDonough, 2009, p. 20).

⁷ The comparison group was matched on gender (all male), race (Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal), violent offence, age, year of admission, aggregate sentence, and the risk to re-offend (Trevethan et al., 2005, p.8).

⁸ While the ISOYW program is getting phased out of federal correctional institutions, the program is still offered by the NCSA as a community program.

The ICPM has five primary objectives: a) increase program access; b) increase program availability; c) maximize program delivery; d) increase program participation and completion rates; and, e) reduce costs related to training of trainers and delivery of staff (CSC, 2011, p. 40). Interestingly, although most of the ICPM's objectives have remained consistent, objective (e) in the CSC Research Plan has changed between 2010 and 2011. While the most recent CSC Research Plan (2011, p. 40) shows that the ICPM aims to "(e) reduce costs related to training of trainers and delivery of staff," the 2010 CSC Research Plan showed that the ICPM intended to "(e) reduce general and violent re-offending for those who participated in the program" (CSC, 2010, p. 14). This indicates that one of the ICPM's primary objectives has shifted from focusing on reducing recidivism to focusing on reducing costs.

According to the March 2011 CSC Evaluation Report, moving from the multi-program model towards the integrated program model (ICPM) has presented both advantages and challenges⁹. In terms of advantages, the ICPM enables offenders who have needs unrelated to their criminality or needs identified later in their sentence to still access programs (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 4). This integrated model is particularly beneficial in terms of re-assessing offender needs or overriding program referral guidelines. Once completed, offenders may not participate in the same or lower level intensity program. Thus, the community maintenance component of the ICPM allows offenders to receive follow-up and maintenance treatment (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 4). Finally, the study shows that the continuous intake feature of the ICPM reduces time on waitlists, avoids the need to cancel programs if enrolment is low, reduces gaps in time between programs, and permits offenders to complete programs relatively quickly (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 4).

In terms of challenges, the study shows that some offender needs may require attention before others, which is not possible with the ICPM (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 5). Furthermore, compared to the multi-program model, the ICPM does not take into account individual differences among offenders, which, in turn, "may not effectively address the individual needs of offenders" (CSC, March, 2011, Finding 11). In terms of group dynamic, the continuous intake component of the ICPM is problematic at times, as it interferes with the group's ability to develop trust, share difficult topics, and address specific issues, which is particularly important for Aboriginal offenders, women, and sex offenders (CSC, March, 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 6).

In response to the CSC's shift in programming from the multi-program model to the ICPM, the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) raises several concerns. The OCI questions whether collapsing a number of the previously separate need-targeted programs into only three program streams - only one of which is specific to Aboriginal offenders - will result in the ICPM being a "one-size-fits-all intervention" (2011, p. 45). The OCI

⁹ It is of note that the study did not discuss any advantages specific to the AICPM – the Aboriginal stream of the ICPM.

also notes that time spent in programming is reduced by up to a factor of three under the ICPM (2011, p. 45). Finally, the OCI is concerned about the speed of which the ICPM pilot has been implemented as that the ICPM has already expanded to the Atlantic Region “without benefit of a full evaluation or validated performance indicators” (2011, p. 45). In brief, the ICPM appears to be meeting its efficiency objectives in terms of increasing program access, availability, and participation, while reducing wait times and costs. However, by collapsing a number of specialized programs into only three program streams, the ICPM may not have the capacity to effectively address the individual needs of offenders in general, and Aboriginal offenders more specifically.

6.3 Summary

This section presents the findings from the interviews and document scan, including a story about the inception of Aboriginal-specific programming that has never before been recorded, as well as an exploration of the development, delivery, and future of the ISOYW program in Canadian corrections. Based on these findings, I identify six themes that relate to key program features for healing that will be discussed in the next section.

7.0 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to uncover program features that are key to the healing and rehabilitation of Aboriginal offenders in Canadian corrections. To do this, I focus on the ISOYW program because it has been considered an exemplary Aboriginal-specific program in its ability to incorporate culture and spirituality to assist in Aboriginal offender rehabilitation (Trevethan et al., 2005, pp. 14, 16 & 37). In this section, I present six major themes that emerged from the interviews, academic literature, and government documents.

7.1 Collaboration in Program Development

The academic literature and interviews revealed that extensive consultation occurred between program developers, program specialists and Aboriginal Elders during the development of the ISOYW program (Trevethan et al., 2005; Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013). The interviews also revealed extensive collaboration between the program developers and the inmates themselves. For example, rather than relying solely on academic research and program experts, Carola decided that the best way to develop the ISOYW program and the “RAGE” videos was to directly ask the Aboriginal inmates what they needed in order to understand their issues. By including the offenders in the discussion, she gained valuable first-hand insight from those who have the most intimate knowledge of the issues that need to be addressed. This inclusive, participatory approach exemplifies an Aboriginal perspective that all community members, including offenders, should be included in the discussion of how an issue is addressed because the most effective solutions come from those directly involved (Ross, 2006, p. 14; McCaslin, 2005, p. 88). Furthermore, from my interview with Lois I learned that offenders were not only consulted in determining the issues needed to be addressed in “RAGE”, but they were also directly involved in the filming of the four-part documentary. Approximately ten inmates were trained to run the cameras, lighting, etc. This notion that the *way* something is done is equally as important as *what* is being done further reflects an Aboriginal approach to conducting research or other projects (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 128).

7.2 Underlying Issues

Another theme that emerged from the interviews and literature is the ISOYW program’s ability to explore the deep-rooted issues that led the offender to commit the crime. After consulting with the Aboriginal offenders, Carola discovered that offenders need to examine all aspects of their lives (childhood, adolescents, relationships, family life, alcoholism, etc.) that led to their committing a crime. Each participant in this study mentioned that while alcohol and drug abuse was strongly correlated to the offenders’

decision to commit a crime, the alcohol and drug abuse were only symptoms of much deeper-rooted issues. Participants agreed that for any real change to occur in the offenders' behaviour, offenders had to work on their most painful issues. This finding is congruent with the literature on Aboriginal approaches to justice that advocates for examining the root causes that lead up to a crime, not just the crime itself (Ross, 2006, pp. 140-141) Consequently, the ISOYW program spends a significant amount of time exploring the offenders' childhood to identify the original soul scar and the cause of their rage. Lois noted a correlation between the level of the pain that the offenders went through and the level of joy they experienced in return. Therefore, the facilitation team worked with offenders to help them understand their reactions and recognize their triggers:

Healing is like an onion, you've got to take the layers off. [...] I teach [offenders] how to understand that their reaction is coming from a place of woundedness or fear. Ok, so what's around the woundedness, what's around that fear? Instead of reacting and getting violent, let's go back and see why we're reacting in the first place. Why are we feeling hurt? That's what it's all about. Once we can understand where we're being triggered, we have a whole lot better chance of surviving (Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013).

Through a process of reframing past experiences, the facilitation team, especially the Elders, helped offenders understand their issues from a different perspective (Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013). According to Lois, the team would ask questions such as: "Have you ever thought of the circumstances that would have forced your mother to have to give you up for adoption? Have you ever thought that that might have been the hardest thing she ever had to do?" Reframing helps offenders consider the circumstances that may have surrounded their issues, which could, in turn, influence how they perceive these issues.

Although addressing the root causes of their issues was identified as a distinct feature of the ISOYW program and a critical component to healing, findings from the interviews and literature suggest that not everyone is capable or ready to do this level of work. Lois stated that not all offenders are able to get to the core of their issues and that, as a facilitator, she needs to respect those boundaries. Furthermore, the literature and the participants noted that, in cases involving psychopaths and sociopaths, some offenders are incapable of feeling remorse, and thus will not benefit from the healing process. In these cases, incarceration is the best option to ensure public safety (Ross, 2006, p. 240).

7.2.1 Identity

Aboriginal identity was one of the underlying issues that came up frequently in the interviews and was also identified in the literature as being instrumental to healing. The literature states that core aspects of Aboriginal identity (language, culture, teachings, ceremonies, etc.) are critical to healing yet identity issues remain prevalent in Aboriginal

inmates (Ellerby & MacPherson, 2002, p. 58; Waldram, 1994, p. 201). In fact, the question of identity and shame came up several times during Carola's interview:

Shame is a deep, deep, deep emotional scar. If you don't take shame out of somebody's life, they'll continue to self-sabotage because they believe they're not worth it. [...] When people start to understand who they are as Indigenous people, life changes for them. They say 'I'm proud to be an Indian, I'm not embarrassed. I'm not ashamed about who I am'.

Therefore, there is a need to address Aboriginal identity in programming in order for healing to occur (Ellerby & MacPherson, 2002, p. 58). Lois indicates that the ISOYW program addresses the question of Aboriginal identity by building a sense of pride in who the inmates are as individuals, and who they are as Aboriginal peoples. She suggests that having a sense of pride is key to the offenders being able to make the tough decisions that they will have to make once they leave prison. Carola reiterates this point, stating that the ISOYW program, particularly the Elders, provides offenders with a sense of belonging and a sense of identity through spiritual teachings.

7.3 Holistic Approach to Healing

The ISOYW program's holistic approach to healing was identified as another key theme. In line with the Aboriginal philosophy that healing aims to unite and maintain a balance between all four aspects of a person's being, Carola integrated a Medicine Wheel approach into the design of the ISOYW program so that physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional lessons and activities were offered every day (Lane et al., 1984, pp. 9, 12 & 16; Lee, 2005, pp. 102-103; Ross, 2006, p. 25).

7.3.1 Experiential Learning

In support of a holistic approach to healing, the ISOYW program incorporates an experiential learning model. Experiential learning is a holistic model for learning where experience is central to the learning process (Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 2000, p. 2). Rather than program sessions focusing on written, cognitive-based activities, the ISOYW program offers alternative methods, such as drumming, singing, dancing, storytelling, and ceremonies, for offenders to deal with their issues. Two participants suggested that the experiential learning model was a critical component of the ISOYW program's influence on healing because it provided offenders with other ways to move through their healing journey. Lois and Carola noted that storytelling was a common method used to address issues because it is customary in many Aboriginal cultures and is an inclusive learning mechanism. Lois also noted that written assignments were not effective for all offenders due to the varying levels of literacy. However, she stated that all offenders are capable of storytelling. In fact, the inmates with the lowest literacy were often the best storytellers as they relied heavily on their speaking skills. Lois suggested that, on the contrary, cognitive-based programs can lower the self-esteem of the illiterate inmate population, which is counter-productive to the healing process. Furthermore, the ISOYW program's

experiential learning model can be more accessible than cognitive-based program models to offenders who suffer from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD), which is a particularly important consideration given the disproportionate number of Aboriginal offenders with FASD¹⁰ (Bracken, 2008, pp. 29-30). Offenders with FASD may not have the mental capacity to fully participate in cognitive-based exercises, and, therefore, may not benefit from this style of learning.

7.4 Culture and Spirituality

In line with the research that supports the integration of Aboriginal culture and spirituality into correctional programming for Aboriginal offenders (Heckbert & Turkington, 2001, pp. 56-57; Sioui & Thibault, 2001, p. 48; Zellerer, 2003, p. 187; Milward, 2012, p. 29; Trevethan et al., 2005, pp. 14, 16), culture and spirituality were central themes in the interviews.

7.4.1 Elders

The interviews and literature indicate that the Elders play a key role in the development and delivery of Aboriginal-specific programs in general, and the ISOYW program in particular. Research suggests that Elders play a critical role in the healing process as they offer traditional teachings, guidance and encouragement to offenders (Milward, 2012, p. 32; Ross, 2006, p. 237; Lee, 2005, p. 98; Waldram, 1994, p. 200). Moreover, all three participants emphasized the need for Elders in educating trainers/facilitators and in developing the sessions and activities. Lois mentioned that Elders also helped offenders learn cultural protocols and gracious living. For example, during her time as a facilitator of the ISOYW program, Lois and the facilitation team would invite the Elders from the community for a lunch at the institution. During these lunches, inmates would learn cultural protocols, such as how to prepare food, how to be a host, how to welcome people, and how to offer carvings to the Elders. Although these are basic cultural protocols, many offenders had never learned or experienced these social etiquettes.

7.4.2 Ceremony

Lois maintained that the distinguishing feature of the ISOYW program was its emphasis on, and frequent delivery of, ceremonies. Each week, there was a formal ceremony (pipe ceremony, water ceremony, or sweat lodge) that was supplemented by traditional teachings from the Elders. Additionally, there were informal ceremonies at every meal, where the inmates would prepare a plate of food to offer to the departed. This ceremonial component also helped build a sense of community and a sense of Aboriginal identity, which is instrumental in the healing journey.

¹⁰ It is of note that FASD is not a health issue exclusive to the Aboriginal population, although it is disproportionately prominent among the Aboriginal offender population.

7.4.3 Program Values

Another key feature for healing is the program's integration of Aboriginal values into all aspects of the program. Research suggests that the Aboriginal values and worldviews on which a program is founded must be incorporated into the program's design, delivery and implementation (Benson et al., 2000, pp. 51-52). As noted, the ISOYW is based on the principles of Natural Law (kindness, strength, honesty and sharing) and the belief that all things are interconnected: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual (LaBoucane-Benson, 2002, p. 40). During the interviews, all three participants identified the same four values of Natural Law as being foundational to an Aboriginal-specific program. Each participant discussed how the program values were reciprocated by the facilitators and exemplified in their everyday interactions. For example, facilitators showed kindness, honesty, sharing, and strength not only to offenders during their program sessions, but also to other team members, staff, and management at all times. By doing this, facilitators modeled how to integrate core Aboriginal values into all aspects of one's life to move forward on one's healing journey. In addition to the four values of Natural Law, Michael also noted the importance of the principles of ceremony, of process and of protocols. He illustrated the importance of protocols by teaching me the meaning behind offering a tobacco gift to an Elder, which I had done before the interview.

7.5 Commitment of the Facilitation Team

Another theme that arose in the interviews and literature was the significant role of the facilitation team. According to Michael, the strength of any Aboriginal-specific program depends on outstanding trainers/facilitators. In fact, my discussion with Michael revolved almost entirely around the level of quality that was required for a trainer/ facilitator and the rarity of finding people with this skillset. He suggested that trainers/facilitators need to be pushed past their limits during training so that they gain a better understanding of their own limitations. In a similar vein, all three participants discussed the importance of having trainers/facilitators undergo significant personal development before trying to help offenders. They must be far enough along on their own healing path so that they are aware of their own triggers and personal demons. The notion that an individual cannot help others heal until they have done significant healing themselves is reiterated in the literature (Ross, 2006, pp. 156-157). For example, the facilitators and Elders of the ISOYW program work intensively with inmates to delve into their deep-rooted emotional issues and are responsible for helping offenders move through their healing process. This type of work requires that facilitators have physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental stamina, as well as confidence, strength, compassion, and dedication. Their ability to create a safe space for dialogue and establish trust with inmates is essential. Most importantly, after helping offenders to explore their most difficult issues, facilitators need the skills to be able to restore the offenders so that they end up in a healthier state than when they began their healing journey.

7.6 Support from Peers

An interesting theme that came up during Lois' interview was the level of support from peers including, inmates currently participating in the program, inmates who are not participating in the program, and inmates who previously graduated from the program. Lois said that non-participating inmates (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) went to great lengths to make her feel safe within the institution because they understood that she was trying to help people through the program. Non-participating inmates also supported the ISOYW program by respecting the request to not interact with inmates who were currently participating in the six-week program. Lois also noted the level of support that inmates currently participating in the program provided each other through encouragement and feedback while they moved through their issues. This peer encouragement is supported by traditional teachings around Brotherhood, tribalism and standing by one's own people. Finally, Lois mentioned that previous ISOYW program graduates acted as role models for the current program participants. Lois shared a story about a group of previous graduates requesting to speak with the current group of ISOYW program participants to discuss their behaviour. The graduates reprimanded the new group for not taking the program seriously and for not behaving respectfully after program hours. After this discussion, Lois noticed a considerable change in the new group's behaviour and was amazed by the graduates' ability to positively alter the group dynamic. In doing this, the group of graduates had not only been role models in their demonstration of non-violent confrontation, but they also showed the new group that there were peers inside the institution who were watching them and cared enough to reprimand them when they exhibited poor behaviour.

7.7 Challenges

During their interviews, all three participants discussed the challenges they encountered during program development and/or delivery. One of the challenges experienced by all of the participants was a resistance to the delivery of a correctional program based on a number of Aboriginal healing approaches. For example, when piloting one of the first Aboriginal-specific programs to ever be delivered inside an institution, Michael and his training team had to wait outside in below-zero temperature for two hours before the guards let them enter through the institution's gates.

Similarly, in delivering the ISOYW program, Carola encountered resistance from some of the staff who did not believe that prison was the place for therapy. Furthermore, in developing the ISOYW program, she faced criticism regarding her holistic approach to treatment. There were concerns that addressing the offenders' various issues (alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, abandonment, etc.) in such depth, and at the same time, would trigger offenders, causing them to be more violent. Carola responded that many of the offenders spent most of their lives living in dysfunctional homes and communities where these issues were rampant and occurred simultaneously. Therefore, she insisted that these issues be addressed at the same time because they cannot be separated.

Finally, while Lois received support from the majority of CSC staff, she did experience some instances of disrespect from staff who did not support the ISOYW program. She

attributes these instances to ignorance and an overall lack of cultural awareness on behalf of some of the staff.

7.8 Shift in Programming

As discussed in Section 6.2.6 of this report, while conducting my research, I discovered that the CSC is undergoing a shift in programming, moving from the multi-correctional program model that offered a number of specialized programs towards an Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM) (CSC, March 2011, Integrated Correctional Programs section, para. 1). To improve efficiencies, the ICPM has collapsed and replaced a number of previously separate need-targeted programs within the multi-program model, including the ISOYW program (OCI, 2011, p. 45). Although a full evaluation of the ICPM has not yet been made publicly available, I raise several concerns regarding this shift in programming and question the repercussions that cutting the ISOYW program will have on Aboriginal offenders.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI) questions whether streamlining the various specialized programs into only three program streams will lead to a “one-size-fits-all” approach that may not have the capacity to effectively address the individual needs of offenders in general, and Aboriginal offenders specifically (2011, p. 45). I echo these concerns and raise several questions of my own. Does the Aboriginal stream of the ICPM (the AICPM) have the capacity to effectively address the individual needs of Aboriginal offenders? More specifically, to what extent is the AICPM capable of addressing, in a holistic and in-depth way, the root causes of the issues that have led to the Aboriginal offender’s criminality? In discussing this shift in programming, Carola argues that the cognitive-based training on which the AICPM is based only speaks to the mental aspect of a person: “It doesn’t do the soul work. It doesn’t reach into that core and to those wounded parts of a person.” Lois reiterates this point, stating that if you remove the experiential learning foundation of a program, you lose everything that goes with it. She continues that cognitive-based programs are not helpful for a lot of people, especially those who are illiterate or suffer from FASD. Given that FASD is a common health issue among the Aboriginal offender population, how will this shift in programming to a cognitive-based model impact Aboriginal offenders with FASD?

Furthermore, in terms of culture and spirituality, how does the AICPM integrate cultural and spiritual program features, such as Elders and ceremonies? Ceremony was identified as a central theme in this study. However, if time spent in programming is radically reduced under the integrated model (OCI, 2011, p. 45), will this reduction in programming apply to the AICPM’s delivery of cultural and spiritual components? How will the AICPM compare to the ISOYW program in terms of its ability to heal Aboriginal offenders? Finally, given that the ICPM’s objectives have shifted from reducing recidivism to reducing costs for training, will the AICPM’S focus on increasing efficiency override its ability to heal and rehabilitate Aboriginal offenders? Since there is limited public literature available on the ICPM, these questions will remain unanswered until a formal evaluation of the ICPM (and AICPM) has been released.

7.9 The Way Forward

During the interviews, I asked participants about the next steps required to support Aboriginal offenders and/or Aboriginal corrections. Michael indicated that there is a lack of a de-institutionalization or re-socialization process once offenders leave the institution. He notes that if offenders have been incarcerated for a long period of time, their communication and social skills become limited as they have been institutionalized into speaking the “prison language” and conducting themselves according to prison customs. As a result, their interpersonal skills may suffer and they may not fit in when they try to reintegrate into mainstream society. This inability to connect with other people may cause them to turn to drugs or alcohol and ultimately lead them back to prison. Michael argues that the community needs to take more responsibility for de-institutionalizing and re-socializing offenders once they get out of prison in order to address the disconnect that has occurred between the offender and the community upon institutionalization. While Michael raises a valid point about de-institutionalization and re-socialization, does that presume that the community into which the offender returns is healthy, capable and willing? What happens if the offender is no longer welcome or does not wish to return to that community for a multitude of reasons? What does a de-institutionalization/re-socialization process look like in the community? Does the community have the capacity to provide trained facilitators to support de-institutionalization and re-socialization?

In addition to the need for more community involvement during reintegration, Carola expresses the need to educate both Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal people about the historical factors that have contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in corrections, the contemporary issues that remain prevalent in Aboriginal communities, as well as the interventions that are helping Aboriginal offenders in their healing journey. Moreover, she recommends sharing stories about the ex-offenders who are now positively contributing to their communities in hopes of changing the common Canadian attitude toward Aboriginal offenders. She believes that through education and sharing stories, it is possible to create a space for dialogue where Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal people can work together to create positive change.

6.10 Summary

Drawing on the findings identified in section 6, this section discusses six themes that relate to key program features for healing, which include: collaboration during program development; exploration of underlying issues, including issues of identity; holistic approaches to healing through experiential learning; culture and spirituality in the form of Elders, ceremonies and Aboriginal values; commitment of the facilitation team; and, support from peers. This section also discusses some of the challenges faced by participants while developing or delivering an Aboriginal-specific program, the shift in programming that the CSC is currently undergoing, and the next steps in Aboriginal corrections.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary of Findings

To recapitulate, the purpose of this report is to inform an educational film by exploring how Aboriginal-specific interventions are facilitating the rehabilitation of Aboriginal offenders. More specifically, this report aims to uncover what features of Aboriginal-specific interventions are key to the healing of Aboriginal offenders. To narrow the scope of this study, I focused on the ISOYW program as it is considered an exemplary Aboriginal-specific program in its ability to incorporate Aboriginal culture and spirituality (Amellal, 2005, The Program section, para. 2; Trevethan et al., 2005, pp. 14, 16 & 37).

After discussing the pivotal historical factors that have contributed to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canadian corrections as well as the literature on Aboriginal approaches to justice and Aboriginal-specific programs, I presented six themes relating to key program features for healing:

1. Collaboration during program development.
2. Exploration of underlying issues, including issues of identity.
3. Holistic approaches to healing through experiential learning.
4. Culture and spirituality in the form of Elders, ceremonies and Aboriginal values.
5. Commitment of the facilitation team.
6. Support from peers.

In addition to these six themes, participants also discussed their challenges while developing or delivering an Aboriginal-specific program, the shift in programming that the CSC is currently undergoing, and the next steps in Aboriginal corrections.

8.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings in this report, I present my client with six recommendations for consideration in her upcoming film.

- Recommendation 1: The educational film should include an in-depth exploration of the history of Aboriginal-specific programming from an Aboriginal perspective to acknowledge parts of history that have been silenced and/or misrepresented for decades. This historical analysis should feature traditional Aboriginal dispute resolution processes that existed prior to contact with Europeans. Aboriginal peoples had their own processes of governing themselves and addressing any wrongdoings before European settlers imposed their laws and judicial systems. Many of these traditional dispute resolution processes have, in fact, become the foundation on which modern dispute resolution processes have been built.

The historical analysis should also focus on the intergenerational impacts that

colonial policies (especially the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools) have had on Aboriginal peoples, linking these impacts to the systematic breaking down of Indigenous families and communities, and to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in federal corrections. Emphasizing the link between Canada's colonial past and many of the contemporary issues faced by Aboriginal peoples, including their over-representation in penitentiaries, is critical because it supports decolonization by alleviating some of the blame that is placed on Aboriginal offenders (specifically) and Aboriginal peoples (in general).

Finally, the historical analysis should share the experiences and first-hand accounts of those involved in shaping and implementing what are now known as contemporary "Aboriginal-specific programs." Many individuals dedicated their lives to ensuring that traditional Aboriginal culture and spirituality be considered as legitimate methods of rehabilitation so that they may be offered inside federal correctional programming.

To gather this historical information, I recommend that my client incorporate teachings, stories, and oral histories through interviews with Aboriginal Elders and other knowledge keepers. By including a historical analysis, my client's film can help reduce the major lack of understanding that currently exists among Canadians about how discriminatory colonial and contemporary policies have played, and continue to play, a significant role in the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in corrections. Furthermore, by featuring traditional Aboriginal dispute resolution processes, the film can also educate Canadians about the value of including Aboriginal culture and spirituality in contemporary correctional programming.

- Recommendation 2: My client's film should highlight the importance of ceremony, Elders, and experiential learning. This study found that ceremonies and Elders involvement can have powerful influences on Aboriginal offender healing (Waldram, 1994, p. 200; Lee, 2005, p. 98; Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013; Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013). This study also discovered that experiential learning tools, such as drumming, singing, storytelling, and art can be conducive to healing and more accessible to Aboriginal offenders, especially Aboriginal offenders with FASD, than solely cognitive-based approaches (Lois, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2013; Carola, personal communication, July 10, 2013). Therefore, I recommend that my client interview individuals who can speak to the value of ceremony, Elders, and experiential learning tools, and include perspectives from current offenders, ex-offenders, program staff, program developers, facilitators, wardens, parole officers, family members, Elders, trainers, and any other individuals whose lives have been affected by Aboriginal corrections. While sharing these stories, it is recommended that the film also focus on success stories about Aboriginal ex-offenders who are now serving their communities in positive ways. In order to interview these individuals for the educational film, my client will need to submit

an electronic application package to the appropriate authorities at the CSC to receive their permission and support. Moreover, I also suggest that my client consult a number of Aboriginal communities in British Columbia and Alberta. As my client has already established working relationships with a number of Aboriginal community stakeholders, I recommend that she first seek their support, then engage in networking activities to build a bigger network of Aboriginal community supporters. To help offset the costs of the film, my client may submit a funding application to the CSC, the department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the BC Ministry of Education.

- Recommendation 3: My client's film should also feature the CSC's current shift in programming. This study discovered that the CSC is moving from the multi-correctional program model that offered a number of specialized programs towards an Integrated Correctional Program Model (the Aboriginal model is referred to as the AICPM) (CSC, March 2011). Since a full evaluation of the AICPM has yet to be made publicly-available, it is difficult to ascertain how and to what extent the AICPM integrates Aboriginal culture and spirituality. However, participants in this study raised concerns that the AICPM's cognitive-behavioural model focuses primarily on the mental aspect of a person without adequately addressing the emotional, spiritual and physical aspects of a person. Therefore, I recommend that my client's film voice these concerns and raise questions about the number of cultural and spiritual activities, such as ceremonies and Elder involvement, offered under the new AICPM.

In addition, this study also identified that a program's intensity and ability to address the offenders' deep-rooted issues was critical to healing is the. For example, the ISOYW program was delivered from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm over 42 consecutive days where the facilitators and offenders spent significant time and energy exploring the underlying causes (i.e. childhoods, adolescence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, abandonment, etc.) of their issues. Although the intensity of the ISOYW program was strenuous on both the offenders and facilitators, this intensive approach helped offenders gain a better understanding of their deep-rooted issues. However, this study found that time spent in programming under the AICPM will be reduced by up to a factor of three (OCI, 2011, p. 45). Therefore, I suggest that my client's film also raise concerns about the AICPM's level of intensity and questions its ability to address the offenders' deep-rooted issues in a meaningful way.

Finally, this study discovered that between 2010 and 2011, one of the ICPM's five primary objectives shifted from focusing on reducing recidivism to focusing on reducing costs (CSC, 2010, p. 14; CSC, 2011, p. 40). I recommend that my client's film also draw attention to this issue.

While it is important to raise questions and concerns about the CSC's shift in programming, this recommendation has several political and fiscal implications.

First, given that a full evaluation of the AICPM has yet to be made publicly-available, there is not a significant amount of information about the AICPM available for review. Thus, in order to gather this information for the education film, my client will need to interview the CSC's staff and policy makers involved in the development and delivery of the AICPM. To obtain these interviews, my client will need to receive the CSC's permission and support. However, due to the critical nature of the concerns raised in Recommendation 3, the individuals to be interviewed may be unable or unwilling to fully disclose their responses on camera and the CSC may withdraw its support for the film. Without the support of the CSC, any interviews with current CSC staff or potential funding from the CSC would be removed, which would affect the outcome of the educational film.

- Recommendation 4: My client should develop a marketing and communications strategy which identifies the target audience, goals and objectives, key message, budget, and distribution methods for the film. In terms of determining the target audience, goals and objectives, and key message for the film, I recommend that my client utilize the findings from this present study and consult with a number of Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community stakeholders who are knowledgeable of Aboriginal correctional programming. To determine the film's budget, I recommend that my client contact the CSC, the department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and the BC Ministry of Education to discuss possible funding opportunities. In terms of distribution methods, I recommend that my client submit her film to a number of educational institutions, including highschools, colleges, universities, school boards, the BC Teachers Federation, and the BC Ministry of Education so that it may be distributed to education institutions across British Columbia. This film is an important tool that can be used to educate future generations about the history and contemporary circumstances of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Although the film may raise some uncomfortable, and perhaps even controversial, discussions in the classroom, it is important to create a safe space for these dialogues as they are necessary in bridging Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations. The film may further benefit by being distributed to National Film Boards, Aboriginal organizations, relevant interest groups, media, federal departments, and provincial ministries.

To develop this marketing and communications strategy, I recommend that my client work with a graduate student within the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) at the University of British Columbia as my client is currently an Adjunct Professor with this School. My client may present the development of this marketing and communications strategy as a research project opportunity for graduate students to undertake in order to fulfill the SCARP degree requirements.

- Recommendation 5: Building on the previous recommendation, I also suggest that a discussion guide be developed to accompany the film when presented at schools

and other public forums. Given the sensitive nature of the film, a discussion guide can be a powerful tool because it creates a space for dialogue, allowing viewers to share their thoughts surrounding these issues, which can, in fact, further contribute to their education on the topic. In particular, the discussion guide should explore the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) as this important part of history is often misrepresented in history books and can incite a powerful response from viewers in general, and especially those who have only recently learned of the extent of the IRS' devastating and intergenerational impact on Aboriginal peoples. I also recommend that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth be trained to facilitate the discussion guide sessions so that they may develop important public speaking and team building skills, and begin to bridge the gap in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations that is still prevalent in Canadian society. I suggest that these youth be selected from youth groups, middle schools and highschools from across British Columbia and Alberta.

- Recommendation 6: I recommend that further research be undertaken to explore Aboriginal-specific programs for federally-incarcerated women and reintegration programs for both Aboriginal men and women. Due to limitations in time and resources, this study did not investigate gender and the experiences of Aboriginal women in corrections. Therefore, there is a need for future research on the over-representation of the female Aboriginal inmate population, as well as available healing interventions designed to address their specific needs both inside the correctional institution and outside in the community. I recommend that future research capture the experiences of federally-incarcerated Aboriginal women, culturally-appropriate correctional interventions available for Aboriginal women inside corrections, as well as effective healing strategies that can be offered both inside correctional institutions and outside in the community. Research in this field would benefit from a case study that explores in-depth the experiences of Aboriginal women in Canadian corrections, as well as a comparative analysis of the Aboriginal-specific interventions and healing strategies that are available for both genders within corrections. Furthermore, I recommend that future research be undertaken to investigate Aboriginal-specific reintegration programs and interventions that are available in the community to address the needs of both Aboriginal men and women once they leave the correctional facility.

8.3 Final Reflections

As I reflect on my experience undertaking this project, I refer to one of the twelve teachings of the Sacred Tree (Lane et al., 1984, p. 29): "Human beings can always acquire new gifts, but they must struggle to do so." In fact, struggle is vital in the research process. I struggled in the beginning of my research when I began to uncover the immensity of my topic, the complexity of Canadian correctional programming, and the political nature of Aboriginal corrections.

Until last year, I had only been superficially exposed to the Canadian history of genocide/colonization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. As I began researching Aboriginal-specific programming, I realized how connected this topic is to a network of other issues: factors for Aboriginal over-representation in corrections; the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada; the effects of colonization, the Indian Act and Indian Residential Schools; intergenerational trauma; racist Canadian attitudes; and, the dysfunctional acquired coping skills (alcoholism, drug addiction, mental health problems, FASD, crime) that are rampant among many Aboriginal communities. Given the interconnectedness of these issues, they must all be considered before a discussion about Aboriginal-specific programming can take place. But how do I address these issues without labelling and perpetuating the negative stereotypes that already exist about Aboriginal peoples? How do I navigate these intricate issues and adequately present them in this study?

I addressed this concern by approaching my research from a decolonizing framework, which, in fact, introduced a new set of struggles. Until this research project, I had no knowledge of decolonizing methodologies; I had only conducted research projects from a Western empirical perspective. Therefore, my understanding of what constituted research was influenced by Western standards of academia. As I researched decolonizing methodologies, I became intimidated and began questioning whether I had the right to carry out this research as a non-Aboriginal person with no experience in Aboriginal research. I eventually came to terms with this ethical dilemma and accepted that the only way forward was to acknowledge and experience the discomfort that the decolonizing research process would inevitably bring. As long as I remained knowledgeable, open-minded and open-hearted, I could engage with this challenge.

In doing this research, I also learned to appreciate the process as well as the outcome. Even though I was disappointed that I was unable to interview the number of people that I had intended, I was able to establish relationships with my client and participants, including those I was unable to interview. The people whom I interviewed and consulted expressed enthusiastic support for my project, which validated the importance of this research and my role as the researcher.

Aboriginal-specific programs can facilitate the healing of Aboriginal offenders by holistically addressing the root causes of their issues using traditional Aboriginal culture and spirituality. To address the issue of Aboriginal over-representation in Canadian corrections, Aboriginal-specific programs that are designed by Aboriginal people and for Aboriginal people must be upheld in future correctional programming. These programs represent a number of Aboriginal approaches of addressing the issue of Aboriginal over-representation and deserve recognition as a legitimate form of correctional programming. More importantly, more control and decision-making power needs to be given back to Aboriginal communities to deal with their own peoples on a broader scale. Finally, there is a need to educate and bridge the relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people so they can work together to create positive, sustainable change in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities across Canada.

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APPENDIX A: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Kelsie Herbst
 Graduate Student
 Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution
 University of Victoria
 Tel: 604-360-3420 E-mail: kelsieherbst@gmail.com

Dear _____

RE: “From the Inside Out: A qualitative analysis of the In Search of Your Warrior program”

You are invited to participate in the above titled research project to satisfy the degree requirements of my Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution. Norma-Jean McLaren, consultant for 42nd Street Consulting and adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia, is the client for this study, which is being supervised by Tara Ney, Ph.D., R.Psych., assistant professor, Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria.

Objectives

The purpose of this report is to gain a better understanding of how the In Search of Your Warrior (ISOYW) program facilitated the healing of Aboriginal offenders. By uncovering which program features of the ISOYW program were key to promoting healing, this research hopes to expose the kinds of cultural and spiritual supports that, not only improve offenders’ potential for successful reintegration, but also resonate with the core values that underpin the policies behind Aboriginal-specific programming. To gain insight about what supports are needed inside the prison walls, I will share the stories and experiences of the creators, administrators, and facilitators of the ISOYW program who saw first-hand the effects that the ISOYW program can have on Aboriginal offenders.

When complete, this report will lay the foundation for an educational film entitled *From the Inside Out*, which will feature Aboriginal-specific correctional programs in British Columbia and Alberta that are making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal offenders. For this study, I will be working with the creator of this film, Norma-Jean McLaren, Consultant from 42nd Street Consulting and Adjunct Professor with the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia. The purpose of the film is to educate the general Canadian public on the following: underlying systemic issues that have led to the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in Canada; the history of Aboriginal-specific programming in Western Canada; Aboriginal-specific programs that are available and effective in addressing the issue of Aboriginal over-representation; and the supports that are needed at the community level to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of Aboriginal offenders once they leave prison.

Methods

I approach my research through a decolonizing framework, which emphasizes that indigenous peoples' interests, experiences, and knowledge remain at the forefront of the construction of knowledge. For this research, I will follow a narrative methodology, which aims to understand the role personal stories play in the making of socio-political worlds.

I will conduct collaborative, participatory, open-ended interviews with participants to gain a better understanding of how the *In Search of Your Warrior* program was created and to share the experiences of those involved in the delivery of the program. The interview questions will be used to guide the discussion rather than seek a specific set of answers. Participants will also have an opportunity to include their own questions about topics they feel are important to cover. Because of your knowledge and experience with the *In Search of Your Warrior* program, I am inviting you to consider participating in this research. My supervisors and I believe your insight is essential to the success of this project.

Participation Requirements

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, I would require approximately 60-90 minutes of your time for an informal interview. This interview will be conducted in-person or by telephone at a location and time convenient to you. I will be asking you questions regarding your experience with the development and/or delivery of the *In Search of Your Warrior* program, focusing on how the program promoted the healing of Aboriginal inmates.

If you would like to participate in this research, please contact me by _____ so that I may forward additional information, including an Informed Consent form. This form will explain the research in detail, outline the minimal risks and many benefits of your participation, as well as ethical considerations such as confidentiality and anonymity.

I look forward to hearing from you and sincerely hope that you will consider providing your insight and expertise into the development of this research. Please do not hesitate to contact me, my client or my supervisor, if you should have any questions at all.

Kindest regards,

Kelsie Herbst
Candidate, Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution
University of Victoria
Email: kelsieherbst@gmail.com
Tel: 604-360-3420

Norma-Jean McLaren
Client
42nd Street Consulting
Adjunct Professor
Email: njmclaren1@gmail.com
Tel: 604-254-5285

Tara Ney, Ph.D., R.Psych.
Academic Supervisor
School of Public Administration
University of Victoria
Email: tney@uvic.ca
Tel: 250-721-8199

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Kelsie Herbst
 Graduate Student
 Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution
 University of Victoria
 #908 – 2968 Glen Drive Coquitlam, BC V3B 0C4
 Tel: 604-360-3420 E-mail: kelsieherbst@gmail.com

Date _____

Dear _____

RE: “From the Inside Out: A qualitative analysis of the In Search of Your Warrior program”

Thank you for your interest in participating in the above-titled research project. This letter serves to provide you with further information about the project and my experience as a researcher, the risks and benefits of your participation, and the considerations I have made to ensure that this research is conducted in an ethical manner.

Researcher Information

I am a graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution at the University of Victoria. I have completed all course components of the program and am now striving to fulfill the requirements of the degree by conducting this study. I believe I am qualified to undertake this project as I have significant academic experience with cross-cultural research, qualitative data analysis, and ethically sound research practices.

Project Details

1. Research objectives

The purpose of this report is to gain a better understanding of how the In Search of Your Warrior (ISOYW) program facilitated the healing of Aboriginal offenders. By uncovering which program features of the ISOYW program were key to promoting healing, this research hopes to expose the kinds of cultural and spiritual supports that, not only improve offenders’ potential for successful reintegration, but also resonate with the core values that underpin the policies behind Aboriginal-specific programming. To gain insight about what supports are needed inside the prison walls, I will share the stories and experiences of the creators, administrators, and facilitators of the ISOYW program who saw first-hand the effects that the ISOYW program can have on Aboriginal offenders.

When complete, this report will lay the foundation for an educational film entitled *From the Inside Out*, which will feature Aboriginal-specific correctional programs that are

making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal offenders. The purpose of the film is to educate the general Canadian public on the following: underlying systemic issues that have led to the over-representation of Aboriginal offenders in Canada; the history of Aboriginal-specific programming in Western Canada; Aboriginal-specific programs that are available and effective in addressing the issue of Aboriginal over-representation; and the supports that are needed at the community level to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of Aboriginal offenders once they leave prison.

2. Deliverables

The final report of this project will include the following deliverables:

- A background section that provides a context for the research by describing the systemic historical, social, and political factors that have led to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canadian corrections.
- A literature review that explores Aboriginal approaches to justice, discusses Aboriginal-specific prison programming, and describes the *In Search of Your Warrior* program.
- A narrative analysis that explores the history and healing features of the *In Search of Your Warrior* program.

Participation

1. Selection

You are being asked to participate in this research because you have considerable experience with the *In Search of Your Warrior* program and knowledge of traditional Aboriginal approaches to justice. Your experience and insight are essential to understanding how the *In Search of Your Warrior* program can promote the healing of Aboriginal inmates.

2. Requirements

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, I would require approximately **60-90 minutes** of your time for an informal interview. This interview will be conducted in-person or by telephone at a location and time convenient to you. The interview will be recorded using an audio recorder and I will take written notes. After the interview has taken place, a transcription will be made and sent to you.

Ethical Considerations

1. General

An Application for Ethical Approval has been submitted and is pending approval by the Human Research Ethics Board of the University of Victoria. This application was submitted after a thorough review of the Tri-Council Policy Statement. A copy of the approval certificate is available upon request. Any questions, concerns, or comments

regarding ethical requirements may be directed to myself, my supervisors, or the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (ethics@uvic.ca, 250-472-4545).

2. Benefits

a. Benefits to the participant

Participants will benefit from participating in the research because they will have an opportunity to share their stories in their own voices about the work they do. They will have the opportunity to empower their communities by discussing the realities of Aboriginal inmates and peoples across Canada and how they are helping address these realities.

b. Benefits to Society

This research benefits society as it aims to build a bridge between Aboriginal and Canadian mainstream worldviews by educating Canadians about the realities of incarcerated Aboriginal peoples and the supports that are facilitating the healing of Aboriginal inmates. This research hopes to expose the power of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual supports in rehabilitating and reintegration Aboriginal offenders and the need for these supports to be integrated into future programming for Aboriginal inmates.

c. Benefits to State of Knowledge

This research will benefit the state of knowledge by exposing the healing capacity of traditional aboriginal practices that have been silenced for decades. By incorporating a decolonizing framework to highlight Aboriginal approaches to justice, this research shines a light on an area of research that is frequently overlooked in Western research. Furthermore, this research will uncover the history behind the inception of Aboriginal-specific programming from an Aboriginal perspective, which has never before been documented.

3. Inconvenience & Risks

I do not foresee any risk of harm as a result of your participation, and will ensure that the proper ethical guidelines are followed at all times during this project. I do acknowledge that participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you in terms of scheduling a one / one and a half hour interview; however, I will make every possible attempt to arrange an interview around your schedule. I hope that the benefits of your participation will outweigh this potential inconvenience.

4. Confidentiality & Anonymity

To protect your confidentiality and anonymity, you have the option to remain anonymous during the interview and dissemination of the findings. If you wish to remain anonymous, I will use pseudonym initials on all notes, interview transcripts and final report to identify each participant. In this case, all notes, interview transcripts, or any other research

materials will not contain your name or identifying information. Identifying information will be numerically coded and stored on an external USB drive, which will be locked in a filing cabinet when not in use.

5. Participant's Right to Withdraw

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, your information will only be used with your permission. If you do withdraw from the study and do not give permission for your information to be used, your information will be destroyed and not used.

6. Data storage and disposal

All information will be stored on a password-protected computer and an external USB drive that will be kept in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. All interview findings will be used by the researcher to develop the project's final report. With your permission, the final report and individual data sources (notes, interview transcripts) will also be used to inform the client's upcoming documentary entitled "From the Inside Out". Although the documentary may involve different interview questions, this study's final report and the individual data sources (notes, interview transcripts) will inform and guide the interview questions in the client's documentary. Your voluntary consent is required before your interview responses are shared with the client for the purpose of her documentary.

7. Dissemination of results

It is anticipated that the results of this project will be disseminated in the following ways:

- a. A final report will be written and submitted to the University of Victoria in order to fulfill partial requirements for the DR598 Master's Project course. The final report will be reviewed by the client (Norma-Jean McLaren), academic supervisor (Tara Ney), and Second Reader (Lyn Davis), prior to the delivery of an oral defence.
- b. An oral defence will be delivered to an academic panel at the University of Victoria. The general public is invited to attend all defence presentations.
- c. The final report will be archived in the University of Victoria Theses and Dissertations database, and will remain accessible to University of Victoria faculty, staff and students.
- d. The final report will be shared with the Norma-Jean McLaren for the purpose of producing the documentary "From the Inside Out".

Consent

1. Ongoing Consent

I will allow participants to review interview transcripts and omit any information that you do not wish to be included in the analysis or final report. In order to review your interview transcripts, please provide ongoing consent to the researcher (option to initial

below).

2. Future Consent

This study's final report will also be used to inform the client's documentary entitled "From the Inside Out". If you wish to consent that the information collected during your interview (notes, interviews transcripts) may be used or referred to in the documentary entitled "From the Inside Out", please provide consent for future data use (option to initial below). If you initial the statement "I wish to remain anonymous in all stages of research dissemination", no identifiable information will be provided to the client or referred to in the documentary. If you do not initial the statement "I wish to remain anonymous in all stages of research dissemination", your name and identifiable information may be provided to the client or referred to in the documentary.

If you do not wish that the information collected during your interview be used or referred to in the documentary, please do not initial the statement "I consent that the information notes and interview transcripts with my name and identifying information or without my name and identifying information collected in this research may be shared with Ms. McLaren in the documentary entitle "From the Inside Out" (option to initial below).

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

"I, _____, consent to participating in the research project titled:

(Print name)

"From the Inside Out: A qualitative analysis of the In Search of Your Warrior program"

I have carefully read and considered the terms outlined in this Letter of Consent, and am aware of the potential risks posed by this research. I have had the opportunity to have my concerns addressed by the researcher. By signing below, I confirm my consent to voluntarily participate in this research and to be contacted by telephone by the researcher to schedule an interview.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Please initial below if:

"I wish to remain anonymous in all stages of research dissemination" _____.

"I give ongoing consent to review interview transcripts" _____.

"I consent that the information notes and interview transcripts with my name and identifying information or without my name and identifying information collected in this research may be shared with Ms. McLaren in the documentary entitle "From the Inside Out" _____.

Please sign a copy of this letter and return the same to me by Sept. 26, 2013.

Thank you for taking the time to review the project details and for your anticipated participation.

Kindest regards,

Kelsie Herbst
Candidate, Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution
University of Victoria
Email: kelsieherbst@gmail.com
Tel: 604-360-3420

Norma-Jean McLaren
Client
Consultant
42nd Street Consulting
Development
Email: njmclaren1@gmail.com
Tel: 604-254-5285

Tara Ney, Ph.D., R.Psych.
Academic Supervisor
School of Public Administration
Faculty of Human and Social
Email: tney@uvic.ca
Tel: 250-721-8199

Please retain a copy of this letter for your reference.

APPENDIX C - PROPOSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These open-ended questions are intended to guide a casual discussion rather than reach a specific set of conclusions. Proposed open-ended interview questions:

1. What is your name and where are you from?¹¹
2. What has been your role or involvement in Aboriginal-specific programming?
3. Can you please tell me about what inspired you to become involved in Aboriginal prison programming?
4. Can you please tell me about your experience with the In Search of Your Warrior program?
5. In your experience, how has the ISOYW program impacted the Aboriginal inmates who have participated in the program?
6. In your opinion, what values are central to Aboriginal-specific programming?
7. Can you tell me about how the ISOYW program contributes to the healing of Aboriginal offenders?
8. In your opinion, what is it about the ISOYW program that is making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal offenders?
9. What supports do you think can help Aboriginal offenders heal once they arrive in prison?
10. Based on your experience, how does the impact of the ISOYW program compare to that of mainstream programs in terms of the healing of Aboriginal inmates?
11. Can you tell me about what supports you think are needed at the community level to facilitate a sustainable reintegration once Aboriginal offenders have left prison?
12. What other questions/topics do you feel are important that have not yet been raised or discussed?

¹¹ This question will only be asked to those who do not wish to remain anonymous. It is a sign of respect to ask an Aboriginal person who they are and where they are from.