

INDIGENOUS REVIEW



OVERVIEW

Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary adapted our structural approaches to programming and case management in 2014 to utilize Indigenous culture and spirituality for women on their path to healing. The UWAY of Calgary assisted EFry in 2016 with the opportunity to review our programming to identify the quality of our services and structures to establish recommendations to continue to improve how we integrate culture and spirituality into our day to day work as a non-indigenous agency.

PURPOSE

Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary strives to ensure the agency increases the level of support for Indigenous peoples through genuine cultural perspectives that is focused on healing and wellness.

METHODOLOGY

EFry hired a consultant with traditional perspective from the Blackfoot community. She attended programming, and services. An oral report was brought back to EFry, and her findings were taken to an Elder's advisory council to have them review her findings and provide recommendations that reflected a cultural perspective and lens.

Review conducted by Monica Chiefmoon

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Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary

PART I

REVIEW OF PROGRAMS

PRISON COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Case Management supports on the whole have a focus on culture. Referrals are provided to help women integrate into their communities with better success. Services are provided to women who are experiencing or have had experiences of incarceration, but also to women who are at risk of criminalization.



PRISON

In the Remand centre, women were eager to engage in Indigenous programming. In particular, the programming was more meaningful as those that were more serious about connecting culturally participated more sincerely in these programs than in life skills programming. In providing language programs in Remand women were able to learn basic conversational Blackfoot including greetings, learning their “traditional name” and the Blackfoot prayer. Learning the language had positive effects as many of the women indicated that they did not know their language and in many cases acknowledged a disconnect from their culture.

The challenge with Remand is that there is often a shift of women as they may be incarcerated for a few days up to a few months, however there is no prior indication if or when the women will be released. The women are usually waiting for their court dates, bail, or in some cases are doing short ‘bits’ to address a short sentence or fines. In other cases, women are waiting in Remand to be transferred to a provincial or federal institution to start their time after sentencing. As a result, this population is quite transient, which means the time available to work directly with them needs to be sufficiently meaningful if there is going to be opportunity to engage them outside the institution.

Indigenous programming is an opportunity to connect to women to influence interest to connect with EFry upon their release to have access to ceremony and longerterm connections to the culture and spirituality. Providing spirituality in the institutions is necessary as this is often the first place where Indigenous peoples gain access to culture. Many have been disenfranchised from the culture through generational institutionalization resulting from the residential schools and the foster care systems. Gaining access to engage in ceremony and cultural activities will help them to reconnect to who they are as Indigenous people and regain identity.

The talking circles seemed to be beneficial to the women who connected well to the Elder. The difficulty with the talking circle was that there is limited time for the women to attend and quite naturally women become emotional when participating. Women are seeking opportunity to open up and, in some cases, there was not enough time for the women to debrief before the guards returned them to their unit. Opening up is difficult in this setting and the time it takes for women to begin to feel comfortable to share more personally, the time is over. This could leave women more vulnerable without proper assistance.

Remand imposes a number of restrictions that impeded opportunity for cultural programming including restrictions on smudging, inability to attend a sweatlodge or having access to sacred areas that might offer more support towards integrating more effectively culture and spirituality. Additionally, limitations to smudging are another concern, as having access to medicines is a powerful way to engage women on their healing journey.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEWER

- Provide opportunity for the Elder to engage in one-on-one meetings prior to the talking circle, and options to return to the unit after the talking circle in order to debrief with any of the women that require more support.
- Negotiate with Remand around allowing more opportunities for the women to smudge in the institution and implement more Indigenous programming.
- Increase options for the women to engage with Elders from different Nations to increase connections for women who may not be from the territory or who are not Blackfoot.
- Implement symbolism through use of a feather or talking stick or rock to engage women with the ability to understand the concepts of listening as well as talking. Women will learn as much from each other and heal through their own contributions.
- Focus on the core issues that result in addiction
- Need access to smudge- the women are asking for this and could benefit from this access.



ONE OF THE GIRLS SAID SHE HAS NEVER EVER FELT SO A PART OF SOMETHING EVEN HAVING BEEN BROUGHT UP IN THE CHURCH. WITH THE FIRST NATIONS SPIRITUALITY, IT'S EVERY DAY, NOT JUST ON SUNDAYS. AND IT'S EVERYWHERE YOU ARE. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE THE SMUDGE OR THE SWEET GRASS/ SAGE YET. AND I SAID YOU DON'T HAVE TO. AND THIS IS WHAT I TELL THEM, YOU CAN STILL KEEP YOUR RELIGION AND BE SPIRITUAL. IT'S A WAY OF LIFE. THIS IS WHAT HAS KEPT US GOING. THAT'S HOW WE LEARNED TO PRAY."

Monica Chiefmoon



COMMUNITY AND OUTREACH

It is more difficult to connect women once they have been released from Remand, especially if they are returned back into the shelter system and are unable to get into treatment or sustainable housing upon their release. Women leaving Lethbridge Correctional are easier to connect to services as they are more likely to have engaged in EFry services for longer periods of time, as well as attending school, training or life skills during their incarceration. Remanded women are less likely to connect upon release if they have not been there for any significant time to commence meaningful services. Therefore, it is important that women have built a strong enough relationship with the case manager during their remanded period and have a motivation to continue to engage in supports to help them out of the experiences that lead them back into the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEWER

- Services need to be delivered by those that are Indigenous or those that have lots of experience in working with Indigenous peoples.
- Case workers with strong cultural perspectives are imperative to ensuring that the cultural nuances of the women served are understood and met.
- The women need to be connected to culture not only through programming, but having access to the Indigenous community will reconnect them to their people



INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SUPPORTS

Indigenous Cultural Supports are not a program, but a philosophy of the agency that contributes to all aspects of the programs and services provided at Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary. Programs are provided that support women in a variety of ways that not only contributes to access, but increasing cultural identity and a sense of belonging. EFry's cultural supports include connection to language, ceremonies and activities that ignite cultural awareness through teachings and building community.

In addition, cultural supports are provided to staff to increase their awareness of traditional values, historical context to intergenerational trauma, and participation in cultural activities and ceremonies. Staff also have access to Elder supports and may participate in programming as volunteer supporters. Indigenous staff are supported to remain on the healing path, while non-Indigenous staff build an ability to have understanding and compassion in working with their clients that are Indigenous.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEWER

- Increase accessibility to culture from prison to the community
- Consistency of cultural connections are important for women to support them on their healing journey. Therefore, what is in the community should be replicated of what is being supported in the prisons and what is supported in the prisons should be provided in the community.
- Land based teachings are important ways of learning – field trips such as medicine picking or going to spiritual places to learn and do ceremony
- Ensure that the history is part of the processes and teachings – beading classes are one thing, but ensure that the history is included in understanding why it is cultural.
- Having non-Indigenous women attend programs is important as our culture is inclusive and their participation increases their knowledge base and can change their mind set around the stereotypes that they may have to build better understanding of Indigenous peoples and our issues. In addition, their participation also helps them along their own healing.

“

LIKE WHERE BEADING CAME FROM, LIKE HOW OUR PEOPLE DIDN'T ALWAYS USE BEADS. WE USED PORCUPINE QUILLS AND BONES FROM THE BUFFALO. WE'D SOFTEN THE BONES AND MAKE BEADS OUT OF THEM AND PAINT THEM. SO THAT COMPONENT COULD BE ADDED INTO THAT TO GIVE THAT HISTORY. AND NOT JUST THE BEADING PART, THERE ARE OTHER THINGS. LIKE WHY DO THE BLACKFOOT HAVE THE LITTLE TAIL AT THE BACK OF THEIR MOCCASINS. EVEN THE DESIGNS. WHERE THE METIS USE FLOWER DESIGN AND THE BLACKFOOT USE GEOMETRIC. SO YOU ARE TEACHING THEM AT THE SAME TIME YOU'RE TEACHING THEM ABOUT BEADING.”

Monica Chiefmoon



SAGE

The SAGE program was ending when it was reviewed, however the review of the materials, curriculum and a few visits allowed the reviewer to identify that there is a good opportunity for women to be connected to life and employment skills that have had little exposure to them. The program provides a sense of community that builds a belonging and cultural identity to those who may have not been connected to their culture or have drifted away from their culture due to addiction, homelessness, and trauma. SAGE provides a foundation to learn about themselves and to gain skills that are beneficial and will contribute to improving their lives. The curriculum is cultural, however the consistency of following through by the facilitator needs to be corrected as the use of smudge for example is important to preparing the day and should be used daily including the teachings around it. Most of the women are making their first steps back into society, therefore spirituality helps them to feel a part of something to have access to it everyday and everywhere. They are learning all the time to reconnect back to themselves, their culture and their communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEWER

- Consistency of using the culture – ensure that smudging is occurring daily and that it is accessible to the women when they want to use it.
- Accessibility to more Elders and cultural teachings
- Ensuring that there is a sense of community in the program, particularly for those women who may have done long sentences, they need to know where they fit into the community.
- Continue to integrate cultural life skills into the context of the programming
- Women in SAGE need access to more ceremony in addition to what is being conducted currently – increased access provides balance reflecting the mind, emotions, body and spirit.



COURT PROGRAMS

The Court programs provide legal information and supports to individuals attending first and second appearance docket court in Calgary and the surrounding rural communities of Airdrie, Canmore, Cochrane, Didsbury, and Okotoks. Information provided assists individuals in understanding their charges, their plea options and the resources that they have accessible to them.

There was no specific focus on culture in the programs, although there are ways to increase this potential even in a structured environment such as the court system. The system can also be intimidating to those that are unfamiliar or fearful of the process. Although smudging and other ceremonial elements can't be implemented, things like access to language or Indigenous staff and volunteers available would increase the potential of supports particularly in the rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEWER

- Court Programs tend to lack any sort of cultural influence. This is in part based on the colonial system (Justice), however there are ways to support Indigenous peoples more specifically going through the system. Clear explanations of the charges and further support in assisting them relay their questions and concerns to the justice of the piece. The system is intimidating and therefore decreasing the confusion and stigmas will go along way to assisting Indigenous peoples accessing the court system.
- Being able to provide services in Indigenous languages would assist to help Indigenous peoples with more support in the court system.
- More direct client support is required to contribute to a more individualized and supportive way of assisting through the process better.
- Indigenous court workers with Indigenous language are needed to help the Regional Court areas increase their connection to the people and build a level of trust and comfort with the population to be approachable.
- Rural areas require more assistance with transportation to help those on the Nations get to court. Inability to attend court creates another barrier that could be addressed through consistent access to transportation.



LEGAL ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Several attempts were made by the reviewer to connect with the Legal Advocate to review the program. The busy nature of the role of the Legal Advocate was a barrier, which suggests that the program in itself is inaccessible. As a result, this is the only program that was unable to be reviewed and assessed under the Indigenous review.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEWER

- Accessibility is an issue; the Legal Advocate is too busy to connect and this could be considered the main barrier to Indigenous peoples – if the service is inaccessible to the reviewer then it will be inaccessible to those trying to access the services. Indigenous people trying to access the service will be less likely to connect to the service to be assisted when they have the experience of not being able to reach or access the service with success.
- Further supports for the Legal Advocate or to increase staffing may be necessary.
- Having Indigenous staff in this role may also increase the perception of accessibility.



EVALUATION PROCESSES AND DATA COLLECTION

EFry on the whole has a unique way of collecting data in addition to collecting statistics, they have created tools that reflect cultural perspectives such as the Medicine Wheel Service Plan. This tool is used currently with SAGE and they have begun to use it in case management with Prison, Community Outreach Team. The tool is visual for the clients to see their personal growth, but it is also a tool used to help the case managers guide their work within the case management. For cultural programs, using the medicine wheel is a familiar way of assessing benefit and this fits well to inform funders and the agency around the successes or weaknesses of the programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEWER

- Include oral reports as an option to support ways of knowing and the oral traditions
- Be careful to ensure that data is not collected for the sake of collecting – information should be useful and help the organization make changes that are valuable to informing change and increasing quality of programs
- Use the medicine wheel in more than the cultural programming and the case management teams.

PART II

ELDER AND KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS CIRCLES

ELDERS

Monica Chiefmoon (Reviewer)	Kainai
Dila Provost Houle	Piikani
Michael (Micky) Smith	Piikani
Blandine Bastien	Piikani
Mark Strikes With A Gun	Piikani
Janis Laboucane	Metis
Clarence Wolf Leg Sr.	Siksika
John Chiefmoon Jr.	Kainai



OVERVIEW

Two oral meetings took place. A talking circle was conducted at Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump with 5 Elders, and a breakfast meeting occurred with 2 other Elders separately. Elders came from Morley, Piikani, Siksika, and Kainai (Blood) Nations, and included a Métis Knowledge Keeper. An overview of Monica's findings and recommendations were reviewed and further feedback was given by the Elders.

“

BELIEF SYSTEMS ARE VERY POWERFUL, BUT THEY ARE UNCONSCIOUSLY DOWNLOADED IN THE FIRST 6 YEARS OF LIFE AND AS A PERSON GROWS UP, THESE BELIEFS ARE INCORPORATED MORE AND MORE. CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW MANY NEGATIVE BELIEFS WE PICK UP ON THE RESERVATION? THAT'S HOW DAMAGING IT IS. THAT'S WHY THERE ARE SO MANY SICK PEOPLE - ADDICTIONS, PILLS, JAIL... ONE BAD DECISION CAN LEAD TO JAIL... (SIC)

Micky Smith



SPIRITUALITY AND CEREMONY

Spirituality and connection to ceremony were indicated as being essential to addressing the complex social issues of Indigenous peoples. Healing is more successful when cultural ceremonies guide the process and are integrated successfully into the work being conducted by social programming. Providing ceremony to those who are incarcerated and the most vulnerable people is imperative to help them return to the culture and get back to themselves as Indigenous peoples. Spirituality, contributes to breaking the chain of bad relationships. It provides hope for the future. In particular a focus on intergenerational trauma needs to be healed. Their stories need to be heard without judgment to help them return their self-esteem.

- The most success for addictions has been with those that are connected to culture through ceremony – sundance, and sweatlodges.
- Understanding healing through cultural ceremony is effective for those involved in the criminal justice system.
- Understanding of trauma and how it shapes women's lives – healing through cultural arts provides a way of expression that increases self-identity and pride in the culture.
- Ceremonies are gifts; a cultural code of living.
- Our own spirituality is the best way to help our people.
- What we believe as Indigenous peoples is what works to help heal us.
- They need to know their options and be able to have access to ceremony upon release.
- There are spirits and they come in the door with the Elders, and the spirits work through them. This is a successful way in helping our people during incarceration. Changes are possible when there is a focus on spirituality.
- Sometimes the spiritual academy is prison and this is the first place that our people are reconnected. Many spiritual leaders had their first experiences or were reconnected while doing time.



IN WHATEVER PROGRAM WE'RE DOING, TO CREATE BALANCE. I ALWAYS THINK YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE MIND/EMOTIONS/SPIRIT/BODY. WHEN I USED TO WORK AT ST. PAUL'S, I FOUND THAT THE PEOPLE WERE UNDERNOURISHED - WHEN YOU'RE DRINKING, YOU DON'T EAT. BUT THE SYSTEM DIDN'T WANT TO REALLY SUPPORT THEIR NOURISHMENT, THEY SAID THEY GOT ALL THAT IN THE FOOD. I STILL THOUGHT THEY NEEDED SUPPLEMENTS. SO IN THE MIND, YOU HAVE TO RE-DO IT TO TEACH THEM WHAT THE THINKING IS AND WHAT THEIR EMOTIONS ARE. NATIVE PEOPLE, OUR EMOTIONS HAVE BEEN BANGED UP BECAUSE OF OUR LIFESTYLE AND BEING PUT ON THE RESERVATIONS AND THE BOARDING SCHOOLS AND THE JAILS. MY BROTHER SAID HE WENT 18 YEARS IN JAIL THROUGH SHORT TERMS. SO THAT, WE NEED TO DEAL WITH. AND THE SPIRIT, LIKE CEREMONIES AND THE SMUDGE. AND THE BODY. NEEDS A LOT OF NUTRIENTS AND THINGS LIKE THAT. SO IF WE FOLLOW AND WHEN WE DEAL WITH THE MEDICINE WHEEL, IT'S ALL ON THERE."

Dila Provost Houle



CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Having connections with each other contributes to having a sense of belonging and community for those that have been separated by systems. These are the roadblocks that prevent Indigenous people from having success.

- There is shame and disconnection associated with being in prison from families and communities. These emotions are difficult to express in a place like prison.
- Exploration of what the women want when they are released is important to understand
- The women are excited to engage in cultural things – they want more spirituality, but there are limitations on what can be brought into the prisons.
- Women as emotional beings are a gift and spirituality is a tool that can be supported to help them.
- Those leaving prison need to feel welcome and included again – being judged is what keeps them away from family and community and will make it more difficult once they are released. Love is the most important ingredient of supporting them home.
- Hope and inclusion will help them believe that there is something else other than the narrow path they were on.
- Trauma surfaces for many, but if you know where you are coming from there may be opportunity to make changes in their lives.
- Learning from those with lived experiences are helpful to teach those from that experience.



CODEPENDENCY IS A FACTOR, WE LEARN FROM OUR FAMILIES AND REPEAT THE LEARNED BEHAVIOUR THAT CONTINUES TO KEEP ON GOING AND GOING. SOMETIMES IT CAN BE GOOD, BUT THE MAJORITY OF THE TIME ITS NOT SO GOOD. I WAS ONE OF THOSE THAT HAD TO BREAK THE CHAIN. BUT THAT'S MY STORY. THEY HAVE TO LEARN THAT THERE IS NOT JUDGEMENT AND BASICALLY GETTING TO LIKE THEMSELVES"

Janis Laboucane



THAT UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND CARING AND COMPASSION GOES A LONG WAY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A PSYCHIATRIST AS LONG AS YOU'RE COMING FROM YOUR HEART TO THE PERSON. ... ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PRAY AND THE CREATOR WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM.".:

Blandine Bastien



HOMELESSNESS, ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH

The cycle of homelessness and incarceration is linked highly to mental health and addiction. Being released often means women are forced to stay at shelters without any viable housing options that quickly leads back to addiction. In particular, when they are stabilized on medications during incarceration, they are often left without the resources or medications to manage their mental health conditions and use substances to self-medicate their symptoms. The institution is a good place to start the relationship and this can lead to strong linkages for those coming in for more support after incarceration.

- There is imbalance in their lives – loss of culture and spirituality – no balance leads to incarceration and to homelessness.



THEY WANT SPIRITUAL HELP, SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.....GIVE THEIR HURT TO THE CREATOR."

John Chiefmoon Jr



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Police, the justice department, and justice related agencies used to have a successful approach after incarceration that had an interagency case management process. This was helpful in keeping people flowing through the system without falling between the gaps. Not only did this help them through the court process, but increased the level of collaboration between agencies to assist with the needs of those within the system. As many individuals struggle with coping within an intimidating system it helped to overcome the difficulties, they had in attending and coming out the other side successfully. In particular, in cases where individuals were not being successful and repeatedly came into contact with the system, there was a more restorative and compassionate approach to addressing them in the system. Currently, the lack of collaboration in the justice system is a major factor in appropriate access to connecting to the right resources.

- Women are going to jail for petty crimes; because of poverty. Poverty is difficult in Calgary and even things like not having a bus ticket can create a barrier and end women up in prison. Prison is not helping them; it can only escalate the problem of poverty.
- Truth and reconciliation is a two-way process and needs to be done in collaboration.
- Remove the intimidation by helping people understand their rights and resources
- Engage more effectively to focus on reducing recidivism, through active case management there is more opportunity to reduce the number of times that individuals appear before the courts.
- Need to give information on what the judge looks for to help with alternative measures and restorative justice. Understand the spiritual connection to help them learn how the justice system works and what are resources are available to help them get through these experiences.
- Indigenous peoples often feel like they have no voice and have become accustomed to the treatment of the justice system. They are more likely to spend time incarcerated and longer sentences because they don't access the right support during their hearings.
- Need to have support for the individual and their family as the issues affect the entire family not just the individual.
- Support needs to happen before sentencing or the pleas. Whenever possible if the options are available, the person should be diverted to restorative justice.
- Need to put the person back in balance. They need to learn to deal with their behaviours, understand their feelings (have hope and faith), learn how to think and understand what they are thinking, and connect to spirituality and ceremony (the pipe). This will give them the tools they need to regain the way of life.
- The worker needs to be involved in the eco-system of helping not just someone who approaches their work from academic study. Workers should learn more about Indigenous issues and spirituality. Indigenous workers are preferred as they will have a better reference of the culture and spirituality to support clients.
- Keep an eye on the trends that affect the sociology of the people – adapt and provide supports that address the shifts.



**WE NEED TO CALM THE THINKING,
CONNECT THEM TO THE SPIRITUAL PART OF
THEMSELVES. HELP THEM TO UNDERSTAND
WHY THEY ARE DOING WHAT THEY ARE DOING,
WHAT IS GOING ON."**

Clarence Wolfleg Sr

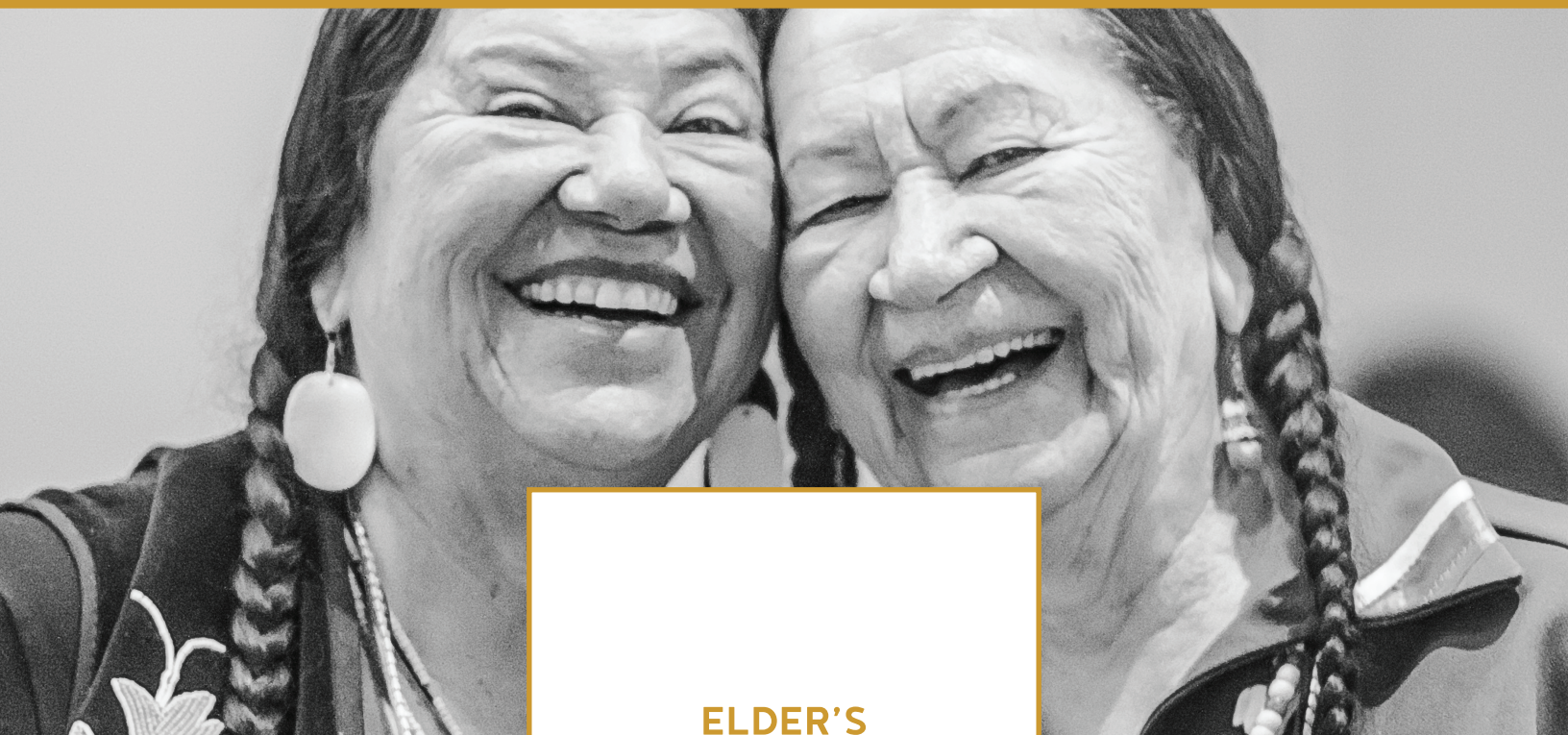


POLICY

Correctional policy is not written in stone, but are guidelines that reflect best approaches. There needs to be more concentration on challenging the policies that reflect the over-representation of Indigenous peoples in incarceration. The intergenerational factors, including Indian Residential Schools, addiction are issues that:

- Indigenous peoples have an inherent right. It is a constitutional right for Indigenous inmates to have access to their spirituality and increased access to Elders and ceremony. Under the Corrections and Conditions of Release Act Section 83, an Elder has the same rights as any other spiritual leader in a correctional setting and correctional services may utilize community supports for Indigenous services and ceremonies as required.
- Need to chip away at the issues and address them when they happen. Understand why the issues exist and identify how to evaluate the positives and negatives. Understand the story both individually and as group. Humanizing the problem leads to self respect, confidence and self-esteem. This is how policy needs to be written and incorporated into the structure.





ELDER'S RECOMMENDATIONS





CULTURE AND CEREMONY

- Connection to culture is important and needs to be built into the context of the agency and programming.
- The culture is inclusive and should be able to easily engage both clients and staff who know about their culture and those that do not.
- Need to have Elders who are engaged, passionate and spiritual to be able to meet our clients where they are and help support them to where they need to be.
- Elders need to be in the forefront from development, orientation to knowledge exchange.
- Increase opportunity to engage clients in ceremony and spirituality. Spirituality is based on natural laws – provides tools to build confidence and progress. Spirituality awakens the person to their identity and live in a balanced way.



SPIRITUALITY TEACHES PEOPLE HOW TO LIVE AND HAVE BALANCE. KNOW ABOUT WHO THEY ARE, THINK WITH KNOWLEDGE AND FEED THEIR HEARTS.”

John Chiefmoon Jr



COMMUNITY AND RESOURCES

- Need to have connections to the community during incarceration and aftercare.
- Healing is achieved through cultural perspectives – arts, dialogue and communication and connections need to be included in the processes and programs.
- Guidance and mentorship around ceremony and protocols are important to learn while in prison to assist with the transition after incarceration.
- Development of an Indigenous collaborative case management table with a focus on cultural supports, resources and assistance to get Indigenous clients through justice issues. Needs to include Elders, access to ceremony, and use of the medicine wheel to guide the structure.
- Include peer support opportunities. Those experienced populations have insight to bring stronger solutions to challenging client situations.



APPROACHES AND SUPPORT

- Increasing personal awareness to adapt the subconscious thoughts and beliefs that have kept clients stuck in the cycle of poverty and incarceration.
- Best practices should include proper cultural protocols that include natural supports and a focus on decreasing the effects of trauma.
- Approaches need to include building trust slowly and with patience to support those who have experienced significant trauma.
- Integrate an Indigenous perspective of restorative justice to help individuals who may have challenges in overcoming the complex issues that cause them to continue to be involved in the criminal justice system.
- Increased involvement and connection from the Indigenous communities (Nations) to provide aftercare supports.
- Collective action in working as a community to address complex issues of those that end up experiencing repeat incarceration related to additions, homelessness and mental health.
- EFry needs to work more collaboratively with the Nations to assist their off-reserve populations when leaving incarceration.



WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, I REMEMBER ONE TIME I HAD DOUBLE PNEUMONIA... DURING THAT TIME, IN A HOUSE IN BROCKETT, THEY PUT A BED BY THE HEATER, IT WAS TOWARDS THE DOOR. I SAW THE DOOR OPEN AND I SAW 3 PEOPLE COME IN. THERE'S A BENCH BY THE DOOR, TWO OF THEM SAT THERE AND ONE OF THEM SAT WHERE THE BED WAS. I SEEN HOW THEY DRESSED. THREE OF THEM, ALL DIFFERENT COLORS. I GOT OUT OF THE PNEUMONIA, GOT BETTER. AND MY MOTHER WAS A VERY STRONG CATHOLIC. AND MY MOTHER DOESN'T SPEAK ENGLISH. AND THE PRIEST COMES TO THE HOUSE, TALKING BLACKFOOT WITH MY MOTHER. AND HE GAVE HER A BOOK. AND I SEEN 3 PEOPLE IN THE BOOK AND I SAID I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE, THEY WERE HERE. AND TWO THINGS HAPPENED - I WAS DRIVING AROUND IN BROCKETT, IN THE RIVER BOTTOM. I WAS RIDING DOWN THIS HILL. AND I WAS FISHING. IT WAS GETTING DARK, AND I ROLLED UP MY LINE AND THE RIVER WAS LOW AND RODE ACROSS AND I CAME UP. I FELL INTO THE WATER AND ... AND I SEEN THESE TWO GUYS COME UP. THEY PULLED ME OUT. ANOTHER THING, I WAS GOING HOME DRUNK. THERE'S A GRAVEYARD IN BROCKET. IT WAS COLD, BLOWING SNOW. AND THESE 2 GUYS DROVE AROUND ... THEY TOOK A SHORTCUT TO MY HOUSE AND FOUND ME IN THE SNOW. AND THESE THINGS HAPPENED - I'M FORTUNATE TO BE THERE. THAT'S WHY I BELIEVE IN A HIGHER POWER. I'VE BEEN SOBER FOR 36 YEARS. IN THOSE YEARS, EVERYTHING IS SO DIFFERENT FROM WHEN I WAS IN THAT... "

Mark Strikes With A Gun