

MEN'S WELLNESS IN PROVINCIAL CORRECTIONAL CENTRES PROGRAM

Final Evaluation Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Indigenous people in Canada historically had strong and rich traditions of land-based health and wellness and experience, knowledge, and tools for healing. Oral history suggests the population was characterized by good health and longevity, enhanced by ceremonial and spiritual practices for well-being. Contact with European settlers and colonial policies and practices of systemic oppression of Indigenous culture, language and traditions, residential schools and the “60s scoop” resulted in intergenerational trauma and marginalization of Indigenous communities and continue to have major social, economic and health consequences today. Compared with the general population, Indigenous men are at greater risk of depression and suicide and suffer a disproportionate burden of other mental health issues. Further, men are generally less likely than women to seek help with health issues and they face many barriers when accessing appropriate mental health services. As a result, men suffer in silence far too often. Research indicates many benefits of men’s-only spaces for health engagement to help promote healthy lifestyles, connections and strong mental health among men.

Created in 2010 by men living in Vancouver Downtown Eastside, the DUDES Club Society is aimed at building solidarity and brotherhood between members and promoting men’s health through education, dialogue, and health screening clinics. Currently, the program operates men’s group sessions in more than 40 communities across British Columbia. Since 2019, the program has been delivering its services in several correctional facilities.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the project is to conduct evaluation of the Men’s Wellness in Provincial Correctional Centres program implemented by DUDES Club Society. The evaluation was focused on the portion of the program activities contracted through Provincial Health Services Authority. The evaluation was started in March 2021 and completed in September 2021, and examines program activities implemented from January 30, 2019 to August 30, 2021 at three correctional facilities, including: Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC) Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC) and Nanaimo Correctional Centre (NCC).

1.3 EVALUATION ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Based on a review of the program documents, program files and preliminary interviews with program staff members, a list of evaluation issues was developed. The evaluation questions under each of these issues are outlined in the table below.

Evaluation Issues and Questions

Evaluation Issues	Evaluation Questions
Need	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a need for the types of activities and programming delivered by the DUDES club in BC correctional facilities? 2. Are the programming and services provided by the program responsive to client needs?
Success in Producing Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To what extent did the program achieve its goals and objectives and generate the expected outcomes? 4. Are there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative, that can be attributed to the activities implemented by the program?
Design and Delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Have the existing design and delivery of the program been effective? 6. What are the opportunities to improve the program design and/or delivery?

1.4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES

This evaluation project was undertaken in three phases. The first phase consisted of initial interviews as well as a file and document review, leading to the development of a detailed evaluation work plan that outlined the strategies and methodologies which were implemented in the second phase of the project. The field research undertaken in the second phase of the evaluation included:

- *Literature and document and data review.* The document and data review included a detailed review of background and organizational documents, including program descriptions, funding proposals, annual reports and documents demonstrating program outputs and characteristics of program participants. The literature review focused on key issues around involvement of Indigenous people in the Canadian justice system, incarceration rates and issues of men's wellness at correctional centers. The literature review also covered some of the lessons learned and best practices in supporting Indigenous men at the correctional facilities.
- *Interviews with 10 key informants.* We conducted in-depth telephone interviews with ten individuals, including members of the DUDES Club involved in design and delivery of the program activities as well as external stakeholders, such as staff members working at correctional facilities (e.g., wardens, nurses, Aboriginal Liaison Officers, etc.) as well as two former participants of the program who recently were released from correctional facilities.
- *A survey of 17 program participants.* A survey of program participants was conducted with the help of program staff and facilitators. In particular, survey questionnaires were provided to participants at the end of group sessions organized as part of the program at the correctional facilities. The participants were able to complete the surveys anonymously, which were later collected and mailed to us by the staff.

1.5 DATA RELIABILITY AND LIMITATIONS

The evaluation employed multiple lines of evidence including interviews and surveys targeting a broad cross-section of stakeholders involved in, or affected by, the Men's Wellness Program. Additionally, an extensive literature and administrative data review was conducted. The key findings and conclusions presented in this report have been triangulated and confirmed with two or more lines of evidence. Despite these steps, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The interview and survey results incorporate the perceptions and opinions of key informants and survey respondents. Responses are impacted by memory, are influenced by respondent experiences (which can include stories related to them by others) and may be subject to respondent bias (e.g., many of the key informants and survey participants were directly involved in the planning and implementation of the program or affected by it).

Several measures were implemented to reduce the effect of respondent biases:

- (i) the purpose of the evaluation, its design and methodology, and the strict confidentiality of responses were clearly communicated to respondents;
- (ii) the interviews were conducted by highly experienced interviewers;
- (iii) follow-up questions were often asked to clarify information and better understand the context and basis for the comments made; and
- (iv) findings were cross-checked for validation.

In addition, the evaluation has made use of administrative data to report on program activities, outputs and outcomes. The accuracy of the administrative data reported may have been affected by the quality and consistency of the data reported by the program. Finally, input on the impact of the program was obtained through surveys with program participants. However, given the nature of the program (i.e., delivered at correctional facilities), we experienced challenges with obtaining high response rate, limiting the number of those who completed the survey. With support from program facilitators, we managed to survey 17 program participants and interview two former participants of the program, all of whom participated in the program activities at Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC). We were not able to obtain perspectives from those who attended program activities at Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC) or at Nanaimo Correctional Centre (NCC).

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of Men's Wellness in Provincial Correctional Centres Program. Chapter 3 summarizes the major findings of the evaluation while Chapter 4 summarizes key conclusions.

2. MEN'S WELLNESS IN PROVINCIAL CORRECTIONAL CENTRES PROGRAM

This chapter describes the DUDES Club and the Men's Wellness in Provincial Correctional Centres Program in terms of their background, objectives, design, delivery and intended outcomes.

2.1 BACKGROUND

The DUDES Club Society (DCS) was established in 2010 by men living in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside (DTES). It is a grassroots initiative responding to critical gaps in health services available for Indigenous and non-Indigenous men in the community. In Canada, the DTES is one of the most adversely affected communities in terms of the social determinants of health.

The key objectives of the DUDES Club include:

- building solidarity and brotherhood between members;
- promoting men's health through education, dialogue, and health screening clinics; and
- enabling men to regain a sense of pride and fulfilment in their lives.

The DUDES Club is committed to carrying out its stated objectives in an inclusive nonjudgmental, and holistic way. The full spectrum of the men's community in the DTES (gay, transgender, two-spirited, etc.) is encouraged to attend the programming and benefit from the services delivered by the DUDES Club. The Club's motto "*Leave your armour at the door*" provides an important foundation, as gatherings are a safe place for men to shed their defences, be vulnerable, and open up to one another. Men have referred to gatherings as a "sanctuary" to get away from the harsh realities of life in the DTES. Regardless of their current mental or physical state, members are welcome as long as they remain respectful and follow the code of conduct.

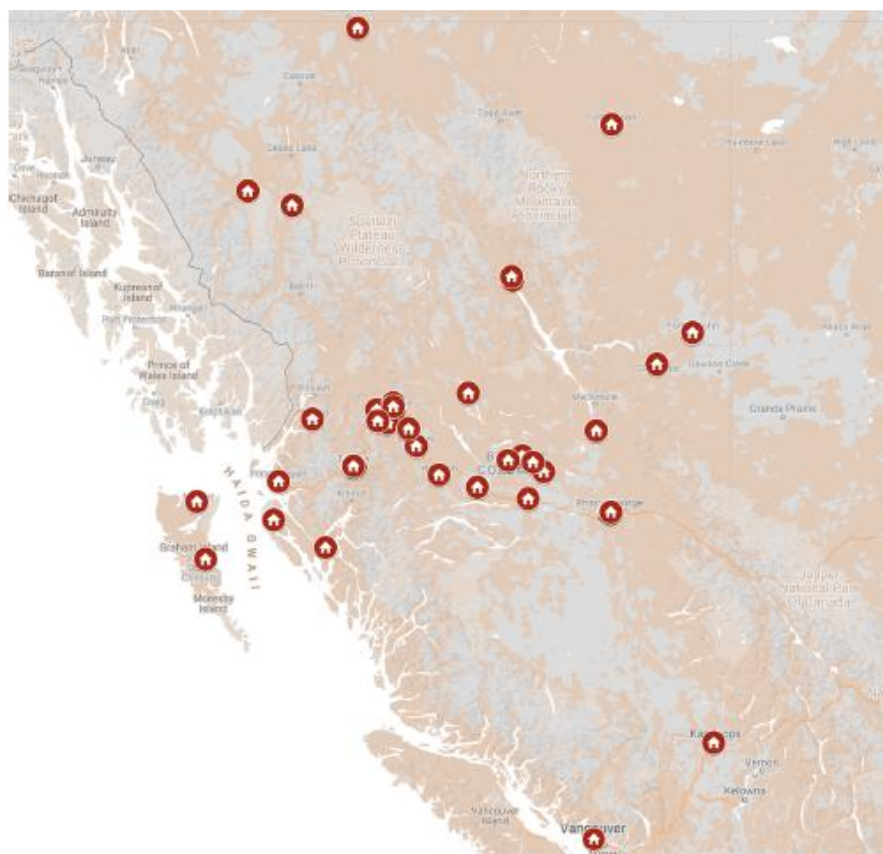
The DUDES Club activities were started in 2010 through the organization of bi-weekly gatherings at the Vancouver Native Health Society. On average, each gathering is attended by 50 to 60 men with a core of volunteers who support the activities. Volunteers receive modest compensation for their work, which can include cooking, serving, cleaning, facilitating activities and planning. As a large percentage of the members are Indigenous, the activities are implemented in culturally-safe environment, which often incorporates Indigenous perspectives such as medicine wheel teachings, regular participation of Elders, and bringing in health care professionals who provide a culturally-safe context for Indigenous peoples. The gatherings routinely start with an opening prayer led by a local Elder. The men then socialize and participate in various casual activities, followed by a hot meal. After the meal, an interactive health discussion is facilitated by a health care worker (mostly physicians, but occasionally a nurse or

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social worker), which allows men to ask questions about their health and to improve both their health literacy and peer-support skills. Gatherings always close with a prayer led by the DUDES Club Elder.

A 2016 evaluation of the activities and programming delivered by the Club demonstrated considerable health benefits of the program for participants. In particular, compared to infrequent attendees, frequent attendees experienced improved quality of life, mental health, physical health, health confidence, peer support, spiritual wellness, and social support. Furthermore, compared to non-Indigenous members, Indigenous members felt more trust and support with the group and felt that the Club helped them connect to their cultural heritage.

Communities where DUDES Clubs Gather Locally



The success of the initial group sessions in the DTES has led to increased demand for services provided by the Club. In 2013, the Club started organizing group sessions in other communities in BC. Since then, the activities and programming delivered by DUDES Club Society has grown significantly, and by 2020 its operations had expanded to more than 40 communities in British Columbia and several communities in other parts of Canada. DUDES Clubs (DCs) operate in Indigenous communities that are both rural, on-reserve and urban sites.

2.2 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

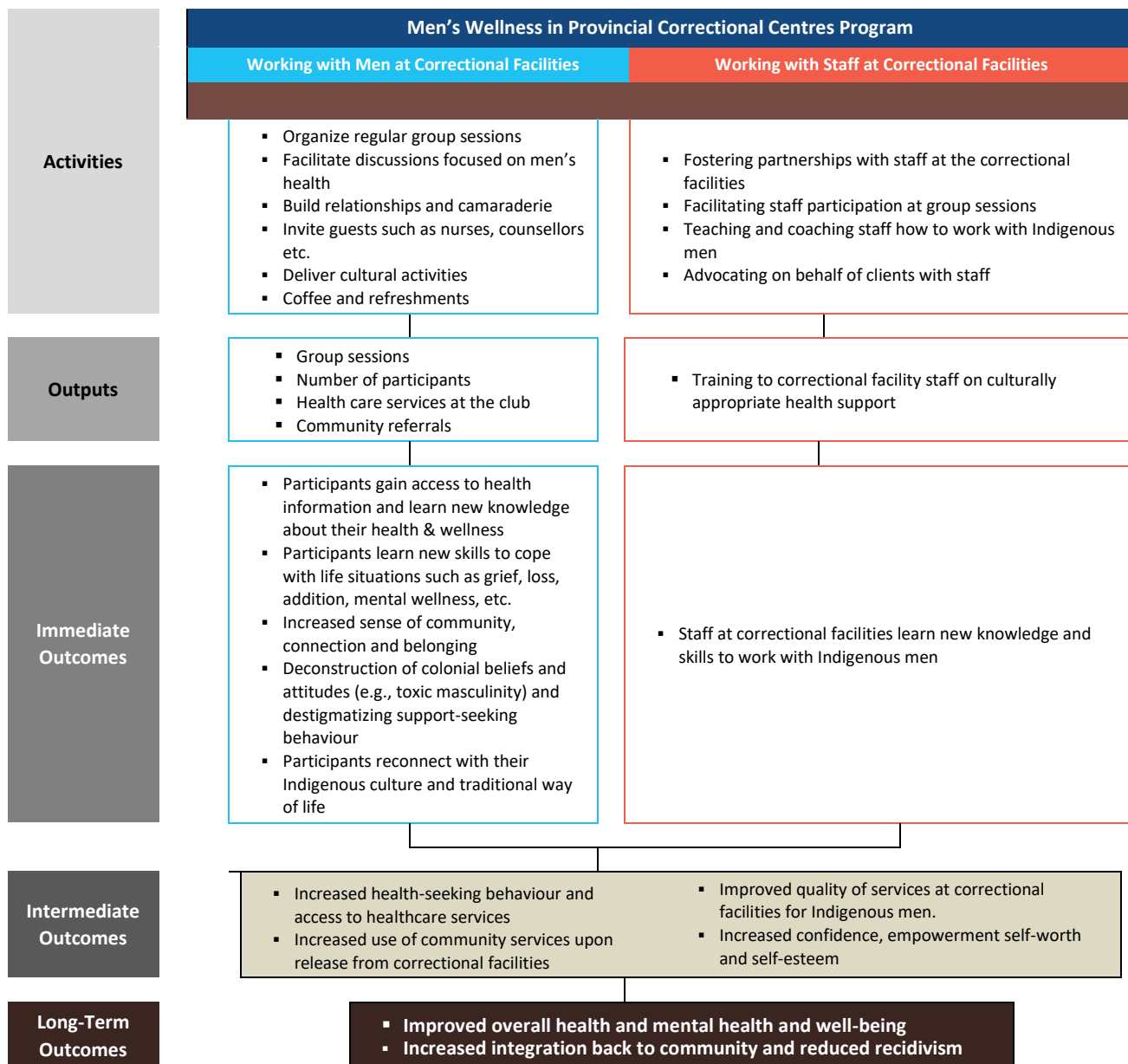
The Men's Wellness in Provincial Correctional Centres Program was started in 2019 with an objective of implementing the DUDES Club program model at the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC). As part of a program, a First Nations Elder was trained and supported by the DUDES Club to organize men's group sessions for incarcerated Indigenous men at PGRCC. From January 2019 to December 2019, the sessions were organized twice per month with a focus on creating a safe environment for incarcerated men at PGRCC to discuss issues related to family, culture, and recovery. The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) provided a total \$14,910 to fund the activities of the program during the 12-month period. An amendment to the agreement was made in October 2019, to extend the activities of the program for additional 15-months period from January 2020 to March 31, 2021. To support the activities of the program, PHSA committed additional funds later, which helped to further expand the program activities to Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC) or at Nanaimo Correctional Centre (NCC).

The program takes a very flexible approach in delivering its services at the correctional facilities. In particular, to engage clients in the program activities, a representative of the program (an Indigenous Elder) approaches different units within each correctional facility, introduces himself, shares about his background and indicates that he works for an Indigenous organization and not for the correctional facility. He then offers men the opportunity to join/organize discussion groups focused on men's health. Members of the units make a decision to participate in the group discussions or not.

Each session is attended by six to eight men and lasts from between one to two hours. Discussions start with a prayer and smudging, followed by check-ins during which participants introduce themselves and describe their health background and challenges. Based on need and the desire of the participants, sessions may also be attended by a nurse and/or mental health counsellor employed by the provincial health authority. Refreshments and coffee are provided. The discussions mostly focus on four aspects of health: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical. During the discussions, the participants may also receive help, advice, suggestions etc. from a nurse or a counsellor based on need and/or issues that come up during sessions. Three sessions are organized in each facility per week, and an estimated 30 individuals attend the sessions each month. During the period of September 2019 to January 2021, an estimated 170 incarcerated men at PGRCC benefited from the sessions organized through the program.

The figure in the following page provides a logic model for the Men's Wellness in Provincial Correctional Centres Program. As demonstrated, in the immediate term the program is expected to provide participants with access to health information and help them learn new knowledge about their health and wellness; teach participants new skills to cope with life situations such as grief, loss, etc.; increase clients' sense of community, connection and belonging; assist with the deconstruction of colonial beliefs and attitudes while destigmatizing support-seeking behaviour; and help participants reconnect with their Indigenous culture and traditional way of life. In addition, in the immediate term, the program helps staff members at correctional facilities learn new knowledge and skills for working with Indigenous men.

Logic Model: Men’s Wellness in Provincial Correctional Centres Program



In the intermediate term, these outcomes result in increased health-seeking behaviour and access to healthcare services among participating men, increased use of community services upon release from correctional facilities and increased confidence, self-esteem among participants. The programming also helps to improve the quality of services at correctional facilities available for Indigenous men. In the long term, the program activities help to improve overall health, mental wellness and well-being of participating men, support their re-integration back to the community and reduce recidivism among program participants.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS

This chapter provides the key findings of the evaluation gathered from all lines of evidence.

3.1 NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

The literature indicates that the Indigenous population in Canada is overrepresented in criminal justice system due to colonial policies, historic and ongoing racism and discrimination, and lack of adequate support and programming.

A review of the literature indicated that:

- *A disproportionately large proportion of incarcerated Canadians have Indigenous background and Indigenous incarceration rates have been increasing over the past decade.* The Indigenous population in Canada is overrepresented at Canada's correctional facilities, which are often described as “the new residential schools.” Indigenous adults and youth and male and female population all experience very high levels of incarceration. Despite representing only 4.5% of the Canadian adult population, in 2018/2019, Indigenous adults accounted for 31% of admissions to provincial/territorial custody and 29% of admissions to federal custody. The same year, Indigenous females accounted for 42% of female custody admissions, while Indigenous males accounted for 28% of male custody admissions. Indigenous youth accounted for 43% of all youth admissions into correctional facilities while representing only 9% of the Canadian youth population.¹ Furthermore, while admissions of white adults to Canadian prisons declined through the last decade, Indigenous incarceration rates have increased. In the ten-year period between March 2009 and March 2018, the Indigenous population at correctional facilities increased by 43% compared to a less than 1% overall growth in the total adult custodial population during the same period.² Indigenous admissions to provincial/territorial correctional services have increased over the past decade, in terms of relative numbers and as a percentage of total admissions.³
- *The ongoing processes of colonialism, systemic interpersonal and internalized racism, and inequitable access to opportunities, which have created socio-economic and health disparities, are root causes affecting how Indigenous people are represented in the Canadian justice system.* There are many layers of historical and contemporary factors at play when it comes to understanding why Indigenous people may be more likely to be criminalized. A review of academic literature indicates that Indigenous peoples and communities historically had strong and rich traditions of land-based health and wellness. Oral history suggests the population was characterized by good health and longevity,

1 Malakieh, J. (2020). Adult and youth correctional statistics in Canada, 2018/2019. Statistics Canada, <https://www.150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14700-eng.htm>

2 Department of Justice (2020) Overrepresentation of Indigenous People in the Canadian Criminal Justice System: Causes and Responses.

3 Ibid.

enhanced by ceremonial and spiritual practices for well-being. Contact with European settlers marked a significant change in BC First Nations socio-economic status and health and wellness. Colonialism and colonial policies devastated First Nations peoples' wellness through forced displacement from their traditional territories and disconnection from cultures, families and communities, ceremonies, languages, knowledge and traditions. Colonial policies and practices of systemic oppression of Indigenous culture, language and traditions, in addition to the impacts of the Indian Residential School system and the "60s scoop," have resulted in intergenerational trauma and marginalization of Indigenous communities, and continue to have major consequences in terms of social, economic and health outcomes today. The over-representation of Indigenous people in the Canadian criminal justice system is just one example. Some of the ongoing factors affecting Indigenous incarceration rates include high prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), issues related to mental health and wellness, higher rates of alcohol and substance abuse, and socio-economic marginalization. For example, the findings in the literature indicate that individuals with FASD are more likely to come in contact with the criminal justice system at a young age, more likely to plead guilty and experience anxiety, and have difficulties understanding the process.⁴ Similarly, inadequate housing, poverty, lack of employment and limited access to services are the major factors contributing to crime and victimization in Indigenous communities.

- *Indigenous people face discriminatory policies and practices within the Canadian criminal justice system and lack a proper support system.* A literature review indicates that there has been an increased recognition of systemic issues and discrimination in Canadian justice system against Indigenous Canadians. The examples of the Canadian policies that disproportionately impact Indigenous communities include the Mandatory Minimum Penalty (MMP) requirement which was expanded in 2008. Since then, the proportion of Indigenous offenders admitted with an offence punishable by MMP has almost doubled, from 14% in 2007/08 to 26% in 2016/17;⁵ and cultural differences between the eurocentric justice system (punitive) and Indigenous RJ (taking responsibility), which results increases the likelihood of Indigenous offenders pleading guilty, although they may not be legally guilty, which is then reflected in the level of crime and incarceration.⁶ The high rate of Indigenous children involved with welfare has been termed by many academics who study it as a "pipeline to prison"⁷ and victimization, human trafficking, susceptibility to involvement in gangs and gun crime. At the correctional institutions Indigenous inmates are disproportionately classified and placed in maximum-security institutions, overrepresented in incidents involving use of force and self-harm, and historically have been more likely to

4 Exploring the Use of Restorative Justice Practices with Adult Offenders with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; Jane Evans and Natacha Bourgon; Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada (2020).

5 DOJ: Bill C-22: Mandatory Minimum Penalties to be Repealed:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-justice/news/2021/02/bill-c-22-mandatory-minimum-penalties-to-be-repealed.html>

6 DOJ Research and Statistics Division (2017) Guilty Pleas Among Indigenous People in Canada, Angela Bressan and Kyle Coady

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/ir/gp-pc/gp-pc.pdf>

7 The Overlap Between the Child Welfare and Youth Criminal Justice Systems: Documenting "Cross-Over Kids" in Manitoba (2020)

be placed in solitary-confinement units.⁸ Furthermore, compared to others in the system, Indigenous offenders serve a higher proportion of their sentences behind bars before they are granted parole, and are returned to custody, at much higher levels.⁹ Indigenous offenders account for a disproportionate number of self-inflicted injuries. While Indigenous offenders comprise about 29% of the overall inmate population, they account for approximately 52% of all incidents of self-injury. Similarly, Indigenous offenders are over-represented in the number of incidents of attempted suicide, accounting for 39% of all such incidents in the last 10 years.¹⁰

Literature review indicates a range of culturally appropriate services delivered at correctional centers, involvement of Elders and spiritual practices along with change in criminal justice system that will account for trauma and effects of colonization may help to address overrepresentation of the Indigenous people among Canadian prison population.

The literature review provided a range of recommendations, best practices and approaches that may help to reduce Indigenous incarceration rates in Canada, ranging from early education (e.g., Aboriginal Head Start program) to incorporation of Indigenous approaches into the Canadian justice system. Some of these recommendations are related to correctional services and how the services delivered within prison can be improved for Indigenous people. As noted in a report by the Correctional Investigator Releases Ivan Zinger, Correctional Service needs to make dramatic changes to stop the revolving door, better prepare Indigenous offenders to meet the earliest parole eligibility dates and more safely return them to their home communities.¹¹ Some of the specific measures recommended by the Correctional Investigator, federal commissions and parliamentary committees have included: transferring of resources and responsibility to Indigenous groups and communities for the care and supervision of Indigenous offenders; ensuring more readily available, culturally relevant correctional programming and a clearer and more robust role for Indigenous Elders in the process.¹² For example, 2018 report by the House of Commons Standing Committees on Public Safety and National Security, made a number of critical recommendations in relation to correctional system, including:¹³

- Increasing the ability of Indigenous inmates to access Healing Lodges, which offer culturally appropriate services and programs to offenders in a way that incorporates Indigenous values, traditions and beliefs.
- Increasing access and availability of culturally-relevant correctional programming for Indigenous peoples.

8 Report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. 2018. Indigenous People in the Federal Correctional System

9 Global News: January 21, 2020. Canada's prison watchdog disturbed by 'Indigenization' of correctional system

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6443752/indigenous-people-canada-prisons-watchdog/>

10 Office of the Correctional Investigator Annual Report 2018-2019

11 Global News: January 21, 2020. Canada's prison watchdog disturbed by 'Indigenization' of correctional system

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6443752/indigenous-people-canada-prisons-watchdog/>

12 Ibid.

13 Report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. 2018. Indigenous People in the Federal Correctional System

- Increasing the number of Indigenous staff and providing training on Gladue and Aboriginal Social History to all staff to increase cultural competence, as well as enhance the relevance and effectiveness of services for Indigenous inmates.
- Improving and increasing engagement with Indigenous communities to provide reintegration services for Indigenous offenders being released back to the community.
- Increasing the availability of appropriate and relevant employment and educational programming and training that is informed by labour market needs.
- Improving screening, assessment and diagnosis of mental health issues, specifically Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
- Providing trauma-informed therapeutic approaches to programming and interventions, particularly for Indigenous women.
- Facilitating access to appropriate identification and health cards to all Indigenous offenders prior to their release.

Key informants noted that there is a strong need for culturally safe programming focused on Indigenous men's health and wellness and building of trust and peer support among incarcerated Indigenous men and the programming and services delivered through the Men's Wellness program is a right response to address this need.

During the interviews, all key informants noted a strong need for services and programming delivered through the DUDES Club at correctional facilities. When asked how much of a need there is for the Men's Wellness program on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is no need at all and 5 is a major need, key informants provided an average rating of 4.8 (n=9) to indicate that the need was a major.

Key informants noted a strong need for a program that supports health, mental resiliency, spirituality and overall well-being among Indigenous men at the correctional facilities. In general, men's mental health is overlooked by the Canadian justice and correctional systems as there are very few effective support programs available. Most of the men at the correctional facilities are disconnected from their families, nations and cultures. They often lack a sense of belonging and often hope for their futures. The culture and mentality at correctional facilities among incarcerated men are often characterized by a defensive, toxic form of masculinity that does not facilitate respectful interaction or the expression of emotions. As a result, many men face challenges in communicating, which creates barriers to their integration back into the community after release. Key informants noted that at some of the correctional facilities where the program operates (e.g., PGRCC), the majority of incarcerated men have an Indigenous background. At the same time, most of the staff are not Indigenous and lack proper cultural safety and humility training. As a result, these incarcerated men do not feel comfortable accessing many of the health services delivered at the facilities. These facilities generally lack holistic health services that incorporate Indigenous ways of healing. Most men at the correctional facilities have gone through significant personal or intergenerational trauma, leading to violent behaviour, destructive relationships and substance abuse. Therefore, a focus on connecting with Indigenous culture and traditions is a valuable tool for many Indigenous men to build self-esteem and develop mental and emotional resilience.

Key informants noted that the program has been very successful in meeting the needs of

participating individuals. The program targets a combination of critical unmet needs, including creating a safe space for discussions, a focus on health and wellness, and building a trust and peer support. Therefore, the program has been received exceedingly well among participating individuals, particularly at the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC), where the wellness program has been delivered since 2019. The demand for the program has been strong and steadily increasing. According to program staff members, most of those who attend the program once tend to return to take part in the activities again. Delivery of the program at the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC) and at the Nanaimo Correctional Center (NCC) started recently during the COVID-19 pandemic. These programs were delivered online, affecting attendance and interest. Nevertheless, participation rates have been steady and increasing in these two facilities. As COVID-19 cases are declining and the vaccination rates increasing, plans are underway to transition program activities to be delivered in-person.

According to key informants, the program has been particularly effective in addressing the needs of marginalized men with complex needs. Men who do not know how to articulate their needs, who do not feel they are welcomed at clinics, and who have the most significant trauma and stigma tend to benefit the most from the activities of the program. The program supports these men by bringing services to them, helping them connect directly with health services that exist in correctional centers and build trust and a sense of belonging with their peers.

However, key informants also noted that the need among Indigenous men for health and mental services is much greater than what the program can offer. With limited resources and staffing, the program has been only able to meet a portion of the need. For example, some of the facilities where the program operates have 150 to 200 men, and the program has allocated only one part-time staff member to organize several group sessions per week. As a result, each participant can attend one or maximum two group sessions per months, which is insufficient to address some of the complex trauma that many participants experience. According to key informants, the program needs at least two full-time and dedicated staff at each facility and needs to be delivered through a combination of in-person and group sessions in order to have a significant impact on participants.

3.2 SUCCESS IN PRODUCING OUTCOMES

Over the 28-months period covered under this evaluation, the program has served a large group of participants from three different correctional facilities. The number of sessions organized in each facility and the total number of participants have increased steadily.

The program delivery was started in May 2019 at the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (PGRCC) and in January 2021 it was expanded to other two facilities: Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC) and Nanaimo Correctional Center (NCC). Over the two-and-half-year period under review, from May 2019 to August 2021, a total 145 group sessions have been organized by the program at three correctional facilities. In addition, attempts were made to organize eight more sessions. However, due to various reasons (COVID, lockdown, etc.) these sessions were canceled. Of the 145 sessions, participant data was available for 139

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sessions. A total 649 participants¹⁴ attended these 145 sessions.

The number of sessions organized and the participation at these sessions have been increasing steadily. In particular, in 2019, a total of ten sessions were organized in PGRCC which were attended by 101 participants. The following year, in 2020, despite the effects of pandemic, the total number of sessions at PGRCC increased to 38 (more than a threefold increase), which was attended by a total 178 participants. In 2021, a total 68 sessions were organized at the same institution, 18 sessions were organized at VIRCC and 10 sessions were organized at NCC. These sessions, in 2021, were attended by a total of 468 participants.

Participation Between 2019-2021 in Each Facility

Facility	2019		2020		2021		Total	
	# of sessions	# of participants	# of sessions	# of participants	# of sessions	# of participants	# of sessions	# of participants
PGRCC	11	101	38	178	68	370	117	649
VIRCC	0	0	0	0	18	55	18	55
NCC	0	0	0	0	10	43	10	43
Total	11	101	38	178	96	468	145	747

Each session was attended by an average six participants and lasted for about 1.5 hours. The sessions and discussions were attended by a large group of individuals representing a diverse group of First Nations communities across BC.

As demonstrated in the following table, the average size of the sessions organized has varied across correctional facilities. In particular, while an average of four individuals attended each session organized at VIRCC, an average of six individuals attended each session organized at PGRCC and an average of five attended sessions organized at NCC. The duration of each session has been somewhat consistent across facilities as each session lasted an average 1.5 hours. Data on the First Nations status and identity of participants were available for only 21 sessions. According to the data, these 21 sessions were attended by First Nations individuals representing over 61 First Nations communities across BC.

Size of Sessions by Facility

Facility	Total # of sessions	Size of each session (average # of participant)	Average Duration (hours)	# of communities
PGRCC	117	6.1	1:28	59
VIRCC	18	3.9	1:34	2
NCC	10	4.7	1:22	0
Total	145	5.7	1:28	61

¹⁴ The number reflects participation rather than participants (i.e., individuals). The program collects and reports attendee numbers for each session only and does not track specific names of individuals attending each session.

The sessions organized through the program involved a number of cultural activities and covered a diverse range of health subjects that are critical to men’s health. About one-third of the sessions also included guest speakers.

As demonstrated in the following table, most groups sessions organized by the program included cultural activities such as smudges (85%), talking circles (44%), and other aspects of Indigenous perspectives on health (41%).

Types of Cultural Activities Implemented

Cultural Activities	% of all Sessions (n=145)
Smudge	85%
Talking Circle	44%
Health Topic (e.g., Emotional Health, Spiritual health, etc.)	41%
Introduction to DUDES Club	12%
Group Discussion	8%

Each group session also focused on one or several health topics. As demonstrated in the following table, most common health issues covered during the discussions included emotional health such as dealing with grief and loss, mental health including methods to deal with depression and suicide, and spiritual health focused on building spiritual resilience. Other subjects covered during the discussions included STIs, COVID-19 vaccination, bowel movements, diabetes, physician health, prostate, etc.

Health Topics Discussed During Sessions

Health Topics	% All Sessions (n=145)
Emotional Health (Grief and Loss)	17%
Mental Health (Depression, Suicide)	16%
Spiritual health	15%
STI's (HIV, Hepatitis C)	8%
COVID-19 Vaccination	8%
Bowel Movements (Colonoscopy)	7%
Diabetes	4%
Physical Health	4%
Prostate Health	4%
Testicle Health (Testicle Cancer, Self exam)	3%
Blood Pressure	3%
Cholesterol	3%
Testosterone	1%
Different Topics on Health	1%
Total	100%

About one-fifth (23%) of the sessions also included guest speakers such as nurses, mental health workers, Elders, spiritual leaders and other health specialists and/or traditional healers.

Percentage of Sessions that Included Guest

Sessions	# of Sessions	% of All Sessions
Sessions included guest	34	23%
Sessions did not include Guest	93	64%
Unknown	18	12%
Total	145	100%

Program participants report attending group sessions organized by the program regularly and participating in a range of discussions related to their health and wellness. The participants report a high degree of satisfaction with the sessions that they attended because the sessions created a safe environment for discussions and covered important topics related to men’s health and well-being.

Of the 17 program participants who completed the survey, all indicated that they have been attending the group sessions organized through the program either regularly (65%) or often (35%). As demonstrated in the following table, all survey participants recalled attending group discussions focused on men’s health and traditional wellness activities such as spiritual wellness, prayers and smudges. In addition, 88% indicated participating in the activities related to cultural learning and connections, 82% reported attending mental health and wellness support, and 53% recalled receiving advice from a nurse or a doctor during the sessions.

Types of Sessions Attended by Program Participants

<i>Do you remember attending?</i>	# of Survey Participants	% of Survey Participants
Group discussions focused on men’s health?	17	100%
Traditional wellness activities (e.g., spiritual wellness, prayers, smudges, drumming, singing, etc.)?	17	100%
Cultural learning and connections?	15	88%
Mental health support?	14	82%
Information or advice from nurse or a doctor?	9	53%
Total	17	100%

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the activities and programming attended, using a scale 1 to 5, where 1 is not satisfied at all, 3 is somewhat satisfied and 5 is very satisfied, the program participants provided an average rating of 4.4 (n=16) to indicate a high level of satisfaction. The participants also provided an average rating of 4.9 (n=16), where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, to indicate that they would recommend the activities and programming delivered through DUDES Club to other men. Participants noted that they found the sessions to be a safe place to discuss their problems and attendees be respectful towards each others’ opinions. The facilitators hired by DUDES Club to run the discussions have the necessary skills, background and qualities to relate to participants, engage with them and create conditions for respectful discussions. The participants found traditional wellness activities particularly useful because it helps them to connect with Indigenous traditions and culture. Several participants also noted that they found health topics covered during the discussions very

interesting to them because they rarely get a chance to talk about their health with other men.

Survey participants and key informants reported a range of impacts on participants’ health and well-being in terms of connection to First Nations culture, improved confidence, sense of connection and belonging, improved mental wellness and access to health services.

During the survey and interviews, participants were asked to report impacts of the program on their own health and wellness using a scale 1 to 5, where 1 is no impact at all in that area, 3 is somewhat of an impact, and 5 is a major impact. As demonstrated in the following table, both key informants and survey respondents provided average ratings from 3.9 to 4.7 to indicate that the program has been successful (or very successful) in terms of helping participants to reconnect with their Indigenous culture and traditional way of life; increasing participants’ confidence, empowerment, self-worth and self-esteem; increasing their sense of community, connection and belonging; helping participants gain access to health information and learn new knowledge about their health and wellness; increasing participants’ skills to cope with life situations such as grief, loss, addiction and mental wellness; improving participants’ overall health and well-being; increasing health-seeking behaviour and/or access to health services; increased trust in other people among participants; increasing participants’ integration back into their communities and reducing recidivism; deconstructing colonial beliefs and attitudes (e.g., toxic masculinity) and increasing participants’ use of community services upon release from correctional facilities.

Impacts of the Program on Participants

<i>To what extent do you believe that participating in DUDES Club’s group sessions has had an impact in terms of: (On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is no impact at all in that area, 3 is somewhat of an impact, and 5 is a major impact)</i>	Survey Participants (n=17)	Key Informants (n=9)
Helping participants to reconnect with their Indigenous culture and traditional way of life?	4.6	4.2
Increasing confidence, empowerment, self-worth and self-esteem?	4.5	4.6
Increasing sense of community, connection and belonging?	4.5	4.8
Helping participants gain access to health information and learn new knowledge about their health & wellness?	4.2	4.6
Increasing participants’ skills to cope with life situations such as grief, loss, addiction, mental wellness, etc. ?	4.1	4.4
Improving overall health, mental health and well-being?	4.0	4.6
Increasing health-seeking behaviour and access to healthcare services?	3.9	4.2
Increased your trust in other people?	3.9	-
Increasing integration back to community and reducing recidivism?	-	4.8
Deconstructing colonial beliefs and attitudes (e.g., toxic masculinity) and destigmatizing support-seeking behaviour?	-	4.7
Increasing use of community services upon release from correctional facilities?	-	4.3

In their responses, key informants and current and past participants of the program provided many examples and justification of how the program has helped to generate these impacts. These responses are summarized as follows:

- *Connecting with Indigenous culture and traditional way of life.* Key informants noted that many Indigenous men who end up in correctional facilities are missing strong connection to their culture and traditional way of life. The program helps them to connect with their Indigenous culture and spirituality. The sessions organized through the program often are opened with prayer, and include cultural activities such as drumming, spiritual wellness, smudges and singing. Connection with culture and traditions contributes to the development of strong identify, pride and self-esteem, improving mental and emotional health and resilience.
- *Building trust, increasing sense of community, connection and belonging.* Key informants and program participants noted that most of those who attend the group sessions several times 'open up' and start talking about their issues and problems. The open conversations conducted in confidential space eventually leads to development of solidarity and trust among participants. Program staff members noted that even the men who experience outbursts or uncontrolled behaviour (which happens rarely) during sessions are invited to attend the session the next time without incurring judgement or condemnation. Many program participants noted that the group discussions often are the only opportunity that they get to go out of the unit and have peaceful and non-judgemental conversation with peers. Discussions help the men to connect with each other and develop camaraderie, leading to improved relationships. The connections built during the discussions and ceremonies help participants to build greater sense of belonging. During interviews one participant noted how sharing of similar experiences during discussions have helped the participants to connect: *"I did not know people there until the DUDES Club came. I used to know the people but hearing their stories and what they are going through, I realized they were going through exactly what I was going through and I made a better connection with them."* Another participant shared a similar experience of being able to develop deeper connection with others who participated in the same group discussions: *"After we done talking, no one would talk about what we talked during groups with others. We only talked among themselves because we were connected during those discussions. We would not share with others who did not go to meetings because they would not understand what we went through."* Members of the prison staff agreed that the concepts of brotherhood and peer support mechanisms implemented by the program have worked effectively in bringing together individuals from different units (who normally do not get together) to communicate in a safe and respectful environment.
- *Helping participants learn new knowledge about their health & wellness.* According to key informants and survey participants, the program has been very successful in engaging participants and communicating key health messages that are most comfortable and relevant to them. The facilitators selected by the DUDES Club are highly skilled, have backgrounds that participants can relate to, and are able to communicate in a way that the participants listen to. For example, most messages are delivered in the form of stories (e.g., personal or stories about other people) that participants can relate to. Many discussions cover the stories of childhood abuse, racism and discrimination, personal challenges and struggle for survival that are familiar to participants. The discussions often lead to finding opportunities to learn and grow from such experiences and build up the

resilience necessary to make the healing journey. Engaging stories, role modelling, and the basic and simple language used during discussions have greatly contributed to learning.

- *Increasing participants' skills to cope with life situations such as grief, loss, addiction, mental wellness, etc.* Key informants noted that the sessions help participants learn new skills to deal with their anger and frustration and to help regulate their emotions. Staff members at the correctional facilities reported that they felt discussions made participants "much calmer." Program participants noted that they learned how to "accept the things that they can not change" and that connections built during sessions helped them get through difficult times. Key informants noted that most topics of discussions focus on spiritual aspects of wellness and create a confidential and shared emotional space for discussion and healing. By talking about stories of their own (or other people's) past, the facilitators help participants recognize their life experience and trauma and appreciate how trauma has affected some of the decisions that they have made in their lives. This creates more recognition and acceptance. For example, one participant noted how recognizing the reasons for his anger helped him to regulate his emotions: "A lot of my anger streams through my loss of mom and end of the relationship with the girlfriend of ten years. Talking about it really helped me." Another participant was able to overcome suicidal tendencies based on advice from a unit mate with whom he was able to connect during the sessions: "I was feeling very depressed and sad, and I was thinking about suicide because I did not want to stay there for three years. Then a guy in my unit recommended I write to my family and I did and it really helped. I started feeling better. He would not have given me that advice if we did not attend the groups together. I ended up staying inside only eight months."
- *Increasing health-seeking behaviour and access to healthcare services.* Survey participants and key informants, particularly those who have attended the program in the past, noted that often it is difficult to get the attention of nurses or doctors at correctional facilities due to their busy schedules. Indigenous men face additional challenges in accessing health services at correctional facilities due to cultural barriers. Many men do not feel safe in approaching health staff or attending clinics as the services often are not culturally safe. By bringing nurses or doctors into the group discussions, the program provides direct access to health professionals (e.g., nurses, doctors, mental health workers, etc.). During these discussions, participants are able to ask their specific questions and find answers directly from health specialists. Following such sessions, men often feel more confident to approach health staff outside of the group discussions. According to participants, even when the nurses or doctors do not attend the sessions, the facilitators have been very effective with communicating participants' needs to health staff and advocating on their behalf to ensure they receive necessary attention and services later. There is an early indication that change in attitudes may influence support-seeking behaviour among participants after they are released from the correctional facilities. Of the two former participants interviewed, one mentioned that since his release from the facility he pays more attention to problems with his health and is willing to meet with a doctor. As he noted: "[...] it made me want to work [on] things that [are] going on with me. I made a doctor's appointment since I was released and trying to get things fixed." The same

individual also taken part in DUDES Club activities and programming since his release from the correctional facility.

- Deconstructing of colonial beliefs and attitudes (e.g. toxic masculinity) and destigmatizing support-seeking behaviour.* Program participants noted that at correctional facilities, showing emotions or talking about problems is uncommon among incarcerated men because often it is considered a sign of weakness. The program has been able to change that, at least in part, by creating a safe space for men to sit together, discuss emotions and problems, and learn new knowledge and skills about health and wellness. During surveys and interviews, program participants provided a range of examples of how participating in the program has helped them to change their attitudes towards toxic masculinity and start paying attention to and recognizing problems with their health and wellness. As noted by one participant: *“I learned patience! I learned it is ok to talk about my health...Man does not speak about their health and I never did. During meetings I learned that instead of saying that I am a dude and did not need worry about it, I can ask simple questions. And that was helpful.”* As noted by another participant: *“DUDES Club helps me every time I attend the sessions because I start feeling comfortable talking about my health.”*
- Increasing integration back to community and reducing recidivism.* Key informants noted that there is a clear link between mental health, sense of belonging, community connections and recidivism. Those who have mental health problems and/or feel disconnected from their communities often are more likely to reoffend. Therefore, the efforts of the program to create sense of community and build trust, connection and belonging contributes to the integration of participants into their communities. The program encourages participants to contact the local DUDES Club in their communities after release and continue their participation in the activities. Those who join to a club after the release are provided with more emotional and peer support as well as connections to resources in their communities. As part of the evaluation, we were able to interview two program participants who were connected with a DUDES Club after release from their respective correctional facilities. One of the participants acknowledged he joined a club after release based on a recommendation from a facilitator: *“[The facilitator] told me to take programs when I get out of the jail and offer us programs to stay in touch, and I did”* However, key informants also noted that claims about the impacts of the program in reducing recidivism are anecdotal. The program lacks resources to track data on participants after they have been released from correctional facilities, and thus the impact in this area is mostly unclear.

According to key informants, the program has also had an impact on the staff members at correctional facilities, increasing their skills and capabilities to work with the Indigenous men.

Members of the DUDES Club involved in the delivery of the Men’s Wellness Program coordinate their activities closely with staff at correctional facilities. In particular, doctors, nurses and mental health workers attend group sessions regularly and communicate regarding the health and wellness of the participants. Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALOs) assist the program with organizing group discussions. Further, Aboriginal Liaison Officers attend sessions, provide logistical support, and closely coordinate programs and services. The members of the Club also

provide regular communication and detailed information to staff regarding the program's activities, methodology and philosophy of working with Indigenous men. During interviews, several staff members at one of the correctional facility noted that these interactions with the Club have helped the staff to improve their skills in working with Indigenous men. Some of the learnings noted during interviews included addressing stereotypes, understanding trauma and its effect on behaviour of individuals, empowerment and belief in positive change. Staff noted that when they see positive changes in men's attitudes and behaviour, they develop more appreciation for the program and are more willing to work with the DUDES Club. Staff members of the DUDES Club also noted that in general the staff at the correctional facilities are willing to learn and accept new ways of doing things.

3.3 DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Key informants and survey participants provided a variety of suggestions for the DUDES Club to enhance its activities in correctional facilities.

While most participants were very satisfied with the design and delivery of the Men's Wellness Program, they also provided a range of recommendations and suggestions as to how the activities of the program could be improved. These suggestions and recommendations are summarized as follows:

- *Increase the number of sessions organized in each correctional facility and to ensure adequate coverage for those who are interested to participate.* Key informants noted that one part-time facilitator organizing several group sessions per week is not nearly sufficient to address the existing needs. Currently, each participant is able to attend a session once per month or once every three weeks. The men who attend the group sessions have complex needs and as such they need more extensive support and services. The frequency of the sessions is one of the most important aspects affecting the impact of the program on participating individuals. Participating in regular sessions over longer periods of time helps men 'open up,' build trust and take positive steps in improving their health and wellness. Key informants noted that for the most effective results, participants need to attend weekly or bi-weekly gatherings, a target which has been a challenge for the program to meet.
- *Expand the program to more correctional facilities.* According to key informants, there is a great need for the types of services the program provides. Key informants also state the program is effective in producing impacts and is generating good value for the resources. Therefore, there is a need to expand the program to more correctional facilities across BC.
- *Ensure discussion groups are delivered in-person for the most effective results.* Key informants noted that in-person gatherings are the most effective and once COVID-19 restrictions are alleviated, the program needs to ensure services are delivered in-person at Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC) and at Nanaimo Correctional Center (NCC).

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- *Deliver one-to-one sessions.* Several staff members at the correctional facilities noted that some men with complex needs may benefit from individual time with facilitators/Elders.
- *Improve program records and documentation.* Key informants noted that the program employs skilled facilitators who are able to deliver effective services and programming. In order to be able to expand the program to more service locations and ensure sustainability, there is a need to improve program documentation. In particular, program needs to develop training manual and curriculum for facilitators, and guidelines for new staff to follow.
- *Invite more guest speakers.* Key informants noted that guest speakers are usually welcomed by participants and help to bring new perspectives and ideas into the discussions. Key informants would like to see more Elders, Healers, Knowledge Keepers and other health professionals to attend the group discussions.
- *Create a system for connecting with Indigenous men after their release from the correctional facilities.* According to key informants, the DUDES Club lacks a system to know when program participants leave correctional facilities, and lacks ways to connect with participants post-release. Most connections are made through informal networks and/or the participants' own initiatives. According to key informants, the program needs to find ways to better coordinate activities with the Provincial Health Services Authority and correctional services so it can connect with participants after the release and involve them in DUDES Club in their communities.
- *Continue keeping the size of group discussions small.* According to key informants, the program has managed to maintain the size of each in-person group discussion relatively small with an average of six persons, which has contributed to success. It is easier for facilitators to manage small groups and ensure everyone is provided an adequate opportunity to speak. This helps facilitators avoid situations where the group is monopolized by one or two more active individuals.
- *Provide food and refreshments more often during sessions.* Key informants noted that due to internal rules at the correctional facilities, the program is limited in its ability to provide refreshments, snacks and meals during the sessions. According to key informants, providing refreshments has cultural significance, improves attendance, helps men better connect during sessions and contributes to the overall success of the initiative.

Key informants also noted a number of other recommendations that are directed at correctional facilities but can nonetheless affect program design and delivery. These recommendations include:

- *Allocate more resources and time for training of staff at the correctional facilities.* Key informants noted that building capacity of staff members working at correctional facilities is mostly outside of the program scope. Nevertheless, potential benefits can be gained from advocating to ensure correctional facilities deliver training on historical and intergenerational trauma, the effects of colonization on Indigenous Canadians as well as cultural safety and humility.

- *Provide more support for DUDES Club facilitators.* Key informants noted that correctional facilities need to provide more and consistent support (e.g., logistical support for organizing discussion such as meeting spaces, timely organization, etc.) and more active participation of correctional facility staff in the activities of the program. For example, more willingness of health staff to attend group sessions can improve the effectiveness of the program.
- *Reduce staff turnover at the correctional facilities.* Key informants noted high staff turnover at the correctional facilities, which affects the effectiveness of the program. Turnover requires the allocation of more resources to build relationships with new staff and train them on program activities, as well as to obtain their buy-in and participation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides the key conclusions arising from the evaluation of the Men's Wellness in Provincial Correctional Centres Program implemented by the DUDES Club.

1. There is major and continued need for the services and programming delivered through Men's Wellness in Provincial Correctional Centres Program.

A review of the relevant literature combined with results of the key informant interviews demonstrates that Canadian Indigenous population is overrepresented in the criminal justice system due to colonial policies, historic and ongoing racism and discrimination, and a lack of adequate support and programming. Indigenous incarceration rates are disproportionately high compared to the general population and these rates are increasing both in terms of relative numbers and as a percentage of total admissions. According to key informants and the findings of the literature, there is a strong need for continuous culturally-relevant mental health programming for Indigenous peoples at correctional facilities as well as services supporting reintegration of Indigenous offenders back into the community. DUDES Club's focus on men's health and wellness at correctional facilities and its support for Indigenous men seeking to reintegrate in their communities after release are critical in addressing some of these unmet needs.

2. The program has delivered increasing number of group sessions at three different correctional facilities, and served a large number of clients who report a high degree of satisfaction with the services.

Over the two-and-half-year period covered by this evaluation, the program has organized 145 group sessions at three different correctional facilities, which were attended by a large number of participants. The number of sessions organized and the participation rates at these sessions have been increasing steadily. Each session was attended by an average of six participants, lasted for about 1.5 hours, and covered a wide range of cultural activities and health subjects such as emotional health, depression and suicide, and spiritual resilience. About half of the sessions are attended by guests such as doctors, nurses, mental health workers and Elders. The participants report a high degree of satisfaction with the services that they received (an average rating of 4.4 on a scale 1 to 5, where 1 is not satisfied at all and 5 is very satisfied); participants say they would recommend the activities and programming to others (an average rating of 4.9 on a scale 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree). The program has created a safe space for respectful discussions among participants and the facilitators have necessary skills and qualifications to lead the discussion.

3. The activities and programming delivered through the Men's Wellness Program has been effective in generating a number of outcomes among participating men and staff members at the correctional facilities.

Program participants and key informants indicated that the program has been successful

in generating a range of impacts in terms of the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of participants. In particular, both key informants and survey respondents indicated the program has been successful in helping participants reconnect with their Indigenous culture and traditional way of life; increasing participants' confidence, empowerment, self-worth and self-esteem; increasing their sense of community, connection and belonging; helping participants gain access to health information and learn new knowledge about their health and wellness; increasing participants' skills to cope with life situations such as grief, loss, addiction and mental wellness; improving participants' overall health and well-being; increasing health-seeking behaviour and/or access to health services among participants; increased trust in other people; increasing the integration of participants back to their communities; reducing recidivism; deconstructing of colonial beliefs and attitudes (e.g., toxic forms of masculinity); and increasing participants' use of community services upon their release from correctional facilities. According to key informants, peaceful and non-judgemental conversations with peers organized through the program often lead to development of trust, camaraderie, and a greater sense of belonging. Engaging stories, role modelling, and basic and simple language often help participants learn new skills in dealing with their anger and frustration, helping them regulate their emotions. The presence of nurses and health professionals at sessions promotes easy access to health services and helps to bring down existing cultural barriers between Indigenous men and health staff at the centres. Some program participants also join the local DUDES Club in their communities upon release, where they are provided with more services that contribute to their reintegration in community. According to key informants, the activities of the program also help staff members at the correctional facilities improve their skills in working with Indigenous (e.g., addressing stereotypes, understanding trauma and its effect on individual behaviour, etc.).

4. There are many opportunities to improve the design and delivery of the program.

Key informants and survey participants provided a variety of recommendations to improve DUDES Club activities and programming at correctional facilities. These recommendations included increasing the frequency of sessions delivered at each facility to provide adequate coverage for those interested to participate; expanding the program to other correctional facilities; including one-to-one sessions for those with complex needs; keeping the size of groups small; placing more focus on in-person delivery (vs. online delivery); providing food and refreshments during sessions; including more guest speakers; improving program records and documentation; and creating a better systems to connect with Indigenous men after their release from correctional facilities. Key informants also provided recommendations to correctional facilities to improve the skills and competencies of staff in delivering culturally safe services, working closely with and providing more support for DUDES Club facilitators, and addressing high staff turnover.