

————— **Research Report** —————

**Program and Service Needs of Federally
Incarcerated Métis Offenders in
Saskatchewan**

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**Program and Service Needs of Federally Incarcerated
Métis Offenders in Saskatchewan**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Métis offenders present various challenges to the Correctional Service of Canada. Firstly, Métis offenders are clearly over-represented within federal corrections. While Métis peoples comprise less than 1% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 1996), Métis offenders account for 4% of the federally incarcerated population. Research has also suggested that Métis offenders may have programming needs that are distinct from those of non-Aboriginal and First Nations offenders. It was, therefore, imperative to more fully examine the institutional and community needs of Métis offenders.

The study was conducted in partnership with the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), Métis National Council (MNC) and Métis Family and Community Justice Services (MFCJS). The methodology consisted of interviews with 52 federally incarcerated Métis offenders in Saskatchewan, 20 family members of Métis offenders and 13 institutional staff. Data from offender files were also extracted from the Offender Management System maintained by CSC. Data from interviews and offender files were used to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the characteristics of federal Métis offenders interviewed in Saskatchewan? How do Métis offenders differ from other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders?
2. What programs are federal Métis offenders participating in within the institution and upon release? Are Métis offenders participating in programs that address areas of high need?
3. What programs and services do federal Métis offenders require within correctional facilities and once they are released into the community?
4. What programs and services do the families of Métis offenders require?
5. What information (or training) does correctional staff have regarding Métis offenders and the Métis culture?

Profile of Métis Offenders

Findings indicated that Métis offenders in Saskatchewan were young, uneducated and unemployed at the time of arrest. Furthermore, Métis offenders had extensive criminal backgrounds, violent criminal offence profiles and demonstrated need in several criminogenic areas (i.e., personal/emotional difficulties, substance abuse, employment and criminal associates). While the profile of Métis offenders appears similar to the profile of First Nations offenders, there were some important differences between Métis and non-Aboriginal offenders. Greater proportions demonstrated high overall need and need for substance abuse programming. Furthermore, Métis offenders were more likely to be rated as having low potential for successful community reintegration in comparison to non-Aboriginal offenders.

Despite various similarities between Métis and First Nations offenders, findings demonstrated that Métis offenders were less likely to speak an Aboriginal language and more likely to have grown up in an urban center. Results appear to suggest that while Métis and First Nations offenders may benefit from similar correctional programs, Métis offenders may require interventions tailored to their unique cultural experiences and environmental influences.

Program Participation

Over three-quarters of Métis offenders reported being involved in institutional programs. Most of these programs were oriented towards substance abuse, anger management/family violence and cognitive skills. Large proportions reported completing programs. Smaller proportions were involved in Aboriginal and Métis-specific programs. In general, offenders found correctional programming to be useful.

Needs of Métis Offenders

Métis offenders in Saskatchewan reported experiencing a myriad of difficulties at intake. Problems related to substance abuse and anger management were common. A large proportion felt that many of their needs were distinct from non-Aboriginal (58%) and First Nations (36%) offenders. Differences were often based on cultural variation. A qualitative analysis of offender needs indicated that Métis offenders required programs centered around Métis culture and practices, emphasizing the importance of having elders and culturally relevant initiatives available in federal facilities. Furthermore, a considerable proportion also reported the need for correctional programs to address specific issues.

Upon release, Métis offenders emphasized the need for employment and educational programs to assist them in the community. Large proportions also identified the need for a support system and cultural programs, highlighting the importance of providing Métis offenders with opportunities and community supports to facilitate the reintegration process.

Needs of Family

Findings demonstrated that family members needed various mechanisms of support to assist them during difficult periods. While the offender is incarcerated, families emphasized the need for contact with the offender, a support network in the community and assistance to offset financial burdens. Findings were similar when families were asked about their needs at the time of the offender's release, underscoring the importance of financial security and community involvement in their lives.

Staff

Interviews with staff highlighted their extensive experience with Aboriginal offenders in general and Métis offenders specifically. However, large proportions felt they lacked a

clear understanding of Métis culture and Métis-specific needs. Moreover, staff generally felt dissatisfied with their understanding and identified several ways to heighten their awareness. Enhanced cultural training was clearly important to staff. Findings suggest that additional training in culture and Métis-specific needs may help staff better serve Métis offenders.

In sum, the project provides a better understanding of Métis offenders, their families and the front-line workers who assist them in the institutions. Results have implications for improved correctional programming inside federal facilities. Furthermore, results can help correctional administrators identify service gaps in the community for Métis offenders and the families.

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INTRODUCTION

The project was a collaboration between Correctional Services Canada (CSC), Métis National Council (MNC) and Métis Family and Community Justice Services (MFCJS) of Saskatchewan to examine the specific service needs of federal Métis offenders in Saskatchewan. The participation of both Métis organizations enhanced the involvement of the Métis community in addressing the over-representation of Métis peoples within corrections. Various sources of information (i.e., offender, staff and family interviews; offender files) were employed to further our understanding of Métis offender needs while incarcerated in federal facilities and upon release.

Métis Offenders

It is clear that Aboriginal persons are over-represented within the criminal justice system (e.g., Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Saskatchewan Métis Justice Review Committee, 1992; Solicitor General of Canada, 1988; Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta, 1991; Trevethan, Tremblay & Carter, 2000; Trevethan, Moore, & Rastin, 2002). The 1991 Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba demonstrates that:

Aboriginal people who are arrested are more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be denied bail, spend more time in pre-detention and spend less time with their lawyers, and if convicted are more likely to be incarcerated (Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991).

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) has not only confirmed the problem of Aboriginal over-representation within the criminal justice system, but has suggested that the problem is becoming worse. In response, the Canadian government has emphasized the importance of addressing the issues faced by Aboriginal peoples. The January 2001 Speech from the Throne states:

...it is a tragic reality that too many Aboriginal people are finding themselves in conflict with the law. Canada must take the measures needed to significantly reduce the percentage of Aboriginal people entering the criminal justice system, so that within a generation it is no higher than the Canadian average (Government of Canada, 2001).

While the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal persons is widespread, the issue is of significant importance in Saskatchewan. Statistics indicate that the rate of incarceration among Aboriginal adults in the province is over 1,600 per 100,000, as compared to 48 per 100,000 among non-Aboriginal adults (CSC, 1999).

As with other Aboriginal groups, Métis offenders are also over-represented in the judicial system (Saskatchewan Métis Justice Review Committee, 1992; Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta, 1991). Although Métis peoples comprise 0.7% of the Canadian population, Métis offenders account for 4% of the federal offender population. Recent figures indicate that approximately 600 Métis offenders are incarcerated in federal correctional facilities. In addition, approximately 300 are currently serving time in the community (CSC, 2002).

Research suggests that Métis offenders may present unique needs for correctional programming. Some of this evidence is supported by studies comparing Métis offenders to other offender groups. Although the differences have not been extensively examined, a few studies have indicated that Métis offenders differ from First Nations and Inuit offenders. The differences are primarily reflected in the offences for which they are incarcerated and their criminogenic needs at intake into federal correctional facilities. Moore (2002) found that, similar to First Nations, Métis offenders had an extensive criminal history. However, larger proportions of Métis offenders were incarcerated for robbery, break and enter, and drug offences than other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. Furthermore, Métis offenders were more likely to experience problems related to employment and social interaction compared to other Aboriginal offenders. Motiuk and Nafekh (2000) found similar differences.

In addition to comparative research, the need for targeted services has also been supported by studies examining the experiences of Métis offenders during incarceration. A study exploring the needs of Métis offenders inside the institution and upon release highlighted the importance of culturally relevant programming and access to Métis-specific staff and services (Trevethan, Moore & Thorpe, 2002). However, according to a report by the Manitoba Métis Federation (2002), Métis offenders are identified as "Aboriginal" upon admission and are not necessarily distinguished from First Nations offenders. As a result, some Métis offenders do not access Aboriginal services during their incarceration. Those in search of greater cultural awareness are provided with programs that employ practices not inherent to their culture (e.g., sweat lodges and sweet grass).

Métis offenders are confronted with similar circumstances upon release. The reintegration process for Métis offenders and their families is typically facilitated by post-release supports and services. However, these services are not necessarily appropriate for Métis offenders. Although there are several programs and services available to Aboriginal offenders, they may not target the specific needs of Métis individuals and families. Ultimately, delivering culturally inappropriate programs to Métis offenders may be less effective in facilitating their reintegration than anticipated.

Research highlighting the over-representation of Métis offenders in federal corrections and their unique profile characteristics supports the need for further research into their programming and service needs. Métis offenders may require different interventions than non-Aboriginal or First Nations offenders. It is necessary to examine why current programs and services may not be appropriate for Métis offenders and identify ways in which programs can be adapted to better meet their needs.

Present Study

The present study was conducted to examine the needs of Métis offenders. The major research questions for this study included:

1. What are the characteristics of federal Métis offenders in Saskatchewan? How do Métis offenders differ from other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders?
2. What programs are federal Métis offenders participating in within the institution and upon release? Are Métis offenders participating in programs that address areas of high need?
3. What programs and services do federal Métis offenders require within correctional facilities and once they are released into the community?
4. What programs and services do the families of Métis offenders require?
5. What information or training do correctional staff have regarding Métis offenders and the Métis culture?

This information should help CSC and Métis organizations better understand how to work with Métis offenders to successfully reintegrate them into the community. It may also provide information leading to different strategies for dealing with Métis offenders while incarcerated. Further, findings from the study may provide information on the best approach for implementing Section 81 and 84 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)* for Métis offenders. The purpose of these sections of the *CCRA* is to aid Aboriginal offenders in their successful reintegration by using traditional healing methods. Information from this project could lead to a second phase that would target specific communities and examine services available for section 81 or 84.

METHOD

This project is a descriptive examination of Métis offenders in federal institutions in Saskatchewan. In order to gather the necessary information, the following data sources were used:

- offender files
- interviews with offenders
- interviews with family members
- interviews with federal institutional staff

Offender Files

A review of offender case files, using CSC's Offender Management System (OMS), was conducted to examine the socio-demographic characteristics of the offenders, current offence, criminal history, and static and dynamic factors . This information was primarily gathered through the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process. CSC's OIA process collects and stores information on each federal offender's criminal and mental health background, social situation and education, factors relevant to determining criminal risk (such as number, variety of convictions and previous exposure, response to youth and adult corrections), and factors relevant to identifying offender dynamic needs (such as employment history, family background, criminal associations, addictions, attitudes). While the results help determine institutional placement and correctional plans, a distribution of selected criminal history and case need variables can result in a comprehensive profile of the federal offender population.

A comparison between Métis, First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders was undertaken in order to examine differences in the profiles of Métis offenders and other offenders in Saskatchewan. Comparative data was retrieved from a one-day snapshot of federal offenders on January 1, 2003.

Offender Interviews

Interviews with federal Métis offenders provided more extensive information than was available through offender case files. In particular, interviews provided some personal information not available in case files, and allowed for more in-depth discussions about the needs of offenders. An interview tool was developed in consultation with a steering committee.

Interview questions were designed to examine six key areas: background information on the offender; childhood experiences; family problems; current relationship with family; program participation; and, needs. The structured interviews included both closed and open-ended questions. Respondents were individually interviewed (face to face) by one of two researchers hired by MFCJS. The interview took anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours to complete, depending on the amount of information provided.

The sample for this study consisted of male offenders incarcerated at selected federal institutions in Saskatchewan. Fifty-two Métis respondents were randomly selected from the population of offenders who were "on-count" in each institution at the time of the study.

Institution	Security	Offenders
Saskatchewan Penitentiary	Medium	41
Saskatchewan Penitentiary	Maximum	2
Riverbend Institution	Minimum	9
TOTAL		52

Family Interviews

Each of the offenders who were interviewed were asked to provide the name of one or more family members with whom they have maintained contact with, and that they felt comfortable with us contacting. A total of 67 family members were identified.

A structured interview was developed for family members of the Métis offenders who were interviewed. Interview questions examined four key areas: background; relationship to offender; needs of offender; and, family needs. The structured interviews included both closed and open-ended questions.

The family members were contacted by telephone and asked if they were willing to be interviewed for the project. If they were willing to participate, they were given the opportunity to conduct the interview in person or over the phone. Twenty family members were interviewed. In some cases two individuals were interviewed from the same family. All interviews were conducted face-to face by one researcher contracted by MFCJS.

Sixteen family members were female (80%). Ten were Métis, seven were First Nations, and three were non-Aboriginal. Nine of the family members were mothers, five were siblings, two were fathers, two were spouses/common-law partners and two were "other" family members. Family members typically lived in urban areas (60%). Small proportions were currently living in Métis (20%), rural (15%), and other (5%) communities at the time of the interviews.

Staff

A list of institutional staff was obtained from the contact at each facility. Staff were then randomly selected from each list. The proportion of staff in the final sample corresponded with the proportion of offenders that were interviewed at each institution. As a result, the largest proportion of the staff sample was selected from the medium

security facility within Saskatchewan Penitentiary. Smaller proportions of the sample were selected from the maximum security facility and Riverbend institution (minimum). It is important to also note that staff were not chosen based on experience or their knowledge of Métis offenders. Rather, the objective of this study was to capture a range of experience and knowledge.

A structured interview was developed for the institutional staff. Interview questions examined three key areas: background - with a particular focus on experience and knowledge, offender needs and programming, and family needs. The structured interviews included both closed and open-ended questions. Interviews were conducted in person by one of the two researchers hired by MFCJS.

In total, 13 institutional staff members were interviewed (male, 55%; female, 45%). The largest proportion was currently employed in case management positions (77%). Few were currently employed as correctional officers, unit managers and in "other" positions (8% in each category). The largest proportion of staff interviewed was non-Aboriginal (70%). A smaller proportion self-identified as First Nations and Métis (30%).

Process

The project began with the creation of a steering committee. This committee was comprised of representatives from MFCJS, MNC, and CSC (national headquarters and the Prairie region). An Aboriginal contractor was hired to conduct the interviews. Following an initial meeting, interview questions were prepared and agreed upon by the steering committee.

The Warden of each institution was contacted to discuss the research. The Assistant Warden of Correctional Programming of each institution was then contacted to set up interview dates and to organize any information sessions that they felt should take place prior to the interviews.

Interviews were conducted with offenders in the three institutions. During the same timeframe, staff interviews were also conducted. Finally, family members were contacted and interviews were conducted.

The interviews were sent to CSC for data input. Open-ended questions were examined and, where appropriate, themes were developed and coded for analysis. Once a dataset was prepared, analyses were conducted to address the research questions.

FINDINGS

The following section describes the results pertaining to the research questions. Appendix A includes all statistical tables.

An analysis was conducted to determine whether the sample of Métis offenders interviewed was representative of the federally-incarcerated Métis offender population in Saskatchewan. The sample accounted for 50% of the total Métis offender population in the province. Findings indicated that the profile of the sample did not differ significantly from that of the population. As a result, the findings in the current study can be generalized to the Métis offender population incarcerated in federal facilities in Saskatchewan.

Profile of Métis Offenders

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

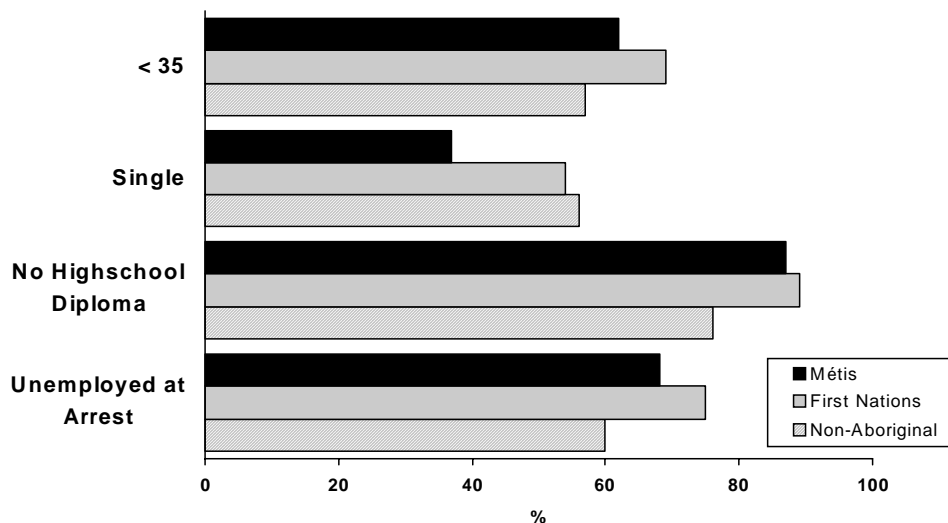
In general, the Métis offenders interviewed in Saskatchewan were similar to First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders on socio-demographic characteristics. Similar proportions of Métis were under 35 years of age (62%) as compared to First Nations (69%) and non-Aboriginal (58%) offenders. However, significantly larger proportions of First Nations offenders were under 35 years of age in comparison to non-Aboriginal offenders (see Table 1).

As illustrated in Figure 1, the educational and employment backgrounds of Métis offenders were also comparable to First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders. Large proportions of Métis, First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders did not have high school diploma (87%, 89% and 76%, respectively) and were unemployed at the time of arrest (68%, 76% versus 60%). Differences did, however, emerge between First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders. Significantly larger proportions of First Nations

offenders did not complete high school and were unemployed at the time of arrest than non-Aboriginal offenders.

Métis offenders differed from both First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders on marital status. Significantly larger proportions of Métis (59%) were married or living in a common-law relationship at the time of admission than First Nations (40%) and non-Aboriginal (26%) offenders.

Figure 1
Socio-Demographic Characteristics



Criminal History

As illustrated in Table 2, Métis offenders were similar to First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders in their criminal history. While large proportions had extensive experience in the criminal justice system, differences between Métis offenders and their counterparts were non-significant. Rather, a number of significant differences emerged between First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders. First Nations offenders appeared to have a more extensive criminal background than non-Aboriginal offenders.

It is important to note that some of the percentages in Table 2 were similar for Métis and First Nations offenders. However, due to the small number of offenders interviewed, differences between Métis and non-Aboriginal offenders were not significant.

Criminal Offence Characteristics

Approximately one-quarter (23%) of Métis offenders in Saskatchewan received a maximum security rating at intake. The proportion with a maximum security rating was not significantly different from proportions of First Nations (24%) and non-Aboriginal offenders (18%) in Saskatchewan (see Table 3).

Figure 2
Most Serious Offence

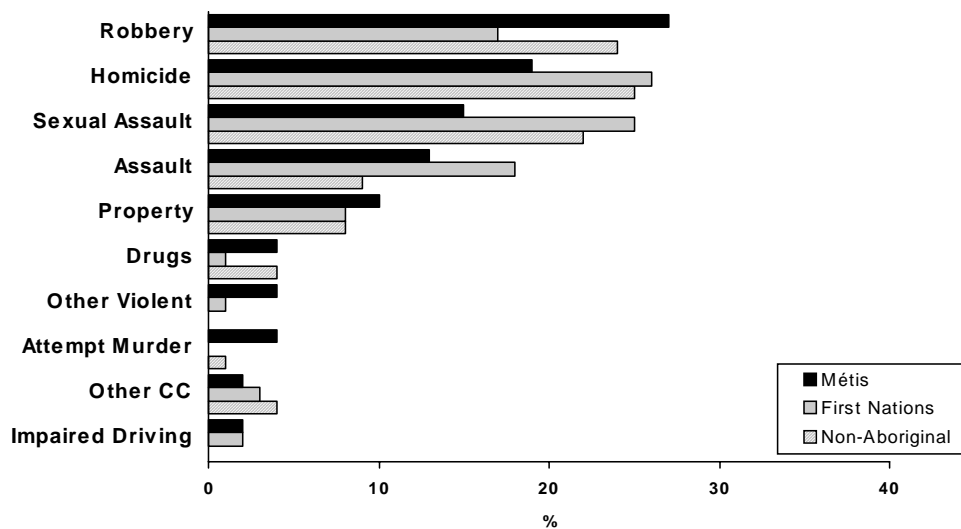


Figure 2 indicates that a large proportion of Métis offenders were currently incarcerated for a violent offence. Similarly, large proportions of First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders were also incarcerated for violent crimes (i.e., homicide, sexual offences). Métis offenders differed from both First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders on various violent offence types. In particular, significantly larger proportions of Métis offenders

were currently incarcerated for attempted murder in comparison to First Nations offenders (4% versus 0%). Larger proportions were also currently incarcerated for "other violent" offences (4%) as compared to non-Aboriginal (<1%) offenders. Significant differences were also evident between First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders on various violent offences (i.e. serious assault, impaired driving, robbery).

Apart from violent offences, groups also differed on drug related crimes. Significantly larger proportions of Métis (4%) and non-Aboriginal (4%) offenders were convicted of a drug offence than First Nations offenders (1%).

The average aggregate sentence of Métis offenders was 6 years. The length of time for which Métis were sentenced was similar to non-Aboriginals (5.7 years), but considerably longer than First Nations offenders (4.8 years). However, differences between groups were non-significant.

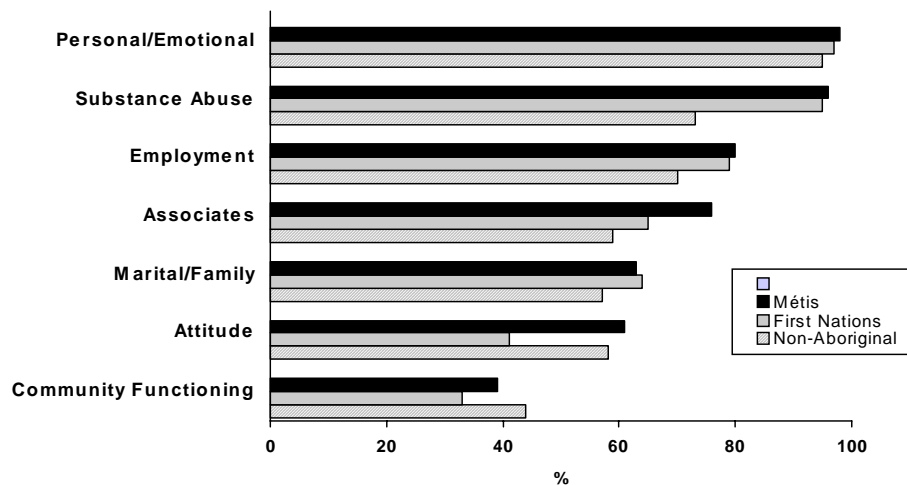
Static and Dynamic Factors

Three-quarters (76%) of Métis offenders in Saskatchewan were considered to be at a high risk to re-offend upon admission. The proportion of Métis offenders classified as "high risk" was not significantly different from proportions of First Nations (79%) and non-Aboriginal (70%) offenders. However, significantly larger proportions of First Nations offenders were considered to pose a high risk to re-offend than non-Aboriginal offenders (see Table 4).

Métis offenders demonstrated a myriad of programming needs at the time of admission to federal facilities (see Figure 3). Large proportions had need for interventions targeting personal problems, substance abuse, employment and interactions with criminal associates. Furthermore, the needs of Métis offenders at intake appeared similar to those of First Nations offenders. However, significantly larger proportions of Métis offenders were rated as having "some or considerable" need for programming in the area of pro-criminal attitudes than First Nations offenders (61% versus 41%). The

needs of Métis offenders were also similar to non-Aboriginal offenders, with a few exceptions. Significantly larger proportions of Métis offenders had "some or considerable" need for programs addressing substance abuse (96% versus 73%) and demonstrated high overall need (86% versus 69%) in comparison to non-Aboriginal offenders. Differences also emerged between First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders on overall need, substance abuse, employment and attitude needs.

Figure 3
Some or Considerable Need



While results suggest that Métis offenders need to address a multitude of areas through correctional programs, results also indicate that large proportions are motivated to participate in correctional programs. One-quarter (24%) of Métis offenders were rated as having high motivation at intake. Similar results were found for non-Aboriginal offenders (21%). Furthermore, large differences between Métis and First Nations (15%) offenders were non-significant.

Despite demonstrating a willingness to participate in programs, large proportions of Métis offenders were rated as having low potential for reintegration at intake. Similar proportions of First Nations offenders were also rated at a low level of reintegration

potential. In contrast, significantly smaller proportions of non-Aboriginal offenders received a low reintegration rating as compared to Métis and First Nations (43% versus 74% and 75%, respectively).

In sum, Métis offenders in Saskatchewan appeared to be in their early 30's, uneducated and unemployed at the time of arrest. While the socio-demographic profile of Métis offenders was not unlike that of First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders in Saskatchewan, results highlight a disadvantaged background. Furthermore, Métis offenders tend to have extensive experience with the criminal justice system and are currently serving a sentence for a violent crime. First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders had similar criminal backgrounds and offence profiles. However, large proportions of Métis offenders appeared to be incarcerated for specific violent crimes and drug-related offences. The lengthy involvement of Métis offenders in criminal activity and the serious nature of their offending behavior was consistent with the elevated need for programming presented at intake. Overall, Métis offenders demonstrated high need for programming in a number of areas. While many of these needs were similar to the needs of First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders, there were some differences. Larger proportions of Métis offenders had "some or considerable" need for interventions targeting pro-criminal attitudes than First Nations offenders. Greater proportions also demonstrated high overall need and need for substance abuse programming than non-Aboriginal offenders. Furthermore, while larger proportions of Métis offenders were considered to have high motivation than First Nations and non-Aboriginal offenders, differences were non-significant.

Research is generally consistent with current findings. Métis offenders in other studies were found to be young, often uneducated and unemployed at arrest. Moreover, these studies have found that Métis offenders had lengthy criminal pasts, violent offence patterns and demonstrated a multitude of criminogenic needs at intake (Moore, 2002; Trevethan et al., 2002b). Nevertheless, findings clearly point to the importance of offering comprehensive programming to Métis offenders inside federal facilities.

Correctional programs may be further enhanced by focussing on those areas in which Métis offenders are different.

Community Information

As illustrated in Table 5, the largest proportion of Métis offenders incarcerated in Saskatchewan grew up in Saskatchewan (55%). Smaller proportions resided in Manitoba (24%), Alberta (12%) and other regions in Canada (10%). Over one-half (56%) of offenders reported being raised in an urban community (large or small city). A smaller proportion of offenders reported being raised in rural (25%) and Métis communities (15%). At the time of arrest, three-quarters (73%) of Métis offenders were residing in an urban community. Smaller numbers were residing in rural (13%), Métis (10%) and reserve (4%) communities. Two-thirds (65%) had lived in these communities for less than 6 years when arrested.

Currently, almost two-thirds (64%) consider a small or large city to be their home. Smaller proportions consider a Métis (23%), rural (11%) or reserve (2%) community to be their home. Similarly, the largest proportion of offenders believed that an urban community would be the best place to be released (72%). Nevertheless, some respondents did feel that Métis (13%), rural (11%) and reserve communities (4%) were the best places for subsequent release.

Approximately eight out of ten (83%) offenders reported that they actually planned to live in a small or large city at the time of release from the federal facility. More specifically, the largest proportions planned to live in Saskatoon (31%), Winnipeg (15%), Edmonton (8%) and Calgary (8%).

In general, Métis offenders in Saskatchewan spent most of their childhood in small or large cities throughout the prairie provinces, with a large proportion residing in the Saskatchewan. Furthermore, it is clear that offenders felt at home in urban communities and believed that these environments held advantages for them upon

release from federal custody. Results highlight the importance of maintaining and developing correctional programs and services for offenders in Prairie cities. In addition, urban programs need to address the challenges associated with returning to an environment that precipitated the criminal behaviour.

Family and Cultural Background

As indicated in Table 6, the largest proportion of Métis offenders reported that their primary caregiver in youth was their birth mother (44%). Smaller proportions reported that both parents (13%) and grandparents (13%) were primary caregivers. Offenders appeared to be quite attached to these figures. Approximately nine out of ten (87%) reported being attached to their primary caregiver. Fairly large proportions also reported a good economic situation while growing up (71%), as well as a happy (69%) and stable (63%) childhood. Not surprisingly, offenders generally maintained contact with their families. While incarcerated, approximately two-thirds currently had contact with their spouses (68%) and children (61%). Three-quarters (78%) had regular contact with other family members.

Despite attachment to their primary caregiver and the reported stability during childhood, the findings suggest that Métis offenders experienced considerable difficulty in the home environment during childhood. Over three-quarters (78%) reported that at least one person responsible for their upbringing had an alcohol problem, and one-fifth (24%) indicated a drug or sniffing problem. Furthermore, the early experiences of respondents appear to be characterized by abuse in the home. Three-quarters of offenders (75%) reported experiencing or witnessing violence in the home as a child. Various forms of violence were present in the families of offenders. Large proportions of those who reported violence said they experienced or witnessed physical (92%), psychological (59%) and sexual violence (41%). In addition, 83% of the Métis offenders said they experienced or witnessed violence in the community.

Apart from issues of family dysfunction, considerable proportions of Métis offenders also experienced disruption to their family lives. Over one-half (52%) reported being involved in the child welfare system at some point during their childhood. Of those who reported involvement, large proportions were placed in foster care (68%) and group homes (36%). Extensive involvement in the child welfare system has also been found among federally incarcerated Aboriginal offenders in general (Trevethan et al., 2002a). Results from the current study emphasize the extent to which many Métis offenders have been displaced early in life.

Family-related difficulties experienced in youth appear to have significantly impacted the adult lives of the offenders. Large proportions felt that the substance abuse problem in their home contributed to their imprisonment (68%). Similarly, over two-thirds (69%) felt that family violence was linked to their involvement in the correctional system.

Literature suggests that the negative childhood experiences of Métis offenders in Saskatchewan are not uncommon from those of Métis incarcerated in other provinces. According to Trevethan et al. (2002b), large proportions of Métis offenders in British Columbia experienced violence and drug use in the home. Moreover, research suggests that Métis offenders share similar childhood experiences with Aboriginal offenders in general. Johnson (1997) found that large proportions of Aboriginal offenders had experienced violence and maltreatment in their youth. Similar findings are also apparent in other studies (Trevethan, Auger, Moore, MacDonald & Sinclair, 2002a).

Childhood instability and disruption to family life may have impacted on the extent to which Métis offenders practiced and internalized their culture. Results in Table 7 indicate that almost three-quarters (71%) of the Métis offenders said they did not speak or understand an Aboriginal language at the time of the interview. Furthermore, only one-third (33%) reported participating in Métis activities and feeling attached to Métis culture (30%) during childhood. Similar results were found when offenders were asked about Métis culture inside the institutions. Less than one-half (40%) reported being

currently attached to their Métis culture and only 6% reported participating in Métis activities within the federal facility. It is important to note that low participation was likely related to a lack of Métis-related activities inside the institutions. In contrast, larger proportions reported being involved in other Aboriginal activities inside the institution (42%) and were currently attached to another Aboriginal culture (55%). Past research demonstrates that First Nations offenders have had a different experience with their culture inside federal facilities. In comparison to Métis offenders in Saskatchewan, larger proportions of First Nations offenders have reported speaking an Aboriginal language, being attached to their culture and participating in traditional activities (Trevethan et al., 2002a).

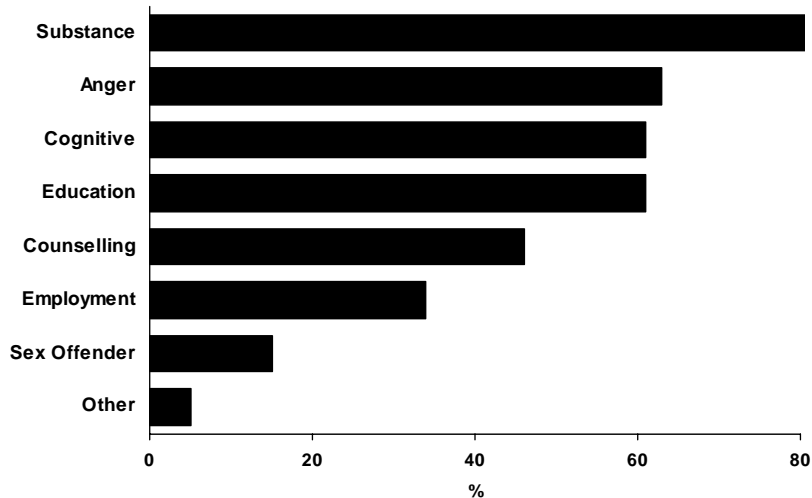
Results in the current study appear to suggest that Métis offenders had limited exposure to traditional Métis life during their childhood and felt little affiliation to their culture. In addition, offenders did not appear to be involved in Métis practices within the institutions, but large proportions were participating in activities oriented towards First Nations cultures. Many offenders also felt a strong attachment to First Nations culture. While there are positive aspects to being involved in spiritual and cultural activities, programs need to acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal cultures present in federal facilities. Furthermore, the benefits of practicing cultural activities that do not reflect the experiences of the clientele remain unclear.

Program Participation

Findings from the interviews suggest that Métis offenders have participated in a variety of correctional programs. Over three-quarters (79%) reported participating in a program while incarcerated within the federal system. Figure 4 indicates that the largest proportions participated in substance abuse (88%). Large proportions also participated in anger management/family violence (63%), educational (61%), cognitive/living skills (61%) and counselling (46%) programs. Smaller proportions were involved in employment (34%), sex offender (15%) and "other" (5%) programs (see Table 9). In addition, of those who reported being on parole, more than one-half (58%) said they

had participated in programs while serving time in the community. The largest proportion of those who participated in community programming were involved in substance abuse (91%), and counselling (55%) programs.

Figure 4
Program Participation



In general, small proportions of the Métis offenders reported being involved in Aboriginal-specific programming. Counselling (42%) and substance abuse (36%) were most frequently identified as Aboriginal-specific in nature. Much smaller proportions of sex offender (17%), anger management (12%), educational (8%) and cognitive/living skills (4%) programs were identified as Aboriginal-specific. Furthermore, only 5 programs were reported as being Métis-specific programs (2 substance-abuse programs, 2 counselling/psychological services, and 1 educational program).

An analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which offenders with "some or considerable" need had received appropriate programming in the institution. As indicated in Table 11, a large proportion of those with "some or considerable" need in the area of substance abuse participated in substance abuse (90%) programs. Furthermore, considerable proportions with personal and emotional needs were involved in substance abuse (87%), anger management (64%), and cognitive/living skills (62%) programs. Of those identified as having "some or considerable"

marital/family need, approximately three-quarters (72%) participated in anger management/family violence programs. In addition, over two-thirds (67%) of offenders with "some or considerable" employment need participated in educational programming. However, only 42% of those with employment need participated in employment-related programs. Overall, findings suggest that the criminogenic needs of Métis offenders were addressed through appropriate programming in the institutions.

Large proportions of Métis offenders reported completing the institutional programs they were involved in (Table 9). Self-reported completion rates appeared to be highest for substance abuse (97%) and anger management (96%) programs. Similarly, large proportions of those involved in employment (93%), cognitive/living skills (88%), counselling (84%) and sex offender (83%) programs reported completing the necessary requirements. Smaller proportions completed educational programs (68%).

Despite the lack of Aboriginal and Métis-specific content, offenders felt correctional programming was useful to them (Table 9)¹. The majority of Métis offenders participating in sex offender (100%), counselling (95%) anger management (92%) and educational (92%) programs indicated that the program content and material helped them in some way. Considerable proportions also found substance abuse (89%), employment (79%) and cognitive living skills (76%) programs to be helpful, highlighting the positive influence of institutional interventions on the lives of offenders. However, almost all offenders noted that they would like to see Métis facilitators to deliver programs and services inside the institution (98%). Offenders felt similarly about the delivery of programs in the community.

In sum, Métis offenders in Saskatchewan participated in a multitude of correctional programs targeting specific needs. Needs presented at intake were generally targeted through appropriate interventions. Large proportions also reported completing these programs and found them useful despite a lack of Métis-specific content. These

¹ It should be noted that the number of offenders participating in some of these programs was quite small. Therefore, caution should be used in interpreting these findings.

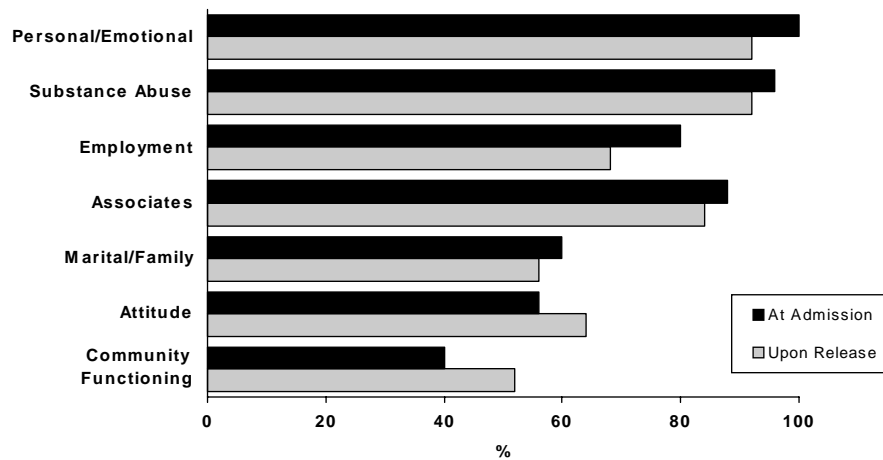
findings are generally consistent with past research on Métis offenders in British Columbia. Trevethan et al. (2002b) found that large proportions were involved in programming that addressed their criminogenic needs. Moreover, offenders considered programs helpful. Results suggest that current correctional planning practices appropriately match specific needs with specialized programs. Results also support the utility of correctional programming in addressing factors related to offending behavior. However, it is still unclear whether cultural and spiritual issues are adequately addressed through basic programming in the institutions.

Institutional and Community Needs of Métis Offenders

A large proportion of Métis offenders were rated as having "some or considerable" need in several criminogenic domains at intake and upon release into the community. However, as illustrated in Figure 5, a larger proportion of offenders at admission had "some or considerable" need for interventions targeting personal/emotional difficulties (100% versus 92%), substance abuse (96% versus 92%), employment (80% versus 68%), associates (88% versus 84%) and marital/family (60% versus 56%) than at release². In contrast, it appears that a larger proportion of Métis offenders at release had need in the areas of attitude (64% versus 56%) and community functioning (52% versus 40%) than at admission. The greater need for intervention in these areas may suggest that issues related to community adaptation and attitudes are more apparent prior to release.

² The analysis only included those offenders who had received an assessment at intake and upon release (n=25).

Figure 5
Some or Considerable Need - at Admission
and Upon Release



A complementary analysis was conducted to determine whether changes in need across time were meaningful. Findings indicated that the need for substance abuse programming (M=3.8 versus M=3.4) and interventions addressing personal and emotional issues (M=3.7 versus M=3.4³) were significantly lower at release. While need in other criminogenic areas changed, differences between intake and release were non-significant. In sum, results suggest that a large proportion of Métis offenders have considerable need for correctional programming prior to their re-entry into the community. However, some offender needs appear to be addressed in the correctional institution.

Needs identified through the intake assessment process were also apparent in offender interviews. Métis offenders in Saskatchewan reported a multitude of personal difficulties at the point of entry to federal facilities (see Table 12). The largest proportion reported having problems associated with alcohol use (58%) and being involved in a criminal lifestyle (48%). However, considerable proportions also reported difficulties

³ Means are calculated using a 4 point scale, with 1 indicating “an asset”, 2 indicating “no need”, 3 indicating “some” need and 4 indicating “considerable” need.

with anger management/violence (44%), drug use (40%) financial instability (29%), and family relations (27%). Smaller proportions experienced problems with employment/education (23%) and depression (17%).

A large proportion of Métis offenders felt that their needs and issues were different from those of other offenders. More than one-half (58%) of the Métis offenders felt their needs were different from the needs of non-Aboriginal offenders. Areas related to identity, culture and spiritual practices were frequently cited as differences. In contrast, of those who felt their needs were similar, large proportions reported that both Métis and non-Aboriginal offenders had to deal with personal struggles and required similar programming in the institutions. Furthermore, about one-third (36%) felt that their needs were different from the needs of other Aboriginal offenders. Cultural variation was frequently cited as an area of difference. A large proportion of those who felt the needs of Métis and First Nations were similar indicated that both groups shared Aboriginal ancestry, common institutional experiences, and personal difficulties.

In addition to having unique needs, Métis offenders reported having specific institutional programming needs. Large proportions felt they needed programs centered around Métis culture and practices (43%). Several of those who identified cultural needs emphasized the importance of having access to Métis Elders inside the institutions, programs oriented specifically towards Métis people and resources that could assist them in learning more about Métis culture. Furthermore, 6% felt they required Métis staff and program facilitators inside the institutions. Large proportions also (34%) reported the need for correctional programming to address their specific concerns inside the facility. Smaller proportions identified the need for programs that focused on attaining a better understanding of the self (13%) and substance abuse (11%).

The suggestions offenders made to enhance institutional programs were consistent with their needs. Considerable proportions suggested that more Métis/cultural specific (26%) and substance abuse (22%) programming be offered. Moreover, some thought they could benefit from more employment/educational programs (18%), other institution-

based programs (i.e. anger management/cognitive living skills) (18%) and Métis support and sharing groups (10%) inside the federal facility.

Upon release, the largest proportion of offenders identified the need for employment and educational programs (37%) to assist them in the community. In addition, large proportions identified the need for a support system (28%) and cultural programs and activities (23%) in the community. Smaller proportions felt they required general correctional programs (14%) and substance abuse treatment (9%).

Offenders made a number of suggestions to enhance program delivery in the community. One-quarter suggested that more cultural (28%) and substance abuse (26%) programs be offered upon release. Smaller proportions reported that community programs could be enhanced with more basic correctional programming (21%) and employment/educational training (13%). Some also noted the importance of improving support networks for offenders (11%) and offering family violence/anger management (11%) and counselling services (9%).

In general, some offender needs appeared to be lower at the time of release into the community, suggesting that specific issues had been addressed while incarcerated. Nevertheless, offenders reported experiencing several difficulties at intake. Problems related to substance use and dependency and anger management were common. In addition, a large proportion of offenders felt their needs and issues were unique from those of other populations. Métis offenders felt their needs were particularly different from non-Aboriginal offenders.

Offenders emphasized the need for specific programs both inside and outside the institution to address their issues. In particular, offenders said they required cultural programs during the period of incarceration and programs focused on employment and education upon release. Several offenders also identified the need for social support at the point of release, highlighting the value placed on developing a network in the community to assist in their reintegration. Previous research on federally incarcerated

Métis offenders found similar results. Métis offenders in British Columbia also felt they needed access to cultural resources inside the institution and educational and employment opportunities upon release (Trevethan et al., 2002b). Findings point to the importance of services in the institutions and community that allow offenders to connect to their culture and provide the means necessary to further their education and eventually acquire stable employment.

Needs of Family Members

The needs of offender family members were also examined in the current study (see Table 13). Métis offenders felt that their families needed various forms of support during the period of their incarceration. More specifically, large proportions reported that their families needed support from the offender specifically (26%), a social network or support in general (21%) and financial assistance (19%). Large proportions also indicated that their family members needed more contact with the offender while in the institution (23%). Smaller proportions said their families needed to have a better understanding of the offender and their issues (12%).

Similar findings emerged when offenders were asked about the needs of their families at the time of their release from federal custody. Upon release, considerable proportions of offenders reported that their family members would require various mechanisms of support. Once again, large proportions felt their families would need support from the offender (23%), financial assistance (20%) and a support system in the community (14%). Large proportions of offenders also felt that their families would need to have contact with the offender (23%) and be able to support and understand the offender while in the community (17%).

Information was also gathered directly from a small number of family members. Approximately one-half (45%) of family members reported experiencing personal difficulties at the time of the interviews. The largest proportion was experiencing financial hardship (78%) and had health concerns (56%). A smaller proportion reported

having mental health issues (11%). Despite a large proportion experiencing personal hardship, only 13% were aware of services to assist them during the period of incarceration. Larger proportions were aware of services available at the time of release (24%).

The largest proportion of family members reported needing contact with the offender during the period of incarceration (33%). However, family members also emphasized the need for support in their lives to assist them with the impact of incarceration. Over one-fifth (22%) said they required financial assistance and employment at this time. In addition, some family members indicated a need for a support network (17%) and counselling (11%). Findings were similar when families were asked about their needs at the time of release. While the largest proportion felt they needed to demonstrate support and understanding towards the offender (39%) at release, considerable proportions also reported needing financial support (28%) and assistance from a supportive social network (22%).

Overall, findings suggest that families require various forms of assistance in order to address the challenges faced while the offender is incarcerated. Moreover, the needs of family members during the period of incarceration do not appear to be very different from their needs at the time of the offender's release. Both offenders and family members acknowledge the value of having a social network in place to support the family during difficult times. Similarly, Trevethan et al. (2002b) found that the family members of Métis offenders in British Columbia required a support network of friends and community members during the period of incarceration. In addition, offenders and families in the current study also acknowledge the financial burdens associated with incarceration and reintegration. Families appear to require monetary support and stable employment in order to address changes to the home economy.

The needs of Métis families are likely similar to the needs of families in general. The incarceration and release of an offending family member presents unique challenges to

the family unit. However, little information is currently available on the needs of First Nations and non-Aboriginal families, making it difficult to draw comparisons.

Nonetheless, it is imperative that correctional policies strongly consider the impact of incarceration and subsequent release on the family unit. Services may need to be enhanced to better address financial concerns. Furthermore, involving community members in the support of families may offset some of the personal and social challenges they face.

Staff Experience and Knowledge

Correctional staff interviewed had extensive experience within federal corrections. Over two-thirds (69%) were employed in their current position for more than three years, and 85% were employed with the service for more than three years in total (including prior positions). A large proportion held other positions within CSC prior to their current position (92%). Of those who held a prior position, the majority was employed in correctional officer positions (92%).

In addition to work with the general offender population, institutional staff also appeared to have extensive experience with Aboriginal offenders inside the institution (Table 14). All of the staff interviewed reported working with Aboriginal offenders in general and Métis offenders specifically. Furthermore, fairly large proportions reported working with Aboriginal (69%) and Métis (31%) communities in some capacity. Similarly, all of those who held prior positions with CSC worked with Aboriginal offenders in general and Métis offenders specifically. Furthermore, it appears that staff have received some instruction from CSC about Aboriginal issues. The majority (85%) of staff indicated that they received training pertaining to Aboriginal issues in the past. However, no staff had received training on Métis issues specifically. Results highlight the exposure institutional staff have had with the needs and issues of Aboriginal offenders.

The amount of experience staff had with Aboriginal offenders appeared to be reflected in their perceived understanding of Aboriginal offender needs. Large proportions felt that they held a good current understanding of the needs of Aboriginal offenders (69%). In addition, over one-half (54%) reported a moderate to high level of satisfaction with their current level of knowledge.

Staff generally felt that the issues of Métis offenders were distinct from other groups. Over two-thirds reported that the needs of Métis offenders were different from the needs of non-Aboriginal and other Aboriginal offenders (67% each). However, staff did not appear to have much knowledge in this area. Only 15% reported having a good understanding of Métis offender needs. Similar proportions reported being satisfied with their understanding (15%). Not surprisingly, a large proportion of staff felt the needs of Métis offenders were not being adequately met inside the institution (62%) or upon release (55%).

Overall, institutional staff have a limited understanding of Aboriginal culture. Only one-third (31%) reported having a good current understanding of Aboriginal culture. Knowledge in the area of Métis culture was even more limited. A small proportion reported that their current level of knowledge was good (15%). Generally, staff were also quite dissatisfied with their current level of knowledge. A large proportion noted a low level of satisfaction with their understanding of Aboriginal culture in general (38%) and Métis culture specifically (77%).

While staff reported a limited understanding of Métis culture and Métis offender needs, they also appear to feel that their level of knowledge could be enhanced through various means. Three-quarters (77%) reported the need for cultural training in order to improve their understanding of Métis offenders. Smaller proportions identified the need for a greater awareness regarding Métis communities (23%) and access to sources of information on Métis offenders (15%).

It is clear that institutional staff had a great deal of institutional experience with Aboriginal offenders. It also appears that staff received some training from CSC on Aboriginal issues in the past and have some knowledge of Aboriginal offenders in general. However, staff had little knowledge concerning the needs of Métis offenders or Métis culture generally. Moreover, while staff felt the needs of Métis offenders were unique from other groups, they had a limited understanding of their specific issues.

While institutional staff did not feel that they held a good understanding of various Aboriginal and Métis-specific issues, a large proportion expressed dissatisfaction with their current level of knowledge and emphasized the need for more awareness. Staff felt that greater awareness could be achieved through enhanced cultural training, exposure to Métis communities and access to information and literature. Results indicate that staff require and desire a greater awareness of diverse Aboriginal cultures. In particular, a more thorough understanding of Métis offender needs and specific cultural practices may be needed. Findings underscore the important role CSC plays in responding to the needs of staff and helping them acquire the knowledge needed to more fully understand their clientele.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to examine the institutional and community programming needs of Métis offenders in Saskatchewan. In addition, the study explored the needs of family members of Métis offenders and gauged the experience and knowledge of institutional staff.

According to profile data, Métis offenders in Saskatchewan are in their early-30's, uneducated and unemployed at the time of arrest. Furthermore, Métis offenders have extensive criminal backgrounds, violent criminal offence profiles and a demonstrated need in several criminogenic areas (i.e., personal/emotional difficulties, substance abuse, employment and criminal associates). While the profile of Métis offenders was fairly similar to First Nations offenders a few differences did emerge. Larger proportions of Métis offenders were incarcerated for attempted murder and drug offences. Larger proportions also had "some" or "considerable" need in the area of pro-criminal attitudes. Important differences were also evident between Métis and non-Aboriginal offenders. Greater proportions demonstrated high overall need and need for substance abuse programming in comparison to non-Aboriginal offenders. Furthermore, Métis offenders were more likely to be rated as having low potential for successful community reintegration.

The childhood experiences of Métis offenders were largely characterized by instability and disruption. Large proportions were raised by a caregiver with substance abuse problems and experienced violence in the home. Furthermore, one-half were involved in the child welfare system at some point in their youth, suggesting the need for institutional interventions targeting negative developmental experiences. Other studies suggest that these experiences are common among Métis offenders and Aboriginal offenders in general. However, some experiences of Métis offenders still appear to be quite different from other Aboriginal offenders. Research indicates that Métis are more likely to have grown up in an urban environment and not speak or understand an Aboriginal language in comparison to First Nations offenders. As such, there is

evidence to suggest that the programming needs of Métis offenders may be unique from those of First Nations offenders. Differences in the cultural experience, environment, and profile characteristics may support the need for specialized programming. Further investigation is needed to determine how appropriate First Nations oriented programming is for Métis offenders.

Métis offenders have participated in a variety of institutional programs designed for federal offenders. Over three-quarters reported participating in programs while incarcerated within the federal system. The largest proportions participated in substance abuse (88%) and anger management programs (63%). Furthermore, only small numbers participated in Aboriginal-oriented programs and only five were involved in Métis-specific programs. Nevertheless, offenders felt the programs were useful. A comparative analysis of criminogenic needs and programs suggested that several offender needs were met through appropriate programs. Results support the utility of correctional programming in addressing factors related to offending behaviour. However, it is still unclear whether cultural and spiritual issues are adequately addressed through basic programming in the institutions.

Interviews with Métis offenders revealed that large proportions were dealing with personal difficulties at the time of admission to the federal correctional facility. A large proportion felt their needs and issues were especially different from those of non-Aboriginal offenders. Only about one-third felt that their needs were different from First Nations offenders. When the needs of offenders were examined, large proportions said they required culturally sensitive programs inside the institution. Several emphasized the importance of having access to Métis Elders inside the institutions, programs oriented specifically towards Métis people and resources that could assist them in learning more about Métis culture. Upon release, Métis offenders placed a great deal of emphasis on employment, education and social supports. The needs expressed by Métis offenders in Saskatchewan appear to be consistent with the needs identified by Métis offenders in other provinces. Findings point to the importance of services in the institutions and community that allow offenders to connect to their culture and provide

the means necessary to further their education and eventually acquire stable employment in the community.

Métis offenders felt their families had specific needs during the period of incarceration as well. Offenders acknowledged that their families needed support from them, strong social networks and financial assistance. Similarly, upon release, large proportions felt their families would need support from the offender, financial assistance and a support system in the community to deal with the difficulties associated with reintegration. Family members also felt that they had a number of needs at release. While the largest proportion felt they needed to demonstrate support and understanding towards the offender, several emphasized their need for financial aid and assistance from a supportive social network. Findings suggest that the incarceration of a family member and process of subsequent reintegration has a significant impact on the family unit. Special needs appear to become acute during these periods. In particular, community services may need to be enhanced to better address the financial hardships families experience. Furthermore, the involvement of community members in the support of families may be crucial in easing their personal and social struggles. While it is clear that families of Métis offenders have important service needs, the extent to which these needs are different from those of First Nations and non-Aboriginal families is unclear.

Institutional staff had a great deal of experience working with Aboriginal and Métis peoples in a correctional setting. Staff also felt that the needs of Métis offenders were different from other groups. However, staff did not appear to know what these differences were. Large proportions felt they had little knowledge of Métis culture and Métis offender needs. Large proportions were also dissatisfied with their current understanding but felt their knowledge could be enhanced through cultural training, exposure to Métis communities and relevant literature. There is clear evidence to support the implementation of training programs for institutional staff who require further education in the area of Métis culture and Métis offender needs. Staff acknowledge the limits of their awareness and emphasize the need for a greater understanding of their clientele. Furthermore, specialized training in the area of Métis cultural diversity and

offender needs may enhance correctional planning practices and program delivery. In short, greater knowledge may better equip staff to meet the criminogenic needs of the Métis offenders they serve.

A number of important implications for correctional policy emerged from this study. First, while some profile characteristics of Métis offenders are similar to First Nations offenders, services may need to be adapted to meet the unique challenges and characteristics of Métis offenders. Existing programs, primarily designed to meet the needs of First Nations offenders, may require modification to better address the experiences and cultural context of Métis offenders in the institution. In addition, it is important that institutional programs for Métis offenders further develop and retain a strong cultural component. Offenders placed a great deal of emphasis on access to culturally relevant services during incarceration. Upon release, findings suggest that programs focusing on the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge while helping offenders maintain their cultural ties may be beneficial in the community. Further research is clearly needed to determine the impact of culturally relevant programs and services on responsiveness.

Second, it is important that correctional policies consider the impact of incarceration on Métis family members and the role families play in the reintegration of the offender. Findings from the study suggest that Métis family members need social and financial support, yet are unfamiliar with services providing aid. While these needs appear to be similar to the needs of non-Métis families, the degree of need may be different. Research has shown that Aboriginal families, in general, are socio-economically disadvantaged. Strains associated with the incarceration and release of a family member may exacerbate pre-existing financial problems. In turn, greater disruption within the family unit and home economy may lead to a greater need for social supports in the community. Increasing awareness of community services and improving the delivery of services may assist families during periods of difficulty. Furthermore, the involvement of community members and access to support groups may help families cope with their challenges. Ultimately, enhancing the quality of services and programs

to families can serve to facilitate the reintegration of offenders who return to their families upon release. Future research should further explore the influence of families on the reintegration process. There is also a clear need for more comparative research focusing on offender families. Identifying similarities and differences between Métis and non-Métis families could help CSC and Métis organizations to better understand how the service needs of Métis families are unique.

Third, correctional staff could benefit from enhanced sensitivity training. A greater understanding of Métis culture and offender needs among case workers may better inform decisions made during the assessment process and the implementation of correctional plans. Aboriginal training programs that are currently in place within CSC could possibly be enhanced by including additional material on Métis offenders and their culture. Outlining differences between Métis and other Aboriginal populations would be an important component. However, it may also be necessary to implement new training programs that focus on specific Aboriginal groups. More research is needed to determine the needs of staff and the best ways to approach training.

Lastly, findings from this study could be used to inform the implementation of Section 81 and 84 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)*. More thorough knowledge of Métis offender needs may help Métis organizations and CSC determine appropriate communities for release. Findings also emphasize the need to gain a better understanding of the services available to Métis offenders in various communities. A second phase to the current project could involve an assessment of community needs in the cities that Métis offenders plan to be released to.

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APPENDIX A: Tables

Table 1
Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics

	Métis		First Nations		Non-Aboriginal		p
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Total	52		327		295		
Institution	52		327		295		
Saskatchewan Penitentiary - Medium	41	79%	209	64%	169	57%	
Saskatchewan Penitentiary - Max	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%	
Riverbend Institution	9	17%	37	11%	48	16%	
Regional Psychiatric Centre	0	0%	81	25%	76	26%	
Age at admission	52		327		295		**
<35	32	62%	227	69%	171	58%	
35+	20	38%	100	31%	124	42%	
Mean age	31.2 yrs		30.4 yrs		34.2 yrs		
Marital status at admission	51		318		294		***
Single	19	37%	169	53%	163	55%	*
Married/Common-law	30	59%	126	40%	77	26%	***
Separated/Divorced	2	4%	21	7%	48	16%	***
Widowed	0	0%	2	1%	6	2%	NS
Education at admission	38		260		209		***
No highschool diploma	33	87%	231	89%	159	76%	
Highschool diploma	5	13%	29	11%	50	24%	
Employment at arrest	38		260		211		***
Employed	12	32%	63	24%	84	40%	
Unemployed	26	68%	197	76%	127	60%	

NS = Not Significant

* = $p \leq .05$

** = $p \leq .01$

*** = $p \leq .001$

**Table 2
Criminal History**

	Métis		First Nations		Non-Aboriginal		p
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Previous youth convictions	37		258		204		***
Yes	23	62%	172	67%	92	45%	
No	14	38%	86	33%	112	55%	
Previous adult convictions	38		260		209		NS
Yes	35	92%	235	90%	182	87%	
No	3	8%	25	10%	27	13%	
Previous community supervision	38		259		208		NS
Yes	31	82%	216	83%	158	76%	
No	7	18%	43	17%	50	24%	
Previous provincial term	38		260		209		**
Yes	31	82%	214	82%	148	71%	
No	7	18%	46	18%	61	29%	
Previous federal term	38		260		209		NS
Yes	10	26%	81	31%	77	37%	
No	28	74%	179	69%	132	63%	
Failed - community sanction	37		259		208		**
Yes	24	65%	192	74%	128	62%	
No	13	35%	67	26%	80	38%	
Failed - conditional release	37		258		206		NS
Yes	19	51%	129	50%	86	42%	
No	18	49%	129	50%	120	58%	
Segregation for disciplinary infraction	35		246		201		NS
Yes	8	23%	95	39%	76	38%	
No	27	77%	151	61%	125	62%	
Escape/Attempt/UAL	38		259		208		*
Yes	14	37%	99	38%	56	27%	
No	24	63%	160	62%	152	73%	
Reclassified to higher security	37		251		202		NS
Yes	3	8%	57	23%	42	21%	
No	34	92%	194	77%	160	79%	
< 6 Months since last incarceration	38		260		208		*
Yes	15	39%	92	35%	53	25%	
No	23	61%	168	65%	155	75%	

NS = Not Significant

* = $p \leq .05$

** = $p \leq .01$

*** = $p \leq .001$

**Table 3
Offence Characteristics**

Current offence	Métis		First Nations		Non-Aboriginal		p
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
	52		327		283		
Most serious offence							
Homicide	10	19%	84	26%	74	25%	NS
Attempt murder	2	4%	0	0%	4	1%	**
Sexual assault	8	15%	81	25%	66	22%	NS
Assault	7	13%	59	18%	27	9%	**
Robbery	14	27%	56	17%	72	24%	**
Other violent	2	4%	3	1%	1	0%	*
Property	5	10%	25	8%	25	8%	NS
Impaired driving	1	2%	6	2%	0	0%	NS
Drug-related offences	2	4%	2	1%	11	4%	*
Other <i>Criminal Code</i> and federal statutes	1	2%	10	3%	11	4%	NS
Mean aggregate sentence (1)	6.0 yrs		4.8 yrs		5.7 yrs		NS
Security level at admission	47		304		266		NS
Minimum	4	9%	24	8%	35	13%	
Medium	32	68%	206	68%	183	69%	
Maximum	11	23%	74	24%	48	18%	

(1) Mean aggregate sentence is calculated with life sentences removed.

NS = Not Significant

* = $p \leq .05$

** = $p \leq .01$

*** = $p \leq .001$

Table 4
Static and Dynamic Factors

	Métis		First Nations		Non-Aboriginal		p
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Risk to re-offend	51		316		288		*
Low	0	0%	4	1%	9	3%	
Medium	12	24%	61	19%	78	27%	
High	39	76%	251	79%	201	70%	
Overall dynamic need	51		316		288		***
Low	0	0%	3	1%	4	1%	
Medium	7	14%	48	15%	84	29%	
High	44	86%	265	84%	200	69%	
Dynamic factors	49		297		276		
Marital/Family - high need	31	63%	190	64%	156	57%	NS
Substance Abuse - high need	47	96%	282	95%	202	73%	***
Community - high need	19	39%	99	33%	122	44%	*
Personal/Emotional - high need	48	98%	288	97%	261	95%	NS
Attitude - high need	30	61%	123	41%	160	58%	***
Associates - high need	37	76%	192	65%	164	59%	NS
Employment - high need	39	80%	236	79%	192	70%	*
Motivation for intervention	50		291		267		NS
Low	8	16%	64	22%	62	23%	
Medium	30	60%	182	63%	149	56%	
High	12	24%	45	15%	56	21%	
Reintegration potential	46		294		252		***
Low	34	74%	220	75%	108	43%	
Medium	9	20%	53	18%	88	35%	
High	3	7%	21	7%	56	22%	

NS = Not Significant

* = $p \leq .05$

** = $p \leq .01$

*** = $p \leq .001$

**Table 5
Community Information**

	#	%		#	%
Province/territory of residence during childhood	51		Best place to be released	46	
Saskatchewan	28	55%	Large city	28	61%
Manitoba	12	24%	Métis community	6	13%
Alberta	6	12%	Rural community	5	11%
British Columbia	2	4%	Small city	5	11%
Ontario	2	4%	Reserve	2	4%
Nova Scotia	1	2%			
Type of community during childhood	52		Plan to live	48	
Large city	19	37%	Large city	35	73%
Rural community	13	25%	Small city	5	10%
Small city	10	19%	Métis community	4	8%
Métis community	8	15%	Rural community	3	6%
Reserve	1	2%	Reserve	1	2%
Other	1	2%			
Type of community at arrest	52				
Large city	28	54%			
Small city	10	19%			
Rural community	7	13%			
Métis community	5	10%			
Reserve	2	4%			
Lived in community of arrest	52				
Less than 1 year	23	44%			
1-5 years	11	21%			
6-10 years	2	4%			
11-15 years	4	8%			
16-20 years	3	6%			
More than 20 years	9	17%			
Type of community of offence	51				
Large city	28	55%			
Small city	12	24%			
Rural community	6	12%			
Métis community	4	8%			
Reserve	1	2%			
Where do you consider home	44				
Large city	24	55%			
Métis community	10	23%			
Rural community	5	11%			
Small city	4	9%			
Reserve	1	2%			
Attached to home community	45				
Yes	38	84%			
No	7	16%			

**Table 6
Family Background**

	#	%		#	%
Primary caregiver during childhood	52		Violence experienced contributed to you being in prison	39	
Birth mother	23	44%	Yes	27	69%
Both birth parents	7	13%	No	12	31%
Grandparent(s)	7	13%	Family involvement in crime	51	
Foster care	5	10%	Yes	35	69%
Birth father	3	6%	No	16	31%
Other non-family	3	6%	Current contact with spouse	22	
Adoptive parent(s)	2	4%	Yes	15	68%
Sibling	2	4%	No	7	32%
Attached to primary caregiver	52		Attached to spouse	16	
Yes	45	87%	Yes	12	75%
No	7	13%	No	4	25%
Involved in child welfare system	52		Children (biological, step, and adopted)	52	
Yes	27	52%	Yes	33	63%
No	25	48%	No	19	37%
Child welfare involvement	27		Current contact with children	33	
Foster care	19	70%	Yes	20	61%
Group home	10	37%	No	13	39%
Adopted	3	11%	Attached to children	24	
Other	3	11%	Yes	19	79%
Good economic situation while growing up	52		No	5	21%
Yes	37	71%	Current contact with other family	51	
No	15	29%	Yes	40	78%
Stable childhood	52		No	11	22%
Yes	33	63%			
No	19	37%			
Happy childhood	52				
Yes	36	69%			
No	16	31%			
Experienced/witnessed violence in home	52				
Yes	39	75%			
No	13	25%			
Experienced/witnessed violence in community	52				
Yes	43	83%			
No	9	17%			
Caregiver had alcohol/drug/sniff problem	51				
Alcohol	40	78%			
Drug	11	22%			
Sniffing	1	2%			
Substance abuse at home contributed to you being in prison	40				
Yes	27	68%			
No	13	33%			

Table 7
Cultural Information

	#	%		#	%
Speak/Understand Aboriginal language	51		Attached to Aboriginal culture - inside the institution	51	
Yes	15	29%	Yes	28	55%
No	36	71%	No	23	45%
Have a Métis card or member of Métis local	52		Attached to Aboriginal culture - outside the institution	32	
Yes	20	38%	Yes	13	41%
No	32	62%	No	19	59%
Attached to Métis culture - childhood	50		Participated in Métis activities - childhood	52	
Yes	15	30%	Yes	17	33%
No	35	70%	No	35	67%
Attached to Métis culture - adulthood before incarceration	51		Participated in Métis activities - adulthood	52	
Yes	18	35%	Yes	25	48%
No	33	65%	No	27	52%
Attached to Métis culture - inside the institution	50		Participated in Aboriginal activities - childhood	52	
Yes	20	40%	Yes	19	37%
No	30	60%	No	33	63%
Attached to Métis culture - outside the institution	33		Participated in Aboriginal activities - adulthood	52	
Yes	14	42%	Yes	35	67%
No	19	58%	No	17	33%
Attached to Aboriginal culture - childhood	51		Currently participate in Métis activities	52	
Yes	13	25%	Yes	3	6%
No	38	75%	No	49	94%
Attached to Aboriginal culture - adulthood before incarceration	52		Currently participate in Aboriginal activities	52	
Yes	19	37%	Yes	22	42%
No	33	63%	No	30	58%

**Table 8
Other Information**

	#	%
Work experience prior to incarceration	52	
Yes	46	88%
No	6	12%
Area of employment occupied last	44	
Trades, transport & labour	37	84%
Sales & services	3	7%
Other	2	5%
Business, finance & administration	1	2%
Education	1	2%
Previous employment experience	45	
Trades, transport & labour	42	93%
Sales & services	6	13%
Business, finance & administration	3	7%
Criminal justice	1	2%
Education	1	2%
Health & medical services	1	2%
Mental health services	1	2%
Currently working in the institution	52	
Yes	33	63%
No	19	37%
Easy to finding a job after release	52	
Yes	42	81%
No	10	19%

**Table 9
Institutional Program Participation**

	#	%						
Participated in programs while incarcerated	52							
Yes	41	79%						
No	11	21%						
	Overall Programs		Aboriginal Programs		Métis Programs		Program Completion	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Overall programs	41							
Substance abuse	36	88%	13	36%	2	6%	35	97%
Anger/family violence	26	63%	3	12%	0	0%	25	96%
Cognitive/living skills	25	61%	1	4%	0	0%	22	88%
Education	25	61%	2	8%	1	4%	17	68%
Counselling/psychological	19	46%	8	42%	2	11%	16	84%
Employment	14	34%	0	0%	0	0%	13	93%
Sex Offender	6	15%	1	17%	0	0%	5	83%
Other	2	5%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
	Yes		No					
	#	%	#	%				
Program usefulness								
Substance abuse	32	89%	4	11%				
Anger/family violence	24	92%	2	8%				
Cognitive/living skills	19	76%	6	24%				
Education	23	92%	2	8%				
Counselling/psychological	18	95%	1	5%				
Employment	11	79%	3	21%				
Sex offender	6	100%	0	0%				
Other	2	100%	0	0%				
Would like Métis specific program/ services in the institution	49							
Yes	48	98%						
No	1	2%						
Would like Métis facilitators to provide program/services in the institution	50							
Yes	49	98%						
No	1	2%						

**Table 10
Parole Program Participation**

	#	%						
Been on parole	52							
Yes	19	37%						
No	33	63%						
Participated in programs on parole	19							
Yes	11	58%						
No	8	42%						
	Overall Programs		Aboriginal Programs		Métis Programs		Program Completion	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Overall programs	11							
Substance abuse	10	91%	0	0%	0	0%	8	80%
Counselling/psychological	6	55%	3	50%	2	33%	4	67%
Education	3	27%	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%
Cognitive/living skills	2	18%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
Anger/family violence	1	9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Employment	1	9%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Sex offender	1	9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	2	18%	1	50%	1	50%	2	100%
	Yes		No					
	#	%	#	%				
Program Usefulness								
Substance abuse	8	80%	2	20%				
Counselling/psychological	6	100%	0	0%				
Education	3	100%	0	0%				
Cognitive/living skills	2	100%	0	0%				
Anger/family violence	1	100%	0	0%				
Employment	1	100%	0	0%				
Sex Offender	1	100%	0	0%				
Other	1	50%	1	50%				
Would like Métis specific program/ services in the community	50							
Yes	45	90%						
No	5	10%						

Table 11
Program Participation by High Dynamic Need

Programs	Marital/ Family		Substance Abuse		Community Functioning		High Need Personal/ Emotional		Attitude		Associates		Employment	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	25		39		17		39		24		32		33	
Substance Abuse		***		***		***		***		***		***		***
Yes	23	92%	35	90%	16	94%	34	87%	20	83%	27	84%	30	91%
No	2	8%	4	10%	1	6%	5	13%	4	17%	5	16%	3	9%
Cognitive/Living Skills		NS		NS		NS		NS		**		NS		NS
Yes	16	64%	23	59%	11	65%	24	62%	18	75%	20	63%	21	64%
No	9	36%	16	41%	6	35%	15	38%	6	25%	12	38%	12	36%
Anger Management		*		NS		*		NS		NS		NS		NS
Yes	18	72%	24	62%	13	76%	25	64%	16	67%	20	63%	20	61%
No	7	28%	15	38%	4	24%	14	36%	8	33%	12	38%	13	39%
Education		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS
Yes	13	52%	24	62%	9	53%	23	59%	16	67%	19	59%	22	67%
No	12	48%	15	38%	8	47%	16	41%	8	33%	13	41%	11	33%
Counselling		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS
Yes	11	44%	17	44%	7	41%	18	46%	12	50%	14	44%	12	36%
No	14	56%	22	56%	10	59%	21	54%	12	50%	18	56%	21	64%
Employment		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS		NS
Yes	9	36%	14	36%	5	29%	14	36%	8	33%	11	34%	14	42%
No	16	64%	25	64%	12	71%	25	64%	16	67%	21	66%	19	58%
Sex Offender		**		***		*		***		***		***		***
Yes	5	20%	6	15%	4	24%	6	15%	4	17%	4	13%	6	18%
No	20	80%	33	85%	13	76%	33	85%	20	83%	28	88%	27	82%

NS = Not Significant

* = $p \leq .05$

** = $p \leq .01$

*** = $p \leq .001$

**Table 12
Offender Needs**

	#	%		#	%
Issues at time of incarceration (1)	52		Needs upon release to community (1)	43	
Alcohol abuse/addiction	30	58%	Employment/Education	16	37%
Criminal peers/criminal lifestyle	25	48%	Support network	12	28%
Anger/violence	23	44%	Cultural programs & access to activities	10	23%
Drug abuse/addiction	21	40%	General correctional programs/counselling	6	14%
Financial/poverty	15	29%	Substance abuse intervention	4	9%
Marital/family issues	14	27%	Financial assistance	3	7%
Employment/education	12	23%	Other	1	2%
Depression	9	17%	No needs	5	12%
Self-esteem	4	8%			
Housing	3	6%	Suggestions for programs in the institution (1)	50	
Mental health	2	4%	Métis specific/Cultural programs	13	26%
Lack of community support	1	2%	Substance abuse programming	11	22%
Physical health	1	2%	Employment/Education	9	18%
Death in family	0	0%	Other institutional programs	9	18%
Sniffing	0	0%	Métis support/sharing groups	5	10%
Other	14	27%	Community reintegration programs	4	8%
			Elders	4	8%
Do needs differ from non-Aboriginal inmates	48		Other	3	6%
Yes	28	58%	None	7	14%
No	20	42%			
			Suggestions for programs in the community (1)	47	
Do needs differ from other Aboriginal inmates	50		Cultural Programs	13	28%
Yes	18	36%	Substance abuse intervention	12	26%
No	32	64%	Other programs	10	21%
			Employment/Education	6	13%
Needs in institution (1)	47		Support network	5	11%
Correctional programming	16	34%	Family violence/Anger management	5	11%
Access to elders	8	17%	Counselling	4	9%
Métis oriented programs & activities	8	17%	Other	7	15%
Understanding self	6	13%	None	2	4%
Substance abuse treatment	5	11%			
Learn about culture	4	9%			
Métis staff	3	6%			
Other	4	9%			
No needs	7	15%			

(1) Respondents may have given more than one answer. Therefore, the total does not equal 100%.

Table 13
Family Needs

	#	%
Offender interview - Family needs during incarceration (1)	43	
Commitment/Support from offender	11	26%
Contact with offender	10	23%
Support network/Support in general	9	21%
Financial assistance	8	19%
Understanding of offender	5	12%
Other	6	14%
Nothing	7	16%
Offender interview - Family needs at release (1)	35	
Commitment/Support from offender	8	23%
Contact with offender	8	23%
Financial assistance	7	20%
Support/Understand offender	6	17%
Support network/Support in general	5	14%
Other	4	11%
Nothing	6	17%
Services for family during incarceration	16	
Yes	2	13%
No	14	88%
Services for family at release	17	
Yes	4	24%
No	13	76%
Family needs during incarceration (1)	18	
Contact/Visitation	6	33%
Financial assistance/Employment	4	22%
Support network	3	17%
Counselling	2	11%
Other	4	22%
Nothing	3	17%
Family needs at release (1)	18	
Support/Understand offender	7	39%
Financial assistance/Employment	5	28%
Support network/Support in general	4	22%
Other	3	17%
Nothing	3	17%

(1) Respondents may have given more than one answer. Therefore, the total does not equal 100%.

**Table 14
Staff Interviews**

	#	%		#	%
Currently work with:	13		Métis offender needs while incarcerated (1)	12	
Aboriginal offenders	13	100%	Correctional programming in general	6	50%
Métis offenders	13	100%	Cultural programs	5	42%
Aboriginal communities	9	69%	Support network	4	33%
Métis communities	4	31%	Employment/Educational programs	3	25%
			Other	2	17%
Training about Aboriginal issues	13		Métis offender needs while incarcerated being met?	13	
Yes	11	85%	Good/Very	3	23%
No	2	15%	Somewhat	2	15%
			Not at all/Little	8	62%
Training about Métis issues	13		Métis offender needs upon release (1)	12	
Yes	0	0%	Community/Family Support	11	92%
No	13	100%	Employment/Vocational skills	4	33%
			Financial assistance/Housing/Employment	3	25%
Current level of knowledge - Aboriginal culture	13		Community programs	2	17%
Good/Very	4	31%	Other	3	25%
Somewhat	9	69%			
Not at all/Little	0	0%			
Current level of knowledge - Métis culture	13		Métis offender needs upon release being met?	11	
Good/Very	2	15%	Good/Very	2	18%
Somewhat	3	23%	Somewhat	3	27%
Not at all/Little	8	62%	Not at all/Little	6	55%
Current level of knowledge - Aboriginal offenders	13		Family needs being met while offender is incarcerated?	9	
Good/Very	9	69%	Good/Very	1	11%
Somewhat	4	31%	Somewhat	2	22%
Not at all/Little	0	0%	Not at all/Little	6	67%
Current level of knowledge - Métis offenders	13		Family needs upon release being met?	8	
Good/Very	2	15%	Good/Very	0	0%
Somewhat	5	38%	Somewhat	2	25%
Not at all/Little	6	46%	Not at all/Little	6	75%
Do needs differ form other non-Aboriginal inmates	12		Understanding of Métis offenders could be enhanced (1)	13	
Yes	8	67%	Cultural Training	10	77%
No	4	33%	Awareness of community	3	23%
			Information sources	2	15%
Do needs differ form other Aboriginal inmates	12		Other	2	15%
Yes	8	67%			
No	4	33%			

(1) Respondents may have given more than one answer. Therefore, the total does not equal 100%.