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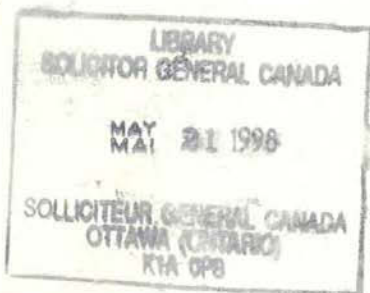
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# THE CORRECTIONAL STRATEGY



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## I. THE CORRECTIONAL STRATEGY

The Correctional Service of Canada is responsible for about 23,000 offenders on any given day. Because this responsibility relates directly to important aspects of the lives of these offenders, the Service must discharge its responsibility in accordance with the law, the Mission of the Service, and the social and cultural traditions of our country.

The Service must respond to the needs of the offenders within its jurisdiction. These needs should be considered on two levels: the Service must meet basic needs of offenders, including housing, food, clothing, health care and safety; the Service must also assist the individual offender in addressing factors relating specifically to his or her criminal behaviour so that the likelihood of recidivism is reduced. Often, Service activities can address both levels of needs simultaneously. While the Service is responsible for ensuring the availability of programs and services, as well as providing an environment which supports change, each offender is responsible for changing his/her own behaviour through addressing specific needs as identified in the correctional planning process.

Good corrections is, in effect, the successful reduction of the risk of recidivism. It is the belief of the CSC that good programming is an essential element in reducing recidivism, while at the same time providing better control and stability in institutions and the community. The Service must therefore invest further in programming and provide incentives for offenders to participate in programs designed to correct their criminal behaviour.

## II. PURPOSE OF THE CORRECTIONAL STRATEGY

An overall, commonly accepted correctional strategy will guide operations in determining the relationships and priorities among the components of programming directed at groups presenting different needs. It will thus ensure that the programming effectively meets the needs of the offenders, that the programming components are integrated with one another, and that they are compatible with recognized Canadian community standards.

The Service must, as any other organization, set priorities with efficiency in mind. All functions should be reviewed in light of the correctional strategy to determine what resources should be reallocated.

The **principles** developed in this paper have, therefore, been adopted by the Service in order to:

- **guide the establishment of program priorities;**
- **identify programs that should be either altered or eliminated; and**
- **identify where resource reallocations are possible, and to what programs the resources should be reallocated.**

### III. PRINCIPLES

#### 1. Reducing recidivism by addressing needs

Offender **needs** should drive programs and service delivery in CSC, and programs should primarily focus on successful reintegration. While helping the offender cope with incarceration, the primary efforts have to be directed towards the ultimate goal of successfully reintegrating the offender into the community.

#### 2. Creating an environment conducive to change

Changing values, specifically those relating to reducing criminal behaviour and, thus, recidivism, should direct the management of offenders. The Service must create an environment which is conducive to changing beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, and to reinforcing the desired changes both in the institutional and community settings.

#### 3. The attitudes, values and skills of staff are agents of change

CSC staff, in the community and institutions, must be provided with the appropriate training to develop effective skills in assessment, monitoring, and intervention techniques. This will allow them to assist offenders in developing specific strategies for coping with risk situations, thereby enhancing

the likelihood of their success in the community. All staff, when working with offenders, must contribute to furthering the changes in attitudes and behaviour. What they do should ensure a consistent approach to the offender and should complement the activities of their colleagues.

#### **4. An Organized Approach to Establishing Programming and Effective Follow-up Throughout the Sentence is Required**

The cognitive, social learning approach to programming teaches offenders the skills and abilities to think and plan logically and provides them with alternatives designed to change socially unacceptable behaviour. Programming in the community must build upon and be consistent with institutional program offerings so that offenders maintain the positive gains achieved during incarceration. Correctional programming must be focused on developing and reinforcing lifestyles that maintain law-abiding behaviours.

### **IV. OFFENDER NEEDS**

**P**rominent offender needs are related to cognitive deficiencies, substance abuse, illiteracy, mental illness, sexual deviancy and antisocial attitudes, values and behaviours. These groups are not mutually exclusive and many offenders display a number of these needs. As a result, integration of program interventions is necessary.

In order to address the real needs and not just the symptoms, basic cognitive deficits which are underlying needs such as impulse control or anger management must be addressed with offenders who manifest these needs through substance abuse, sexual deviancy or violence.

A majority of needs are common to all offenders, including women, aboriginals and other ethnocultural groups. What is needed for these gender-specific or cultural groups is different only in the approach taken or the context in which the needs are addressed. This concept of socio-cultural contexts may have to be expanded as the cultural profile of the offender population changes.

A clear distinction must be made and recognized between offender needs and the Service's needs. An activity required to support the Service's operations may not be complementary or consistent with the needs of offenders. Implementation of the Program Planning Model will assist in identifying offender needs as distinct from organizational needs, as well as the program modalities and resources required to meet the need.

## V. PROGRAMMING

**P**rogramming must be directly linked to meeting offenders' needs, and particularly those needs which, if addressed, will result in pro-social behaviour. It should be directed at changing behaviour, beliefs and attitudes to make the behavioural changes more durable. All programs should have a correctional orientation and correctional goals. All existing programs should be examined regularly to determine whether they meet this orientation, these goals and these results.

The Service must be able to effectively identify needs and to match levels of programming to these needs. The assumption that existing programs will meet the offenders' needs must be avoided. Needs should not be identified on the basis of program availability. Each offender's needs must be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, with consideration for the release potential of the offender and the nature of programming to be delivered in the community.

It must be recognized that for some offenders, a significant portion of programming is no more than management or control (these are offenders with a strong criminal orientation who present a high risk of escape, and/or those with a violent orientation).

It must be determined how the offender's needs can best be met, in the institution and in the community. The Service should be oriented to management of the offender in the community, when that environment is assessed as being appropriate to meet the offender's needs, and when the offender's risk of reoffending is assumable.

The overall general programming strategy is to be oriented towards behaviour change. More specific core programming strategies must be developed to address substance abuse, family violence and mental health (including sexual deviancy). Finally, for a smaller number of offenders displaying more serious or chronic substance abuse and mental health difficulties, specialized clinical interventions may be required.

To maximize the effectiveness of interventions addressing the priority areas, it is important that all programs, activities and employment be carefully integrated to permit the offender to obtain the greatest benefit from these interventions. Skills taught, or behaviours acquired, need reinforcement by providing opportunity to apply them. This means that staff must be trained to effectively provide these opportunities.

## VI. CORRECTIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

**S**hortly after admission to federal custody, all offenders undergo an intake **assessment** to determine their level of risk and their programming needs. This review is based on input from a variety of sources including community offices, courts, police reports, victims, as well as psychological, educational, vocational, and substance abuse testing.

Results of the intake assessment are used by case management officers as the basis on which to develop the initial correctional planning for the offender. In consultation with the program personnel and the offender, a **Correctional Plan** is designed to address the factors which have been identified as contributing to criminal behaviour. Programming needs are prioritized so that interventions can be logical, sequenced and effective and ensure that the offender's progress is evaluated by program deliverers. The offender's plan is dynamic and is reviewed regularly for revision as needs are met. An offender's progress towards addressing specific needs and in reducing the level of risk serves as the major factor for the decision-making process, and its assessment central to the management of the offender throughout the sentence.



Institutions must ensure that a process is in place so that recommendations developed by case managers and program officers concerning program and work assignments are implemented, while taking into consideration relevant priorities. The program/ work assignment review process must ensure that each program or work supervisor understands the objectives which have been set for the individual offenders. These objectives serve as the factors on which to obtain regular feedback on how the offenders are progressing in relation to their goals. In the community, program and work placements must also be major determining factors for correctional planning on an ongoing basis.

The Program Planning Process provides a means for ensuring that both institutions and parole offices can effectively respond to the programming requirements of their respective offender populations. Key components of the process are the issues of needs, design and implementation, and program evaluation. This process provides a method for systematically identifying offender needs, for evaluating the effectiveness of programs, and guidance for the realignment of resources into programs corresponding to the needs. Program Planning must be done on a continuous basis in order to ensure that the programs offered to offenders reflect the changing needs of the offender populations.

The challenge of programming is not only to ensure that it is offender needs driven and is directed at changing behaviour, but also to ensure that there is continuity between the institutions and community. Programs offered in the community must provide for reinforcement for the gains made through program involvement already undertaken in the institutions and must be designed to meet the different situational needs of offenders on release.

## VII. PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS - THE CORE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The following areas are considered core programs or program areas: living skills programming, substance abuse, sex offender treatment, family violence and literacy. They must be widely available for delivery in institutions and the community, since a vast majority of offenders present needs in one or more of those areas. The ongoing analysis of the information concerning offender needs, which is gained from the intake assessment process, will allow the Service to develop and implement further core programs as needs may dictate.

In order to allow offenders to gain the maximum benefit from the programming areas, there must also be sufficient levels of mental health programs available in the community and institutional settings. Surveys have concluded that significant proportions of the offender population are, at any given point in time, in need of in-patient treatment for a mental disorder and/or are in need of intensive interventions for the treatment of severe substance addiction. Without programs which address mental disorders and severe substance abuse first or concurrently, the potential benefits from the core programs will be limited.

CSC has adopted the cognitive, social learning approach to personal development programming. The model, through a social learning and educational approach, attempts to teach offenders how to think logically, objectively and rationally without over-generalizing blame. It is upon this model that the basis for our major programming interventions, such as living skills programming modules, substance abuse programs, family violence programs, literacy programs and sexual offender programs, have been developed.

The basic component of **Living Skills Programming** is the Cognitive Skills Training module. The involvement of offenders in this component forms the basis for and is often a prerequisite for training/programming in the other more focused areas including Living Without Violence, Family Life/Parenting Skills, Leisure Education, Community Integration, and Anger/Emotion Management. It is believed that the majority of offenders require the training provided by the Cognitive Skills module.

The strategic model employed by CSC for the development and implementation of **Substance Abuse Programs**, involves the

matching of offenders' assessed severity of substance abuse with the appropriate intensity of programming. Low intensity programs (educational) are designed for offenders with minimal alcohol and/or drug related problems, whereas medium intensity programs (treatment) are designed for offenders with more substantial substance abuse problems. Intensive programs are clinical in nature and are designed to address the needs of offenders who demonstrate the most severe substance abuse patterns. The application of the relapse prevention model, both in the institutional and community environments, is being utilized by CSC as an effective means of reinforcing the offender's learning, and designing effective supervision strategies.

The strategy for **Sex Offender Treatment** is the development and delivery of programs to meet the needs of this segment of the offender population both in the institutions and on conditional release. Intensive treatment programs are delivered in the institutions and psychiatric centres, and to ensure that the program gains are retained, correctional staff in minimum security institutions and in the community use relapse prevention techniques to ensure effective supervision. Determination must be made of the "offence cycle"; all persons who play a part in the offender's daily life, such as correctional staff, family members and parole supervisors, must be aware of the crime patterns and understand effective methods of intervention. The strategy calls for an ongoing effort to increase the treatment capacity for sex offenders in the institutional and community environments and to establish the relapse prevention model as an effective basis for the programming and supervision of sex offenders in institutions and for those who have been released to the community.

While **literacy** may not be directly related to criminal behaviour, illiterate individuals are very often also socially unskilled and ill-equipped to cope with daily ordinary life. A strong literacy program is important as a basic social need, as well as to assist the offenders in understanding other program components that will help them reintegrate into the community.

**Family violence** is acknowledged as a pervasive and complex social, health, and criminal problem and is an emerging program area for federal corrections. Studies indicate that family violence problems are widespread among the federal offender population, both as victims and perpetrators.

CSC's strategy to respond to family violence issues includes the development of a range of prevention and treatment programs for offenders and their partners. The purpose of the programming is to affect attitude and behaviour change towards family members, especially partners and children, by providing offenders with knowledge and skills in an environment which supports these changes.

## VIII. SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Other program/activity/employment areas play a vital role in contributing to addressing needs and providing an opportunity to practise the skills learned through the priority interventions. The variety of applications changes with the endeavour but the primary goal of each is to support the application of skills designed to correct criminal behaviour. Academic education programs and leisure activities, for example, can be used to provide a concrete environment to apply skills and to evaluate behaviours. It is within this environment that the skills and behaviour learned from involvement in core program areas must be encouraged, monitored and evaluated. CSC personnel working in these areas must be aware of the offenders' Correctional Plan and have the necessary avenues to evaluate and report on their progress. In all areas of the correctional environment, be they in the kitchen, a CORCAN shop, or through pastoral counselling, the criminogenic factors which affect the individual offender must be the focus of interventions.

Many of the offenders entering CSC's institutions have never acquired the necessary basic skills to succeed in the labour force, either in the community or, indeed, within the institution. Without appropriate programming intervention, they will experience serious difficulties upon release in obtaining and maintaining employment. Because correctional research has shown that post release employment may contribute to reducing recidivism, after key program interventions have taken place, preparing the offender for employment in the Canadian labour market upon release should be strongly supported. Many institutional placements allow for the vocational training or for the development of employability and work place behaviour of offenders by providing work related training and experience in a business-like environment where offenders build on

interpersonal skills that they have acquired in participating in many of the core programming areas. Related services such as employment counselling, community industries and job placement help bridge the institutional learning into the community. Many of the skills and qualifications which are obtained in the correctional environment are affirmed through provincially recognized certification and/or contribute to the personal development and sense of achievement of offenders.

A system of Inmate Pay is in place to encourage offenders to participate in programs which address the criminogenic factors highlighted in the Correctional Plan and to assist them to save for their eventual release and support family members in the community. The foremost principle of inmate pay is to ensure that the level of pay is directly related to the involvement in and progress made on the Correctional Plan: the greater the achievements, the higher the rate of remuneration. Offenders should not be in a position to earn top rates of pay or participate in wage bonus programs until such time as they are involved in or have completed the requirements set out in their Correctional Plans.

## IX. DELIVERY OF CORE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

**T**he Core Program components can be delivered by many CSC and non-CSC staff, as long as they have an affinity for relating to offenders and the cognitive and social skills necessary to deliver the training. They must be well trained to deliver the programs effectively, and they must be provided with an environment which favours continuity and encourages the offender to participate.

**In the institutions,** dedicated program delivery officers should be identified at each facility, providing an ongoing capacity for delivery and allowing a true integration of programming into other aspects of the operations. The resources required for each institution will vary, depending on the results of the Program Planning exercise used to identify offender needs and the costs of the resulting programming.

**In the community,** if the Service is to succeed in safely releasing an increased number of offenders at an earlier point in their sentences, the area and district offices need to:

- ensure they have an adequate number of programs and the staff to deliver them;
- ensure their program base is adequate to pursue the delivery of core program components for offenders who need them upon release; and
- foster community development of clinical interventions which meet the needs of released offenders.

Offenders should be required to participate in programs which are considered necessary for the reduction of the risk of recidivism. For some offenders, this may be considered to be a higher or equal priority to that of obtaining and maintaining employment during portions of the supervision period. Community release must not be delayed in order to complete a program in the institutional setting, if the program can be delivered equally well or better in the community.

In order to respond to the offender needs in the community, there should be programming resource capability in each district to:

- encourage community development of programs for offenders;
- provide an advisory service on programming to parole officers; and
- when required, deliver programs.

The Service should strive to maintain links with the community by using existing resources in the local community for the delivery of programs when they are available. In some communities and for some types of offenders, community based programs are not available, accessible or appropriate. In such cases the Service may have to develop and deliver programs itself. It is also important to consider the benefits which can be achieved through delivery of programming by CSC staff, such as variety in interests and expertise. In order to maintain continuity for the programming which has been delivered in the institutions, all programs and services utilized, whether delivered by CSC or under contract, must be based on similar or compatible program models. In order to determine whether it is preferable to utilize CSC staff or contracted programming, a number of factors must be considered:

- the availability of effective programs in the target community;
- the relative costs associated with the delivery source;
- the potential for enhancing case managers' supervision capabilities with the addition of programming interventions within CSC;
- the ability of the contracted program to meet the needs of the "corrections clientele"; and
- the interest, expertise and qualifications of the CSC staff available.

Whenever a core program has been developed by CSC for CSC staff, it should normally be delivered by CSC staff unless there exists clear benefits to have alternative organizations or private agencies provide the program.