

**A STRATEGIC APPROACH AND POLICY DOCUMENT  
TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES OF OFFENDERS:  
SAFETY - RESPECT AND DIGNITY - FOR ALL**



**Canadian Families and Corrections Network**

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***A Strategic Approach and Policy Document To Address the Needs of Families of Offenders: Safety - Respect and Dignity - For All* was written by Lloyd Withers, National Coordinator, CFCN.**

**Dedicated to Sylvia Griffith, a founding member of the Canadian Families and Corrections Network, who died in September 2002. Sylvia was the Executive Director of the John Howard Society of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia.**

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to Address the Needs of Families of Offenders:  
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**Executive Summary**



***Vision Statement***

The families of offenders are to be recognized and supported as assets to offenders, the correctional system and society because of the role they can play in successful conditional release without compromising public safety or the security or good order of an institution.

***Mission Statement***

The "Addressing the Needs of Families of Offenders" project will develop a strategy and produce a policy document that will offer recommendations on the needs of families affected by incarceration and reintegration, based on extensive consultation in communities across the country.

The recommendations will be addressed to government departments and voluntary sector agencies and will aim at improving their policies, programs and services by increasing their ability to work together and communicate more effectively in addressing the needs of families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

## ***Background***

The Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) is a joint initiative between the voluntary sector and the Government of Canada. The long-term goal of the VSI is to strengthen the voluntary sector's capacity to meet the challenges of the future, and to enhance the relationship between the sector and the federal government.

When the Voluntary Sector Initiative was announced in June 2000, part of its mandate was to enhance the policy development in federal government departments by creating opportunities for input by voluntary sector organizations. This part of VSI's mandate is known as Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD).

On August 8, 2001, the Honourable Lucienne Robillard, President of the Treasury Board of Canada, Minister responsible for Infrastructure and Chair of the Reference Group of Ministers for the Voluntary Sector, announced \$11.6 million in support to voluntary sector organizations to lead 21 pilot projects that may contribute to federal policy development. The Canadian Families and Corrections Network's "Addressing the Needs of Families of Offenders" was one of the projects that was chosen.

## ***Terms of reference***

The terms of reference of the Strategic Approach and Policy Document on Addressing the Needs of Families of Offenders were that the CFCN to develop policy recommendations that address quality of life needs of families of offenders. It was intended that the recommendations would arise from a community-based consultation process that involved interested members of the public, voluntary sector agencies, faith groups, service providers, correctional staff, and families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

## ***Methodology***

Fourteen public consultations were held in twelve communities across Canada in order to directly collect information on quality of life issues and to help form the policy recommendations on the needs of families of offenders. Over 600 people participated in these meetings. A questionnaire was also mailed-out to families and thirty completed questionnaires were returned. An abbreviated questionnaire was available on-line and ten submissions of this were received. Altogether, then, input was received from approximately 650 people. Interviews with several correctional staff and managers were also held.

A second round of consultations (Series B) was held in nine communities and attended by 99 participants. The Series B public consultations reviewed the draft policy recommendations.



### *Document Structure*

The structural components of the strategic approach and policy document are:

**Introduction** to the VSI and to this project

**Vision and Mission** for the strategic approach and policy document

**Strategic Policy Principles** proposes broad policy principles, based on:

**Safety** - The safety of the public is paramount, including that of the family, the offender, correctional staff and community members.

**Respect and Dignity** - Treating the family with respect and dignity and addressing quality of life issues engages the family as an asset and as a factor in desistance and in successful conditional release.

**For All** - A social benefit of services to families and children affected by incarceration and reintegration is crime prevention.

**Policy Recommendations** are discussed within a framework of nine dilemmas. The policy recommendations engage the family as a dynamic factor in desistance and conditional release success without compromising the good order and security of the correctional facility or community safety. The dilemmas are:

1. jurisdictional dilemma
2. ecological dilemma
3. risk management dilemma
4. geographical dilemma
5. research dilemma
6. resource dilemma
7. role dilemma
8. criminalization dilemma
9. continuity dilemma

**Best Practices Referencing** identifies several current activities as best practices in the delivery of services to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

## ***Conclusion***

"A Strategic Approach and Policy Document To Address the Needs of Families of Offenders: Safety-Respect and Dignity-For All" asserts that the family of the offender is an asset to be encouraged rather than a problem to be accommodated within the correctional process, and that supporting and engaging the family as a factor in desistance and successful conditional release is crime prevention.

Effective service provision to families affected by incarceration and reintegration is a complex issue that requires partnership between all stakeholders: the offender, the family, correctional managers and staff, and the community. To achieve the goal of support and engagement of families, this policy document offers balanced and achievable recommendations that are based on current successes of both the Correctional Service of Canada and the voluntary sector.

Canada is renowned within the global correctional community for its successes, expertise and programming effectiveness in offender treatment. The implementation of a vision that supports and engages the family in the correctional process will confirm once again Canada's status as a leader in this area.

## ***Policy Recommendations***

### **1. Jurisdictional Dilemma**

#### **Recommendation 1.1: Placement of Families Issues within a Responsibility Unit of NHQ, CSC**

##### **1.1.1: Family Issues Unit.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada establish a Family Issues Unit. This is an essential component in endorsing the importance and profile of families as an asset to the correctional process. It is suggested that the Family Issues Unit provide coordination of policies, proposals and initiatives related to families, promote policies addressing quality of life needs for children and families; conduct consultations; encourage best practices, networking and dialogue between correctional organizations and the voluntary sector, develop and maintain a database of public and voluntary sector organizations that provide services to children and families affected by incarceration and reintegration; and encourage dialogue between prisoners, families, sector agencies and correctional staff on family quality of life issues.

## **1.1.2: Chaplaincy Branch Placement.**

It is suggested that the Family Issues Unit be located in the Chaplaincy Branch because of its operational involvement with families. Because of the recommended scope of work, it is important that the Community Engagement Branch, Policy Branch, Operations and Programs Branch, Aboriginal Issues and Women's Issues be integrally involved with the leadership of the Family Issues Unit.

## **Recommendation 1.2: Annual Policy Meeting**

It is recommended that NHQ hold an annual policy meeting, chaired by the Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programs (or a designate) and attended by sector and branch heads, to review any current or new policy initiatives or emergent issues that relate to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

## **Recommendation 1.3: Citizens Advisory Committees and Families of Offenders**

The Citizens Advisory Committee, as representative of the public who participate in the correctional process, can ensure better public awareness and bring a substantial contribution to the humanization of the facilities, policies, directives and procedures of the Correctional Service of Canada. It is recommended that CAC increase their leadership in institutional and community issues related to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

## **Recommendation 1.4: Inter-jurisdictional and Interdepartmental co-operation**

### **1.4.1: Inter-jurisdictional and interdepartment co-operation.**

It is recommended that federal, provincial and territorial inter-jurisdictional and interdepartmental co-operation continue discussions with respect to exchange of information between Child Welfare agencies and the criminal justice system. It is recommended that consultation on family issues specific to First Nations/ Aboriginal peoples and other minorities as well as gender-based issues be built into this process.

### **1.4.2: Canadian Assistance Plan/ Canadian Health and Social Transfer.**

While the Canadian Assistance Plan/ Canadian Health and Social Transfer is beyond the scope of this policy document, services to families is one form of crime prevention. It is suggested that discussions continue among Federal, Provincial and Territorial Correctional Departments to ensure adequate social support for families, including families of offenders as an affected population group.

## **2. Ecological Dilemma**

### **Recommendation 2.1: Coordinators, Family Support**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada fund the voluntary sector or faith-based organizations for five full-time Co-ordinators, Family Support. It is recommended that each Coordinator, Family Support be based in the Regional Reception Centre/Assessment Unit of each

Region.

**Recommendation 2.2: Visitor Resource Centres (VRC)**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada fund the voluntary sector or faith based organizations to establish Visitor Resource Centres at maximum security institutions, institutions for federally sentenced women, and institutions that are geographically isolated. It is further recommended that the Coordinator, Family Support coordinate or liaise with the voluntary sector or faith-based organizations who operate the VRCs.

**Recommendation 2.3: Inclusion of families of offenders issues in accountability contracts.**

Institutional Wardens, Executive Directors and Parole District Directors are currently responsible for the operations within their responsibility units. Operationally, this includes the level and quality of support to families affected by incarceration and reintegration within their responsibility unit. Services to families affected by incarceration need to be incorporated within accountability contracts, operating plans and operational reviews.

**Recommendation 2.4: Responses to Families in Crisis.**

It is recommended that each institution and parole office establish a Standing Order that specifies a chain of command for responses to families who may experience crisis in the institution/parole office, or who may contact the institution or parole office and indicate that they are in crisis. Such crises may include the death of the offender, a death in the family of the offender, crises that arise for families in the Visiting and Correspondence Area, and family violence in the Private Family Visiting Unit. Identification of staff who are able to respond to any of these situations is needed such as Psychology, Chaplaincy, Native Elder, health care, social work where applicable, Parole Officer, Primary Care Worker and also voluntary sector agencies.

**Recommendation 2.5: Staff Training**

**2.5.1: Staff -Visitor Interaction and Training.**

It is recommended that there is selection and training for all staff who have direct contact with the public, including family members and visitors to the institution or families in the community. The focus of training is on awareness and sensitivity to the needs of families affected by incarceration and reintegration. For institutional staff, training should adopt a public-service focus without compromising the good order and security of the institution. The training should also include cultural awareness related to Aboriginal families. Aboriginal awareness training should include those staff who work closely with families in the community such as parole officers and program delivery staff where those programs are not Aboriginal-specific.

**2.5.2: Training for Family Counselling.**

It is recommended that institutional and community chaplains, institutional and community Parole Officers and Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers receive training related to service provision

to families affected by incarceration and reintegration that includes training for family counselling. There should be recognition that Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers may not conduct counselling in the same manner as non-Aboriginals.

**2.5.3: Guidelines for Practice -Chaplains, Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers.**

It is recommended that the Chaplaincy Branch, CSC, develop guidelines for practice related to services to families as a guide to both Chaplaincy Teams and the line and functional supervisors of Chaplains. This includes screening for training, experience and ability to provide services to families as a component in the Chaplaincy Selection Process. It is further recommended that the CSC's Aboriginal Sector develop similar guidelines for practice, screening and training for Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers.

**Recommendation 2.6: Unifying Visitor Security Control and Visits and Correspondence Departments**

It is recommended that Visitor Security Control and the Visits and Correspondence Departments be staffed as a single department and reporting to the same unit manager or equivalent. Comments by family members and correctional staff suggest that linking Visitor Security Control and Visits and Correspondence Departments is effective both for service provision to families and for drug interdiction when the staff in these two departments are selected and trained to respond appropriately to the public while carrying out security procedures. Family members become more trusting when dealing with the same security officers on a regular basis, and thereby feel more comfortable in discussing matters related to drug interdiction with them.

**Recommendation 2.7: Checklist for Institutional Accessibility****2.7.1: Checklist for Institutional Accessibility.**

It is recommended that a checklist be developed to assess an institution's accessibility to visitors and families. The checklist would include such items as the location and distance from the visitor parking area to the Main Gate/ Visitor Security Control area, the size of and accessibility to the institution's Waiting Area during inclement weather, comfort of the seating in the Visiting Room, availability of appropriate food, provision of activities that assist in relationship maintenance during the visit, availability of children's activity area, etc.

**2.7.2: Consumer Satisfaction Survey.**

It is recommended that each institution, parole office, Community Correctional Facility and Community Residential Facility have an annual consumer satisfaction survey of visitors and families to gather suggestions for evaluating and improving the visiting experience, and that the results of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey be reflected in Warden's or District Parole Director's accountability contracts or objectives. Components of the survey should include how all staff who have interaction with families, including parole officers, chaplains and other program and service staff and correctional officers assist families in maintaining family ties.

**Recommendation 2.8: Post Sentence Community Assessment Information Provision.**

It is recommended that a package of information on the impact of incarceration on the family be given to families at the Post Sentence Community Assessment (CA) by the parole officer. This may include information such as the Time Together/ Qui purge la peine? information booklet for families. Aboriginal-specific information should be included in information provision.

**3. Risk Management Dilemma****Recommendation 3.1: Orientation and orientation material for families and for visitors****3.1.1: Orientation to visiting.**

It is recommended that, when feasible, families receive an orientation to the visiting process or procedures in a correctional facility. Orientation should also include information on family violence, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, FAS/FAE and what to do if they are pressured by the offender. As travel costs may be high for some family members, it is recommended that the orientation take place during the Post Sentence Community Assessment, at a local parole office, or through a voluntary sector or faith-based organization. If the orientation takes place at a correctional institution, the orientation should not impinge on the visiting time of the offender and the family. For example, an orientation at the institution could take place immediately prior to regular visiting hours while the family is waiting for the visiting period to begin. If an orientation is not operationally feasible, orientation material should be mailed to the family along with the notification of security clearance to visit the institution.

**3.1.2: Virtual Tour.**

It is recommended that institutions prepare a Virtual Tour, such as that of Regional Psychiatric Centre (Prairies), that family members can access through the Internet. This approach orients the family to the facility at which their family member is incarcerated and serves to alleviate questions and fears for the visitor and children.

**Recommendation 3.2: Family violence**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada continue its current approach to the prevention of family violence in the Private Family Visiting program.

**Recommendation 3.3: Search and security procedures****3.3.1: Review of search and security procedures.**

It is recommended that institutional search and security procedures be regularly reviewed to ensure that family members, visitors to the institution, volunteers and other members of the public are treated with respect and dignity while on the Correctional Reserve.

**3.3.2: Ion Scanner/ NDS system.**

It is recommended that correctional staff exercise best practices to ensure that equipment and work spaces are not cross contaminated while processing visitors to the institution using the Barringer Ion Scanning System or Narcotics Detection System. It is further recommended that there not be an over-reliance on this technology and that security decisions related to visiting be based on a variety of security information sources and not solely on the results of these systems.

**3.3.3: National Data, through the National Drug Strategy Coordinator.**

It is recommended that data be collected on a national basis by the National Drug Strategy Coordinator on the number of families and visitors per year who are charged and/or placed on closed visits or no visits for introduction of drugs/contraband.

**4. Geographical Dilemma****Recommendation 4.1: Facilitation of communication and visiting**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada, at the earliest possible date, institute a telephone system that allows families to benefit from the same long distance cost savings enjoyed by other members of the public.

**Recommendation 4.2: Visiting hours at the institution**

It is recommended that institutions review their visiting hours to ensure that visiting hours are scheduled to correspond to public transportation availability, where applicable, and to ensure that, where operationally possible, visits are available during the evenings, weekends and statutory holidays when family members are most available or may most want to visit.

**Recommendation 4.3: Responding to shifting visiting patterns****4.3.1: Investigation of Visiting Patterns.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada investigate the possible shift in visiting patterns away from the regular visiting program to an increased participation in the Private Family Visiting Program and institutional Socials. If the investigation reveals a shift in visiting patterns, it is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada augment the Private Family Visiting program and allow for more flexibility of bookings for eligible families.

**4.3.2: Transportation Services.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada review its strategy of public funding for corridor transportation services provided by the voluntary sector, with a view to increasing public support for low income Canadians who use these services.

**Recommendation 4.4: Hospitality houses**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada review the level of public funding support to the five existing hospitality houses operated by faith-based organizations and the

voluntary sector, with a view to increasing this support. It is recommended that this review include an analysis of variance in usage to determine the cost/benefit of increasing the private family visiting program as compared to increased public support to hospitality houses.

#### **Recommendation 4.5: Support to families of the North and Newfoundland and Labrador**

##### **4.5.1: New technologies.**

It is recommended that new technologies, such as Internet conferencing, be piloted as means of maintaining family ties by supporting contact between the offender and families and children of the North and Newfoundland and Labrador, and, based on pilot success, expanded to other uses where offenders are distant from their families. Pilot projects may include a supervised conferencing site at several institutions and sites that are accessible to families such as at a Parole Office, a municipal library, a faith-based group or at a voluntary sector agency.

##### **4.5.2: Annual Visit.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada review the level of funding of the annual Family Prison Visit from Newfoundland and Labrador to its Atlantic Region institutions.

#### **Recommendation 4.6: Support for operational regimes**

It is recommended that complexes be encouraged because of its potential to incorporate or address family quality of life issues, relationship maintenance need and potential community support.

#### **Recommendation 4.7: Location of correctional facilities**

It is recommended that the location of new correctional facilities include a review of family accessibility issues, including public transportation, transportation routes, corridor transportation services and low cost accommodations while visiting.

## **5. Research Dilemma**

#### **Recommendation 5.1: Data collection for research and program planning**

It is recommended that data collection related to the family of the offender be increased during the intake assessment process and that family assessment tools be included during the Post Sentence Community Assessment, and that the data then be made available to researchers, policy makers and program developers, through Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada.

#### **Recommendation 5.2: Research on Parental Incarceration**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada conduct research on the short and long-term effects of parental incarceration on both the parent and child to determine the issues or factors that protect the child or increase the child's risk of intergenerational criminal behavior to determine additional program or intervention strategies with both the parent and the child.



### **Recommendation 5.3: Multidisciplinary conference on families affected by incarceration and reintegration**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada, in partnership with other criminal justice and correctional agencies and the voluntary sector, host a multidisciplinary conference on families affected by incarceration and reintegration in order to generate professional interest, issues to be explored and creative ways of conducting research on families.

## **6. Resource Dilemma**

### **Recommendation 6.1: Funding Accountability for Voluntary Sector Agencies**

#### **6.1.1: Partnerships.**

It is recommended that voluntary sector agencies who receive public funding demonstrate active partnerships with a variety of public, private and/or other voluntary sector agencies in order to maximize funding, service delivery and resources.

#### **6.1.2: Services and Dynamic Factors.**

It is recommended that voluntary sector agencies who receive funding for services from the CSC structure their services to meet identified dynamic factors that lead to conditional release success.

#### **6.1.3: Service Evaluation**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada require that voluntary sector agencies that receive public funding augment internal or external evaluation of service delivery to demonstrate program efficacy, and aid in program replication, duplication of results, and for identification of further areas for research and service development, and that this evaluation requirement be contained in funding proposal budgets.

## **7. Role Dilemma**

### **Recommendation 7.1: Ombuds Process for Families**

It is recommended that the Office of the Correctional Investigator investigate as to whether policies and practices are being followed with regards to family-related complaints that are registered by either the offender or the family.

### **Recommendation 7.2: Funding Source Declaration.**

It is recommended that voluntary sector agencies who receive public funding through the Correctional Service of Canada, either through primary or through arms-length agreements or contracts, identify the Correctional Service of Canada as a financial contributor in its advertising, publications and promotional material.

### **7.3: Restorative Justice**

#### **7.3.1: Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution Unit and Families.**

It is suggested that restorative justice approaches to families of offenders be included within the objectives of the Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution Unit of the Correctional Service of Canada.

#### **7.3.2: Orientation for New Offenders**

It is recommended that orientation for new offenders include augmented information on restorative justice approaches to the family and corrections, on quality of life needs that may face their families, on relationship maintenance, and on sensitivity to how their actions within the institution could affect their families.

## **8. Criminalization Dilemma**

### **Recommendation 8.1: Awareness and Sensitivity Training during COTP**

It is recommended that the Correctional Officer Training Program (COTP) include an intensive component on the family of the offender as an affected population.

### **Recommendation 8.2: Community Engagement and Families**

It is recommended that CSC, through its Community Engagement Sector, include the needs of families affected by criminal behavior and by incarceration and reintegration in its community engagement and public education activities.

## **9. Continuity Dilemma**

### **Recommendation 9.1: Augmentation of Mother-Child Program**

It is recommended that the Mother-Child program be increased to include family support at halfway houses to assist with re-establishing the parent-child relationship, to enhance parenting skills, and to assist in housing, employment and community reintegration for mothers.

### **Recommendation 9.2: Parenting program emphasis for incarcerated parents**

#### **9.2.1: Evaluation of Parenting Skills Program.**

It is recommended that the Parenting Skills program be evaluated as to its effectiveness in developing and reinforcing the parent-child bond.

#### **9.2.2: Availability of Parenting Skills Program.**

It is recommended, based on the potential of intergenerational criminal behavior, that the Parenting Skills program be more readily available to incarcerated parents, and that the screening and selection of offenders for the program include those offenders who are non-custodial parents, that

either the offender or the child may become part of a blended family during incarceration or upon reintegration, or that the offender may have children in the future.

**9.2.3: Culturally Specific Parenting Program Components.**

It is recommended that parenting programs for incarcerated parents include culturally specific parenting program components for aboriginal mothers and fathers that address aboriginal/ First Nations understandings of family, kinship, parenting, and an understanding of community and spirituality.

**9.3: Programming for reintegration****9.3.1: Project Funding.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada establish an initial contributions fund of \$500,000 per year to support proposals for place-based, community based programs or counselling for families who are affected by reintegration. It is recommended that project funds be made available to the voluntary sector, Community Chaplaincies, faith-based groups, Native Friendship Centres, Native Elders and to community agencies. It is recommended that projects be based on written proposals that use best practices in service provision to families, that proposals are results- and community-based reintegration programs or counselling to families, and based on the findings and recommendations of this Report and other strategic approaches that CSC may choose to adopt. It is also recommended that projects and project approval recognize Canada's geographic and ethnic diversity. It is also recommended that, where possible, the proposed regional Coordinators, Family Support have regular and ongoing contact with projects within their Region, including serving as ex-officio representation on Boards of Directors or project management committee.

**9.3.2: Pre-release Orientation Package.**

It is recommended that a pre-release orientation package be developed for families. The pre-release orientation package would include what to expect upon family reintegration, relationship restructuring, and information and referral sources that include family counselling sources, community counselling centre information and other available community resources, including Aboriginal-specific information.

**9.3.3: District Parole Office psychologists.**

It is recommended that psychologists or counselors at the District Parole Offices provide family counselling to those families for whom difficulties may contribute to parole violations and parole revocation by the National Parole Board.



# **A Strategic Approach and Policy Document to Address the Needs of Families of Offenders: Safety - Respect and Dignity - For All**

## **Foreword**

One of the foundations of family life is an awareness of the importance of working together to build a life that meets everyone's needs.

Working in partnerships is a hallmark of how CSC Chaplaincy goes about finding ways to provide spiritual services to the people in CSC's care and custody. It is through these partnerships that we try to assist them and their families in strengthening their faith and their relationships with faith communities during and after their involvement with Corrections.

As CSC looks to the public and to organizations that offer services to families for their ideas about how the Service can better address their needs, we are particularly aware that this will only be possible through a partnership with family members who are affected by incarceration and reintegration.

We are, therefore, delighted to have as our partner in the development of a strategic approach not only the family members themselves who have participated in the consultations associated with this project, but also the leadership and coordination offered by the Canadian Families and Corrections Network (CFCN). This document, the opportunity to offer constructive feedback on it and the hope of change as a result of the final report, all owe their existence to the hard work and perseverance of CFCN, and especially its National Coordinator, Lloyd Withers.

We eagerly look forward to seeing the results of your feedback. We will assist the CFCN to present the recommendations that you endorse to the decision-makers within CSC in order to encourage their implementation.

Please accept our thanks for working with us and the CFCN to do what all families strive to do - build a better life together.

**Terry Richardson**  
**Director-General**  
**Chaplaincy Division**  
**Correctional Service of Canada**

## **Acknowledgements**

The Canadian Families and Corrections Network (CFCN) thanks the Chaplaincy Branch, Correctional Services Canada, for championing this project proposal. The CFCN particularly thanks Terry Richardson, Director General, Chaplaincy Branch, Chris Carr, the former Director General, Chaplaincy Branch, and Christina Guest, Project Officer, for their support and encouragement.

The CFCN expresses its thanks to the Portfolio Office of the Department of the Solicitor General of Canada for its support in sponsoring this project, and to the Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development program of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) for their financial support. Without the support of any of these departments, this project would not have occurred.

We express our appreciation to Elizabeth Martin, Quebec Coordinator of the CFCN, for her assistance with this project. We also thank the following persons or organizations who hosted or assisted at the public consultations: the John Howard Society of Newfoundland, the St. Leonard's Society of Halifax, the John Howard Society of Greater Moncton, Spring House, Jane Steeves, the Christian Council for Reconciliation, the Salvation Army Community Resource Centre (Montreal), the Centre de Jour L'Espadrille (C.J.L.E.) L'Espadrille Day Center (Montreal), Quebec Community Chaplaincy (Quebec), the Families, Corrections and Restorative Justice Coalition (Kingston), Heather Holland, Bridge House, Marg Holland, JustUs (Toronto), Welcome Inn Church (Hamilton), Jerry Majalahti (Winnipeg), LifeLine Inreach (Winnipeg), the John Howard Society of Manitoba, Saskatoon Community Chaplaincy, Jynel Dobrescu and Arlene Barnes (Edmonton), the Alberta Seventh Step Society, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver, and the Prisoner Family Forum and the John Howard Society of the Fraser Valley (Abbotsford).

We also thank the voluntary sector agencies and correctional managers and staff who participated in the consultation process, and the institutional and community chaplains who assisted in the questionnaire portion of the consultation process.

We thank each of the almost 750 participants in the public consultations, particularly the families who had the courage to share their struggles and concerns. The CFCN hopes that this process will address the quality of life issues that were shared with us.

**Lloyd Withers,  
National Coordinator,  
Canadian Families and Corrections Network**



## **Vision Statement**

The families of offenders can be recognized and supported as assets to offenders, the correctional system and society because of the role they can play in successful conditional release without compromising public safety or the security or good order of an institution.

## **Mission Statement**

The "Addressing the Needs of Families of Offenders" project will develop a strategy and produce a policy document that will offer recommendations on the needs of families affected by incarceration and reintegration, based on extensive consultation in communities across the country.

The recommendations will be addressed to government departments and voluntary sector agencies and will aim at improving policies, programs and services by increasing their ability to work together and communicate more effectively in addressing the needs of families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

## **Introduction**

The Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) is a joint initiative between the voluntary sector and the Government of Canada. The long-term goal of the VSI is to strengthen the voluntary sector's capacity to meet the challenges of the future, and to enhance the relationship between the sector and the federal government.

When the Voluntary Sector Initiative was announced in June 2000, part of its mandate was the enhancement of policy development in federal government departments by creating opportunities for input by voluntary sector organizations. This part of VSI's mandate is known as Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD).

On August 8, 2001, the Honourable Lucienne Robillard, President of the Treasury Board of Canada, Minister responsible for Infrastructure and Chair of the Reference Group of Ministers for the Voluntary Sector, announced \$11.6 million in support to voluntary sector organizations to lead 21 pilot projects that contribute to federal policy development. The Canadian Families and Corrections Network's "Addressing the Needs of Families of Offenders" was one of the approved projects.

### ***Terms of reference***

The terms of reference of the Strategic Approach and Policy Document on Addressing the Needs of Families of Offenders were that the CFCN would develop policy recommendations that address quality of life needs of families of offenders. It was intended that the recommendations would arise from a community-based consultation process that involved interested members of the public, voluntary sector agencies, faith groups, service providers, correctional staff, and families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

### ***Methodology***

Public consultations were held in fourteen communities across Canada in order to directly collect information on quality of life issues and to help form the policy recommendations on the needs of families of offenders. Over 600 people participated in these meetings. A questionnaire was also mailed-out to families and thirty completed questionnaires were returned. An abbreviated questionnaire was available on-line and ten submissions of this were received. Altogether, then, input was received from approximately 650 people. Interviews with several correctional staff and managers were also held.

A second round of consultations (Series B) was held in nine communities and attended by 99 participants. The Series B public consultations reviewed the draft policy recommendations.



### *Document Structure*

The structural components of the strategic approach and policy document are:

**Introduction** to the VSI and to this project

**Vision and Mission** for the strategic approach and policy document

**Strategic Policy Principles** proposes broad policy principles, based on:

**Safety** - The safety of the public is paramount, including that of the family, the offender, correctional staff and community members.

**Respect and Dignity** - Treating the family with respect and dignity and addressing quality of life issues engages the family as an asset and as a factor in desistance and in successful conditional release.

**For All** - A social benefit of services to families and children affected by incarceration and reintegration is crime prevention.

**Policy Recommendations** are discussed within a framework of eight dilemmas. The policy recommendations engage the family as a dynamic factor in desistance and conditional release success without compromising the good order and security of the correctional facility or community safety. The dilemmas are:

1. jurisdictional dilemma
2. ecological dilemma
3. risk management dilemma
4. geographical dilemma
5. research dilemma
6. resource dilemma
7. role dilemma
8. criminalization dilemma
9. continuity dilemma

**Best Practices Referencing** identifies several current activities as best practices in the delivery of services to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

### *Definition of family*

During the public consultation process, the definition of *family* required some discussion. In some instances, *family* appears defined as a marital or partnered relationship and often in a very traditional way. Other discussions and definitions focussed on the parental relationship, both with respect to the parents of the prisoner and the prisoner as parent, and how this relationship is overlooked within the justice and corrections process. Guardianship issues of a grandparent and the difficulties of bringing a grandchild to visit an incarcerated parent was the focus of several information and referral requests to the CFCN's toll free service for families.

Discussion about the definition of *family* included *kinship* as it relates to both Aboriginal and First Nations peoples. Concern expressed at how the 'system' narrowly defines family and tracks and evaluates family contact, particularly since many Aboriginal/First Nations peoples cannot visit at correctional facilities that are geographically and financially inaccessible to them. This concern was also echoed in families from Newfoundland and Labrador.

Another Aboriginal/First Nations issue was related to the raising of a child by a grandparent or another relative within the *family-as-kin* definition. Here concern was related to opinions that a parent in prison was without place in the child's life or that the child was not being well cared for, while in an Aboriginal understanding of family, the parent is still central in the child's life. These are issues of concern and are addressed within the Commissioner's Directive 702, Aboriginal Programming (CD 702), of the Correctional Service of Canada. CD 702 s.13 states:

**"Extended family" includes not only those family relationships that exist by birth but may also include significant others who are not related by birth, but are given the title of grandparent, parent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle or other relative.**

while CD 702 s.22 states:

**The institution shall recognize and respect that Aboriginal offenders have a wide and purposeful concept of family. Thus, decision makers, when exercising discretion involving an assessment of family relationships, must incorporate, understand, accept and honour the extended family relationships of Aboriginal offenders.**

Under the Palliative Care Guidelines, a draft document of the Correctional Service of Canada, the definition of *family* is 'those persons whom the dying person describes as family.' This is a progressive and inclusive definition.

During the public consultations there was discussion by other groups, including African Canadians, on how private family visits may be limited because of how family is defined. This included comments that for African Canadians and Canadians of Jamaican descent, the definition of *family* is 'those persons whom the person would describe as family.' Kinship was described as important

and several participants suggested that a more inclusive definition of *family* be used, mirroring the definition from the draft Palliative Care Guidelines.

The CFCN has historically used a broad-based and inclusive definition of *family*: family is defined as "a group of individuals who are related by affection, kinship, dependency or trust." It is this definition that is used throughout this strategic approach and policy document.

## A Priority For Policy

One of the stated priorities of the Federal government is promoting the well-being of children in Canada. Children who are affected by the criminal behavior of a family member, particularly through parental incarceration, are a significant concern.

Parental incarceration may be only one of several difficulties or one of multiple risks that may have a cumulative effect on the child. Difficulties may include poverty, low levels of parental involvement and supervision, and witnessing family or community violence. The child may also be the victim of the index offence.

Policy that guides service provision to families and children is crime prevention in that such services may reduce the cycle of intrafamilial and intergenerational patterns of criminal behavior.

Restorative justice, another stated priority of the Government of Canada, provides a framework for the justice and correctional system. Restorative Justice recognises that a harm has been done and that healing is needed.

With respect to the families of offenders, a restorative justice approach identifies the following aspects of harm reduction, reintegration and crime prevention, as summarized in *Waiting at the Gate: Families, corrections and restorative justice* (1):

**The family of the offender is harmed by the criminal activity of the offending family member.**

Offenders need to be aware of and acknowledge the harm caused to their family, their victim and the community by their criminal activity and of the impact of their incarceration on the family. The offender needs to work toward healing the harm of the past and to reduce the likelihood of their causing harm in the future through participation in treatment and programs.

**The family of the offender maintains ties in a correctional atmosphere that challenges the survival of the family.**

It is important to reduce the harm that is done to families either directly as a result of the correctional process or inadvertently in the stressing of the family relationship. This harm needs to be mitigated, minimized and repaired.

**The children of the incarcerated parent may be at increased risk of involvement in future criminal behaviour.**

Effective policy, practice and programs for children may be able to reduce intergenerational

criminal behaviour.

**Stronger family ties are an effective form of crime prevention and lead to safer communities. Strengthening well-being and relationships within families is crime prevention.**

Restorative approaches play a significant role in crime prevention. Family ties and family support may lead to lowered criminal activity, to increased conditional release success, to reduced recidivism and to lowered intergenerational criminal activity. The provision of opportunities to strengthen family ties and the introduction of policies and practices that mitigate the effect of incarceration on the family is essential. If there is a commitment to safer communities, then crime prevention must involve the provision of effective support to the families of the incarcerated.

Current research confirms that family and marital support and ties are one of the dynamic factors in conditional release success. While six other factors - employment, substance abuse, associates, community functioning, personal/emotional functioning and attitude, are intentionally addressed by CSC, the family and marital factor and its role in desistance and conditional release success has not received as much focus.

The Correctional Service of Canada is governed by an Act of Parliament, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA). The Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations (CCRR) are based on the CCRA. The general scheme of the CCRA provides a legal impetus for CSC to provide services to families. It is important to note, however, that the duty to provide such programming is not an explicit legislative requirement. What this means is that while there is no legal impediment to providing services to families affected by incarceration and reintegration, there is no legal obligation for it to do so.

Two provisions in the CCRA point to the Correctional Service of Canada's responsibility to focus on the role of families in the correctional process. The first is s.71 of the CCRA, concerning visits and correspondence:

**71. (1) In order to promote relationships between inmates and the community, an inmate is entitled to have reasonable contact, including visits and correspondence, with family, friends and other persons from outside the penitentiary, subject to such reasonable limits as are prescribed for protecting the security of the penitentiary or the safety of persons.**

The second is s. 4 of the CCRA:

**4e) that offenders retain the rights and privileges of all members of society, except those rights and privileges that are necessarily removed or restricted as a consequence of the sentence.**

While s. 9(d) of the CCRR is in the context of Escorted Temporary Absences (ETA's), the legislative requirement for involving the family affected by incarceration and reintegration in the Mission of the CSC is found in the Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations, s. 9 (d):

**"for family contact purposes to assist the inmate in maintaining and strengthening family ties as a support to the inmate while in custody and as a potential community resource on the inmate's release"**

Incarceration places a physical barrier between the offender and the community and most offenders will eventually return to the community. Walls and fences also separate the offender from family, but family support is too important both during incarceration and upon release back to community. Reintegration planning and programming, in many ways, needs to begin at the moment at which the judge imposes sentence. The rationale for incarceration is not an end in itself. The purpose is to take steps to reduce harm with attempts to address those issues that led to the criminal behavior and that will assist in the safe return of the offender to the community and family.

There can be no more basic societal right, privilege, and ongoing responsibility than the relationship with one's family. There is also an obligation to ensure that families remain as an asset in this process. The family carries the financial burden to maintain the relationship with the offender, including transportation costs, telephone costs, and costs for the Private Family Visiting program. The family may also carry the burden of stigmatization in the community, school or playground because of the offense of their family member. Addressing the burden placed on families is a component of reintegration.

A relationship-building capacity is inherent in effective reintegration. This is multifaceted. It begins with the offender's role in addressing the harm that broke the relationship with the community. It involves the ongoing opportunity for family members to maintain or strengthen a relationship that they choose to continue with the offender. It entails the relationship building capacity of the Correctional Service of Canada and its staff to provide effective corrections, treatment and programs that focus on reintegration. It includes the work of the voluntary sector, faith groups and community volunteers to increase community contact that can lead to successful conditional release.

In fact, a common purpose as it relates to families is captured in the *Mission Document* of the CSC:

***Core Value 1 - We respect the dignity of individuals, the rights of all members of society and the potential for human growth and development***

and reflects the following *Guiding Principles*:

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**We believe that respecting the right of all concerned individuals to be informed participants in the correctional process contributes to the quality of the process and of the decisions made.**

**We recognise the value of family and community relationships.**

**Core Value 2 - We recognise that the offender has the potential to live as a law-abiding citizen**

and reflects the following *Guiding Principles*:

**We recognise that the establishment and maintenance of positive community and family relationships will normally assist offenders in their reintegration as law-abiding citizens.**

**The involvement of community organisations, volunteers and outside professionals in program development and delivery will be actively encouraged.**

Addressing this important factor and engaging families in successful reintegration promotes the mandate of CSC, that of crime prevention and community safety. Correctional policy, practices, programs and attitudes has the potential of strengthening, or harming, family support. There is a growing awareness of this factor's influence on the offender's well-being during and after incarceration, the role played by the family in successful reintegration, and the need to address quality of life issues of families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

Family ties can make a difference but they require a supportive correctional process for this to happen. Several branches within the Correctional Service Canada have worked together with respect to families affected by incarceration and reintegration. Public policy places a value on the maintenance of prisoners' family relationships and on parent-child contact, including open (contact) visiting programs, the Private Family Visiting program, parenting programs, family violence reduction, and escorted and unescorted temporary absences (ETA's and UTA's) for family purposes, and support to voluntary sector organizations to offer services to families. It is important to facilitate the further development of family-based programming by institutional programmers, voluntary sector organizations and private agencies.

Effective policy is critical to guide this development and effective policy requires functional implementation. As several targeted consultation interviews suggested, correctional staff request appropriate guidance, and protection, to offer services to families affected by incarceration and reintegration. Service provision to families by correctional personnel, chaplains, volunteers, and voluntary sector organizations often faces resistance within a correctional facility. Policy requires the express support of senior decision-makers at each level of the policy's functional

implementation. This is needed to address any concerns that discussions of enhanced services to the family of the offender is lip-service or a correctional 'flavour of the month.' This is not only the concern of some correctional staff or of the voluntary sector: Family members are sensitive to an apparent incongruity between policy and its implementation and between practice and attitude with respect to the family affected by the incarceration and reintegration.

There is also a continuing need for the voluntary sector and for families themselves to contribute to policy and program development at federal, provincial and territorial levels. This includes the Government of Canada's community engagement activities and education and awareness programs, including that of the Correctional Service of Canada.



## Strategic Policy Principles



This strategic approach and policy document is based upon three strategic policy principles:

**Safety - The safety of the public is paramount, including that of the family, the offender, correctional staff, and community members.**

**Respect and Dignity - Treating the family with respect and dignity and addressing quality of life issues engages the family as an asset and as a factor in desistance and in successful conditional release.**

**For all - A social benefit of services to families and children affected by incarceration and reintegration is crime prevention.**

These strategic policy principles will be combined with the quality of life issues and concerns raised in the public consultation process. The strategic policy principles will then be associated with the dilemmas involved in addressing quality of life issues. Finally, policy recommendations will offer a resolution to each dilemma.

***Strategic Principle - Safety***

**The public image of the Correctional Service of Canada, for members of the public who come into the institution: volunteers, lawyers, families, is determined by Visitor Security Control and the V&C Department. It is critical to select people for those positions based on their ability to put forward the proper public image, not rotating staff into these sensitive positions on a 'who's available' basis or because of concerns about overtime.**

**These two departments [Visitor Security Control and V&C] need to be joined together. Not only do family members feel more comfortable dealing with the same staff, but they grow to trust us and provide important information that protects the institution and its staff and the safety of their family member.**

**Correctional Officer,  
Visiting and Correspondence Department,  
Springhill Institution.**

The Correctional Reserve is the institutional property on which a federal correctional facility sits, and upon which a specific set of rules apply. The 'correctional reserve' could also describe responses that accompany change or innovation. A conservative and specific set of rules apply here as well. Within both of these 'correctional reserves', the family of the offender is sometimes viewed as a problem to be accommodated, even feared, rather than an asset to be supported or encouraged.

For the family, visiting in a correctional facility can be intimidating. It is a different world with formal and informal rules and regulations. It can also be frightening because it imprisons their loved one. It appears to have unlimited power and control. In the institutional Visiting Area, the actions and behaviour of the family member and the prisoner may be under careful scrutiny or surveillance.

The divergent priorities of maintaining the good order and security of the institution while supporting the family as a factor in conditional release success and desistance is a demanding balance. Rick DeShaw, a former prison guard, in a letter to the editor of the Kingston Whig Standard, entitled *Why prison guards are angry* (2), summarizes the role of the correctional officer within the prison system:

- 1) Do not let prisoners escape**
- 2) Do not let prisoners hurt or kill one another or staff**
- 3) Do not let prisoners have contraband such as drugs, brew, weapons or other prohibited items such as credit cards and cellphones.**

These are important tasks. Balancing an open environment within a correctional facility, the threat of the introduction of contraband, and the implementation of the drug interdiction strategy are often divergent and conflictual priorities that can negatively affect the visiting experience for families. Operationally these priorities can sometimes subsume other goals or requirements, including the programming, treatment and reintegration components of the correctional process. It can also include an operational attitude of negativity as it relates to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

Families want their incarcerated member to be safe. The introduction of contraband into a correctional facility inevitably leads to violence and jeopardizes everyone's safety. The introduction of contraband puts their loved one, other family member's loved one, and correctional staff at risk of injury and may contribute to continued addiction and health problems.(3)

To ensure safety, including that of the family, correctional staff, and the offender, the Correctional Service of Canada has implemented a stringent drug interdiction strategy that includes active and passive security and surveillance, ion scanning or narcotics detection systems applied to personal effects of visitors as they enter an institution and drug detection dogs. The interdiction strategy assumes that everyone who enters an institution: staff, offenders, volunteers, and family members share a responsibility of ensuring the safety and security of the institution.

Family members feel overly targeted through the implementation of the drug strategy. In three of the public consultations, family members stated their understanding for the need for the drug interdiction strategy and security procedures, but requested that there be a democratization of search procedures. Rather than heavily targeting families, they requested that similar security procedures be applied to all who enter a correctional facility, citing events in which correctional officers or staff who have been suspended or fired related to violating the security of the institution. A similar recommendation is found in CSC's Report of the Task Force on Security, who recommended that:

**Standards of searching need to be enhanced with particular attention being paid to front gate procedures, where all visitors and staff should be subjected to the same rigorous criteria. (4)**

Family members are increasingly concerned with the reliability and settings levels, workspace cross contamination or cross-contamination from other visitors if correctional staff do not follow a stringent cross-contamination protocol while using the Barringer ion scanner or the NDS (Narcotics Detection System). Further, some family members reiterated their claims of 'false positives' at the public consultations and the inability or lack of a process to challenge test results. The tension and concern will ultimately continue, as the use of drugs within federal correctional institutions continues.

Critical comments by family members were directed towards institutions in which there was high staff turnover, with an accompanied changeability and perceived fickleness in implementation of posted and un-posted rules and regulations. During the consultation process, family members requested a principle of accommodation, that is, an interpretation of rules, regulations, policy, practice and attitude based on the unique dynamics of the family affected by incarceration and reintegration. A principle of accommodation recognises that the family may be in crisis and requires support, and that the day to day operations of the correctional reserve may limit responses to families to those based on security, but will not necessarily result in concern or care.

A tension also exists here, as correctional staff attempt to balance programs and activities that may support families with an equal concern that families can be manipulated by the offender to bring contraband into the institution, or that families may be at risk of future family violence or other offending behaviors.

Reconciling security concerns with being supportive to relationships and quality of life issues for families is challenging. It requires the creation of internal practices, policy (and attitude) to establish a partnership with the family in correctional objectives. The Task Force on Security Report picks up the importance of establishing a dialogue or partnership that is based on effective interpersonal relationships:

**Technological advances in security need to be assessed, standardized and implemented consistently in CSC. We caution however that an over-reliance on technology can erode the development of interpersonal relationships. (5)**

Family members confirm the effectiveness of an operational approach in which families have contact with a familiar face. Those institutions that appear to be more 'family-friendly' in their approach and that were mentioned by families as attempting to improve the quality of the visiting experience use stable rostering of selected staff in sensitive positions that have interaction with the public.

Another safety issue for families is the incidence of Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS. The family may require information and education, including the level of risk they may face and how to protect themselves. It is important for the family ask the prisoner if he/she is engaging in any risky behavior that also places them at risk. Risky behavior within the prison population allows the spread of these diseases, including tattooing, intravenous drug use, sharing of unsterilized needles, and unprotected sexual activity with other partners. A recent Health Canada report recommended that doctors begin routine HIV testing to pregnant patients because of studies that concluded that women were unaware of their partner's past behaviors that may place them at risk. (6,7) Similar information provision for families is needed related to fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect (FAS/FAE) and intravenous drug use. The increased incidence of the above issues are a growing concern among Aboriginal communities. (8)

Family violence, including the potential of family violence during the Private Family Visiting program, is a safety concern. The incidence of family violence among the federally sentenced men is high. In a file review related to family violence prior to the offender's incarceration, Robinson and Taylor (1995) found that one in three male prisoners indicated that they had been violent toward a family member. Their file review also revealed that 1 in 3 married male prisoners had been abusive toward their female partner and that 1 in 5 had been charged for the offence. Almost half of the subjects in the sample had repeated the offence with more than one partner. One in ten male prisoners with children had also assaulted their children prior to incarceration. Robinson and Taylor suspected that their results underestimated the actual violence and abusive behavior of male prisoners. (9)

Dutton and Hart (1992) found that female partners of male prisoners were at a high risk for family violence in the Pacific Region of the Correctional Service of Canada. They found during interviews with male prisoners and female partners that, prior to incarceration, family violence occurred in 58% of the relationships. (10)

The Correctional Service of Canada has instituted the Family Violence Initiative, including programming for high risk offenders that addresses the causes of family violence. Violence in the current or previous relationship is one of the significant reasons for the denial of Private Family Visits. Other reasons include attempts by the prisoner or the family member to violate the security of the institution or institutional violence or behavior.

It is also important to prepare the offender for reintegration back into the family, particularly among offenders who have previously used violence to establish power and control. A family that has successfully coped and restructured during incarceration may challenge the power and control attitudes or behavior of the returning family member and may lead to a recurrence of family violence.

Incarceration can serve as an intervention to a family in crisis and may bring an end to a cycle of violence. Some marital partners chose to continue the relationship with the perpetrator. Whether there was violence occurring in the relationship or not, incarceration may provide an opportunity for intervention with the family. Some relationships continue or form and re-form within the correctional process. Some relationships improve. Of the 20 English respondents to the questionnaire component of the policy document development, 50% responded that their relationship had improved since incarceration.

The common goal of restorative justice and the correctional process is safe reintegration into the community. Research has shown that quality family ties are an asset during incarceration and upon reintegration. Family ties are a dynamic factor in reducing criminal behavior and in increasing conditional release success (11). A supportive family, and thus provision of support to that family, is crime prevention.

Because family support is an important factor, the provision of opportunities to strengthen family ties and to institute policies and programs that mitigate the effect of incarceration on the family are essential. The opposite is also true: policy, practice and attitude can damage this important factor.

A 'family-friendly' approach to corrections recognizes the impact of the correctional process on the family. It promotes the safety of the family, correctional staff, community members and the offender. It recognizes that some policies, procedures, practices and attitudes may be harmful to the maintenance of the family relationship. A 'family-friendly' and a restorative justice approach attempts to reduce this harm.

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*Strategic Principle - Respect and Dignity*

**I made my family an offender's family.  
Rev. Rod Carter,  
Queen's Theological College, Kingston.**

**After the end of it all, you're OK, you're all right. . . . Because you get into that  
emotion where you think you're going to lose it. I'm never going to be  
the same. . . . [but] I didn't fall apart.  
Grace, whose son is incarcerated,  
Saskatoon.**

Family members have a right to be treated with respect and without bias: they were not sentenced by the courts. A 'family-friendly' approach to the correctional process recognizes that public opinion may project fears about criminals and crime onto the family members affected by incarceration and reintegration. Families know and experience this through the policies, practices and attitudes that they face both in the community and in correctional institutions.

Family-friendly policies and practices are needed to guide correctional staff such that the effects of incarceration on the family relationship is minimized or mitigated. Family-friendly policy and practice treats families with respect and dignity and engages the family as an asset and a factor in successful conditional release and crime prevention, while balancing safety concerns for the family, for the offender, for institutional staff, and for the public safety.

Treating families with respect and dignity does not threaten the good order and security of an institution. Respect and dignity proposes a vision that goes beyond a solely security-based response to the family. It includes an awareness of the collateral harm that the correctional process has on quality of life issues for families. It also means that the correctional process and its agents model appropriate relationships with others to the offender.

During the public consultation process, many quality of life issues of families were universally voiced. These quality of life issues can be loosely categorized under three headings: information and referral, socio-emotional support, and the collateral effects of the correctional process on relationship maintenance, including those of Aboriginal and First Nations families, the families of federally sentenced women, and families of Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Information and referral**

Families find that they lack accurate and timely information about available services. Families have difficulty in knowing how to access services and are sometimes reluctant to access services even after they are discovered. Families constantly search for information regarding the justice and corrections process related to incarceration and parole and what is expected of the offender and his/her family.

During the public consultation process, family members who attended the consultations were often surprised by the organizations that could provide services and that were available to the family. Family members also reported that organizations and institutional and community chaplaincies often did a poor job in advertising their services.

Information and referral needs include a spoken need for orientation about visiting and Private Family Visits, for information on how to conduct themselves while visiting at the institution, and what the inside of the institution where their family member lives and works looks like. Many family members are uninformed or misinformed about the correctional process, including security procedures and safety concerns. There is an expectation by CSC that the family will 'know the ropes' when no one is assigned the responsibility for informing the family.

It is often left to the offender to inform or educate the family on the justice and corrections process. Thirty family members completed the questionnaire component of the public consultation process. When asked about information provision on visiting and prison, over 50% of respondents indicated that most of their information came from the offender. Institutional staff were identified as providing this information by approximately 25% of respondents.

Orientation that is provided to the offender often includes a component on visiting rules and regulations within the institution. Patriarchal and controlling attitudes or shame on the part of the offender sometimes restrict the flow of information between offender and family. Furthermore, educational awareness programs for family members sometimes generate conflict within the partnered relationship. Offenders and family alike may try to shield or protect each other by not sharing information.

With respect to information about the offender, many family members do not realize that the offender must provide written consent before any CSC staff member can discuss any matters pertaining to the offender. This legal requirement is sometimes not adequately explained to family members.

Family members are sometimes unaware of the person's criminal record or offense history. Some families have not seen the court transcripts. Some families do not, or choose not, to believe the offence history.



Family members who responded to the questionnaire component requested that further information was required in the following areas:

<b>I need or would like to have more information or help provided to family members with the following: (n=28)</b>	
Maintaining my relationship with my family member during incarceration	11
Progress of my incarcerated family member	11
General information about prison	10
Administrative matters (e.g. parole)	10
The psychological well-being of my incarcerated family member	9
Understanding the behaviour of my incarcerated family member	8
Visiting regulations	8
Legal issues	8
Financial issues	8
Support groups	7
My own psychological well-being	7
Low cost accommodations while visiting	6
Transportation to the institution	5
Relationship issues	5
Information on children and incarceration	2
Other things: advocacy issues/prisoners rights	1
advocacy on a family member's behalf when problems with CSC	1
mediation	1

With respect to questions related to service provision, requests for augmented services were also heavily weighted toward information and referral, including toll-free information lines (n=14), Visitor Resource Centres to help families at the institution (n=12), Welcome Orientation to the institution and to visiting (n=11), and an information booklet on visiting rules and hours (n=11). Other service requests included opportunity for worship services for families at the institution (n=10), a family support worker in the institution or community (n=9), family counselling (n=9), and supports group for families affected by incarceration or reintegration (n=9).

### **Socio-emotional support**

Families described the following needs and challenges:

- Their individual need for socio-emotional support from agencies who understand the dynamics and quality of life needs of a family in crisis because of their involvement with the justice and corrections process;

- Their desire to be treated with dignity and respect, including the elimination of a tendency toward the criminalization of families and towards intimidation on the part of correctional staff that families face when visiting at the institution;
- The threats and manipulation by offenders from inside the institution to do illegal things;
- The challenges of single parenting;
- The difficulty with children's behavioural issues;
- The lack of awareness or sensitivity of needs of children of the incarcerated parent;
- The poverty in which they live;
- The need for a broader understanding of the definition of family and kinship; and
- Among aboriginal families at the Saskatoon consultation, there was an expressed need for increased contact between native elders, chiefs and band counselors and their incarcerated family member to aid in future community reintegration.

The family affected by incarceration and reintegration may be a family in crisis. They are families who may not know how to access services or may be hesitant to access supportive services. Some families who do access services often find it difficult to continue to participate in programs or treatment and may withdraw prematurely. By the time family members have reached the Correctional Reserve, they may have already experienced significant disruptions in their family life, and for a significant duration. If the family relationship survives the arrest, trial, sentencing and conviction of the offending family member, the family faces the maintenance of a family relationship in a setting that may further stress the survival of the family.

The emotional load for the families with respect to feelings of grief, loneliness, abandonment, isolation, anger, and fear can be overwhelming. Also, as one family member during the consultation said, "the family is left holding the bag in the community" for the criminal behavior of the offender. The offender may be in prison, but the family may reside at the same address or the same community in which the offence took place.

Incarceration may cause financial and employment concerns for families. For example, in the questionnaire component of the consultation process, 64% of respondents identified that incarceration of their family member adversely affected their financial situation, with 35% of respondents identified that they had financial difficulties. In fact, 21% of respondents identified that they did not have a choice in keeping employment following their family members arrest.

The justice and correctional process is a cycle of loss and grief for the family. This emotional cycle of incarceration tends to follow some predictable ups and downs, and are shown in the following table. Relationship issues take on increasing importance in the emotional cycle of incarceration. There is often a growing investment by the offender in a family relationship, including the partnered and parenting relationship. This investment may not have existed prior

to incarceration. The family becomes one of the main links for the offender to the community.

<b>Emotional Cycle of Incarceration for Families Affected by Incarceration and Reintegration</b>	
Arrest, Trial and Sentencing	Anticipation of loss and initial grieving
	Detachment and withdrawal from the offending family member
	Renegotiation of relationship
Incarceration	Emotional disorganization
	Renegotiation of relationship
	Family stabilization
	Anticipation of parole and reintegration
Parole/ Reintegration	Renegotiation of relationship
	Reintegration and stabilization of relationship

Wright and Wright (1992) concluded in their study that strengthening families - that is, increasing the quality of the marital relationship - is justified despite the fact that further study is required to prove that there is a causal relationship between family life and a decrease in criminality (12). It appears that it is the quality of the relationship that is the significant factor, making it appropriate to support and improve the quality of the family relationship. This approach is in contrast to critical attitudinal responses toward the offender and family relationships that focus on family dysfunction or that the offender is only interested in maintaining the relationship to 'use the family.'

Many relationships end at or during incarceration or upon reintegration. For some families, the re-offending of the offender, the nature of the offence, or the fact that the offense was against a family member, stresses family resources beyond its ability to cope or be resilient and the family chooses to have limited or no contact with the offender. Marital relationships end in separation and divorce. Finally, some relationships end at reintegration because either the offender or the family is unable or unsuccessful in renegotiating the relationship after release.

The public consultations in Moncton, Winnipeg and Edmonton found that some female partners in the community still cared for the offender, but have ceased to love their incarcerated partner. The female partner continues the relationship however, knowing that the correctional process will assess the marital relationship as an asset in conditional release. Once the offender is on parole or is successfully reintegrated, she ends the relationship. This phenomenon requires further study.

Families are both ready and reluctant to discuss socio-emotional concerns. They readily discuss concerns once they are convinced that the service provider is 'OK'. They are reluctant to discuss concerns in that they may have already experienced community stigmatization, may have had negative experiences with social welfare or child protection agencies and are distrustful of justice and corrections personnel. Gaining access to families affected by incarceration and reintegration is often problematic and they are potentially hostile and resistant to contact. The family fears that

information that they share may lead to retributive or interventionist responses that will negatively impact them or their children, or that it may impact the treatment that their incarcerated family member receives. Requests for information about family life are sometimes construed as intrusive or invasive.

These fears may not be totally unfounded, as many family members become viewed by the correctional process and by the community only within the context of the offender and the offence. This 'criminalization' of the family occurs and a stigma of guilt by association is assigned to the family. The labeling may often continue in the schoolyard for the child of the incarcerated parent.

The stigma experienced by families was captured by Jane Steeves of Women in the Shadows (WITS) in the Moncton consultation:

### **“Stigmatization”**

#### **Jane Steeves, Women In The Shadows (WITS).**

*Thank you giving me the opportunity to introduce you to a group of people who are stigmatized by society in general but who are thought to be one of the strongest groups of individuals by those who work with them: families of inmates. My plan is to talk about "stigmatization" in society and its direct and indirect effects upon inmate's families. Also, I will briefly touch on some of the emotions that flow from this stigmatization.*

*Goffman defines "stigma" as someone who is reduced in our minds from a whole and normal person to someone that is tainted and discounted. It also refers to having blemishes of character that are perceived as "weak willed, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty.*

*Just as the prisoners are not easily accepted within society, their families also experience similar difficulties. Society is not ready or willing to accept the stigmatized person nor make contact on equal ground.*

*Another group that is stigmatized are those who live in poverty. This societal problem is one that is relevant to our discussion on inmate's families. Public policy or attitude often presumes that the poor are personally responsible for their circumstances. Again, they experience added humiliation and shame.*

*If family members of the prisoner are not poor prior to the arrest, they will be afterward. Various expenses will impact on financial security of family members: legal bills, relocation cost, visiting expenses, living on a fixed income, and loss of a "wage" earner. We must see a prisoner's family as one who is in a "posture" of overload. They are in financial overload, emotional overload, task overload, and stigma management overload.*

*There are a variety of emotions that a prisoner's family member goes through. I've chosen to talk briefly about a few of them.*

*Loneliness and isolation: People do not seem to rush to support the person who has someone in the newspaper for committing a crime and is going through the courts. Often a*

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*spouse leaves home and her support system to render support to her loved one. She becomes a single-parent instantly or over time. She loses the support of her spouse.*

*One woman who moved here from Ontario to be close to her husband left a supportive family behind. She lived in an apartment with her son and stayed hidden there from Feb-May and saw no one but the Social Service worker and the various store clerks.*

*With parents who have a loved one in prison, people shy away because they do not know what to say and it becomes easier for parents to isolate themselves and live alone in their own pain.*

*A mother and father stayed in their house after their son was arrested and later when he went to prison. No one came by or no one called. They lost important support, friendships and normal relationships.*

*Family members keep the secret, by making stigma-managing statements.*

*"Tell your teacher that Daddy is working on the oil rigs".*

*"Daddy is on a government project".*

*"Daddy is in the army, that is why he wears a uniform".*

*"My husband left me."*

*"My husband or son had to work away to find work."*

*Anger: There is a sign in the chapel at Springhill Institution that reads, "Anger is love turned upside down". Family members often experience anger. They are angry with their spouse or child, angry with the various participants in the situation, and angry when the information is not available for them to make informed decisions.*

*One woman arrived home from work with four police cars surrounding her house. She walked in as the police were arresting her husband and doing a thorough search of her house. She was arrested without having any idea of what he was involved in. Her house was totally searched with everything strewn all over with all closets and drawers emptied and left all over the place. She was at the police station until midnight before they realized that she knew nothing about her husband's involvement in selling drugs. At midnight, with no transportation home and without her purse, they said she could go home. She protested because of her situation and they eventually drove her home.*

*Her neighbors, who had been friends, stopped speaking to her, leaving her in isolation. She maintained certain anger throughout his incarceration. She was innocent and yet she had to work to maintain the household, pay for the legal costs, endure the shame and guilt, and pay for the extra cost of visiting the man she loved. She came to our group in tears and shared a story second to none.*

*It is a privilege to know her.*

*Fear is defined as "the feeling associated with expectancies of unpleasantness. This may involve an expectancy of actual pain or it may involve an expectancy of distress of another sort, like fear of failure or a fear of loneliness..." Ellenson talks about "fear" as it refers to stigma. The person is afraid of being left out of the crowd; they have fear of rejection and fear of ridicule. Being part of the inmate's family means isolation, shame and guilt. Fear is related to anxiety, is a feeling of being caught and overwhelmed. Instead of becoming sharper, the person's perceptions are generally blurred or vague.*

*Many women/parents do not have adequate information or do not know how to access information from C.S.C. and that lack of information gives them anxiety over what to expect and how the system operates.*

*Other women as well as parents are hearing stories from their husband or child of what might happen to them if they does not bring in contraband [into the institution]. One mother begged staff in Visiting and Correspondence to protect her son. She was in tears and terrorized by what might happen to him.*

*Some family members are pressured into bringing drugs or money and they really don't want to. The fear of being caught is paramount as is sometimes the fear of what will happen to them if they are. The loved one complies and breaks the law because of this fear. One cannot imagine the "fears" these people are going through. Fear of not making the rent, fear of not being able to maintain her family and home, fear of not being able to pay a very high phone bill, fear of not being able to get to the prison due to a lack of transportation and funds. She is always in fear of being found out. She is afraid that her secret will be revealed and that the whole world will know her husband is in jail and her children will be ridiculed. These fears are multiple and too plentiful to mention. And in terms of the parents of a prisoner, they are equally afraid.*

*The prisoner's family do not look "strong" in society's eyes. Often times they do not look strong in the eyes of other members of their own family. But in the eyes of those of us who work with them, they are considered to be some of the strongest people we know. We have only the deepest respect for them.*

*Their love for the family member makes them choose the battle, choose the hardship and the journey of pain on behalf of someone they simply love. This is their strength. They do this while maintaining their family and managing under the cloud of stigmatization that surrounds them.*

### **Collateral effects of the correctional process on relationship maintenance**

Collateral effects of the correctional process challenge relationship maintenance. These include:

- Communication difficulties for families, including the expense of the current phone system by which the offender must make collect calls and the fact that conversations in the visiting room, on the telephone or by mail not being private;
- Transportation difficulties, high transportation costs to visit, particularly at geographically isolated institutions;
- Low cost accommodations during visiting;
- Child care costs during visiting;
- Economic and housing relocation difficulties for those families that move closer to the institution;
- Changes to institutional placement and institutional transfer that may be disruptive to the family, including the family moving to maintain the relationship
- Release to a community away from family because of the absence of a halfway-house in the local community or lack of bed space;

- A seemingly low priority for programming for relationship maintenance (marital and parental);
- Lack of / poorly maintained children's activity area in the Visiting Room with few opportunities to strengthen the parent-child bond;
- Lack of consistent application of rules and regulations, including feeling targeted, and together with a perceived lack of equality in search procedures between different groups;
- The absence of an ombuds process for families to address decisions that impact on them, to redress complaints about the treatment they receive, to resolve interpretations of policy regarding the family on the part of parole officers and institutional staff; or to challenge the criminalization of families in the correctional process;
- Concerns related to access by the offender to treatment programs earlier in the sentence to address the family's need for the offender to progress to parole and to a crime-free lifestyle.

The collateral effects of incarceration were also evident in three specific areas in the public consultations. These are: a lack of sensitivity on the part of some correctional staff as it relates to families, particularly families of aboriginal background; the logistical, geographic and economic difficulties of families of the north and families in Newfoundland and Labrador in maintaining a relationship with an incarcerated family member in a correctional facility in southern or mainland Canada; and lack of awareness of the needs of families of federally sentenced women.

### **“Impact of Incarceration and Reintegration on the Inuit Family”** **Sarah Anala, CM, GN, Inuit Liaison/Elder, Atlantic Region CSC.**

*What is the experience of and the impact on the Inuit family once a family member gets incarcerated and upon reintegration?*

*In order to understand some of the answers to that immense question, one must become aware of a few of the logistics concerning Labrador. One must first understand that the land-mass of Labrador can easily swallow up Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the island of Newfoundland with lots of room to spare. There are no roads or railway north of Goose Bay. One must fly in by twin otter or trek by ski-doo in the winter to Nain, Davis Inlet, Hopodale, Postville, Makkovik and Rigolet. It takes about one and a half to two hours to fly into Nain which is the northernmost community on the North Coast Labrador. In the summer, you fly in or take the ferry north. The majority of the offenders come from Nain, which has a population of approximately 1500. So, we are talking remoteness and long distances.*

*There is high unemployment in Northern communities and some struggle with poverty.*

*When the bread-winner or the hunter of the house-hold becomes incarcerated, the family is placed in a very precarious situation. The cost of living in the north is almost triple of living here. When one considers a 19 cent cucumber can become \$3.19 and a regular size Christmas turkey can cost up to \$80.00, one can imagine, what happens when the wife and family has no one to hunt for the caribou, the seals, the birds and the fish; the hunter is a thousand miles away*

*in Dorchester. If the wife had been working, she now has to stay home to look after the children. With the cost of hydro, oil and buying wood, she has to choose if she will buy that or snow-boots and snowsuits for the -50 degrees Fahrenheit winter. Some times an extended family member may bring some caribou or seal meat, if he has the means (i.e., ski-doo and gas, to go hunting).*

*Inuit have been referred to as the race who has the most willingness to do for their children than any other race. I have known an Inuk (singular of Inuit) mother who hasn't eaten in three days so that the children will have in times of scarcity. This is done with no sense of burden, sacrifice, or of being put out. I have seen an Inuk mother with three children, get up to send them off to school with no heat in the house. By dinner and supper time, she had managed to get enough wood to make bannock.*

*There have been Inuit women whose hydro and heat bill had accumulated and then disconnected, having to move in with extended families who were already severely over-crowded. It was reported, one winter that there were nineteen people living in a three bedroom bungalow.*

*With no running water and no heat, it is difficult to do the laundry. So the children go to school hungry and in dirty clothes. Some children turn to petty theft and break and enters to be able to go and buy potato chips and pop.*

*No matter what hardship had existed before incarceration, the children love their parents unconditionally and vice-versa. The greatest pain experienced by the mother is the children crying for their father, or their favorite uncle. I have taken a young Inuk "favorite uncle" home on compassionate grounds. There were 30 children, ages 18months to 8 years old, meeting their uncle at the airstrip. When he came out of the little plane, there was a melody of children's voices, bouncing off the mountains, with "UNCLE!" and hand clapping. My client was so covered with children, you could hardly find him! The lonesomeness is almost more unbearable than the poverty. In amongst all this, the love never diminishes so, the wife and children count the days before return.*

*A regular family of a mother and child can fly to Nain and back here (NB) \$1900.00 seat sale, if you are lucky. As a result, no one can fly from Nain to visit a family member on their own resources. We, as Inuit, have been very fortunate to be involved with the John Howard Society in St. John's Nfld. Up to now, they have been able to bring down a couple of mothers, sisters or a father, usually for the Newfoundland Social, in Dorchester and in the past, to Westmorland and the Atlantic Institution. For that, the Inuit are forever grateful or else, there wouldn't be any family members visiting.*

*Often-times, the families affected have no telephones but we Inuit, as a team, have become very innovative. We have a very healthy working relationship with the counselors and healers at the Labrador Inuit Health Commission. We'll agree on a specific day and exact time, one of the LIHC staff will get the family members by ski-doo or ATV and we'll connect the family members from my office. Sometimes, there is a line-up of daughters, sons, nieces, and nephews, intertwined with laughter and tears. In this old world, everyone has a sense of belonging and of being loved. At the same time, there is healing work being done by the family members and my client.*

*There is social services and counseling services but, because of the cost of living and cost*



*of food, that is not quite enough. The families who have good paying, consistent jobs, that are not just seasonal jobs, are able to fare better. Those who have healthy, non-drinking extended families also look out for each other as, that is the traditional and customary way of the Inuit.*

*The reintegration experience of families has been improving as the expertise, experience and net-working of the helping team gets better. Because of this healing work starting in incarceration and continuing in reintegration, the families are tending to stay intact on their long-term healing journey.*

*Some of the conditions placed on Inuit offenders upon return home are not realistic. How is one going to stay 500 feet or 500 yards from another individual when there is only one road to the post office or one entrance to a store when there are only three stores and one post office? Because Inuit are highly patient and forgiving, whatever the reason was has already been healed, traditional Inuit restitution has already been done and the System lets it linger on.*

*I believe beginning to learn about what the Inuit families face and being at the same table is a good start to begin to brain-storm about what direction the next stop to take is in how to help the Inuit families who have been left behind.*

*I am of the belief if the Euro Western world allowed us, the Inuit, to practice our traditional Inuktitut ways of forgiveness, mediation, restoration and restitution, the Inuit families wouldn't be so adversely affected by incarceration of a family member.*

*I will share two quotes from Inuit women: "Using the criminal justice system is like trying to fine-tune something with a crow bar when it is inherently broken."*

*"Jail is a system created by white, middle-class men, because the loss of freedom and the stigma attached to it have a significant impact on that social group. Those deterrents don't work here."*

*Thank you for listening to me and I pray our paths will cross again. I will end with a borrowed passage:*

*Don't walk in front of me,  
I may not follow  
Don't walk behind me,  
I may not lead  
Walk beside me  
And be my Friend.*

*Nakunek (Thank you).*

### **"The Deported" of Newfoundland"**

**Lloyd Withers**

**Families and Corrections Journal Vol. 4 No. 5 (Sep/Oct 2000)**

*Valerie Corcoran, the Prison Liaison/ Family Services Coordinator at the John Howard Society of Newfoundland explains, "In the mid '80's, about the time when all the work was being done on Port Cartier and Atlantic Institution, there was bid by Newfoundland to have a federal institution too, but it was unsuccessful. Newfoundland inmates were transferred out of the province. We call them, "The Deported."*

*There are between 100 - 130 identifiable Newfoundlanders currently serving time in the Atlantic Region of the Correctional Service of Canada. Newfoundlanders, both men and women, serve their federal sentence on the mainland of Canada and at significant distance from family. Further, the opening of Nova Institution for Women in Truro, Nova Scotia, meant that women from Newfoundland who might be able to serve their sentence in Newfoundland under an exchange of service agreement between the federal and provincial government, could be transferred out of province. An exchange of service agreement gives them a choice of serving their time in a federal institution or provincial jail, but bed space, program needs, and available space can make it an undesirable choice or a non-existent option.*

*The distance and cost to visit a family member is prohibitive. For example, the airfare for a family from Nain, Labrador, to Halifax is \$2000.00, and the family is still hours from a federal institution. The John Howard Society of Newfoundland, with the support of the Correctional Service of Canada, developed the Family Prison Visit program to assist the families of federally incarcerated men and women in 1984. The Family Prison Visit occurs each year, this year from October 13- 16. Program funding allowed for the payment of the complete cost of visiting for 15 families to five federal Atlantic institutions. Four families were assisted to each of Atlantic, Dorchester and Springhill Institutions, and one family at each of Nova and Westmorland Institutions. Cost cutting is maximized using seat sales, buses and bulk bookings.*

*In order to be considered for the program, applications were completed by the federal prisoner and forwarded to the John Howard Society of Newfoundland. Sixty applications were reviewed and screened based on length of sentence, date of last visit, needs related to the visit, and release date. It was a difficult process to determine the final selection of families since each application has merit. Valerie and other staff coordinated and supervised the family visits to the institutions, including organizing group socials, a traditional Newfoundland dinner, games and barbecues. Private family visits were also coordinated and reserved with the institutions for families who are eligible.*

### **Experience of Federally Sentenced Women**

One of the roles of a parent is to assist children to cope with stressful events. When a father is incarcerated, the mother typically continues in a supportive role. There is a continuity of care for the children. This is often not the case for the children when a mother is incarcerated. Since many women offenders were single mothers at the time of their arrest, their children lose a major support which compromises their ability to cope with this stressful event. There is not a continuity of care for many of the children of incarcerated mothers: the majority of the children will reside with a grandparent, in foster homes or in other alternate care settings.

One of the recommendations of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (1990) was that mothers could live with their children, full-time or part-time, within the institution. After significant study, the Mother-Child program was instituted. The objective of the Mother-Child program, according to Rachel Labrecque (1995) is to "foster and promote stability and continuity for the child in its relationship with its mother. The **best interests of the child**, including the

physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of the child is the primary consideration in decisions relating to participation in the Mother-Child Program." (13) The first Mother-Child Program took place in Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge in 1996 and was fully implemented in 1997. The program is gradually expanding to other non-maximum security regional facilities for federally sentenced women.

Family ties are important to federally sentenced women. The construction of regional facilities has decreased the distance between some women offenders and their families. While the number of federally sentenced women is small relative to the number of male offenders, the need for 'family-friendly' services and programs for them is high. It is particularly important to address quality of life needs for federally sentenced women relating to family, including programs related to parenting in prison, parenting from a distance, early childhood development, and reintegration/reunification skills for parent-child relationships.

### **“Incarcerated Mothers”**

#### **Frances Lesway, Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver.**

*Significant numbers of female offenders are the sole custodial care-giver of their children. When these women are incarcerated their children must either be cared for by the government or a family member, typically a grandparent. These women thus struggle with essentially co-parenting their children from prison and attempting to maintain a relationship with the child with whom they believe they will be reunited with upon release. The question of immediacy for the reunification is contingent upon whether the state has custody of the child.*

#### **Child Friendly Space**

*During the Burnaby consultation, the need for child-friendly visiting space at the institution was discussed. The sterile prison décor and design was pointed out. It was noted that child friendly space which met the needs of children for food, activity and quiet space had been available on a pilot basis during the 1980's when it had been funded by CSC. The benefits of supportive family space was discussed from both the child's and parent's view with supportive research noted as to the benefits of interaction in a positive and normalizing way.*

#### **Mother-child Program**

*The need to have a mother-child program in BC for federal women was discussed. A woman spoke of giving birth to her child and then having to relinquish custody at the hospital because no such program was any longer available in the province.*

#### **Supported Family Visitation**

*Women discussed the economic reality of their lives with the subsequent standard of living. The effect was that children are impeded from visiting either because of lack of money to transport the child to the institution (bus stops are too distant for children to be able to walk the distance); taxi's are exorbitant, and private vehicles are rare. Thus, a supported visitation*

*program is required to enable children to attend the institution to see their mothers.*

*Secondly, the need for assistance to bring the children from the homes of foster care is necessary because foster parents are often unwilling to attend the prison and bring the child for a visit. Thus, a supervised access worker is required to assist with visitations and supervise the child and provide the necessary debriefing and transport back to their residence.*

### ***Specialized Parenting Programs and Assistance***

*A program to assist women with maintaining a relationship with their child such as the mother-child read a book program which operates in Atlantic Canada and at Collins Bay Institution for incarcerated fathers was mentioned. Women read books and tape their voices then the book and recording is sent to the child. It was noted that activities which can normalize relationships are beneficial for both child and mother.*

*Support which assists women to communicate effectively on the phone to influence their children and the parenting of them was noted as necessary. Current program which emphasizes communication skills such as the Cognitive Skills Program fail to recognize the domains within which women need to use effective communication skills. This includes parenting, relationships, and as victims of exploitation. Programs fail to address this issue, emphasizing communication as anger management.*

*A program which specifically addresses the issue of children and relationships is necessary to support women with having successful relationships to return to in the community.*

*There were gender differences recognized for women and men. Men typically have partners that will maintain contact with them when they are incarcerated while the inverse is true for women. Typically the relationships of women do not survive incarceration. Thus women develop relationships with other inmates for emotional support.*

*The need for a supportive community linkage program was discussed in which community relationships would be assisted and supported was noted. Community Access Workers currently devoted their time to assisting inmates to find housing and negotiate eligibility requirements for social assistance. Emphasis is not placed upon a case work relationship with family members – much the way hospital social workers maintain contact and support family members of those critically or terminally ill so as to maintain the relationship for the patient. Such an approach would assist women to maintain their community relationship and decrease the degree of isolation with which they struggle.*

*Programs such as circles of support try to recognize the isolation of women and their enhanced risk to self or re-offending. These programs are partially attempting to address a problem however which could be reduced if it was prioritized and resources were placed there prior.*

### ***Structural Impairments***

*Multiple complaints about the cost of the millennium phone system were raised and the financial burden placed on families was noted. The phone system is a toll and charges system which results in costs of a minimum of 90 cents for a local call and as high as 2.25 a minute for*

*elsewhere in the province. The cost of local calls are thus between 10 and 45% of an inmate's daily income. The phone system is particularly punitive for family contact when there is long distance involved.*

**Community Transition**

*Transition, transition, transition! The need for supportive community workers to assist families to readjust to the return of their loved one was noted.*

*Offenders must similarly adjust to a changing world and a child, or children who have gone on to develop without much contact with the released parent. The parental relationship must be supported and re-established.*

*The need for individual and family support and counseling was noted. It was noted that the programming support needed to come from within the community and from a community agency because of the trust issues involved. Offenders and families wanted to feel free to speak honestly without a parole officer reflecting on the spoken words and the offenders' risk management and offence cycle.*

**Community Investment**

*The link between having a parent involved in the criminal justice system and the increased risk for child of substance abuse, lower academic achievement, and involvement in the social and criminal justice systems was noted. The investment in families is therefore strategic and preventative both for the offender and their children.*

*Strategic Principle - For All*

*Who else but family has the stick-to-it-iveness to hang in there for justice?  
Chris Carr, Former Director General,  
Chaplaincy Branch, CSC*

"For All" includes families affected by incarceration and reintegration. They are Canadian citizens who are affected by the criminal behavior of their family member. They are also affected by the decision of the courts who act on the behalf of all citizens, as well as the justice and corrections officials who carry out the decision of the courts. The families themselves are not sentenced by the courts and remain citizens, with all the rights and privileges of citizenship. They require, as all Canadian citizens may from time to time, assistance and support with the difficulties that they may face.

"For All" includes the child affected by parental incarceration. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by consensus by the UN in 1989. This international treaty identified the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. Canada ratified the CRC in December, 1991. Article 9 (3) of the CRC states:

**Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests. (14)**

This is particularly relevant for the child affected by parental incarceration. For a child, a parent in prison is still a parent. Contact is needed and required, unless there is indication that visiting the incarcerated parent is not in the best interest of the child. For this reason, information sharing is needed between child welfare agencies and justice and corrections department.

"For All" includes women. It became clear during the consultation process that there is a gender issue: the majority of offenders are males and the majority of those who visit at the correctional facility are the female partners of male offenders. For the most part, these women are single parents surviving on a single income. They often experience distress around their economic status, housing issues, transportation, parenting and relationship issues while concurrently dealing with justice, corrections and social services systems at the federal, provincial or territorial levels. Gizelle Dias, of the Prisoners HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN), commented on gender at the Toronto consultation by stating:

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**It is a women's issue. The majority of visitors are women, for both male and female offenders. It is women who sit in the visiting room, who bring in their children. Women who are disadvantaged, single parent, single income. They deserve support.**

Given that the majority of offenders are male, it could also be stated that while crime is a male problem, visiting policy and practice and care is a women's issue.

These gender-based issues cannot be avoided. Many women who visit tend to be disempowered and marginalized, and often with multiple needs. They may not know how to obtain the information and referral services to socio-emotional, mental health services and financial support. They constitute a group that can be further marginalized all too easily. They feel judged, misunderstood and further marginalized when they do access services, stating that service providers lack understanding of their unique needs or that the service provider is openly critical of the continuation of a relationship with the incarcerated offender.

"For All" includes the offender: a parent in prison continues to be a parent. Those who are not currently parents may have children in the future or become a member of a blended family. This also requires consideration in program planning and in admission criteria for parenting programs, as well as research into the parent-child bond and the issue of parental incarceration as a risk factor in intergenerational criminal behavior. (15) "For All" includes the needs of incarcerated mothers and continuity of care issues for children of incarcerated mothers. These may further the social benefit to children and to communities. Finally, "For All" includes the offender, as most will eventually return to the community.

"For All" includes communities. For example, the public consultation in Hamilton identified the consequences of incarceration and support to families, particularly with respect to the social benefit of support during reintegration and the consequences to communities if support is not offered. Jeff Wingard and Rosa Ekoko, Social Planning and Research Council, stated in a brief to the Hamilton consultation:

**Incarceration by itself is not a cause of homelessness, however, the lack of community supports that often accompany the release of a person into the community combined with poverty and a lack of available, affordable housing, can result in homelessness.**

Jeremy Travis, Amy Solomon and Michelle Waul, in *From Prison to Home: The dimensions and consequences of prisoner reentry* shows the scope of difficulties facing families. While Travis, Solomon and Waul speak to the situation in the US, their comments are applicable to the Canadian experience. Many of the quality of life issues, including the effects and differences of paternal and maternal incarceration that these authors identified, arose at the public consultations, such as:

**Incarceration and reentry have substantial impacts on a large and growing number of families - ranging from the loss of financial and emotional support to the social stigma attached to having a family member in prison. These complex relationships, combined with the great distance between many prisons and their home communities, require creative management on the part of the families, government agencies, and community support systems to minimize the harm to children and families. (16)**

Travis, Solomon and Waul continue by discussing the destabilization of communities that occurs because of incarceration and reintegration, ways to increase the resilience of families and the community, and the need to address family and offender issues related to criminal behavior, substance abuse, employment, housing and counselling.

The impact of incarceration on the family and children in turn has an impact on the community. Providing services to families and children is a form of crime prevention. There is a social benefit - "For All" - in providing services to families and children who are affected by incarceration and reintegration.



## **Policy Recommendations**

There is a tacit acknowledgement of the impact or effect of crime, criminal behaviour and the correctional process on families. There are, however, several dilemmas that have slowed the furthering of services and programs within the correctional process. The dilemmas require identification as they may slow policy implementation or impede best practices as it relates to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

In this section of the policy document, each dilemma is identified and followed by policy recommendations that establish a coordinated, consistent and effective strategic policy approach. The approach engages the family as a dynamic factor in desistance and successful conditional release and without compromising the good order and security of the correctional facility and while meeting community safety concerns. This is done within a restorative justice understanding, reducing the harm caused to families, directly or inadvertently, by the offender, by the justice and corrections process, and within the community.

The dilemmas are the:

- 1. jurisdictional dilemma**
- 2. ecological dilemma**
- 3. risk management dilemma**
- 4. geographical dilemma**
- 5. research dilemma**
- 6. resource dilemma**
- 7. role dilemma**
- 8. criminalization dilemma**
- 9. continuity dilemma**

### *1. Jurisdictional dilemma*

**Until the jurisdictional dilemma is resolved, there will be limited change in approaches that involve the family of the offender.**

**Ted Baker,  
Truro Parole Office.**

Jurisdiction poses a difficult dilemma. With respect to families affected by incarceration and reintegration, there is an increased need for interdepartmental and intersectoral cooperation. After all, whose responsibility is the family? The Federal Government may be ultimately responsible, but transfer payments to the provinces are meant to ensure that social support to families are a provincial and municipal responsibility.

Families face the provincial and territorial correctional system first, even if it is by way of passage into the federal correctional system. Provincial offences are those that garner sentences of less than two years. Family and relationship restructuring tends to be limited in sentences of 30 days or less. After 30 days, the family must, out of necessity, make many decisions related to "doing their own time", in the absence of their incarcerated family member. Those offenders who will serve a federal sentence, ie. those of two years plus a day or more, pass through the provincial and territorial correctional systems on their way to federal institutions, and with an increased family and community disruption.

The jurisdictional dilemma arises for families when they attempt to access services. It is not uncommon for many women who are in a relationship with someone who is federally incarcerated to be informed by a provincial agency that she should access federal services or services at the federal correctional facility. When she attempts to access services at the correctional facility, she may be informed that no or limited services exist and that she needs to access provincial or municipal services. The family ends up feeling further misunderstood and unsupported as it falls into jurisdictional, information and service delivery voids.

The jurisdictional dilemma highlights the important role of the voluntary sector agencies and faith based organizations that are, or could, provide services to families. While there are funding and accountability issues to be resolved, these agencies and organizations are able to cross intergovernmental, interdepartmental and jurisdictional lines.

Funding, however, is increasingly limited within the voluntary sector. The public consultation revealed funding jealousies and 'turf' issues between voluntary sector agencies. This was complicated with funding restrictions that limited deliverables to corrections related (offender-based) programs and services as opposed to corrections oriented (family-based) programs and services. There was a lack of training, guidance or guidelines within the voluntary sector in

offering services specific to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

The starting point in resolving the jurisdictional dilemma rests within governmental departments, including the Correctional Service of Canada. It is important that issues related to family of the offender receive leadership and formal acknowledgement within the corporate structure. Without this jurisdictional step, the engagement of the family as an asset to desistance, successful conditional release, community safety and crime prevention will continue to rest with limited, localized initiatives by committed individuals within voluntary sector organizations.

### **Recommendation 1.1: Placement of Families Issues within a Responsibility Unit of NHQ, CSC**

#### **1.1.1: Family Issues Unit.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada establish a Family Issues Unit. This is an essential component in endorsing the importance and profile of families as an asset to the correctional process. It is suggested that the Family Issues Unit provide coordination of policies, proposals and initiatives related to families, promote policies addressing quality of life needs for children and families; conduct consultations aimed at improving visiting areas and the maintenance of family contact; encourage best practices, networking and dialogue between correctional organizations and the voluntary sector, develop and maintain a database of public and voluntary sector organizations that provide services to children and families affected by incarceration and reintegration; and encourage dialogue between prisoners, families, sector agencies and correctional staff on family quality of life issues.

#### **1.1.2: Chaplaincy Branch Placement.**

It is suggested that the Family Issues Unit be located in the Chaplaincy Branch because of its operational involvement with families. Because of the recommended scope of work, it is important that the Community Engagement Branch, Policy Branch, Operations and Programs Branch, Aboriginal Issues and Women's Issues be integrally involved with the leadership of the Family Issues Unit.

### **Recommendation 1.2: Annual Policy Meeting**

It is recommended that NHQ hold an annual policy meeting, chaired by the Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programs (or a designate) and attended by sector and branch heads, to review any current or new policy initiatives or emergent issues that relate to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

### **Recommendation 1.3: Citizens Advisory Committees and Families of Offenders**

The Citizens Advisory Committee, as representative of the public who participate in the correctional process, can ensure better public awareness and bring a substantial contribution to the humanization of the facilities, policies, directives and procedures of the Correctional Service of Canada. It is recommended that CAC increase their leadership in institutional and community

issues related to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

**Recommendation 1.4: Inter-jurisdictional and Interdepartmental co-operation**

**1.4.1: Inter-jurisdictional and interdepartment co-operation.**

It is recommended that federal, provincial and territorial inter-jurisdictional and interdepartmental co-operation continue discussions with respect to exchange of information between Child Welfare agencies and the criminal justice system. It is recommended that consultation on family issues specific to Aboriginal/First Nations peoples and other minorities, as well as gender-based issues be built into this process.

**1.4.2: Canadian Assistance Plan/ Canadian Health and Social Transfer.**

While the Canadian Assistance Plan/ Canadian Health and Social Transfer is beyond the scope of this policy document, services to families is one form of crime prevention. It is suggested that discussions continue among Federal, Provincial and Territorial Correctional Departments to ensure adequate social support for families, including families of offenders as an affected population group.

## *2. Ecological dilemma*

**[If a CSC staff person was providing services to families] I would use them. But would I trust them? Probably not. They would be hired by the government and they would be going by government rules, and they have certain policies that they have to follow. They would not be trusted too much. . . . Who can help? Not-for-profit organizations, like the Salvation Army or Elizabeth Fry, or someone who is trained to help the families. Understand what feelings we have as families of inmates and also help the inmates to adjust to coming home, working together, trying to put both sides together as a family.**

**Dianna,  
Hamilton consultation**

There is a complex ecology or inter-relationship between the offender, the family and correctional personnel. The ecological dilemma develops early in the family's experience with the correctional process and challenges communication and dialogue. The ecological dilemma is reflected in a 'shared paranoia' that exists between some families, correctional personnel and service delivery staff in voluntary sector organizations. Further, any attempt to shift from power-based relationships or inequities that typify the current ecology to a person-based response faces divergent and competing pressures within the 'correctional reserve.'

Within the federal correctional process, the first contact between the family and correctional staff is often during the Post Sentence Community Assessment (CA). The CA usually occurs before the family begins to visit at a correctional facility and involves an interview with the family by a parole officer. The parole officer may be employed by the Correctional Service Canada or on contract through a voluntary sector agency. The focus of the CA is to evaluate family and community support and to determine the level of risk and risk management. This contact has the potential for initial inroads to support the family, including the provision of accurate information and referral and to identify safety and quality of life needs and issues.

The public consultation process demonstrated however, particularly at the Kingston, Hamilton and Abbotsford consultations, that many families experience the Post Sentence Community Assessment as exclusively focussed on risk management related to criminal behavior, substance use by the offender, and concern for family violence. Some families feel that they are being enlisted as "secondary parole officers" whose role is to provide supervision and information on the offender to the parole officer. Families sometimes felt that there was little concern that they were in crisis because of their involvement in the justice and corrections process or that there was any concern with relationship maintenance. Some felt judged or criticized for maintaining a relationship with the offender or that they felt considered as co-accused with the offender.

Information provision to the family during the post sentence community assessment was met with significant approval at the Edmonton and Abbotsford public consultations. It was suggested by the participants that *Time Together: A survival guide for families and friends visiting in Canadian federal prisons/ Qui purge la peine? Un guide de survie à l'intention des familles et des amis en visite dans les prisons fédérales canadiennes* (17) would be an excellent choice.

The next contact with the correctional process may be during the visiting program at the institution. Here, family member perceive a conflict of interest and ask, "How can correctional personnel provide services to families while being responsible for incarcerating my loved one?"

The Visits and Correspondence Department at a federal correctional institution is not a program area. Its a security and the approach to the family is in the context of the offender, the offence and the potential threats to the good order and security of the institution. The actions of some family members who introduce contraband into an institution affect the visiting experience of all visitors. These influence the security response to all family members. The result is that families feel that the most restrictive level of security is generally applied during their visiting experience at maximum and medium security institutions.

During the consultation process, several strong statements were made by family members about this component of the ecological dilemma during the visiting experience. Family members requested a change in the attitudes and practices that treat family members as guilty of a crime by virtue of their maintaining a relationship with their incarcerated family member. Family members are automatically under suspicion for introducing contraband into the institution. They must go through search procedures that correctional staff do not, even if the family member does not have a criminal record. There were several concerns about strip searches and the intimidation of family members. Some participants called for the same treatment for all persons entering a prison, drawing attention to events at several federal institutions at which correctional staff were dismissed because of the introduction of contraband. Family members requested a democratization of search procedures.

Families requested a principle of accommodation, that is a greater range of responses, to assist them in maintaining their relationship, since relationship maintenance often incurs great financial and emotional cost for the family. For example, some families did not feel that their needs were taken into consideration by CSC staff when decisions were made to transfer an offender, especially when the family is not notified prior to travelling a significant distance to visit the offender. These decisions by CSC staff stress the resilience of family ties that are already maintained under a distressing and difficult situation.

The consultation process found that an augmenting of services to families included a resolution of the ecological dilemma by establishing dedicated service delivery personnel, preferably through the voluntary sector. It was also found that some institutional and community Chaplains, Native

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Elders and Native Liaison Officers, whose current duties included services to families, felt inadequately trained or unsupported in working with families. They may feel daunted by the complexities of the ecological dilemma of working with this affected population because of the lack of policy, institutionally-based guidelines, protection for the service provider, or because they may face negative responses from their peers for working with, or being identified as being supportive of, families of offenders.

One recent development in Canada is the Visitor Resource Centre concept (VRC). While Visiting Centres have existed in Britain for several years, the VRC in Canada was first piloted at Kingston Penitentiary. Supported financially by RHQ (Ontario) Chaplaincy, the VRC provides trained service providers inside the visiting area who can meet with the entire family to provide information, parent education and support and activities that strengthen the parent-child bond. Chaplaincy Branch RHQ (Ontario) funds the Canadian Families and Corrections Network to staff and administer the VRC. The VRC at Kingston Penitentiary has been recognized as a best correctional practice by the International Prisons and Corrections Association. (18) While the universal provision of staffed VRCs would be the ideal way to address many quality of life concerns for families, the VRCs would be most effective at maximum security institutions, institutions for federally sentenced women, and institutions that are geographically isolated.

Staff training and awareness is also a critical component of addressing the complex interactions that typify the ecological dilemma. This includes training on interacting with families and the public, training on responses to families in crisis and specialized training in family counselling. Staff who have contact with the families of Aboriginal offenders should also have Aboriginal cultural awareness training. Awareness training should extend to those staff who work closely with families in the community such as parole officers and program delivery staff even when those programs are not Aboriginal specific.

Guidelines for practice related to service provision to families are also required for institutional and community chaplains, Native Elders and Native Liaison officers. This includes screening for the ability to provide services to families as a component in the Chaplaincy Selection Process, with similar guidelines for practice for Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers.

Comments by family members and by some correctional staff during targeted interviews suggest that linking Visitor Security Control and Visits and Correspondence Departments is effective both for service provision to families and interdiction. This may be particularly the case when the staff are selected and trained to respond appropriately to the public while carrying out their security procedures. Family members are more likely to provide information to 'family-friendly' staff with whom they relate regularly and positively. This strategy has both a safety and a respect and dignity component.

The implementation and effectiveness of the recommendations can only be assured through the inclusion of family issues in accountability contracts or performance agreements of wardens,

Executive Directors and District Directors, as well as by establishing a means of identifying local issues related to the ecological dilemma. While advisory committees that involve family members have been used with some success in the past, a standard method of gathering family concerns at the ecological level is important. It is recommended that families have the opportunity to complete a consumer satisfaction survey. It will then be possible to include family concerns in accountability contracts and in institutional or parole office objectives.

A checklist for institutional accessibility is also recommended for institutional planning purposes. The checklist can serve as a starting point for making the visiting experience as welcoming as possible, that is, that the visiting experience can be normalized without normalizing prison for the family, particularly children. The checklist would include such items as the location and distance from the visitor parking area to the Main Gate/ Visitor Security Control area, the size and accessibility to the institution's Waiting Area during inclement weather, comfort of the seating in the Visiting Room, availability of appropriate food, provision of activities that assist in relationship maintenance during the visit, availability of children's activity area, etc.

As in the quotation from the Hamilton public consultation that opened this chapter, families affected by incarceration and reintegration were requesting a coordination of service provision both within the correctional process as well as in the voluntary sector. It was also evident that families wished to have identified persons who are responsible for this coordination, and that service delivery occur through the voluntary sector. Through this means, aspects of both the role dilemma, resource dilemma and the ecological dilemma could achieve significant resolution.

For this reason, the establishment of regionally based Coordinators, Family Support, is recommended. One pattern is the Family Contact Development Officer (FCDO) with the Scottish Home Office, HM Inspectorate of Prisons. An FCDO position exists within each Scottish prison. These positions have met with success, particularly when the staff person requested the position and when the FCDO duties were the staff person's main responsibility as opposed to a related duty. Additionally, while the dilemmas discussed in this strategic approach and policy document were not specifically identified by correctional staff in Scotland, it appears that the FCDO's ability to work within these same dilemmas, of finding a means to work within the 'correctional reserve,' and a capacity to build relationships with families were major factors in whether the FCDO position was successful. (19)

Under the Scottish model, the main duties of the FCDO are :

- 1. To liaise with statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with family contact within the FCDO's establishment in order to support strategic developments.**
- 2. Continually strive to improve family contact and the facilities offered, including visit frequency, visit duration, family visits, quality of visits, visit centres,**



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**refreshment areas and all facilities within the waiting room. Provide a co-ordinating role for voluntary agencies involved in visit arrangements.**

**3. Responsible for preparing an information sheet for prisoners' families on family contact and facilities within the establishment, ensuring that it is updated when changes are implemented.**

**4. To ensure that prisoners and their families are consulted on a regular basis regarding quality of visits and facilities available within the establishment and wherever possible take cognisance of their views when change is implemented.**

**5. To make a formal review of family contact provision twice per year and report to management. To ensure that that views of all parties are obtained, the postholder will be required to carry out surveys of prisoners' families, and meet with focus groups of prisoners, staff and management to evaluate implemented change.**

**6. To assist with the development of and to act as a reference point for local prisoners' Families Support Groups in Scotland.**

**7. To link with Staff Training Officers to coordinate staff training inputs to develop awareness of the needs of prisoners' families. (20)**

Further forecasted developments of the FCDO by HM Prison Inspectorate are found in Appendix C of this document. The developments comprise a comprehensive role for the FCDO with respect to families, staff and the voluntary sector, both in the institution and in the community.

Based on the public consultations, it is preferable that the Coordinator, Family Support positions occur through an arms-length funding partnership between the voluntary sector or faith-based organizations and the Correctional Service of Canada. As funding is also limited, there is potential that the Coordinator, Family Support can provide services on a regional basis. This would include information and referral provision to families as well as to carry out a liaison role with respect to families with correctional institutions and with existing correctional staff who may already provide services to families and with the voluntary sector. It is recommended that the Coordinators, Family Support work from the Regional Reception Centre/ Assessment Unit in each Region of the CSC. As the Reception Centre/ Assessment Unit is where the first federal institutional contact by family members takes place, it makes sense to establish the position there. In this way early and timely provision of information to both the offender and family can occur. This may also assist with subsequent penitentiary placement and transfers of the offender through the correctional process and into reintegration. This could provide a liaison with existing resources for families within the institution, the community, and within the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The ecological dilemma contains attitudinal elements that may be difficult to change. Attitude

cannot be legislated by policy. That being said, families who visit at the institution or who meet with parole officers in the community are Canadian citizens and members of the public. This alone is reason to treat them with dignity and respect. Establishing an environment in which positive family contact can be maintained requires as much diligence as maintaining safety and security. Because of the importance of family support, family ties should not be stressed beyond their limits.

**Recommendation 2.1: Coordinators, Family Support**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada fund the voluntary sector or faith-based organizations for five full-time Co-ordinators, Family Support. It is recommended that each Coordinator, Family Support be based in the Regional Reception Centre/Assessment Unit of each Region.

**Recommendation 2.2: Visitor Resource Centres (VRC)**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada fund the voluntary sector or faith based organizations to establish Visitor Resource Centres at maximum security institutions, institutions for federally sentenced women, and institutions that are geographically isolated. It is further recommended that the Coordinator, Family Support coordinate or liaise with the voluntary sector or faith-based organizations who operate the VRCs.

**Recommendation 2.3: Inclusion of families of offenders issues in accountability contracts.**

Institutional Wardens, Executive Directors and Parole District Directors are currently responsible for the operations within their responsibility units. Operationally, this includes the level and quality of support to families affected by incarceration and reintegration within their responsibility unit. Services to families affected by incarceration need to be incorporated within accountability contracts, operating plans and operational reviews.

**Recommendation 2.4: Responses to Families in Crisis.**

It is recommended that each institution and parole office establish a Standing Order that specifies a chain of command for responses to families who may experience crisis in the institution/parole office, or who may contact the institution or parole office and indicate that they are in crisis. Such crises may include the death of the offender, a death in the family of the offender, crises that arise for families in the Visiting and Correspondence Area, and family violence in the Private Family Visiting Unit. Identification of staff who are able to respond to any of these situations is needed such as Psychology, Chaplaincy, Native Elder, health care, social work where applicable, Parole Officer, Primary Care Worker and also voluntary sector agencies.

**Recommendation 2.5: Staff Training**

**2.5.1: Staff - Visitor Interaction and Training.**

It is recommended that there is selection and training for all staff who have direct contact with the public, including family members and visitors to the institution or families in the community. The

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focus of training is on awareness and sensitivity to the needs of families affected by incarceration and reintegration. For institutional staff, training should adopt a public-service focus without compromising the good order and security of the institution. The training should also include cultural awareness related to Aboriginal families. Aboriginal awareness training should include those staff who work closely with families in the community such as parole officers and program delivery staff where those programs are not Aboriginal specific.

**2.5.2: Training for Family Counselling.**

It is recommended that institutional and community chaplains, institutional and community Parole Officers and Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers receive training related to service provision to families affected by incarceration and reintegration that includes training for family counselling. There should be recognition that Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers may not conduct counselling in the same manner as non-Aboriginals.

**2.5.3: Guidelines for Practice - Chaplains, Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers.**

It is recommended that the Chaplaincy Branch, CSC, develop guidelines for practice related to services to families as a guide to both Chaplaincy Teams and the line and functional supervisors of Chaplains. This includes screening for training, experience and ability to provide services to families as a component in the Chaplaincy Selection Process. It is further recommended that the CSC's Aboriginal Sector develop similar guidelines for practice, screening and training for Native Elders and Native Liaison Officers.

**Recommendation 2.6: Unifying Visitor Security Control and Visits and Correspondence Departments**

It is recommended that Visitor Security Control and the Visits and Correspondence Departments be staffed as a single department and reporting to the same unit manager or equivalent. Comments by family members and correctional staff suggest that linking Visitor Security Control and Visits and Correspondence Departments is effective both for service provision to families and for drug interdiction when the staff in these two departments are selected and trained to respond appropriately to the public while carrying out security procedures, and with a stable rostering. Family members become more trusting when dealing with the same security officers on a regular basis, and thereby feel more comfortable in discussing matters related to drug interdiction with them.

**Recommendation 2.7: Checklist for Institutional Accessibility****2.7.1: Checklist for Institutional Accessibility.**

It is recommended that a checklist be developed to assess an institution's accessibility to visitors and families. The checklist would include such items as the location and distance from the visitor parking area to the Main Gate/ Visitor Security Control area, the size of and accessibility to the institution's Waiting Area during inclement weather, comfort of the seating in the Visiting Room, availability of appropriate food, provision of activities that assist in relationship maintenance

during the visit, availability of children's activity area, etc.

**2.7.2: Consumer Satisfaction Survey.**

It is recommended that each institution, parole office, Community Correctional Facility and Community Residential Facility have an annual consumer satisfaction survey of visitors and families to gather suggestions for evaluating and improving the visiting experience, and that the results of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey be reflected in Warden's or District Parole Director's accountability contracts or objectives. Components of the survey should include how all staff who have interaction with families, including parole officers, chaplains and other program and service staff and correctional officers assist families in maintaining family ties.

**Recommendation 2.8: Post Sentence Community Assessment Information Provision.**

It is recommended that a package of information on the impact of incarceration on the family be given to families at the Post Sentence Community Assessment (CA) by the parole officer. This may include information such as the Time Together/ Qui purge la peine? information booklet for families. Aboriginal-specific information should be included in information provision.

### ***3. Risk management dilemma***

**Effective corrections involves using whatever can be gathered, including the strength of family, as a support in reintegration. The results that have been demonstrated so far is that COSA [Circles of Support and Accountability] works, but doesn't work all the time. Family is the same. Support to families? In the long run, it works, even if we are able to tap into the extended family to support reintegration.**

**We need to balance security and family. Families need to know that it is a safe and secure environment for prisoners, for their loved ones, to live in. Families need to be educated about this.**

**There are often complaints by family members or visitors as being approached as suspects. [Entering a correctional facility] should be considered in the same light as Customs and as Customs Agents: when I go through an airport or through customs, I should expect to be searched.**

**Ross Toller,  
Deputy Commissioner, Prairie Region,  
Correctional Service of Canada**

The Canadian Families and Corrections Network's toll free information line provides no-cost information and referral to families. About 75% of callers are partners or girlfriends and 20% of callers are parents, and the remaining 5% are grandparents, friends and other relatives. In its three years of operation, all callers have been family members of male prisoners.

The question inevitably asked by parents is, "What did I do wrong?" Self blame and feelings of shame are followed by concerns for their son's safety and a deep desire for the correctional process to provide effective services or programs to their son that can lead him to a crime-free lifestyle.

Information requests from grandparents include those who either wish to assist or prevent their grandchildren from visiting their father in a correctional institution.

For partners and girlfriends, information requests focus on visiting or the reason for denial of participation in the Private Family Visiting program (PFVs). The Private Family Visiting program is a 72-hour period, every 3 to 6 months, in which the family lives together inside the institution. Accommodations are in townhouse-style accommodations inside a fenced compound on the correctional reserve.

Generally, the answer to the partner about why they might be denied a PFV is straight-forward: because of violence by the prisoner in a previous or current relationship, because of a violation or

attempt to violate the security of the institution by the visitor or prisoner, or because of the institutional behavior, the lack of required treatment program or the unsuccessful or non-compliance with treatment by the prisoner.

Other partners wish to complain about negative responses and the criminalization of family members by correctional staff; insensitivity by some staff about family life; the difficulties in maintaining relationships during incarceration; changeable rules and regulations, lack information sharing, and child behavioral issues.

Operationally, decisions must be balanced with safety, including that of family members, correctional staff, and the public. These concerns must be paramount. Some family members understand this, while other families don't realize the effect of introducing contraband into the institution. Contraband jeopardizes the family's safety, the prisoner's safety and the safety of correctional staff, as it inevitably leads to violence inside the institution. A safe, secure environment for their family member requires the support of the family.

It became clear during the consultation process that families fall within a unique category that includes volunteers. It is paradoxical in that both groups are viewed as powerful and weak within the correctional environment. The two groups are powerful in that they are members of the public and care must be taken in dealing with them. They have a certain status in the prison because of their unique position within the prison hierarchy. However, there are constant fears that family members and volunteers are weak and are easily 'conned' or manipulated by prisoners to violate established rules or the good order and security of the institution, or to challenge administration.

Both family members and volunteers may need orientation. Orientation processes are already in place for volunteers. A similar process that goes beyond a community assessment and security screening is needed for families. In fact, orientation to visiting and to the institution is requested by families, as long as orientation does not interfere with or take time away from their visit with their loved one.

In any case, treating family members (and volunteers) with dignity and respect does not violate the good order and security of a correctional facility. Unfortunately, the actions of some family members impact the visiting experience of all families at that institution.

Risk management is a dilemma and the safety of the family member, the offender, correctional staff, and the community is paramount. Decision makers and parole officers, when faced with the consequences of critical decisions around safety concerns and risk, will err on the side of caution. There is a need, however, to go beyond the fears associated with risk management.

**Recommendation 3.1: Orientation and orientation material for families and for visitors****3.1.1: Orientation to visiting.**

It is recommended that, when feasible, families receive an orientation to the visiting process or procedures in a correctional facility. Orientation should also include information on family violence, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, FAS/FAE and what to do if they are pressured by the offender. As travel costs may be high for some family members, it is recommended that the orientation take place during the Post Sentence Community Assessment, at a local parole office, or through a voluntary sector or faith-based organization. If the orientation takes place at a correctional institution, the orientation should not impinge on the visiting time of the offender and the family. For example, an orientation at the institution could take place immediately prior to regular visiting hours while the family is waiting for the visiting period to begin. If an orientation is not operationally feasible, orientation material should be mailed to the family along with the notification of security clearance to visit the institution.

**3.1.2: Virtual Tour.**

It is recommended that institutions prepare a Virtual Tour, such as that of Regional Psychiatric Centre (Prairies), that family members can access through the Internet. This approach orients the family to the facility at which their family member is incarcerated and serves to alleviate questions and fears for the visitor and children.

**Recommendation 3.3: Family violence**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada continue its current approach to the prevention of family violence in the Private Family Visiting program.

**Recommendation 3.3: Search and security procedures****3.3.1: Review of search and security procedures.**

It is recommended that institutional search and security procedures be regularly reviewed to ensure that family members, visitors to the institution, volunteers and other members of the public are treated with respect and dignity while on the Correctional Reserve.

**3.3.2: Ion Scanner/ NDS system.**

It is recommended that correctional staff exercise best practices to ensure that equipment and work spaces are not cross contaminated while processing visitors to the institution using the Barringer Ion Scanning System or Narcotics Detection System. It is further recommended that there not be an over-reliance on this technology and that security decisions related to visiting be based on a variety of security information sources and not solely on the results of these systems.

**3.3.3: National Data, through the National Drug Strategy Coordinator.**

It is recommended that data be collected on a national basis by the National Drug Strategy Coordinator on the number of families and visitors per year who are charged and/or placed on

closed visits or no visits for introduction of drugs/contraband.



#### *4. Geographical dilemma*

“Sometimes, in their loneliness, they forget.”

**Maria, on why inmates phone family so often,  
despite the high cost imposed on families  
because of the mandatory use of  
collect phone calls.**

The geographical dilemma is evident on many levels. The offender is physically separated from family and community. Several quality of life issues for families result from this and a variety of strategies are needed to address the geographical dilemma. Federal correctional facilities may be located at a significant distance from family support. Many facilities are geographically isolated, not on public transportation corridors, and are expensive, complicated and time-consuming for families to reach in order to visit.

Transportation costs and the mandatory use of collect telephone calls are major costs for families, yet these are two very important activities for families and for the maintenance of family ties. With respect to telephone costs, monthly phone bills can be excessive because of the current phone system that requires the incarcerated offender to phone collect. Family comments during the public consultations suggested that phone bills as high as \$600.00 or more are not unheard of. The average Canadian citizen has a choice of a variety of telephone services that minimize the cost of collect and long-distance phone calls. The mandatory use of collect telephone calls is a quality of life issue for families affected by incarceration that requires an immediate resolution.

With respect to transportation costs to visit, of the 27 families who answered the questionnaire associated with the consultation process about travel to visit at an institution, the average travel time was 2.75 hours, with a range of 10 minutes to 1.5 days. Public transportation to institutions in rural Canada is complicated, costly or non-existent and few assisted transportation services for families of offenders exist. The John Howard Society of Ontario provides a van service from London and the greater Toronto area to many Ontario provincial and federal correctional facilities, while the Salvation Army's bus service from Ottawa to Kingston area federal prisons provide some financial respite for families. These two services are limited in terms of availability and are corridor services only. Bridge House, in Kingston, provides a van service from its facility to Kingston area federal institutions. All three services have user-fees, but the cost is less than taxi or regular bus services. Drop-off and pick-up times by the services coincide with institutional visiting hours.

For some families, these services are the only affordable ways to visit. It is important that transportation services receive some public support, particularly in order to assist low-income Canadians. It is also important that visiting hours at correctional facilities are at times when

families and children are most available to visit or may most want to visit, such as evenings, weekends, school breaks and statutory holidays. It is also important that, where public transportation is available, that visiting hours are scheduled to take advantage of this service.

### **Hospitality Houses**

The distances involved for family members to visit at Canadian prisons can often limit contact and add considerable expense to families that are already coping with financial challenges.

One of the substantive movements within the voluntary sector and the faith community with respect to services to families affected by incarceration is the development of hospitality houses. These houses provide low cost accommodation for families, primarily women with young children, who travel from other communities to visit at a federal correctional facility. The houses also provide emotional support and some programming for families while at the residence, and address some of the concerns related to visiting,

There are currently five hospitality houses operating in Canada: Spring House in Springhill, Nova Scotia, Mountain Top House, in Dorchester, New Brunswick, Bridge House I and II in Kingston, Ontario, and Family House in Abbotsford, British Columbia. A sixth house, Residence Bon Pasteur, in Port Cartier, Quebec, was closed recently because of insufficient funding.



**Spring House, Springhill, Nova Scotia**

The idea of a residence to assist families of prisoners at Springhill began with Judy Allard, the wife of the former Atlantic Regional Chaplain and the current Assistant Commissioner, of CSC's Community Engagement Branch, Pierre Allard. She saw the need to provide accommodations and nourishment at a minimum cost and "nourishment for the spirit as well." Spring House is operated by the Christian Council for Reconciliation, an Atlantic-wide, non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to the ministry to prisoners and their families during their incarceration and

after release. Spring House has operated since 1985, providing low cost accommodation for families while they are visiting at Springhill, Dorchester or Westmorland Institutions. Spring House consists of four bedrooms for guests, a meeting room (which can serve as a bedroom), an apartment for staff, a kitchen, a dining-room, a sitting room, and a utility room.



**Mountain Top House, Dorchester, New Brunswick**

Mountain Top House is the most recent hospitality house, opening in 2001. Within walking distance of Dorchester and Westmorland Institutions, the hospitality house is built on land leased from the Correctional Service of Canada. It is operated by the Sisters of Notre Dame du Sacre-Coeur, with one part of the house occupied by the Sisters and the other part accommodating up to nine visitors.



**Bridge House I and Bridge House II, Kingston, Ontario**

The wives of two inmates and the wife of a clergyperson founded Bridge House, the first hospitality house in Canada, in 1980. It operates as a not for profit charitable organization. As

a result of increased need, Bridge House II opened in 1998, on the grounds outside of Collins Bay Institution. The two houses provided 39,267 women person-nights and 19,337 children person-nights) with low cost accommodation while they were visiting at one of the eight local federal correctional facilities between 1982 and 2000. A low cost transportation service shuttles families to the institutions for visits. Trained Early Childhood Educators provide low cost childcare while mothers are visiting at the institutions. They also offer specialized summer programs for children.



**Family House, Abbotsford, British Columbia**

The Family House in Abbotsford, BC, opened in April 1984 by the John Howard Society of the Fraser Valley. It was in response to a growing need for short term accommodation for families visiting loved ones in one of the eight prisons in the Abbotsford area. The staff have extended their focus for families to include relocation assistance, general information, and someone to talk to.

Family House provides a warm welcome to families coping with demanding times. In the first eight months of 2002, Family House provided 850 person-nights for families who were visiting at local correctional facilities, 600 supportive interventions, and over 2000 contacts with community agencies. Their children's program provided subsidized recreational and educational programs, and a yearly birthday and Christmas gift for over 200 children. For many of these children, it was the only gift that they received.

Continued public support for existing hospitality houses is needed as well as financial aid for families who visit at particularly remote or isolated institutions, such as at Port Cartier Institution in Quebec.

The geographical dilemma is relevant to engaging the family in programs and services. Expectations of family support by correctional staff may be limited by distance. Retention of

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families in treatment is often difficult and is compounded by the distance that family members need to travel. Daylong or weekend-long relationship enrichment events, for example, may be more feasible than ongoing, weekly treatment programs or services. Anything more may prove to be an unrealistic financial and time-commitment expectation for families.

At three public consultations, several families claimed that they are visiting less during normal visiting hours and saving their limited income to pay for Private Family Visiting or to attend institutional socials. They also indicated that these activities are more 'normal' with respect to family life. This phenomenon requires further study and a 'family-friendly' response is needed if such a shift exists. Such a response would include an increase in the availability of private family visiting for eligible families and accommodating the family with respect to the hours during which families can enter or leave the private family visit.

There has been recent discussion within the Correctional Service of Canada on operational regimes. Based on program and treatment needs and level of program participation, the offender progresses through the institution which is organized as a complex rather than being transferred to other institutions for lowered security or for program and treatment needs. Operational regimes may have the ability to assist in relationship maintenance, at least for some families. Complexes may lessen disruption of family life and the economic hardship resulting in relocations to be closer to the correctional facility, which can occur with multiple transfers from one institution to the next. There is the potential of lowering ongoing transportation costs to visit and the family may have to move less often to follow their family member through the correctional system. Complexes may also make escorted and unescorted temporary absences (ETAs and UTAs) for family purposes more readily available.

For example, operating Collins Bay Institution as a multilevel complex could include minimum security Frontenac Institution operating as a Community Correctional Centre (CCC). In principle, following assessment at Millhaven Institution and 'pen placement' to Collins Bay Institution, a family would experience only one move if it chose to relocate to Kingston. For those families who choose not to relocate, complexes, when coupled with low cost accommodations at Bridge House II would maximize cost savings to the family. Complexes have the potential to lower family disruption and to augment program and service availability and participation.

The introduction of operational regimes may have an effect on CSC's drug strategy. As was mentioned, the public consultation process shows that interdiction may be more successful when family members relate to the same staff at Visitor Security Control and V&C on an ongoing basis. Family members are more likely to provide information to 'family-friendly' staff with whom they relate regularly and positively. The complex could be favourable to interdiction when coupled with staff training related to families affected by incarceration and increase the safety of the family, correctional staff and the offender.

Complexes may have little impact for families who visit at isolated institutions and/or require complicated and expensive transportation planning, such as for families from the North and from Newfoundland and Labrador. Innovative or creative approaches to family contact and relationship maintenance are needed to address these issues. CSC's provision of support to the annual Newfoundland and Labrador family visiting assistance program to alleviate some of the relationship maintenance difficulties for selected families would be one such approach. There may be a need for further exploration of alternatives to incarceration and non-traditional approaches in the North as to what constitutes corrections or a correctional facility.

The use of new technologies such as secure Internet conferencing between the offender and family also offers promise of addressing the geographical dilemma. It is recommended that new technologies, such as Internet conferencing, be piloted as means of maintaining family ties between the offender and families and children of the North and Newfoundland and Labrador. Based on pilot success, the use of new technologies can be expanded to other uses where the offender is distant from family contact. Pilots may include a supervised conferencing site at several institutions and sites that are accessible to families such as at a Parole Office, a municipal library, a faith-based group or at a voluntary sector agency.

As was identified earlier in Sara Anala's comments concerning Inuit families, the geographical dilemma of reintegrating offenders back into small isolated communities is challenging. It is often impossible for the victim and offender to not have contact when there is one store in the isolated community. Concerns related to reintegration, re-victimization and relocation will require consultation and discussion to achieve local solutions.

#### **Recommendation 4.1: Facilitation of communication and visiting**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada, at the earliest possible date, institute a telephone system that allows families to benefit from the same long distance cost savings enjoyed by other members of the public.

#### **Recommendation 4.2: Visiting hours at the institution**

It is recommended that institutions review their visiting hours to ensure that visiting hours are scheduled to correspond to public transportation availability, where applicable, and to ensure that, where operationally possible, visits are available during the evenings, weekends and statutory holidays when family members are most available or may most want to visit.

#### **Recommendation 4.3: Responding to shifting visiting patterns**

##### **4.3.1: Investigation of Visiting Patterns.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada investigate the possible shift in visiting patterns away from the regular visiting program to an increased participation in the Private Family Visiting Program and institutional Socials. If the investigation reveals a shift in visiting patterns,

it is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada augment the Private Family Visiting program and allow for more flexibility of bookings for eligible families.

**4.3.2: Transportation Services.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada review its strategy of public funding for corridor transportation services provided by the voluntary sector, with a view to increasing public support for low income Canadians who use these services.

**Recommendation 4.4: Hospitality houses**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada review the level of public funding support to the five existing hospitality houses operated by faith-based organizations and the voluntary sector, with a view to increasing this support. It is recommended that this review include an analysis of variance in usage to determine the cost/benefit of increasing the private family visiting program as compared to increased public support to hospitality houses.

**Recommendation 4.5: Support to families of the North and Newfoundland and Labrador****4.5.1: New technologies.**

It is recommended that new technologies, such as Internet conferencing, be piloted as means of maintaining family ties by supporting contact between the offender and families and children of the North and Newfoundland and Labrador, and, based on pilot success, expanded to other uses where offenders are distant from their families. Pilot projects may include a supervised conferencing site at several institutions and sites that are accessible to families such as at a Parole Office, a municipal library, a faith-based group or at a voluntary sector agency.

**4.5.2: Annual Visit.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada review the level of funding of the annual Family Prison Visit from Newfoundland and Labrador to its Atlantic Region institutions.

**Recommendation 4.6: Support for operational regimes**

It is recommended that complexes be encouraged because of its potential to incorporate or address family quality of life issues, relationship maintenance need and potential community support.

**Recommendation 4.7: Location of correctional facilities**

It is recommended that the location of new correctional facilities include a review of family accessibility issues, including public transportation, transportation routes, corridor transportation services and low cost accommodations while visiting.

### ***5. Research dilemma***

**No-one knows, for example, how many children are affected by the incarceration of a father. This is an important question. Are there going to be some steps taken to address this lack of information?**

**Joyce Waddell-Townsend,  
Children Visiting Prisons-Kingston.**

What works, for whom, and under what circumstances, is a complicated question. To date, there has been limited professional interest shown by researchers with regard to the family and corrections. This is surprising in light of the fact that the family is one of the dynamic factors that affect reintegration success. The fact that family support may be changeable - here today, but not tomorrow - may help to explain the lack of research attention. (21)

A holistic approach is based on who is affected by criminal behavior, incarceration and reintegration includes the family. The Correctional Service of Canada's progressive policy with respect to visiting, with the Private Family Visiting program, with the high intensity family violence program, with sex offender treatment programs, and with cognitive skills training surpasses the correctional community in most of the developed world. The Parenting Skills program is a significant contribution to the field. There is a significant focus on certain areas of intervention such as preventive security and the family's potential to jeopardize the good order and security of the institution. There is appropriate concern about risk management and screening for family violence.

Further quantitative and qualitative research related to families affected by incarceration and reintegration is needed so that resources can be effectively targeted. At this time there is a paucity of Canadian research in this area. It is not a simple matter, for example, to determine how many children are affected by parental incarceration, how many offenders were custodial or non-custodial parents, comparative family demographics, quality of life and socio-emotional factors, the impact of parental incarceration on the parent-child bond or on intergenerational criminal behavior, and so on. The CFCN is regularly contacted to supply information to nonprofit organizations that would support grant proposals related to families or the children of offenders, as well as students developing papers on families affected by incarceration. This information, however, does not exist.

Research, where it does exist, tends to be on small, non-randomized samples or narratives. 'In the absence of data, the myths continue' accurately summarizes the requirement for data collection. The corollary is also true in that in the absence of data, educated guesses suffice.



The prisoner cannot be seen in isolation from family background. An increase in data gathering is required for appropriate services and response to them and to their families. Data gathered on family background at the intake assessment interview needs expanding from family data such as marital status and family address, to include family relocation due to crime or incarceration, number of children, custodial or non-custodial relationships, household makeup at time of arrest, current caregiver of children, etc. The data must be readily available to researchers, policy makers or for program developers, with an ease to sort fields for correlation with other static and dynamic factors related to program and treatment needs and to reintegration potential. As intergenerational criminal behavior is a concern, research is also needed to determine the effect of parental incarceration on both the parent and child, and what are the issues or factors that protect the child or increase the child's risk of intergenerational criminal behavior and to determine additional program or intervention strategies for both the parent and the child.

Information about the family is often self-reported by the offender and may or may not be accurate. In some instances, it appears that inaccurate information may be provided by the offender because of the variety of definitions of 'family' or 'marriage'. In other cases the offender may wish to be viewed in a particular family-based light for any number of other reasons that may positively affect the prisoner's evaluation by a parole officer and thus claim that they have family ties in the community (22). It may also be the case that the offender claims no family ties because the offender does not want contact between his or her family and justice and corrections officials.

The capacity to include family members in research or dialogue may prove difficult to cultivate and achieve. Because information sharing and the integrity of the data that is collected are critical, the families' mistrust of the 'System' and researchers needs to be acknowledged. Family members, however, want to be consulted and request that service providers and researchers not assume that they know what families want or need before they are asked. Family members do not want service providers or researchers to 'create' a need and then develop strategies to respond to it. For their part, family members call for effective programs that assist the offender to address the issues that resulted in incarceration and to assist their family member to begin a crime-free lifestyle.

One area of recent research is Multisystemic Therapy (MST). MST has been used with young offenders in Canada, and Alan Leschied and Alison Cunningham describe the model of treatment intervention. (23) MST was developed by Scott Henggler at Family Services Research Center at the Medical University of South Carolina. The intensive and solution-focused approach addresses goals that are related to the youth's antisocial behavior.

MST was field-tested in Ontario. However the Ontario Government withdrew funding for the field trials because, among other issues, the field trials showed that the approach was no better than other existing services, and that MST is very low-caseload and resource intensive program. (24) The Ontario provincial government has declined to continue with the program.

Theoretically, the MST approach of intensive support to the family and the offender for one to

three months post-release may have merit for further research as an intervention program both with the offender's criminal behavior and in addressing potential intergenerational criminal behavior.

During the public consultations in Winnipeg and Edmonton, there was discussion that some partners continue to provide support during incarceration long after the relationship with the offender ended. The relationship continued out of care, but not out of love, because of the weight that paroling authorities are now placing on family support. Once the partner is convinced that the offender is taken care of and is in the reintegration process, the relationship is terminated.

There was discussion in the St. John's, Kingston, and Saskatoon consultations about what constitutes 'positive' family support. Participants felt that it was important to not idealize the family or family support, and that family support may not necessarily be supportive of a crime-free or substance abuse-free lifestyle. While family variables have been assessed as increasing successful conditional release and influencing desistance (25), further research is needed about support. It may be important to use additional assessment tools to assess the family/marital relationship during the post sentence community assessment (PSCA).

Finally, it is important to include Aboriginal specific issues, where appropriate, when engaging in future research on issues pertaining to families affected by incarceration and reintegration. This will assist in the further development of culturally specific programs for Aboriginal offenders and their families.

#### **Recommendation 5.1: Data collection for research and program planning**

It is recommended that data collection related to the family of the offender be increased during the intake assessment process and that family assessment tools be included during the Post Sentence Community Assessment, and that the data then be made available to researchers, policy makers and program developers, through Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada.

#### **Recommendation 5.2: Research on Parental Incarceration**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada conduct research on the short and long-term effects of parental incarceration on both the parent and child to determine the issues or factors that protect the child or increase the child's risk of intergenerational criminal behavior to determine additional program or intervention strategies with both the parent and the child.

#### **Recommendation 5.3: Multidisciplinary conference on families affected by incarceration and reintegration**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada, in partnership with other criminal justice and correctional agencies and the voluntary sector, host a multidisciplinary conference on families affected by incarceration and reintegration in order to generate professional interest, issues to be explored and creative ways of conducting research on families.

## *6. Resource dilemma*

**Resources are needed to intervene at the family level. When we sentence dad, we sentence the family. We need to conceptualize that the family is part of the correctional process. It is not restorative justice if we only work with the offender.**

**Rick Burk,  
Regional Chaplain, Prairie Region,  
Correctional Service Canada**

Since funding is limited, it makes sense to focus services and programs related to criminal behavior and successful reintegration on what gets and keeps the offender out of jail. Is service to families a value-added service given limited financial resources, or is it preferable to expend limited financial resources in other target areas such as employment skills, substance abuse, criminogenic thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills, or conventional social behavior, etc?

A rationale for funding is needed, including funding for voluntary sector involvement. It appears that funding for correctional programming or services that are offender-focused (specific to the offender) can be more readily rationalized than can programs or services that are offender-related (offender and the family). This is in part because of the jurisdictional and research dilemmas. Until these are addressed or resolved, resource allocation for families affected by incarceration and reintegration may continue to be limited. While the pilots may show program or service efficacy, the requirement of voluntary sector and faith-based organizations to annually develop a new project is demanding both on the resources of the sector and on the client base-the families.

Since family factors are as important to conditional release success as at about the same level as employment (26), it would make sense to allocate resources to programs and services for families. Voluntary sector agencies that receive public funding, however, need to be accountable for the services that they delivery, that is, there needs to be an internal or external evaluation process that can assess their programs' effects on the identified factors for successful reintegration. The information from the evaluation would also assist with research and may identify further areas of research. Evaluation and evaluation dissemination requirements need to be included as line items in funding proposals.

It is also critical that the voluntary sector or faith-based organization establish effective partnerships or coalitions with the public and private sectors in order to make efficient use of funding and resources and to maximize service delivery.

Within the Canadian Department of National Defence, through the Director, Military Family Support, families of military members are provided with an integrated series of services at Military Family Resource Centres (MFRC). MFRCs exist at each Canadian military base and at bases in Europe, Asia and the Pacific where numbers warrant. The MFRCs were formed to deliver

services to military families living both on and off the base. Services include information and referral, crisis intervention, deployment support and quality of life programming, volunteer training and supervision and programming for parents and children. The MFRCs are formed as non-profit organizations and funding is received under a tripartite agreement between the Base Commander, the Military Family Support Program and the MFRC. The MFRCs are publically funded, with funding levels based on various factors such as size and location of the military base. Unique operating and maintenance (UO&M) costs are allocated to the MFRC based on various requirements of the agency that provides the services. (27)

Service delivery for military families was found to be most effective if it began prior to deployment, existed during deployment and continued after the military member's return to the family. A similar continuity of service delivery is needed for families affected by incarceration and reintegration. Relationships are stressed by incarceration, but reintegration is also a demanding and difficult family process.

The MFRC is one model that could provide a benchmark within the resource dilemma. While deployment as a military member is a socially acceptable separation, separation due to criminal behavior is not. Services to the family of the offender, however, do serve an important role in successful conditional release.

## **Recommendation 6.1: Funding Accountability for Voluntary Sector Agencies**

### **6.1.1: Partnerships.**

It is recommended that voluntary sector agencies who receive public funding demonstrate active partnerships with a variety of public, private and/or voluntary sector agencies in order to maximize funding, service delivery and resources.

### **6.1.2: Services and Dynamic Factors.**

It is recommended that voluntary sector agencies who receive funding for services from the CSC structure their services to meet identified dynamic factors that lead to conditional release success.

### **6.1.3: Service Evaluation**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada require that voluntary sector agencies that receive public funding augment internal or external evaluation of service delivery to demonstrate program efficacy, and aid in program replication, duplication of results, and for identification of further areas for research and service development, and that this evaluation requirement be contained in funding proposal budgets.

### *7. Role dilemma*

**Address some of the controversial issues instead of emphasizing mutual appreciation sessions between CSC and this organization. We need to clearly define roles here-partnership versus control.**

**Comment on a evaluation form, Kingston consultation.**

There is concern among some correctional decision-makers that voluntary sector organizations would direct their funding for family-based initiatives into adversarial advocacy, criticizing the shortcomings of the correctional process, staff or institutions. This stands in contrast to attempts by some voluntary sector agencies to form effective partnerships to address correctional or institutional objectives related to criminal behavior and safe reintegration. Another concern of decision-makers is that once funding is granted to a voluntary sector agency, it is then difficult to alter or end funding or to change accountability. An evaluation process at program completion ensures accountability for the delivery of service for which the voluntary sector agency was funded.

The role dilemma for the voluntary sector centers around perceptions that the acceptance of funds from the Correctional Service of Canada may give the impression to families that there is not appropriate distance for the voluntary sector agency to advocate on their behalf. For some families, and for some voluntary sector agencies, acceptance of funds is viewed as an implied ratification of certain correctional policy, practices or attitudes. Again, evaluation is relevant to the 'funding acceptance implies control' issue. Evaluation requires quality control of the service that is delivered and this might be perceived by some voluntary sector or faith-based organization as implying control of the organization. These sentiments are echoed by some offenders and their families. They express concern that organizations that accept funding through the Solicitor General's Department or through the Correctional Service of Canada are tainted or should be held suspect.

Voluntary sector agencies are placed in a difficult position. They may fear alienating their clients if they declare that funding is accepted directly or through arms-length funding relationships, particularly from the Correctional Service of Canada. Because this dilemma, some voluntary sector agencies attempt to operate without funding from the Correctional Service of Canada or from other correctional departments. On the other hand, the Government of Canada and the Correctional Service of Canada may not receive the recognition that it deserves in providing funding support to the voluntary sector and thus to the clients served by the voluntary sector.

There were several requests for an advocacy, mediation or ombuds process on behalf of families during the public consultations. Many of the family requests for advocacy involved the treatment of the prisoner or the lack of a process to address decisions related to policy, practice or attitude at the institutional level as it relates to the family and the offender.

Because this is the role of the Office of the Correctional Investigator (OCI), it makes sense that this route be followed to resolve family concerns. The OCI is in the position to determine if policy, practice was correctly followed. The advocacy role of the OCI will resolve some operational concerns for families through channels that are already established.

Other concerns may not be addressed by the OCI, particularly if advocacy is defined by the offender or family as 'doing battle' against either an institutional administration or the Correctional Service of Canada.

It is difficult for some families to move beyond a blame-stance toward the correctional process/system and to acknowledge that their family member's actions led to incarceration and the subsequent difficulties for the family. For their part, families are sometimes hesitant to acknowledge that they are affected first by the criminal behavior of their family member. The family's difficulty is the result of the criminal behavior, compounded by incarceration. Families and correctional staff may miss this connection. A restorative justice approach to families and corrections has as a first principle that families are harmed by the criminal behavior of the offending family member, either as hidden victims or as direct victim, and that the offender needs to acknowledge the harm and work toward healing. Some families are hesitant to discuss this issue with the offender. They may choose not to acknowledge the harm caused by the offender and may instead focus on the harm caused by the correctional process. This may be a strategy used to avoid alienating the offender, and thus protecting or preserving the family relationship. For some families, the correctional process and correctional staff will continue to be held responsible or to blame for all of the family's distress.

The correctional process, for its part, needs to practice a restorative justice/ harm reduction approach to families, such that the decision of the courts and the consequences on both the prisoner and the family are not increased or exacerbated. Further, in the absence of any facts to the contrary, the family did nothing wrong. It is not the family's fault that they are having to cope with incarceration.

As was mentioned on page 37, the prevalence of pre-incarceration family violence among the male offender population is high. In Canada, many of the most serious crimes, including murder, sexual offences and domestic violence, are committed within the context of an intimate or familial relationship. Restorative justice approaches often focus on stranger violence, sometimes missing the family context of crime and harm. Restorative justice approaches also need to be aware of revictimization, including the family.

Also with respect to role, the offender continues to have a primary responsibility role for family, and rightly so. One family member at the Kingston consultation forcefully expressed her opinion that the offender has a responsibility for what the family is experiencing. She also expressed her

dismay about attitudes or demands that ‘someone’, including the Government, should have to do something for families, when it is the offender that needs to take responsibility for what happened and the effect on the family. Her family member was incarcerated for dealing drugs, and she asserted that he should be incarcerated, in that "If someone deals drugs, they go to jail." She also felt that the family needs to take responsibility, even if that responsibility begins in reaching out for assistance as opposed to expecting or waiting for someone, somewhere, to meet their needs.

For these reasons, it was suggested at the Abbotsford public consultation, that families, because they are either direct or hidden victims of criminal behavior and because of the potential of further harm within the correctional process, that CSC's Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution Unit include families as a component in its restorative justice approaches.

Some offenders are unaware of restorative justice issues or approaches as it relates to family. The offender may also be unaware of quality of life needs facing their family during incarceration and reintegration. While orientation programs for new offenders often includes a basic introduction to visiting policy and procedure, an augmented family-based orientation that contains information on restorative justice approaches to the family and corrections, on quality of life needs that may face their family, on relationship maintenance, and on sensitivity to how their actions within the institution could affect their family may be additional needed components.

**Recommendation 7.1: Ombuds Process for Families**

It is recommended that the Office of the Correctional Investigator investigate as to whether policies and practices are being followed with respect to family-related complaints that are registered by either the offender or the family.

**Recommendation 7.2: Funding Source Declaration.**

It is recommended that voluntary sector agencies who receive public funding through the Correctional Service of Canada, either through primary or through arms-length agreements or contracts, identify the Correctional Service of Canada as a financial contributor in its advertising, publications and promotional material.

**7.3: Restorative Justice****7.3.1: Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution Unit and Families.**

It is suggested that restorative justice approaches to families of offenders be included within the objectives of the Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution Unit of the Correctional Service of Canada.

**7.3.2: Orientation for New Offenders**

It is recommended that orientation for new offenders include augmented information on restorative justice approaches to the family and corrections, on quality of life needs that may face their families, on relationship maintenance, and on sensitivity to how their actions within the institution

could affect their families.



### ***8. Criminalization dilemma:***

**I walk down the street and they yell out at me, "murderer!"**

**Wife of an offender serving a life sentence,  
St. John's consultation**

Current strategies within the correctional field focus on how to successfully reintegrate the offender, not on how to incarcerate longer or harsher. Some members of the public, however, may view the sentence of the courts not just as incarceration as punishment but also incarceration plus punishment.

It is difficult to foster public support for families affected by incarceration and reintegration. The family is 'criminalized' or viewed only in the context of the offender, the offence, and the offender's incarceration. The family will do the same amount of 'time' as their incarcerated family member. The criminalization dilemma spills over into labeling the children as the 'children of the offender' and the 'offender family'. This stands in opposition to an approach that views families as an affected population in crisis. The family has done nothing wrong. They have only chosen to maintain a family relationship.

Criminalization also has an impact on a prisoner's role as parent. It is a short step to degrade the role of the incarcerated father or mother, claiming that their incarceration is a sign of an uncaring or of ineffective parenting.

Criminalization also has a gender component. The majority of offenders are male and the majority of visitors are women. The women tend to be disempowered and marginalized and constitute a group that can be further marginalized all too easily. In this sense, visiting policy and practice and care is a women's issue. Further study on the criminalization dilemma with respect to women's issues is needed. This includes the needs of incarcerated mothers and the continuity of care issues for children of incarcerated mothers.

Gender is also an issue when it comes to the incarcerated father. A research dilemma related to the parent-child bond was previously identified and will be discussed later in the continuity dilemma related to intergenerational criminal behavior and the availability of the parenting skills program to incarcerated fathers.

Fathering initiatives have recently taken on greater importance in society, and effective fathering is also a concern as it relates to the offender and the effects of parental incarceration. Significant discussion is underway in the United States. This has included the November 2001 Round Table by the National Centre on Fathers and Families through the University of Pennsylvania (28) which discussed the collateral outcome of parental incarceration on children and the impact of

incarceration on the role of the father.

The criminalization dilemma is an attitudinal response. Families experience this dilemma in many areas of their lives, including on the 'correctional reserve.' Here, the dilemma may only be addressed through educational or sensitizing activities for correctional staff that are aimed at raising awareness of the family as an affected population and to the role of families as an asset to the offender and to the correctional process

It is also important to engage the community in this educational process. The family affected by incarceration does not live in the prison. The family works, and plays and worships in the wider community. As one person commented during the public consultation process, "the family is left holding the bag for the offence committed by the offender." Within the Correctional Service of Canada, it is important to include families in its community engagement activities.

**Recommendation 8.1: Awareness and Sensitivity Training during COTP**

It is recommended that the Correctional Officer Training Program (COTP) include an intensive component on the family of the offender as an affected population.

**Recommendation 8.2: Community Engagement and Families**

It is recommended that CSC, through its Community Engagement Sector, include the needs of families affected by criminal behavior and by incarceration and reintegration in its community engagement and public education activities.

## 9. Continuity Dilemma

**It was not happily ever after. . . . He called me ‘Keeper’ when he was released . . . .There needs to be an exit package for families. He had programs, I had @#\$. I had no idea what to expect.**

**M,  
Moncton.**

The continuity dilemma has several facets. The continuity dilemma arises because, without effective service provision to the family, there is the potential of the continuation of criminal behavior by the child of the incarcerated parent. The continuity dilemma also arises because services to families must begin early in incarceration and continue into reintegration.

A recent study by Ralph Serin and Shelley Brown, Research Branch of the Correctional Service of Canada (2002) showed that, of federally sentenced offenders during 2000/01:

**19% of offenders grew up in families where the mother was absent  
38% of offenders grew up in families where the father was absent  
47% of the offenders had the family assessed as dysfunctional  
38% of offenders reported that their family had a pattern of prior criminal  
behaviour (29)**

This incidence of family difficulties and continuation of criminal behavior within the family is troubling. One study suggests that criminality within the family significantly increases the likelihood of a child becoming in conflict with the law in later life. (30) These and other studies serve to indicate that there are significant social consequence to families and children who are affected by criminal behavior, incarceration and reintegration.

### **"Children of Incarcerated mothers: the invisible needs area" Rea Theijsmeijer, Executive Director, Ellen Osler Home.**

*According to CSC statistics in 2001 there were approximately 807 Federally Sentenced Women in Canada who were incarcerated or on parole. Of the 360 women who were incarcerated, two-thirds were mothers of children under the age of five. Often these women were single parents. While incarcerated, living apart is an ordeal for both mother and their children. It is the children's needs, which I would like to focus on.*

*Although this is not new news to CSC, community providers or the clients themselves, supports for children of mothers who are incarcerated remains an area that is sadly lacking in appropriate formal supports, funding and structures to assist these children and their mothers to successfully reintegrate back into the community as a family unit. Added to this lack of*

*support the impact of racism, poverty and social isolation, is it a wonder that we continue to perpetuate the cycle of victimization and criminalization within our communities?*

*One of the biggest needs of the community in which I serve are support programs for children whose mothers are in conflict with the law. How does our communities create criminals? Let's start with what we do know. We are aware of the lack of supports and resources female single parent households face. There is a day care crisis along with a low-income housing crisis across Ontario. We talk about the "problem of the single mother" that lives in poverty in our social work classes, in social and welfare policies and in our churches. We are aware that 80% of imprisoned women are inside for poverty related offences. We are aware that 90% of aboriginal and 82% of all women in prison are survivors of incest, rape or physical assault and who have not had the luxury of financial, emotional and therapeutic supports in order to heal and grow. We also know the number of women in prison increased 200% in the past 15 years.*

*Although this might not be viewed as "the biggest needs of the community" **the children of incarcerated mothers is a crucial need that requires further investigation and assistance.***

*For women with children under the age of 5, we have a targeted group that we are aware of but because of the low numbers and lack of resources it remains an area of need that does not receive much attention or support. We are aware of the cycle of abuse, poverty, victimization that contributes to women's criminal behaviour and choices. Mother gets into conflict with the law when she chooses to do a quick drug deal, prostitutes herself, steals or defrauds welfare and then becomes incarcerated - separating her from her children.*

*Unless an informal support system is in place - such as an aunt or grandmother to look after the children - these kids are put in a string of foster homes or group homes. We change their social worker on a regular basis. The ability to learn to create meaningful, healthy and lasting relationships becomes undermined for the child. Want to create a criminal? Change everything in a child's life and keep changing it. Undermine their sense of belonging and security from their family connections and their cultural heritage.*

*Add racism, poverty, social isolation, to further develop feelings of insecurity and social deprivation. Given a child's growth stage, they are unable to articulate their feelings so we watch this child start to "act out" their anger, frustrations and deep hurt. We then label that child "bad", unmanageable", "challenging" etc. to further perpetuate their feelings of unworthiness and victimization. Keep this up until one day the child turns to alcohol, drugs, prostitution and eventually, if there is no intervention or turn around the child is labeled "criminal" and becomes a part of the system.*

*Focusing on developing and improving more formalized mother/child programs for incarcerated women and their children. Financially support halfway house mother/child programs to allow trained staff to assist women with re-bonding with her children and support parenting skills development. Incorporate children's programs designed specifically to meet the child's needs for re-bonding with the mother such as play therapy. These programs must be culturally sensitive to meet the holistic needs of the family without further disenfranchising them from mainstream society.*

*The justice and corrections process would be more helpful to families affected by*

*incarceration and reintegration if the child welfare and correctional systems could work more closely to address the unmet needs of both incarcerated mothers and their children. By supporting community agencies programs financially who deal specifically with women in conflict with the law, newer and more women sensitive programs could be developed to address elements of this unmet need of children. Children also need the formal support through their transition back to the primary caregiver, usually the mother.*

*The outcome of this support would promote healthier attachments between mother and child. Healthier attachments and better parenting skills create healthier families. Healthier families create healthier and safer communities. The ability of the mother to parent her children in the healthiest manner possible will influence and undermine the generational cycle of socialized criminal activity, poverty and homelessness of the children upon maturation. It is expected that the sound foundations established in the short-term reintegration process will carry through in the long run.*

*"If you educate a man,  
you educate one person.  
But if you educate a woman,  
you educate an entire family".*

*Women in conflict with the law do not get the same supports and opportunities as their male counterparts. This fact is well known to all who work with this population due to the scarcity of resources being allocated and targeted to the "biggest needs areas".*

*However, given the long term costs (socially and financially) to the community when we do not support children during the parent's incarceration and reintegration process, compared to the long term social and financial benefits communities would gain if we supported these programs now, it is my opinion that this is the "biggest needs area" which needs to be addressed.*

The intergenerational effect of criminal behavior, parental incarceration and other risk factors can have a long-term effect on the child. This requires protective factors for children:

**It is the combination of risk factors children experience, particularly if these are multiple, persistent, and not balanced by protective factors, that predispose them to negative outcomes. This understanding primes society to make the important and necessary shift towards prevention of crime and victimization. The aim of prevention is to reduce risk and increase protective factors related to the child, the parent-child environment, and the broader community. The earlier protective factors are increased in a child's life, the greater the chance for diminishing risk.**

**National Crime Prevention Council (1998)  
Preventing Crime by Investing in Families (31)**

The Child Welfare League of Canada identifies several societal and family factors that they correlate with youth crime. Factors include family violence, addictions, parental neglect and

community apathy, sexual and or physical abuse of children, witnessing of violence (usually against the young person's mother), lack of or inadequate supervision by parents, excessively harsh discipline, spousal conflict, father's absence, parental alcohol or substance abuse, and parental and sibling psychiatric problems:

**Leading writers in the area of family policy for crime prevention theorize that families who are dealing with excessive stresses of poverty, racism, and poor or disadvantaged communities often experience an impairment in their parenting capacity and/or skills. This will be exacerbated by lack of support from extended family or community and will in more serious cases result, or be correlated with, family violence, alcohol and substance abuse, and psychiatric problems.(32)**

It is an unrealistic expectation that the correctional process alone can address the systemic issues that lead to criminal behavior. In many ways, prison has often been the final stopping place of a society's darker problems.

This does not mean that nothing works or that nothing should be attempted. Programs and services to children in the visiting area that normalize the parent-child relationship but do not normalize criminal behavior or incarceration are needed. These include activities that have already been identified, including the Visitor Resource Centre concept in which the voluntary sector provides information and referral, education, interim support and activities that support the parent-child bond in the Visiting and Correspondence Area, or the children's activity areas and craft programs run for children during visiting, such as those of Children Visiting Prisons, Kingston.

In Canada, the Mother-child program within the Correctional Service of Canada is an outstanding initiative that allows some women to care for their children within the institution until the children reach four years of age. The Mother-child program and CSC's core Parenting Skills program require further longitudinal research and evaluation, as well as an expanded usage in the field. This is required to address the continuity of care of children of federally sentenced women upon release and reintegration. Reintegration support is needed for the mother and child prior to release and continuing into the community. This includes enhanced funding to halfway houses for federally sentenced women to involve a Mother-child program as a step to parent-child reintegration.

Because of the potential of intergenerational criminal behavior, Parenting Skills program need to increased for a variety of offenders. The programs themselves also need to be evaluated as to their effectiveness in developing and reinforcing the father-child bond. Because of the potential of intergenerational criminal behavior, that the Parenting Skills program needs to be more readily available to incarcerated fathers, and that the screening and selection of offenders to the program recognize that the offender is often a non-custodial parent, that either the parent or the child may often become part of a blended family during incarceration or upon reintegration, or that the offender may have children in the future. Program components also need to recognize these

issues. Additionally, parenting programs for incarcerated aboriginal parents must include culturally specific parenting program components that address aboriginal/ First Nations understandings of family, kinship, parenting, understanding of community and spirituality.

The correctional process at its best can provide a point or opportunity for intervention for individuals and families. Zajac, Gnall and Gardner (2001) identify several risk/need areas that effective correctional programs can address. In fact, offender progress in these areas of risk and need guides the decisions made by the National Parole Board around an offender's conditional release:

**Antisocial attitudes, values and beliefs: "criminogenic thinking"**  
**Extensive association with other criminally active individuals**  
**Weak problem-solving, decision-making and self-regulation skills**  
**Poorly patterned routines for conventional social behavior**  
**Impulsivity**  
**Low education and poor vocational skills**  
**Family problems**  
**Early and frequent antisocial behavior (33)**

Marital and family support is important for the offender in coping during incarceration and in promoting desistance of criminal activity. Marital and family support is as important to successful conditional release as employment.(34) Public safety can be enhanced by engaging the family as an asset.

In Canada, interest in the social benefit of services to families is growing through community-based initiatives and commitment through the voluntary sector and in faith-based organizations. Several programs across Canada have recently received financial support from the National Crime Prevention Centre (35). These programs focus on crime prevention within the community, often by focusing on families, children and youth, with several programs aimed at families affected by incarceration and the criminal behavior of a family member. These include programs at the House of Hope in Ottawa (Resident Family Support Program), the Support and Advocacy for Family Enrichment (SAFE and Welcome Home programs) of the Salvation Army, Kingston, Ontario, and Northwest New Brunswick Community Mobilization for Intervention Towards High-Risk Offenders (Community Chaplaincy, Grand Falls, NB). Other projects focus on crime prevention or programs for at-risk youth and families through funding to First Nations and Aboriginal communities and organizations across Canada.

The National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) aims to support family health and recognizes that preventing crime requires investing in families. The NCPC views offenders and their families as resources for crime prevention and as a social group that can benefit greatly from social service programs. Aboriginal inmates and families are of particular interest to the NCPC, given the over-

representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal system. For example, the Outdoor Cultural Classroom is a school based project for Aboriginal youth aged 8-12 that addresses risk factors associated with aggression and bullying. This program works from a traditional Aboriginal perspective and focuses on relationships between teachers, students and parents.

Lucie Leonard, Senior Research Analyst at the National Crime Prevention Centre comments that part of why inmate families haven't been targeted directly is that they are a "hard-to-reach" population. She said that inmate families can be difficult to find because of issues regarding confidentiality. For example, one project that operated in Ottawa attempted to access offender families where the children had witnessed violence. One staff person was assigned to coordinate programming for children of offenders in particular but the staff person was able to contact and involve only a few families. Leonard also stated that the NCPC wishes to include families affected by incarceration as a focus in their mandate. It was apparent that the NCPC is attempting to get a better sense of how to positively impact families of offenders in existing and future programming. The needs and concerns of this population are becoming more of a central concern for the NCPC given the effect of criminal behavior within the family. (36)

Service provision uses primary, secondary or tertiary intervention strategies. Primary (or universal) intervention is aimed at all children and families, whether or not there has been conflict with the law. School or community-based educational approaches related to drug and alcohol use and Values, Influences, Peers fall within this category. The programs are well received by the public, but the impact on behavior change may be minimal. Secondary and tertiary interventions are believed to be more effective on target populations. (37) In secondary (or selected) intervention, the children or the family may be at risk because a family member has had previous conflict with the law. Tertiary (or indicated) intervention refers to interventions in which both the family and the child has had previous conflict with the law.

While information and referral-based services were identified as a first concern for families in the "What's FAIR" questionnaire, family counselling was a second concern, with approximately 65% of respondents indicated that they would use family counselling if it were available. This included counselling during incarceration and upon reintegration. Some psychologists in District Parole Offices provide family counselling during parole and reintegration, particularly if unresolved difficulties in the family relationship may lead to parole suspension. Some institutional and community chaplains provide family counselling, although they may not feel competent to do so. Because the responsibility for services to families is a component of the job description for Chaplaincy Teams, more professional development in basic marriage counselling and relationships in crisis is needed. This training is also needed by Native Elders, Native Liaison Officers and Parole Officers.

Over the course of the consultations, it was learned that some families were reluctant to approach Chaplaincy. Several issues were raised here: a) how Chaplaincy and faith groups have presented



themselves both in terms of their role in society, the person, and corrections, and that traditional views or models of the family held by some faith groups; b) families indicated that they felt that Chaplaincy is marginalized within the institution and that to align families with Chaplaincy would continue to marginalize the family and their issues; c) some families have experienced rejection within the community of faith; d) there is suspicion of service deliverers, including Chaplains, based on a perceived lack of distance in the arms-length relationship between the service deliverer and the Correctional Service of Canada; e) there is a growing group within Canadian society that does not have a faith background in which life meaning questions can be addressed through faith/religious celebration/ spirituality in its traditional forms; f) one family member was adamant that while the faith groups and Chaplaincy have their place, they are too 'narrow' to make families feel welcome, particularly for the dysfunctional/ non-middle class family; and finally g) families did not want to be perceived as a 'religious issue'.

Institutional and community chaplaincies, faith-based groups, Native Elders, voluntary sector agencies and others, working in partnership with CSC staff, hold the most promise, however, for a coordinated, consistent and effective service provision to address the continuity dilemma and as fiscally responsible vehicles for service provision.

As stated in the opening quotation to the continuity dilemma, families need to be prepared for reintegration. This can be accomplished through information package on family reintegration and reentry, reintegration programming within the CSC, such as in the Kingston Penitentiary Prerelease program in which eligible families are provided a pre-release Private Family Visit that leads up to the offender and the family leaving the institution at the same time. Post release support can include family counselling for reintegration such as that offered by psychologists within the North Alberta and Northwest Territories Parole office, in which family counselling is provided for families for whom difficulties may contribute to parole violations and subsequent parole revocation by the National Parole Board.

Two additional areas of public support are needed to address the continuity dilemma as well as the resource dilemma. Firstly, funding is needed to augment the Mother-child program at halfway houses to assist with re-establishing the parent-child, to enhance parenting skills, and to assist in housing, employment and family and community reintegration. Secondly, public funding is needed within CSC to support the voluntary sector and faith-based organizations to provide community based reintegration support for families. It is recommended that an initial contributions fund of \$500,000 per year be made available to the voluntary sector, Community Chaplaincies, faith-based groups and community agencies. It is recommended that projects be based on written proposals that use best practices in service provision to families, that proposals are results- and community based reintegration programs or counselling to families, and based on the finding and recommendations of this report and other strategic approaches that CSC may choose to adopt. It is also recommended that projects approval recognize Canada's geographic and ethnic diversity. Where possible, the proposed regional Coordinators, Family Support should have regular and

ongoing contact with projects within their Region, including serving as ex-officio representation on Boards of Directors or project management committees.

**Recommendation 9.1: Augmentation of Mother-Child Program**

It is recommended that the Mother-Child program be increased to include family support at halfway houses to assist with re-establishing the parent-child relationship, to enhance parenting skills, and to assist in housing, employment and community reintegration for mothers.

**Recommendation 9.2: Parenting program emphasis for incarcerated parents**

**9.2.1: Evaluation of Parenting Skills Program.**

It is recommended that the Parenting Skills program be evaluated as to its effectiveness in developing and reinforcing the parent-child bond.

**9.2.2: Availability of Parenting Skills Program.**

It is recommended, based on the potential of intergenerational criminal behavior, that the Parenting Skills program be more readily available to incarcerated parents, and that the screening and selection of offenders for the program include those offenders who are non-custodial parents, that either the offender or the child may become part of a blended family during incarceration or upon reintegration, or that the offender may have children in the future.

**9.2.3: Culturally Specific Parenting Program Components.**

It is recommended that parenting programs for incarcerated parents include culturally specific parenting program components for aboriginal mothers and fathers that address aboriginal/ First Nations understandings of family, kinship, parenting, and an understanding of community and spirituality.

**9.3: Programming for reintegration**

**9.3.1: Project Funding.**

It is recommended that the Correctional Service of Canada establish an initial contributions fund of \$500,000 per year to support proposals for place-based, community-based programs or counselling for families who are affected by reintegration. It is recommended that project funds be made available to the voluntary sector, Community Chaplaincies, faith-based groups, Native Friendship Centres, Native Elders and to community agencies. It is recommended that projects be based on written proposals that use best practices in service provision to families, that proposals are results- and community-based reintegration programs or counselling to families, and based on the findings and recommendations of this Report and other strategic approaches that CSC may choose to adopt. It is also recommended that projects and project approval recognize Canada's geographic and ethnic diversity. It is also recommended that, where possible, the proposed regional Coordinators, Family Support have regular and ongoing contact with projects within their

Region, including serving as ex-officio representation on Boards of Directors or project management committee.

**9.3.2: Pre-release Orientation Package.**

It is recommended that a pre-release orientation package be developed for families. The pre-release orientation package will include what to expect upon family reintegration, relationship restructuring, and information and referral sources that include family counselling sources, community counselling centre information and other available community resources, including Aboriginal-specific information and resources.

**9.3.3: District Parole Office psychologists.**

It is recommended that psychologists or counselors at the District Parole Offices provide family counselling to those families for whom difficulties may contribute to parole violations and parole revocation by the National Parole Board.

## Conclusion

*"A Strategic Approach and Policy Document To Address the Needs of Families of Offenders: Safety-Respect and Dignity-For All"* asserts that the family of the offender is an asset to be encouraged rather than a problem to be accommodated within the correctional process, and that supporting and engaging the family as a factor in desistance and successful conditional release is crime prevention.

Effective service provision to families affected by incarceration and reintegration is a complex issue that requires partnership between all stakeholders: the offender, the family, correctional managers and staff, and the community. To achieve the goal of support and engagement of families, this policy document offers balanced and achievable recommendations that are based on current successes of both the Correctional Service of Canada and the voluntary sector.

Canada is renowned within the global correctional community for its successes, expertise and programming effectiveness in offender treatment. The implementation of a vision that supports and engages the family in the correctional process will confirm once again Canada's status as a leader in this area.

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## Appendix A - Options for Implementation

Three options for implementation of the strategic approach and policy recommendations follow. The purpose of the options is to serve as a guide for decision-making, to prioritize the recommendations and to offer latitude based on a continuum of costing related to service delivery unit.

Option 1 – Implementation of the strategic approach and policy document through a coordinated, place-based strategy of services to families affected by incarceration and reintegration, under a partnership between the Correctional Service of Canada, the voluntary sector and faith-based organizations. Option 1 has the most financial implications.

Option 2 – Tasking of existing Correctional Service of Canada personnel in the institution and community (AWCP- Programs- Institutional and Chaplaincies) Option 2 utilizes existing staff with moderate financial implications.

Option 3 – Status quo. Sporadic, limited initiatives by the voluntary sector and faith-based organizations. This option has little or no financial implications.

One or more of the following components are relevant to any form of implementation:

1. Information and Education
2. Sectoral coordination and partnerships
3. Community Engagement
4. Management
5. Guidelines, Standards and Legislation

### 1. Information and Education

Information and education include the provision of information, educational and training opportunities, and effective orientation materials to better inform, raise awareness and sensitize stakeholders, including the family and the offender, correctional staff and decision makers, voluntary sector agencies, faith-based groups and the community. Information and education needs to include key facts, address myths and misconceptions, elaborate restorative justice approaches, and identify the benefits of a >family friendly= approach to corrections and the role of the family in desistance and successful conditional release.

Comment: This is a safe deliverable that safely impacts the correctional field and families affected by incarceration and reintegration. It also has the potential to influence correctional culture related to the criminalization of the family of the offender, gender, and diversity within the “Correctional

Reserve.”

## **2. Sectoral coordination and partnerships**

Sectoral coordination and partnerships, including institutional and community correctional programs, the activities of voluntary sector agencies and faith-based organizations are essential to the implementation of a consistent and effective strategic approach. Sectoral coordination is also a component that explicitly considers resource availability such that issues such as duplication of services, ‘turf’ issues, results-based programming and partnerships based on best practices are addressed.

Comment – The public consultation process indicated that families affected by incarceration and reintegration prefer that services are provided by voluntary sector agencies and faith-based groups. The strategic approach and policy document suggests that partnership that includes coordination within CSC with funding support by CSC to the voluntary sector and faith-based groups. Voluntary sector agencies and faith based group are accountable to the funder for their results. This raises the fears of many family members about the arms-length relationship between the service provider and the CSC, information sharing and trust. Addressing trust issues through relationship building is time consuming but necessary. The voluntary sector and faith-based groups often fear that they may alienate their client (family and/or offender).

The competing needs and priorities within the correctional process, adversarial advocacy, fears of volunteers, and risk management issues will continue to be challenging. Inter-branch and interdepartmental liaison and cooperation are needed. Effective partnership can be challenging to achieve. Real or perceived power differentials between various sectors require firm commitment that partnerships go beyond maintaining the illusion of partnership with other stakeholders.

## **3. Community engagement**

Community engagement arises from effective information and education. The families of offenders are already in the community. It is necessary to engage both the community and families affected by incarceration and reintegration, including the involvement by community members in volunteer capacities to both the offender and the family. Engaging the family and the community increases reintegration success by maintaining and strengthening support and resources.

Comment – The decrease in social networks for families is a concern, as is the stigmatization of the families affected by incarceration and reintegration. High profile offences, particularly sexual offences and offences of violence, will continue to make community engagement challenging.

## **4. Management**

While the strategic approach and policy recommendations come from a grassroots public consultation process, it is important to operationalize the policy recommendations in a "top-down"

manner. Successful implementation is conditional upon corporate ownership of families as an issue within the correctional process. This will hurry the process and increase success.

Successful implementation is also contingent on both the provincial and federal governments acknowledgement of the importance of addressing the needs of families as a means to desistance, crime prevention and successful conditional release and then making a financial commitment to make this happen.

Comment - This option needs to avoid services to families as a correctional flavour of the month that can be ignored in the institution or community until the flavour melts away and is superseded by other emergent issues.

## **5. Guidelines, Standards and Legislation**

Guidelines, standards and legislation are ultimately required, with care taken to ensure flexibility, resilience and accommodation to determine what is fair, right and appropriate in a given circumstance. Doing the right thing must be tied with doing things right. A combination of individual initiative with written rules and regulations go hand in hand to operationalize an organization's response, including the Correctional Service of Canada.

A cursory review of current legislation as it relates to the family of the offender, including the CCRA, the CCRR, Commissioner's Directives and Standard Operating Practices, indicates that the legislation focuses clearly on institutional security, and community and family safety. These are important, but lead to the operationalizing of only these foci: security and safety.

Security and safety do not necessarily lead to care and concern. While families shared stories during the public consultation of a lack of care and concern, others identified exceptional service from V and C staff, Chaplaincy and other correctional staff and managers. It was clear that in times of crisis, correctional staff act with compassion and in an effective response to families.

Comment – There are some fears related to the liability of offering services to families. This requires further investigation. There are also some fears that the provision of services to families may engender a need for documents as involved as the current Commissioner's Directives. This document shows that, while there is no legal obligation for the CSC to provide services to families affected by incarceration and reintegration, there is no legal impediment to service provision.

The strategic approach and policy recommendation propose a latitude about how the Regions could provide the services: through correctional staff, through institutional and/or community chaplains, and through contractual arrangements with the voluntary sector and faith based groups. While there are those who could argue that guidelines, standards and legislation may bind or prevent the Correctional Service of Canada and its staff from offering services to families, the voluntary sector is not tied to similar jurisdictional or legislative difficulties.

In fact, Institutional and Community Chaplaincies and Native Elders, through their job descriptions, have the requirement and ability to provide services to families. This may involve risk on the part of the service provider, however. During the public consultation, Chaplaincy Teams identified the lack of guidelines or standards for service provision to families as an issue, both in determining their boundaries of service provision, for protection of themselves as the service deliverer, and by way of offering guidance to correctional managers on the role of Chaplaincy. The formulation of such guidance does not require anything as extensive as parliamentary legislation to immediately enhance services to families.

Another concern is the augmentation of services to families of offenders while not providing similar services to families of victims. Some services are being provided to victims. The Correctional Service of Canada, through the Victim Liaison Coordinators, provides information and referral to victims, including notification of the victim of important benchmarks in the offender's progress through the correctional process. Although it is important to be sensitive to the needs of victims, this does not mean that there should be no services for families of offenders. It can be argued that current legislation already exists that allows for services to families because of the role that they have to play in safe and successful reintegration of the offender into the community. At a very minimum, the Correctional Service of Canada can institute a regional information and referral service to families in a Coordinator, Family Support position.



## Suggested Timeline and Unit of Implementation

Recommendation	By Suggested Timeline for Implementation (I) Immediate (1-2 years) (M) Mid-Term (1-5 years), and (L) Long-Term (1-10 years)	By unit of implementation (NHQ) (RHQ) (Inst/Parole) (VolSec) (Other)
1.1.1: Family Issues Unit.	I	NHQ
1.1.2: Chaplaincy Branch Placement.	I	NHQ
1.2: Annual Policy Meeting	M	NHQ
1.3: Citizens Advisory Committee and Families of Offenders	I	Inst/Parole
1.4.1: Inter-jurisdictional and interdepartment co-operation.	L	NHQ
1.4.2: Canadian Assistance Plan/ Canadian Health and Social Transfer.	L	Other
2.1: Coordinators, Family Support	M	Inst/Parole
2.2: Visitor Resource Centres (VRC)	M	Inst/Parole
2.3: Inclusion of families of offenders in accountability contracts	M	Inst/Parole
2.4: Responses to Families in Crisis.	I	Inst/Parole
2.5.1: Staff-Visitor Interaction and Training.	M	Inst/Parole

Recommendation	By Suggested Timeline for Implementation (I) Immediate (1-2 years) (M) Mid-Term (1-5 years), and (L) Long-Term (1-10 years)	By unit of implementation (NHQ) (RHQ) (Inst/Parole) (VolSec) (Other)
2.5.2: Training for Family Counselling.	M	NHQ
2.5.3: Guidelines for Practice.	I	NHQ
2.6: Unifying Visitor Security Control and Visits and Correspondence Departments.	M	Inst
2.7.1: Checklist for Institutional Accessibility.	M	NHQ
2.7.2: Consumer Satisfaction Survey.	M	Inst
2.8: Post Sentence Community Assessment Information Provision.	I	Parole
3.1.1: Orientation to visiting.	I	Inst
3.1.2: Virtual Tour.	M	Inst
3.2: Family violence	I	All

Recommendation	By Suggested Timeline for Implementation (I) Immediate (1-2 years) (M) Mid-Term (1-5 years), and (L) Long-Term (1-10 years)	By unit of implementation (NHQ) (RHQ) (Inst/Parole) (VolSec) (Other)
3.3.1: Review of search and security procedures.	I	Inst
3.3.2: Ion Scanner/ NDS system.	I	Inst
3.3.3: National Data, through the National Drug Strategy Coordinator.	I	Inst / NHQ
4.1: Facilitation of communication and visiting	I	NHQ
4.2: Visiting hours at the institution	M	Inst
4.3.1: Investigation of Visiting Patterns.	M	Inst/ NHQ
4.3.2: Transportation Services.	I	RHQ
4.4: Hospitality houses	M	RHQ
4.5.1: New technologies.	M	NHQ
4.5.2: Annual Visit.	I	RHQ
4.6: Support for operational regimes	M	All
4.7: Location of correctional facilities	L	NHQ

Recommendation	By Suggested Timeline for Implementation (I) Immediate (1-2 years) (M) Mid-Term (1-5 years), and (L) Long-Term (1-10 years)	By unit of implementation (NHQ) (RHQ) (Inst/Parole) (VolSec) (Other)
5.1: Data collection for research and program planning	I	Inst/ NHQ
5.2: Research on parental incarceration	I	NHQ
5.3: Multidisciplinary conference on families affected by incarceration and reintegration	M	All
6.1.1: Partnerships.	I	VolSec
6.1.2: Services and Dynamic Factors.	I	VolSec
6.1.3: Service Evaluation.	I	VolSec
7.1: Ombuds Process for Families	I	NHQ
7.2: Funding Source Declaration	I	VolSec
7.3.1: Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution Unit and Families	I	NHQ
7.3.2: Orientation for New Offenders	M	Inst
8.1: Awareness and Sensitivity Training during COTP	I	NHQ

Recommendation	By Suggested Timeline for Implementation (I) Immediate (1-2 years) (M) Mid-Term (1-5 years), and (L) Long-Term (1-10 years)	By unit of implementation (NHQ) (RHQ) (Inst/Parole) (VolSec) (Other)
8.2: Community Engagement and Families	I	NHQ
9.1: Augmentation of Mother-Child Program	M	NHQ
9.2.1: Evaluation of Parenting Skills Program	I	NHQ
9.2.2: Availability of Parenting Skills Program	M	NHQ
9.2.3: Culturally Specific Parenting Program Components	I	Inst
9.3.1: Project Funding.	M	NHQ
9.3.2: Pre-release Orientation Package.	I	VolSec
9.3.3: District Parole Office psychologists.	I	Parole

## **Appendix B - Best Practices Referencing**

### **CSC Programs**

#### **Private Family Visiting Program**

The Private Family Visiting program is an opportunity for eligible families to spend approximately 72 hours together as a family. Single family living quarters are provided within the security perimeter of the institution. The family and the offender pay for food costs.

The Private Family Visiting program is governed by Commissioner's Directive 770 and by Standard Operating Practice 700-12e. (38)

#### **Mother-child Program**

Governed by Commissioner's Directive 768, eligible women in medium and minimum security federal correctional facilities are able to have their children live with them in the institution on a full time basis until the child is four years of age. This includes women who give birth while incarcerated. Children who are under 13 are able to reside part-time with the mother on weekends, holidays and under other approved times and circumstances.

Women convicted of a crime involving a child are not eligible to participate in the program unless a psychiatric assessment is completed by a psychiatrist selected by the Institutional Head and in consultation with the child welfare authorities.

The safety of the child is paramount in decision making related to the Mother-Child program.

#### **Parenting Skills program**

The Correctional Service of Canada has two programs that address these needs. Parenting Skills provides basic knowledge about parenting and was designed for male prisoners. Ineffective parenting can lead to learned ineffective behavior in the children of the incarcerated father. Parenting Skills for the incarcerated father may lead to healthier children. The Parenting Skills program includes topics such as the changing role and structure of the family, parenting styles, child development, children's needs, interpersonal parenting skills, caring for the family, family violence and abuse, managing emotions, discipline, and values.

Aboriginal parenting skills programs and aboriginal family violence programming were developed by the Correctional Service of Canada in conjunction with Ma Mawi Chi Itata in Winnipeg, in recognition of the cultural needs of aboriginal prisoners and their families.

**Family Violence Program**

The High and Medium Risk Family Violence Programs addresses family violence. The program uses a cognitive-behavioral based approach and is treatment oriented, preventive and educational in its approach.

**RPC Prairies Virtual Tour**

Designed and produced by the Informatics Department at the Regional Psychiatric Centre (RPC), Prairie Region, the computerized Virtual Tour of RPC provides a visual overview and depiction of the facilities at the institution. While currently not available to the public, the virtual tour is an excellent and secure method for educating and informing families of the surroundings and living conditions of the prisoner.

**RPC Prairies Family Assessment**

Elmer Regnim, Roman Catholic Chaplain at the Regional Psychiatric Centre, Prairie Region, has developed an offender assessment tool for chaplains that includes a family assessment component. When the offender arrives as a newcomer at the Regional Psychiatric Centre, they complete a self-report questionnaire. The chaplain follows up with the offender with a written summary and a personal interview.

**Family Counselling for Reintegration**

While several psychologists at federal District Parole Offices provide counselling to the offender, of particular note is the North Alberta and Northwest Territories Parole office in Edmonton, Alberta. The psychologists provide family counselling to those families in which family issues or concerns may be a deterrent to conditional release success or that may lead to a parole suspension.

**Kingston Penitentiary Prerelease Program**

The Kingston Penitentiary Prerelease Program provides the opportunity for a Private Family Visit for eligible offenders at the conclusion of the prerelease program. The offender and the family leave the institution together.

**Voluntary Sector Initiatives****Visitor Resource Centre at Kingston Penitentiary**

The Visitor Resource Centre is operated by the Canadian Families and Corrections Network at Kingston Penitentiary. It is based on restorative justice principles that are identified in the *Waiting at the Gate: Families, Corrections and Restorative Justice* curriculum, which identifies the importance of harm reduction related to the families of offenders. These families are harmed by the criminal behavior of the offender, and may be harmed directly or inadvertently by the justice and correctional process.

Using a restorative justice approach as its basis, the Visitors Resource Centre offers information

and referral, education, interim support/ intervention, provision of activities to strengthen the parent-child bond during the visit, and the opportunity for families visiting in Kingston Penitentiary to discuss the difficulties that they may face in confidence. Service provision includes a toll-free number that families can call for information and referral.

The Visitors Resource Centre used guidelines for standards of practice that are modified from the *Visitors' Centre Good Practices Guidelines* of HM Prison Service, Britain. The VRC at Kingston Penitentiary was recognized as a best correctional practice by the International Corrections and Prisons Association. (39)

### **Relais-Famille**

Relais-Famille is located in an apartment in Villeray, Montreal. Every Tuesday night a community supper is prepared by the members. Services include support through phone calls and personal interviews, accompanying family members to court, and social activities. Relais-Famille was founded in 1998 by Claude Lefebvre (retired chaplain), Marie-Diane Clavette and Therese Cloutier. It is currently staffed by two part-time employees, Helene Bournival and Anny Cyr.

### **Family Continuity for women in detention (CFAD)**

Family Continuity for women in detention was founded in 1985 by Yolande Trepanier. Its objective is to help women build positive relationships with their children. CFAD operates a two day mother-child stay over at the Tanguay detention institution. On the outside, they have converted a warehouse located in St-Henri, Montreal into a multi-function space that includes living room, offices, kitchen, community hall, and food counter. CFAD offers government sponsored work programs, Saturday Youth Program for children 6-12 year of age (crime prevention), daily lunch, bazaars, Moisson food service and a music program for 12-17 year olds.

### **Salvation Army Summer Camp for children 6-12 years of age (North of Montreal)**

The Salvation Army held its first camp in the summer of 2001 under the direction of Auxiliary Captains Serge and Yolande Brunet. Volunteer assist staff in giving inmate children a week filled with fun activities, positive affirmation and laughter. There is no cost to the parents for the program.

### **Moncton Headstart Program**

Moncton Headstart was founded in 1974 by Claudette Bradshaw to address the needs of "at risk" children and their parents. The program initially offered free day care to parents in disadvantages circumstances. The program has expanded to attempt to break the welfare cycle by a series of interventions in all areas of the child's life: economic, physical, social and intellectual. The goals and objectives of the Moncton Headstart program are to: provide socially, emotionally and educationally disadvantaged parents and pre-school children with a professional, non-threatening and accessible learning environment that will enable the family to become self-sufficient and full members of the community; assist parents in fulfilling the basic needs; develop a relaxing and



enjoyable environment for the children; tutor the children to help them reach, or stay at, the same level as others in their class; increase each child's self-esteem so they are able to confront new challenges; maintain good relationships with children at risk, and their families, and to assist them in keeping the family unit together.

**CABI Kit**

With a grant from The National Crime Prevention Centre, Jillian Crabbe (House of Hope, Ottawa) has developed an educational tool kit for families, professionals and community members called the C.A.B.I. Kit (Children Affected by Incarceration Kit). The kit is a resource to inform families and service providers about the effects of incarceration on a child and provides background information on the trauma that a child may endure when a parent is sentenced to a jail term and advocates for the development of support groups for children affected by incarceration.

The service delivery model utilizes the expressive arts as a means of expressing feelings around shame, anger, guilt, loneliness and loss, stigmatization and other issues related to the emotional and developmental effects of criminal behaviour and incarceration on children. The 14 suggested sessions in the service delivery model incorporate a cognitive-behavioural approach, with play and art therapy as a vehicle to deliver a message of hope and healing in a safe and unobtrusive form.

**Women Who Are Affected By The Incarceration Of A Loved One**

This program is provided by the House of Hope Community Resource Facility in Ottawa, Ontario, with funding from Correctional Services of Canada and from the National Crime Prevention Centre.

The program provides information, resources, and referrals. Participants learn new skills and information on the criminal justice system through discussion and presentations by service organizations. A light meal, transportation and child-care costs are provided.

Support groups for children (6-12) and for youth (13-18) who are affected by the incarceration of a loved one are also offered. The support groups provide an opportunity to share feelings and concerns with a group of peers that have similar backgrounds and challenges. A group model based on play and art therapy techniques and a cognitive behavioral approach will be used. The program runs for 14 weeks.

**Annual Family Prison Visit**

The John Howard Society of Newfoundland, with the support of the Correctional Service of Canada, developed the annual Family Prison Visit program to assist the families of federally incarcerated men and women in 1984. Funding allows for the payment of the complete cost of visiting for 15 families to the five federal Atlantic institutions. Cost cutting is maximized using seat sales, buses and bulk bookings.

In order to be considered for the program, applications were completed by the federal prisoner and forwarded to the John Howard Society of Newfoundland. Approximately sixty applications per year are reviewed and screened on a criteria of length of sentence, date of last visit, needs related to the visit, and release date. It was a difficult process to determine the final selection of families since each application has merit. JHS staff coordinate and supervise the family visits to the institutions, including organizing group socials, a traditional Newfoundland dinner, games and barbecues. Private Family Visits are also coordinated and reserved with the institutions for eligible families.

### **Families, Corrections and Restorative Justice Coalition**

The Families, Corrections and Restorative Justice Coalition operates in Kingston, Ontario, and is comprised of 10 community organizations and several individuals. Now in its third year of operation, the Coalition plans an annual conference. To date, conferences have focused on restorative justice and the family, the child of the incarcerated parent and the effects of reintegration on the family.

The mission of the Families, Corrections and Restorative Justice Coalition is to improve the quality of life for families affected by incarceration and reintegration by creating collaborative partnerships among diverse organizations and individuals. Its goals are to provide enhanced opportunities for communication, learning experiences and educational events between families affected by incarceration and reintegration, concerned individuals, organizations, service providers and correctional staff, including organizing conferences, workshops, and other educational opportunities and to develop and foster collaboration among diverse organizations, groups and concerned individuals to aid in achieving their missions together, as it relates to families affected by incarceration and reintegration.

### **Prisoner Family Forum**

A similar coalition, the Prisoner Family Forum, has developed in Abbotsford, BC. The Prisoner Family Forum, in conjunction with the John Howard Society of the Fraser Valley, hosted one of the public consultations that was used to develop the policy recommendations.

### **Hospitality Houses**

A description of the hospitality houses at Dorchester, Springhill, Kingston and Abbotsford appear previously in this policy document.

### **"Raising the Children: A training program for Aboriginal Parents"**

This program was developed in 1992 by the Raising the Children Program, in Sioux Lookout, ON. While not aimed specifically at Aboriginal offenders or families affected by incarceration and reintegration, it is a culturally sensitive and experiential approach to teaching parenting skills.

**Children Visiting Prisons, Kingston**

Children Visiting Prisons, Kingston (CVP-K) provides craft programs in the children's activity areas of several federal institutions in the Kingston area of the Ontario Region, CSC.

## Appendix C - Family Contact Development Officer Initiative

### Family Contact Development Officer Initiative, The Scottish Office, Home Department, HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

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#### 1. AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

##### Expansion of the Family Contact Development Officer Initiative

1.1 The history of the FCDO post goes back to 1990 when a number of interested parties got together to discuss ways to work with and within the SPS to address the needs of prisoners' families. That group then became known formally as the Scottish Forum on Prisons and Families, a group which still meets regularly and continues to provide the SPS with valuable advice on meeting families' needs.

1.2 One of the first tasks of the Group was to commission a research project into current practice in Scottish prisons, the work of voluntary and statutory agencies, the views of prisoners' families and the impact which imprisonment had on family relationships. That project led to the publication in 1992 of a report entitled 'Scottish Prisoners and their Families: The Impact of Imprisonment on Family Relationships'.

1.3 The report contained 14 recommendations, one of which was that:-

**"Each prison should appoint a Families Contact Development Officer".**

1.4 In support of that recommendation, the report stated that:-

**"A senior member of staff would be appointed with overall responsibility for families and would coordinate strategies and developments within the prison. S/he would also hear complaints from prisoners' families about visits and other matters and would organise appropriate training for those officers involved in visiting. The Families Contact Development Officer would also facilitate the involvement of families in discussions about visits and family contacts".**

1.5 In a foreword to the report, the Chief Executive of the SPS said - "In particular, I welcome the suggestion of the appointment of a Families Contact Development Officer in each

establishment to act as a focus for strategic developments within individual prisons".

1.6 Following the acceptance of that recommendation by the SPS, all establishments in Scotland appointed FCDOs each of whom has been provided with a job description - see Annex 7. Among the main aspirations of FCDOs themselves, are the provision of better facilities within establishments for family contact, improvements in relationships between staff and prisoners' families, a better information system for prisoners' families and an acceptance of responsibility by prisoners who may be involved in the trafficking of illicit substances of the effect which such actions might have on their family. The main concerns felt by FCDOs are in trying to avoid confusion of purpose with other departments within their establishments - eg social workers and Personal Officers - and the possibility of creating conflict with their colleagues as initiatives are introduced to improve and relax family contact.

1.7 Within the relatively short time since the FCDO role has been created, much has already been achieved. New and improved information sheets for visitors have been produced containing such information as how to get to the prison, the facilities available on arrival and the times when visits are held (these information leaflets are discussed in more detail at paragraphs 6.19-22). In addition, many establishments have begun to introduce physical improvements such as toilets for the disabled and baby changing facilities. Some establishments have also set up small working groups comprising staff, prisoners and prisoners' families to examine local needs whilst others have undertaken surveys to determine visitors' needs and expectations.

1.8 In addition, a new awareness training package has been produced for delivery to prison staff to help make them aware of the issues which can cause stress and hardship for prisoners' families. The aim of that training package, which is delivered in establishments by the Staff Training Officer assisted by the local FCDO, is to give staff a better understanding of the needs and fears of families visiting prison and therefore to be better equipped to deal with them.

1.9 By having an FCDO in each establishment it might be argued that the SPS is now better placed to provide a coordinated approach to improvements in family contact arrangements, which in turn will eventually help improve both visits provision and service delivery throughout the entire prison estate. Indeed, the FCDOs from all establishments meet on a regular basis to discuss areas of difficulty and to share best practices - which also helps achieve those aims.

1.10 However, one of the major difficulties faced by the overwhelming majority of FCDOs is in finding time properly to take forward all the foregoing initiatives. With the exception of HMP Shotts - see paragraph 6.34 - all FCDOs undertake their role on a part-time basis and have to fit these duties around the other tasks for which they are routinely responsible within the establishment.

1.11 Clearly, different establishments have different needs and it would not be viable or indeed

necessary to appoint full-time FCDOs in the open prisons where the number of home leaves to which the prisoners are entitled, coupled with the remoteness of their locations, reduce the frequency with which visits actually take place. However, in the larger closed prisons with a high daily throughput of visitors there is, in our opinion, a clear need for full-time FCDOs. We believe that such posts are the cornerstone of good relationships with visitors and any consequent reduction in the tensions felt by prisoners and their families will contribute to a more settled existence for the prisoners during their sentence. The current widespread practice of trying to fit FCDO duties into a full-time job is both unfair to the individual and unlikely to ensure that the role develops as was originally intended. Additionally, we believe that in the smaller establishments, part-time FCDO posts must have an appropriate allowance of time set aside to enable the postholders to undertake their various duties effectively.

1.12 We therefore **recommend**, the appointment of full-time FCDOs at Barlinnie, Cornton Vale, Edinburgh, Glenochil, Perth, Peterhead, Polmont and Shotts. We also suggest that the complements at Aberdeen, Dumfries, Greenock, Inverness, Longriggend and Low Moss should contain provision for part-time FCDO posts. We do not consider that any other Scottish establishments could reasonably justify such resourcing at present - though that does not diminish the need in those locations for good visits provision and services.

### **Role of Staff at Visits**

1.13 It is widely accepted that families have an important potential role to play in positively influencing a prisoner's behaviour and attitude throughout his/her sentence and for that reason, we are of the view that they should be kept in touch with the prisoner's progress. This might be achieved by prisoners' Personal Officers making regular contact with families which would help staff and families begin to build up relationships of trust and might also help reduce anxieties and allay fears.

1.14 An obvious time for such informal meetings to take place is when families arrive for visits and we believe that such occasions provide an ideal opportunity for an exchange of information. Under the new staffing structure, responsibility for staffing visits rooms now normally falls to the Operations Group in each establishment, Personal Officers come from the Residential Group, but we believe that such a division of responsibilities should not exclude Personal Officers from occasionally attending visit sessions for the purpose described above. We also see a complementary role for the FCDO in identifying the need for a Personal Officer to make contact with a family. There should also be regular dialogue between the Operations and Residential Groups so that, for example, Residential staff can be alerted at an early stage if there are problems for individual prisoners during visits or indeed, to pass on any relevant information which might have been picked up at a visit.

**Staff Training**

1.15 We are pleased to see the recent introduction of a module on visits which is now included in the training package delivered to recruits at the SPS College. This package was devised - and is delivered - by the SPS member of staff who is currently on secondment to the Scottish Forum on Prisons and Families. As well as advising recruits on prisoners' rights regarding their visit allowances, the package aims to provide an insight into the problems and frustrations faced by families - including the uncertainties and even the feelings of guilt which many of them experience - particularly on their first visit to a prison. This is an important first step in encouraging staff to be sensitive to the needs and expectations of visitors.

1.16 However, good though such training is, it is currently only being delivered to recruits and we believe that there is considerable merit in extending the delivery of the package to serving Officers. We suggest, therefore, that the SPS College should modify the training package presently being given to recruits, for delivery by Staff Training Officers to all staff at local level.

1.17 We recognise that there would be a small cost implication in providing and delivering this training, but we believe that such costs can be fully justified when set against the potential benefits for the SPS as a whole. If prison staff can harness the potentially positive influence of close family members actively to encourage prisoners to accept their sentence and in particular, to participate in appropriate offending behaviour programmes, then that can only be to the benefit of all concerned.

1.18 In addition to a general training package for all staff, we believe that FCDOs should also receive further specialised training relevant to their specific roles. Accordingly, we suggest that the SPS College should provide ongoing training for this group of staff as a matter of priority.

**Information for Visitors**

1.19 As noted at paragraph 1.7, every prison in Scotland has now produced an information leaflet of some kind for visitors, but the quality and availability of these leaflets varies considerably. Some are very good and contain a great deal of useful information laid out in a user-friendly style. On the other hand, some are poor, both in terms of how much they say and how it is said. Clearly, if relevant information can be provided in the right way at the beginning of a sentence then there are advantages for all. [We have] reproduced the information sheet provided by HMP Shotts which could act as a blueprint for other establishments.

1.20 Once prepared, these leaflets should be sent out as quickly as possible after admission so that prisoners' families and friends are informed timeously of all that they need to know. The leaflets should also be available in quantity in visitors' waiting areas together with copies of the Prisoners Information Pack for perusal.

1.21 In tandem, it would be helpful if each establishment also produced a single sheet providing at least the following information:-

- telephone number of the prison
- how to get there by private and public transport
- details of visit times and length of visits
- list of items which can be handed in for prisoners' personal use
- name of the FCDO
- a note confirming that a leaflet containing more information is available at the prison.

This information sheet, which could be made available to prisoners to send out with a letter or first visit pass, would be a way of providing important information at relatively modest cost and could easily be updated to take account of any changes.

1.22 Finally, we are aware that some visitors - particularly those who are visiting a prison for the first time and who might be apprehensive about what to expect - have difficulty in identifying the main prison entrance. We suggest, therefore, that every prison should have on display a notice or sign which clearly identifies the visitors' entrance.



**SPIN and Visits**

1.23 Visitors to prison cannot normally gain access to the establishment without a visit pass and arrangements for the issue of such passes vary. In some cases these are sent out by the prison to the visitor's home address and in other cases they are left at the Gate for collection, in which case the visitor has to produce some form of identification. Although these paper-based systems have been operating well enough for many years, we are nevertheless pleased to note that visits have been identified as an area for development as part of Phase 2 of the computerised Prisoner Records application. Indeed, a full study has recently begun which will seek to explore a range of issues related to visits including booking and security etc. The outcome of the study will help to inform Phase 2 planning and design, as will the operation of existing stand alone, locally devised computer-based visit booking systems.

1.24 We found such a system at HMP Shotts. Prisoners there can now book a visit as far ahead as they wish and details of their request are logged on to the computer by the establishment's librarian. The system then checks that the prisoner is eligible for the visit and once confirmed, an acceptance slip is produced and given to the prisoner whose responsibility is then to inform his visitor(s). A daily print-out giving details of all visits is provided for staff in the Gate.

**Facilities for Visitors**

1.25 As has been stated elsewhere in this report, imprisonment not only affects prisoners but also their families who, having committed no offence, still have to suffer the grief, stress, disruption and financial hardship that the imprisonment of a relative can bring. Similarly, visiting someone in prison can be a stressful and traumatic experience especially for those families who have to make long and difficult journeys and for whom the mere prospect of entering a prison can be a very intimidating experience. It is also recognised that in some cases, imprisonment can lead to the breakdown of family relationships, which in turn can have an adverse effect on the way in which prisoners will behave during their sentence.

1.26 It is therefore important that the SPS should take steps to try to ease at least some of the tensions which families experience when visiting a prison. One of the main ways in which this might be achieved is by making the period immediately before a visit begins a more relaxing and stress-free time - eg by the provision of a Visitors Centre or by extending the use of existing visit areas.

### Visitors Centres

1.27 One of the great advantages which Visitors Centres offer is that they provide a place where visitors (and their children) can relax, receive advice and information, purchase refreshments and generally prepare themselves for their visit. At the end of the visit they can call into the Visitors Centre to discuss any difficulties which might have arisen during the visit and prepare for the journey home. At present, there is only one such centre in Scotland (at HMP Perth).

1.28 In England and Wales, however, more than 50 prisons now have Visitors Centres and more are planned. All of these facilities are outside the perimeter wall or fence and each is managed independently of the prisons with whom they work - though in some cases financial assistance is provided by HM Prison Service. Centres have their own management committees which include representatives from the prison - usually the member of the management team with responsibility for visits and at least one other member of staff - as well as representatives from outside agencies and sometimes prisoners' families. Some of the other centres are run by outside agencies working with prisoners' families, whilst yet another group is constituted independently and registered as charities in their own right.

1.29 All of these Centres provide a wide range of services for visitors, including play areas and baby changing facilities, and offer a pleasant and welcoming place for visitors to spend time between their journey to the prison and their visit. Drinks and light meals are offered at reasonable prices and visitors have the opportunity to discuss with staff in the Centre any difficulties which they might be experiencing.

1.30 Because the Centres are close to the prison and the two usually work closely together, visitors can obtain accurate and up-to-date information about visiting arrangements and other details such as which items may or may not be taken into a visit. Experience has also shown that because the Centres are independent of the prison, many visitors feel more comfortable about discussing problems than they might do with uniformed staff. Some of the Centres in England do have uniformed staff undertaking administrative functions, but it has been found that their presence can alter visitors' perceptions and they are as a result less likely to seek help from the Visitors Centre staff when the uniformed Officers are there.

1.31 In addition to being used as places of relaxation prior to or after a visit, the Centres are sometimes used as an alternative to the traditional visitors' waiting room. For example, in one London prison, visitors attend the Centre to fill in the slip they have to present at the prison and are then issued with a numbered ticket. They then wait in the Centre until they are called across to the prison. This system helps the prison by controlling the numbers waiting to pass through what could easily become a security bottle-neck at the Gate. In addition it helps the visitors who previously had to wait under a plastic shelter exposed to the weather and to the gaze of passers-by. In other Centres, staff telephone the prison to let them know which prisoners have visitors waiting,

so that the prisoners can be brought to the visits room.

1.32 All of the Centres in England and Wales rely heavily on volunteer staff though the vast majority also employ paid staff. Although volunteers have a great deal to offer they do need to be carefully recruited, trained and supported if they are to offer more than just a refreshment service to visitors. The presence of regular staff allows a consistent approach to be adopted and good relationships established with the prison.

1.33 We were interested to learn that the England and Wales Prison Service has a Prisoners' Communications and Family Ties Section and under their auspices, a Visitors Centre Representatives' Group has been established. That Group, which includes representatives from a number of organisations representing the needs of prisoners and their families, has been working on the production of a Code of Standards for Visitors Centres as well as a leaflet about the establishment of Centres and guidelines for good practice. We are impressed with the principle of having a dedicated Family Ties Section and suggest that SPS HQ might find value in examining its work to see whether anything can be learned.

### **Expanding the Use of Existing Visit Areas**

1.34 In 1995 HMP Shotts took the decision to make the FCDO there a full-time post to enable the postholder fully to develop the role and to be available when normal visits were taking place. To that end, two members of staff (plus relief staff) were appointed to ensure that there was always one Officer in the role of FCDO on late duty Monday to Friday and on day shifts at weekends.

1.35 The purpose behind that decision was to ensure that the FCDO would be located in the visitors' waiting room, with a view to bridging the gap between the visitor and the prison. An information corner with leaflets from various social and welfare organisations was set up, but more importantly the FCDOs were encouraged to mingle with visitors and talk to them in an informal atmosphere. A conscious decision was taken that the staff involved should remain in prison uniform and contrary to the experience in some Visitors Centres south of the border, the uniform did not ultimately prove to be a barrier.

1.36 Initially there was some hesitation or mistrust on the part of the visitors, but gradually over the months, a good relationship built up to the extent that visitors now regularly approach the FCDOs seeking information or help. The FCDOs continually seek ways to improve communications and as an experiment, a video recording of the facilities available to the prisoners was shown prior to a visit session. That proved to be an extremely popular initiative and it continues to be shown.

1.37 At the request of the Inspectorate, the Governor of Shotts agreed to develop the scheme

further in an attempt to establish greater involvement with families and to facilitate the development of positive relationships between families and the prison. The first part of this initiative was to encourage families to be involved in the induction programme by taking part in a meeting between the FCDO and the prisoner at an early stage in his sentence. Clearly this participation was necessarily on a voluntary basis, but the purpose of the meeting was not only to introduce the families to the FCDO but also to spell out the prisoner's opportunities and responsibilities for moving himself forward during his sentence.

1.38 It was hoped that this would give the prisoner's visitors a better insight into how the prison worked and how they could have a positive influence both in taking the prisoner forward toward release and making him aware of some of the possible pitfalls. Equally important, it was hoped that these meetings could be used to make the *prisoner* appreciate some of the problems his close relatives had to face during his time in custody, thereby giving him a better understanding of what he could and should look for from his family. We are very firmly of the view that families have the potential to help change prisoners' attitudes and therefore to assist with the reduction of future crime and numbers of victims. That potential must, however, be harnessed and therefore a twin track approach involving families and prison staff has much to commend it.

1.39 The second part of the initiative was aimed to take place nearer the time either for the prisoner's release or when he was due to move on to open conditions. Again, the aim was to try to involve the family in a positive way so that they might help the prisoner cope with uncertainty and anxiety in relation to the pressures that he might face in an open establishment or on release.

1.40 The overall initiative was introduced in October 1995 and we were not surprised to learn that prisoners were at first reluctant to become involved. However, meetings now take place every two weeks with admissions to the prison and there has been a steady increase in the number of prisoners willing to take part, to the extent that we understand that about 90% of all admissions are now involved. We were also pleased to learn that other prisoners who were already in Shotts when the system was introduced, have requested the opportunity to participate.

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**Comment**

1.41 We are very firmly of the view that as a service provider, the SPS should be taking whatever steps are necessary in order to ease the tensions and anxieties which families visiting a prison might have to endure. In considering how best this idea might be taken forward, we have concluded that no changes are necessary with regard to open prisons where visits are more relaxed and less stressful, partly due to the fact that the prisoners in those establishments already qualify for regular home leaves.

1.42 With regard to closed prisons, however, we have outlined above two significant ways in which some attempt might be made to address the very real problems faced by families - ie, the provision of Visitors' Centres outside the perimeter of the establishment or an expanded role for FCDOs within the prison.

1.43 It could be argued that the best way forward would be the *universal* provision of Visitors' Centres particularly for the larger establishments. On the other hand, we have to accept that the provision of such facilities would require the input of considerable resources at a time when the SPS, in common with other public bodies, is facing financial constraints. The existing Centre at HMP Perth is staffed by volunteers but it may not be possible in every case to have such an arrangement, and paid staff - as well as volunteers - would require appropriate support, funding and training.

1.44 We recognise that some establishments may have attempted to have address these problems in the past, but we believe there is value for them in revisiting that exercise - particularly in light of the way in which Shotts has used considerable creativity in blending resources and needs. We therefore **recommend** that every closed establishment should undertake a detailed feasibility study with a view to determining whether they need:-

1.44.1 a properly resourced Visitors Centre; or

1.44.2 an enhanced use of the existing visits area, on the lines of that introduced at HMP Shotts, with an increased role for the FCDO.

To assist establishments in their consideration of 1.44.1 above, SPS HQ should seek advice about the setting up of Visitors' Centres from HM Prison Service's Prisoners Communications and Family Ties Section, information which could then be made available to each relevant establishment.

### Facilities for Children

1.45 At various parts of this report we refer to the importance of prisoners maintaining contact with their families and in particular their children. It is important, therefore, that special care should be taken to ensure that children's needs are properly catered for.

1.46 Article 9(3) of the UN Convention on the rights of the Child, which the United Kingdom ratified in 1991, states that:-

"Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests".

1.47 As far as prisons in Scotland are concerned, we have been pleased to see improvements in play and creche facilities in a number of establishments in recent years but clearly there is still much work to be done. At present, the quality of children's play areas ranges from very good at Perth and Shotts to very basic at Barlinnie.

1.48 In recent times, improvements to visit arrangements have in many cases led to longer visits, which increases the need for the provision of play space which provides suitable distraction for children who can easily become bored and restless during visits.

1.49 A good play area can provide children with a safe and stimulating environment which can help to make the visit a pleasurable experience. It also helps visitors and prisoners to carry on their discussions without constant interruptions and distractions. There is, of course, the problem that if the facilities are too good, then children will not want to spend time at the visit table, which creates its own tensions.

1.50 It is desirable that play areas should where possible be supervised and it is in this respect that the help of organisations in the voluntary sector should be sought. At this point we would like to pay tribute to the excellent work carried out by voluntary organisations - such as Toybox - who provide an excellent and professional service in a number of establishments. We believe that the experience of such organisations should be harnessed and we suggest, therefore, that every establishment should review the facilities which it currently offers by way of children's play areas with the aim of enhancing them or, where they do not exist, introducing them.

1.51 It may also be that links with local training colleges which offer courses in nursery nursing and childcare might provide a source of help. Where an unsupervised facility is on offer - eg on certain days of the week - then a notice to that effect should be put on clear display so that parents are aware of that situation in advance and can then decide whether they wish to allow their

children to use the facility.

1.52 We suggest also that every prison should provide proper baby changing facilities which are easily accessible by visitors - both male and female.

### **Prison Visitor Scheme**

1.53 Prison visitors' schemes (PVS) have been operating in many prisons for a number of years. Their purpose is to provide those prisoners who do not receive visits, with the opportunity to have a volunteer visitor. The schemes are often arranged and monitored by prison chaplains who use their local contacts to help find volunteers - though it should be stressed that not all volunteer visitors come from a religious background.

1.54 The prisoners who benefit from PVS are usually those serving long sentences who have no close relatives or have relatives and friends who live at a distance or who refuse to visit. The visits, which normally take place in the open visit area, can be of great importance to the individual prisoner in maintaining contact with the outside world.

1.55 We therefore fully support the continuation and further expansion of the scheme and suggest that each establishment should appoint a member of the management team to reinvigorate and develop the PVS and to be a recognised point of contact for any prison visitor who needs to discuss problems or difficulties. That individual should also ensure that proper guidance, training and information is given to all potential visitors in advance of their first visit and provide support and contact on an ongoing basis.

### **Smoking Policy**

1.56 The question of whether visit rooms should be smoking or non-smoking areas is a sensitive one, but nevertheless we believe that it is one which has to be firmly tackled.

1.57 Although we accept that individuals have the right to smoke, we also believe that the rights of non-smokers - and in particular children - have to be protected. HMP Perth recently tackled this issue by introducing a complete ban on smoking at visits and it is interesting to note that it was implemented without serious complaint. HMP Glenochil adopted a different approach in that they have designated non-smoking sessions, though smoking is banned at all times in the YOI visits room.

1.58 Clearly there are different ways in which to approach this issue, but it is our view that it is a matter which every establishment must address in order to protect the rights of non-smokers and the health of children. We suggest, therefore, that every establishment should produce and publish a smoking policy which ensures that non-smokers are at least offered the opportunity of having

their visit in a smoke-free atmosphere. In addition, we suggest that there should be a total ban on smoking in every visit waiting area given that these areas can become very crowded and frequently contain a number of children, pregnant women and people with health problems.

### **Prisoners and Families Sharing Meals**

1.59 In some establishments - eg Dungavel and Noranside - a system has been introduced whereby as part of a visit, prisoners can arrange to have a meal with their families. In advance of the visit, the prisoner can order a meal from the kitchen (for which a charge is made) and the visit period is then extended to allow time for the meal to be consumed. This facility is appreciated by all those who take part and it appears to work well.

1.60 We see great advantages in this initiative particularly for long-term prisoners who have been away from the family environment for a considerable length of time. For them, having a meal again as part of the family is important, and helps to re-establish normal patterns of social contact. There would clearly be practical difficulties in extending family meals to all prisoners and therefore we are not advocating that it should be introduced universally. That said, we suggest that an expansion of the facility of enabling prisoners to have a meal with their families as part of a visit, should be made available at all open establishments and where practicable, and appropriate, for those male and female prisoners who are being held at what is regarded as the top end of their closed systems.



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