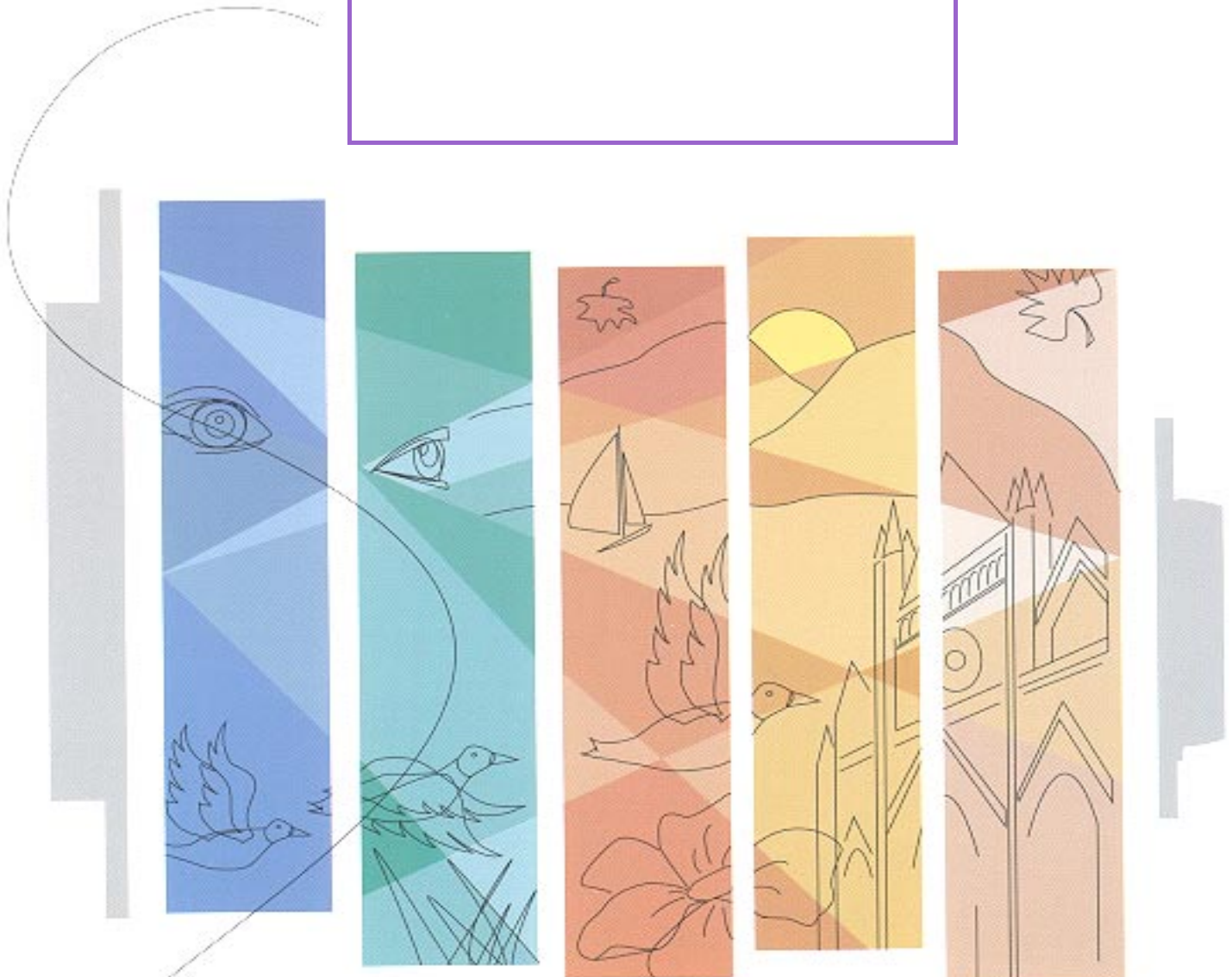




Research Branch  
Direction de la recherche

Corporate Development  
Développement organisationnel

**Aboriginal Offender Survey:  
Case Files & Interview Sample**



\_\_\_\_\_ **Research Report** \_\_\_\_\_

**Aboriginal Offender Survey:  
Case Files & Interview Sample**

This report is also available in French. Ce rapport est également disponible en français. Veuillez vous adresser à la direction de recherche, Service Correctionnel du Canada, 340 avenue Laurier ouest, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0P9. Should additional copies be required they can be obtained from the Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, 340 Laurier Ave., West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P9.

***ABORIGINAL OFFENDER SURVEY:  
CASE FILES & INTERVIEW SAMPLE***

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The present study drew nation-wide samples (approximately 50%) of Aboriginal offenders in federal custody for file review and face-to-face interviews. Criminal history data was also obtained from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). The samples represented all levels of security.

Aboriginal offenders' criminal histories were characterised by a prevalence of violent offences, most common of which was assault. Property crime such as break and enter and theft were the most numerous, and failure during community supervision made a strong showing.

From Aboriginal offenders' case files, information was collected regarding their childhood backgrounds. It was found that early drug (60.4 %) and alcohol abuse (57.9 %) were commonplace, as were behavioural problems (57.1 %). Other frequently-noted occurrences were both physical (45.2%) and sexual abuse (21.2 %), as well as severe poverty (35.3 %), and parental absence or neglect (41.1 %). Suicide was attempted by 20.5 percent of these offenders.

Identified case needs were also found in the Aboriginal offenders' case files. Although Aboriginal offenders' needs were across the board, the highest (i.e., the most problematic) areas were that of substance abuse and emotional/personal needs. In addition, over half this population had high employment and education needs identified by their case managers.

In terms of a Risk/Needs analysis, this Aboriginal group studied tended to be a higher risk/higher needs population. Over 40 percent of those surveyed fell into the high risk/high needs cell, according to their case files. The balance of the others tended to group around the high risk/medium needs or the medium risk/high needs cells.

From the interview data, it became clear that there exists a significant apprehension on the part of Aboriginal offenders to deal directly with Correctional staff. While this may be true to an extent of all offenders in custody, Aboriginal offenders seemed quite firm in the belief that the persons whom they are most trusting of are other natives, and especially spiritual leaders and elders. This is an overriding theme from this study, but it should be acknowledged that it comes from offender responses to a variety of interview questions. One example is, their Native Liaison Officer ... who makes the 'best' counsellor, who do they find most supportive in the institution, and such. In all such questions, the overwhelming response is that other natives, be they elders or Native Liaison Officers, hold the confidence of this population.

In terms of Aboriginal offenders' spirituality, it was established that they, constitute, by their own account, a highly spiritual group, mostly placing a high value on their traditions and culture. There was also a reported high degree of participation in native cultural activities, and the desire for more of such. Concern was also voiced regarding the tribal affiliation of the various elders or spiritual leaders, with many expressing problems when the elder is of a culture different than their own.

Programming offered in their institutions reinforced this view, in that native-oriented programming was felt to more effective, and was participated in with a more positive attitude. Moreover, the majority expressed the view that more programs should be 'translated' so that they might be more culturally relevant for natives.

In line with Aboriginal offenders needs assessments which noted a prevalence of emotional/personal needs, a vast majority self-reported the desire for some sort of counselling. When asked to nominate who they would like as a counsellor, a spiritual leader was overwhelmingly recommended.

In all, several themes presented themselves. First, it becomes clear that the incarcerated Aboriginal population constitutes a high needs group. A group that largely shares a common background of physical or sexual abuse, early drug and alcohol use, emotional problems, poor parenting. This is also a relatively high risk group, often with histories of failure during community supervision.

Another theme relates to Aboriginal offenders' cultural and spiritual life. Here, it was found that many enjoyed participating in native cultural activities, although most desired more to be available. The Aboriginal Offender population also represented themselves as fairly spiritual, and frequent participants in spiritual or ceremonial activities. And again, there was the commonly-voiced concern that not enough was available, or that access was difficult. It was also found that there

was a very common request for culturally-relevant programming, or the translation of existing programs to be more native-specific.

A third theme related to Aboriginal offenders' relationship with various individuals in their institution. In general, there tends to be a lack of trust, and overall acrimony with Correctional staff. On the other hand, Aboriginal offenders reported more comfort with other Aboriginals, and trust of native spiritual leaders or elders. While tense relations between inmates and institution staff may be common for any culture, the present study does not warrant the conclusion that relations are worse for Aboriginal offenders. (That would require a comparative study.) The offenders *did* frequently recommend more Aboriginal staff and program deliverers as a means to smooth relations and improve programs.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. METHOD.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Criminal History.....	4
Subjects.....	4
Data Source.....	4
Case File Reviews.....	4
Subjects.....	4
Face-to-Face Interviews.....	5
Subjects.....	5
Data Collection.....	6
<b>III. FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Criminal History.....	6
Case File Reviews.....	8
Face-to-Face Interviews.....	13
Background Information.....	13
<b>IV. SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>V. REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>69</b>



## **ABORIGINAL OFFENDERS SURVEY: INTERVIEW SAMPLE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Aboriginal Offender Survey began in the Fall of 1995 as a joint effort between the Research and Development Division, Aboriginal Programs, and Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) Regional Headquarters. Partly as a result of several recent task force and policy recommendations (e.g., Task Force on Aboriginal People in Federal Corrections [1987], Aboriginal Justice Inquiry [1991], Saskatchewan Indian and Metis Justice Committee Reports [1992], CSC/NWT Master Development Plan [1992]), it was considered desirable to gather information on the CSC custody population of Aboriginal offenders.

Although there have been several recent reports which have focused on Aboriginal justice issues (Correctional Service of Canada, 1993a; Faulkner, 1992; Pauktuutit, 1993; University of Regina, 1994), until now there are relatively few which have actually gone into correctional institutions to directly collect offender case file data, nor spoken with this sample of inmates, face to face, on their own terms. The need for such a study was underscored.

A second foci of this study was to sample a large number of Aboriginal criminal histories, such that a fuller understanding might be achieved of this populations' criminal involvement. It should be noted here, mainly for those unfamiliar with corrections in Canada, that the population with which we are concerned, are those Natives under *federal* custody as opposed to *provincial* custody. Federal offenders are those whose sentence is 2 years or more. All others (i.e., those serving sentences of 2 years-less-a-day, or less) are not under the jurisdiction of the federal CSC. And although the scope of this study does not permit direct generalisations to Aboriginals in provincial custody, it would not be unreasonable to allow that there are likely many similarities between federally- and provincially-incarcerated Natives.

Applied operational and programming issues also come to the fore. In the same vein, this group has not often been comprehensively studied regarding their programming needs, their strengths or needs as a group, their criminal histories, as well as their direct and often candid opinions regarding their correctional experience.

As can be seen, this project offers the Correctional Service enhanced knowledge of this population, and it is hoped that more

culturally sensitive treatment, applied by more culturally aware line staff, would be a positive step towards optimising correctional practices for Aboriginals.

## **II. METHOD**

Three different data sources were utilised for this study:

- 1) criminal history records,
- 2) case management officer institutional file reviews, and
- 3) personal interviews

The strategy behind this three-prong method was to gather unique data from each source. For instance, interview data provided personal information not available in subjects case files or criminal histories, whereas case files provided information not obtainable electronically, and which was not made redundant in the interviews. This brought in an element of efficiency, while maintaining comprehensivity. These three sources are discussed in more detail below.

### **Criminal History**

#### **Subjects**

This study selected 556 subjects, an approximately 1 in 2 sample of all Aboriginals who were in federal incarceration during the Summer of 1996.

### **Data Source**

The data collected for this part of the study came from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system. This database includes all offenders' convictions, date of conviction, as well as sentence dispositions. Of primary concern for the purpose of this study, however, is the volume and seriousness of the offenders' criminal activity.

### **Case File Reviews**

#### **Subjects**

An approximate 1 in 3 sample of 518 Aboriginal offenders were randomly selected from the Offender Management System (OMS). This sample was balanced between all regions and at all levels of security.

### **Data Collection**

Those subjects who were selected had file reviews conducted by Case Management Officers, or other institutional staff familiar with the offenders' case files. These file reviews were intended to cover areas of the subjects' personal and family backgrounds and extent of cultural identity. Questions were also investigated as to the subjects performance, such as participation in correctional programming, the offenders' level of needs, risk level, and so forth.

The individuals who conducted the structured file reviews had experience working with Aboriginal offenders, and were given additional training material by Correctional Research and Development Division staff.

### **Face-to-Face Interviews**

#### **Subjects**

An approximate 1 in 10 sample of 140 offenders was selected to be interviewed. Selection was representative of all 3 security levels.

#### **Data Collection**

Interviewers were hired and/or arranged for in all regions. (Depending on the availability of non-CSC interviewers [e.g., students, contractors], occasionally Native CSC staff were used.) In as many cases as possible, Aboriginal interviewers were hired and trained in interview technique. A copy of the interview questions and data sheets and an information manual were distributed to all interviewers.

All interview data sheets were sent back to CSC Headquarters for data coding and analysis.

### **III. FINDINGS**

#### **Criminal History**

The criminal history of the sample of 556 Aboriginal offenders is presented in Table 1. As can be seen, property offences such as break and enter, theft and possession of stolen property are predominant. For instance, over six out of ten offenders (62.8 %) had at least one break and enter conviction, and nearly seven out of ten (68.9 %) with theft convictions.

**Table 1. Criminal Convictions Profile From CPIC Files (N=556).**

<b>TYPE OF CONVICTION</b>	<b>1 to 2</b>	<b>3 or More</b>
<b>Murder</b>	16.7 %	0.2 %
<b>Manslaughter</b>	13.5 %	0.4 %
<b>Assault</b>	34.0 %	34.0 %
<b>Sexual Offense</b>	26.6 %	9.7 %
<b>Robbery</b>	25.7 %	10.3 %
<b>Escape</b>	18.4 %	0.9 %
<b>Fail Supervision</b>	36.9 %	28.4 %
<b>Unlawfully at Large</b>	16.7 %	2.3 %
<b>Break and Enter</b>	26.2 %	36.6 %
<b>Theft</b>	34.7 %	34.2 %
<b>Possession of Stolen Property</b>	26.7 %	17.5 %
<b>Impaired Driving</b>	23.8 %	11.8 %
<b>Criminal Vehicular Offenses</b>	15.5 %	10.0 %
<b>Weapons-Related</b>	28.8 %	6.6 %
<b>Drugs</b>	21.0 %	8.1 %
<b>Fraud/False Pretense</b>	13.1 %	7.8 %
<b>Failure to Appear</b>	26.5 %	16.3 %
<b>Mischief</b>	33.3 %	10.0 %
<b>Other Offenses</b>	43.2 %	17.6 %

On a disturbing note, the reader should examine the prevalence of violent offences such as homicides, assaults, and robbery. For example, considering murder and manslaughter together, it was found that just over three in ten (30.8 %) of this population are incarcerated with homicide convictions. Looking to assault charges, fully sixty-eight percent hold convictions. Sexual offences are also fairly common, with over a third (36.3 %) incarcerated for sex-related convictions. The overall conviction pattern for this population would seem to be characterised by an abundance of property offences, as well as what might be seen as over-representative in terms of convictions for violent offences. To be sure of this though, a further comparative investigation, beyond the scope of the present study, would have to be conducted.

### **Case File Reviews**

From the offenders' case files, information was gathered on various problems and background situations identified during their childhood. These are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Childhood Background Information**



<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Parental Absence</b>	41.4 %
<b>Single Parent Upbringing</b>	32.2 %
<b>Raised as Ward of Community</b>	28.6 %
<b>Sent to Residential School</b>	14.7 %
<b>Behavioural Problems</b>	57.1 %
<b>Early Alcohol Abuse</b>	57.9 %
<b>Early Drug Abuse</b>	60.4 %
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	45.2 %
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	21.2 %
<b>Learning Problems</b>	36.9 %
<b>Observed Parental Abuse</b>	34.0 %
<b>Significant Poverty</b>	35.3 %
<b>Suicidal/Self-Injury</b>	20.5 %
<b>Emotional Problems</b>	33.4 %
<b>Diagnosed Psych'l Disorder</b>	7.3 %
<b>Physical Disability</b>	2.7 %

Table 2 presents data on identified offender needs. File reviewers were instructed to score the offender as having a particular need if they found that the need was rated as 'problematic' in the file, usually by the offender's Case Management Officers.

**Table 3A. Profile of Aboriginal Offender Needs (N=518).**

<b>IDENTIFIED CASE NEEDS</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Employment</b>	62.7 %
<b>Educational</b>	53.9 %
<b>Marital/Family</b>	41.8 %
<b>Community Functioning</b>	35.6 %
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	88.2 %
<b>Personal/Emotional</b>	82.4 %
<b>Associates/Companions</b>	32.9 %
<b>Criminal Attitudes</b>	48.8 %
<b>Sex Offending</b>	30.7 %
<b>Other Needs</b>	13.5 %

Clearly, an overwhelming need area is substance abuse, with nearly nine out of ten (88.2 %) Native offenders identified. Personal and emotion needs were also reported for a large majority, roughly eight out of ten, or 82.4 percent of the offenders. A majority also had problems in the areas of employment (62.7 %) and education (53.9 %).

In terms of treatments aimed at addressing their needs, Table 3 contains data regarding the offenders' program participation. Also reported, is whether or not the program was Native-specific.

**Table 3B. Profile of Aboriginal Offender Program Participation (N=518).**

<b>TYPE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>NATIVE-SPECIFIC PROGRAM (%)</b>
<b>Employment</b>	28.4 %	3.3 %
<b>Educational</b>	36.3 %	3.5 %
<b>Marital/Family</b>	15.7 %	7.7 %
<b>Community Functioning</b>	14.7 %	7.2 %
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	59.2 %	30.0 %
<b>Personal/Emotional</b>	42.5 %	12.7 %
<b>Associates/Companions</b>	8.5 %	3.7 %
<b>Criminal Attitudes</b>	22.0 %	6.2 %
<b>Sex Offending</b>	11.2 %	1.9 %
<b>Other Needs</b>	8.9 %	3.7 %

Perhaps the most noteworthy observation one could make from table 3 is that substance abuse programming has the highest rate of participation (59.2 %), and that this hold true also for Native-specific substance abuse programs (30.0%). Programs related to offenders' personal or emotional programs show a relatively high level of

participation as well, with participation rates of 42.5 percent for general programs, and 12.7 percent in Native-specific emotionally oriented programming. This is an important observation, as was noted above, these appear to be the primary areas of need for this population. It should also be noted that the relatively low participation in Native-specific programs likely reflects on lack of availability as opposed to lack of interest. This issue will be addressed below when the interview data is presented.

Table 4 presents cross-tabular data summarising the offenders' ratings of risk and needs.

**Table 4. Aboriginal Offenders' Case Ratings of Risk and Needs.\***

<b>CASE RATINGS</b>	<b>Low Needs</b>	<b>Medium Needs</b>	<b>High Needs</b>
<b>Low Risk</b>	1.4 % (7)	4.3 % (22)	0.8 % (4)
<b>Medium Risk</b>	0.8 % (4)	15.6 % (81)	16.2 % (84)
<b>High Risk</b>	0.4 % (2)	6.8 % (35)	40.5 % (210)

\* There was missing or incomplete data in 69 of the 518 case files reviewed.

**Face-to-Face Interviews**

**Background Information**

Table 5 presents data on the offenders' primary caretaker during their childhood.

**Table 5. Who Was the Main Caretaker of the Subject During Childhood?**

<b>SUBJECT RAISED BY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Both Parents</b>	41.7 %
<b>Single Parent</b>	18.0 %
<b>Grandparents</b>	15.1 %
<b>Other Relatives</b>	2.2 %
<b>Other Non-Family</b>	10.8 %
<b>CAS or Foster/Group Home</b>	12.2 %

As can be seen, less than half (41.7 %) of the subjects were raised by both of their parents, while 23 percent were raised by non-relatives (Non-family + CAS/foster/group homes).

The offenders' first language can be found in Table 6.

**Table 6. What was the Offenders' First Language?**

<b>FIRST LANGUAGE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Aboriginal</b>	42.9 %

<b>English</b>	47.9 %
<b>French</b>	9.3 %

It is considered noteworthy that fully 42.9 percent grew up speaking their Native language. A more complete breakdown of their language groups can be found below in Table 7.

**Table 7. What Was the Offenders' Native Language?**

<b>NATIVE LANGUAGE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Iroquois/Mohawk</b>	7.4 %
<b>Cree</b>	27.9 %
<b>Chippewyan</b>	0.7 %
<b>Ojibway</b>	14.0 %
<b>Mic Mac</b>	5.9 %
<b>Inuktitut/Other Northern/Inuit</b>	16.2 %
<b>English</b>	0.7 %
<b>French</b>	4.4 %
<b>Other</b>	11.8 %
<b>Combination</b>	11.0 %

Table 8 contains information regarding the length of time the offenders' home communities. This question was asked in order to get an idea of the continuing closeness, or lack thereof, of the offenders to their home communities.

**Table 8. How Long Had/Has the Offender Lived in their Home Community?**

<b>TIME LIVED IN THE COMMUNITY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>All His/Her Life</b>	17.9 %
<b>Youth Only</b>	51.4 %
<b>Adulthood</b>	22.1 %
<b>Rarely</b>	2.1 %
<b>Intermittently</b>	2.1 %
<b>Never</b>	4.3 %

From Table 8, it is clear that the majority (51.4 %) left their home communities after their youth. Only 17.9 percent lived continuously (aside from terms of incarceration) in their home community.

Table 9 presents a breakdown of the type of community in which the offenders were raised.

**Table 9. What Type of Community Did the Offender Come From?**

<b>TYPE OF HOME COMMUNITY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Reserve</b>	18.6 %
<b>Urban</b>	30.0 %
<b>Rural</b>	44.3 %

<b>Remote</b>	5.7 %
<b>No Response</b>	1.4 %

Here, only three out of ten (30.0 %) came from urban sites, whereas the remainder were from reservation settings (18.6 %), or rural (44.3 %), or remote (5.7 %) environments.

All subjects were asked whether or not they knew their release date, and this is contained in Table 10.

**Table 10. Does the Offender Know Their Release Date.**

<b>KNOWS RELEASE DATE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	73.6 %
<b>No</b>	26.4 %

In order to get an understanding of the strength of family ties the offenders maintain, a series of related questions were asked. The first of these can be found in Table 11, with fairly self explanatory follow-ups in Tables 12 through 16.

**Table 11. Does the Offender Maintain Contact with their Family?**

<b>KEEPS FAMILY CONTACT</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	92.9 %
<b>No</b>	7.1 %



**Table 12. With Who in their Family Does the Offender Maintain Contact?**

<b>FAMILY CONTACTS</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Parents (inc. Step and/or Foster)	30.0 %
Single Parent	27.1 %
Wife or Girlfriend	12.9 %
Any Siblings	17.9 %
Other Relatives	15.0 %
Other Friends	0.0 %
Unknown	7.1 %

**Table 13. How Often Does the Offender Get to Have Contact with Family Members?**

<b>HOW OFTEN FAMILY CONTACTED</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Daily or More than Once a Day	10.7 %
Weekly	47.9 %
Several Times a Month	13.6 %
Monthly	13.6 %

<b>Several Times a Year</b>	7.1 %
<b>Never</b>	0.0 %
<b>Not Applicable</b>	7.1 %

**Table 14. What is the Typical Mode of Contacting Family?**

<b>HOW ARE FAMILY CONTACTED</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Telephone Calls Only</b>	27.1 %
<b>Writing Only</b>	2.1 %
<b>Institution Visits</b>	2.9 %
<b>Telephone and Writing</b>	26.4 %
<b>Telephone and Visits</b>	14.3 %
<b>Telephone, Writing &amp; Visits</b>	13.6%
<b>Private Family Visits Program</b>	2.1 %
<b>Other</b>	4.3 %
<b>Not Applicable</b>	7.1 %

**Table 15. Why (+) or Why Not (-) Does the Offender Contact their Family?**

<b>WHY (+) OR WHY NOT (-)</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>+ Family Reasons</b>	57.9 %
<b>+ Only Method of Contact Available</b>	2.1 %
<b>- Family are Too Distant</b>	24.3 %
<b>- Not In Long Enough for Visits</b>	0.7 %
<b>- No Need</b>	1.4 %

<b>Other Reasons</b>	2.9 %
<b>Not Applicable</b>	10.7 %

**Table 16. Who Primarily Assists Offender in Arranging Visits and Correspondence**

<b>WHO ASSISTS WITH V AND C</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Self-Arranged</b>	62.9 %
<b>CSC Institutional Staff</b>	18.6 %
<b>Native Liaison Officer</b>	6.4 %
<b>Others</b>	2.1 %

As can be appreciated from the preceding tables, the vast majority (Table 11: 92.9 %) maintain family contacts, with the largest group (Table 13: 47.9 %) contacting their family on a weekly basis. A point of note, however, is that nearly one out of four offenders (24.3 %) report not having the opportunity to receive visits from family members due to the distance of the families' home community relative to the location of the offenders institution.

Another important area relates to the amount of contact the offenders have with CSC staff (i.e., Case Management Officers, Correctional Officers), as well as institutional service providers (i.e., Native Liaison Officers) who are often contract employees with the CSC. The general

approach taken on this set of questions was to first ascertain the frequency with which the offenders made contact with these individuals, then find out the reason of why or why not contact is made.

In Table 17, the subjects' responses to the question of how often they meet with their Case Management Officer (CMO) can be found.

**Table 17. Frequency of Contact With Offenders' Case Management Officer.**

<b>FREQUENCY OF CONTACT W/CMO</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Daily or More Often</b>	0.7 %
<b>Weekly</b>	10.7 %
<b>Several Times a Week</b>	11.4 %
<b>Monthly</b>	12.1 %
<b>Several Times a Year</b>	50.0 %
<b>Only Once</b>	2.9 %
<b>Never</b>	12.1 %

From the data in Table 17, perhaps the most significant finding is that nearly two out of three Aboriginal offenders met with their Case Management Officer (CMO) only several times a year or less. The reasons given for visiting their CMO are presented in Table 18.

**Table 18. Reasons Given for Visiting (+) or Not Visiting (-) Their Case Management Officer.**

<b>WHY OR WHY NOT CONTACT CMO</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
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<b>+ To Keep Up With the Correctional Plan</b>	22.9 %
<b>+ To Arrange for Passes and Visits</b>	2.9 %
<b>+ For Personal Support and Counsel</b>	13.6 %
<b>+ To Arrange for Parole/Release/Transfers</b>	6.4 %
<b>- CMO Unhelpful</b>	12.9 %
<b>- Does Not Trust/Like CMO</b>	30.7 %
<b>Other Reason(s)</b>	9.3 %
<b>No Response</b>	2.1 %

From Table 18, it is notable that the largest number fell into the ‘Does not trust/like CMO’ category. On the other hand, 22.9 percent, the next largest category number, indicated that the main reason to visit their CMO was to attend to their correctional plan, a somewhat more heartening finding.

In a similar approach to the two preceding tables, the offenders were asked the same essential question, but with the person of reference changed to their Native Liaison Officer (NLO). This data is presented in Table 19.

**Table 19. Frequency of Contact With Offenders’ Native Liaison Officer (NLO).**

<b>FREQUENCY OF CONTACT W/ NLO</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Daily or More</b>	14.3 %

<b>Weekly</b>	22.9 %
<b>Several Times a Month</b>	8.6 %
<b>Monthly</b>	30.7 %
<b>Several Times a Year</b>	21.4 %
<b>Only Once</b>	1.4 %
<b>Never</b>	22.9 %
<b>Unknown</b>	2.1 %

The frequency of visits with the NLOs is clearly higher than the figures for CMO visits. In fact, just over two thirds (37.2 %) met with their NLO at least weekly or more often. An unexpected finding was that 22.9 percent reported never meeting with their NLO. The reasons for this disparity may be found in Table 20, where the reason for visiting/not-visiting is reported.

**Table 20. Reasons Given for Visiting (+) or Not Visiting (-) Their Native Liaison Officer (NLO).**

<b>WHY (+) OR WHY NOT (-) CONTACT NLO</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>+ To Keep Up With the Correctional Plan</b>	12.9 %
<b>+ To Arrange for Passes and Visits</b>	2.1 %
<b>+ For Personal Support and Counsel</b>	37.1 %
<b>+ To Arrange for Parole/Release/Transfers</b>	2.1 %
<b>- NLO Unhelpful</b>	14.3 %
<b>- Does Not Trust/Like NLO</b>	14.3 %

<b>Other Reason(s)</b>	14.3 %
<b>No Response</b>	2.9 %

Not surprisingly, the majority (37.4 %) of the subjects sought out contact with their Native Liaison Officers for personal support and counselling. Unfortunately, 14.3 percent said they either did not like or trust their NLO, or found them unhelpful (14.3 %).

Another area of concern is the frequency of contact the offenders have with their assigned Correctional Officer (usually a COII). This data is reported in Table 21.

**Table 21. Frequency of Contact with Their Correctional Officers (COs).**

<b>FREQUENCY OF CONTACT W/CO</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Daily or More Often</b>	2.9 %
<b>Weekly</b>	7.9 %
<b>Several Times a Week</b>	10.7 %
<b>Monthly</b>	10.7 %
<b>Several Times a Year</b>	32.9 %
<b>Only Once</b>	2.9 %
<b>Never</b>	31.4 %
<b>No Response</b>	0.7 %

The general pattern of the data here suggests that the offenders, on the whole, do not have much contact with the Correctional Officers. Almost a third (32.9 %) report having contact only several times a year, while 31.4 percent report never meeting with their CO. These finding must be interpreted with considerable caution, however, as not all institutions require Correctional Officers (again, usually COIs) to maintain case loads.

Table 22 reports the reasons offenders stated for either contacting or not contacting the Correctional Officer staff.

**Table 22. Reasons Given for Contacting (+) or Not Contacting (-) their Correctional Officer (CO).**

<b>WHY (+) OR WHY NOT (-) CONTACT CO</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>+ To Keep Up With the Correctional Plan</b>	19.3 %
<b>+ To Arrange for Passes and Visits</b>	3.6%
<b>+ For Personal Support and Counsel</b>	10.0 %
<b>+ To Arrange for Parole/Release/Transfers</b>	3.6 %
<b>- CO Unhelpful</b>	18.6 %
<b>- Does Not Trust/Like CO</b>	22.1 %
<b>Other Reason(s)</b>	21.4 %
<b>No Response</b>	1.4 %



The numbers presented in Table 22 are quite a bit more spread out across the response categories. Nonetheless, the most common reason given for meeting with their CO was to keep abreast of their correctional plan. On the other hand, the most cited reasons for not contacting their COs was because they either did not like or trust them (22.1 %), or found them unhelpful (21.4 %).

The issue of anti-native attitudes perceived in the institutions was an area that is of concern by both CSC staff and inmates alike. The participants were simply asked whether or not they had such perceptions, and their responses are presented in Table 23.

**Table 23. Does the Offender Perceive Anti-Native Attitudes in Their Institution?**

<b>PERCEPTION OF ANTI-NATIVE ATTITUDES</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	64.3 %
<b>No</b>	34.3 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	0.7 %
<b>No Response</b>	0.7 %

About two-thirds (64.3 %) said 'yes' to this question, while just over one-third (43.3 %) said they felt no anti-native prejudices in their institution.

For those offenders who reported experiencing anti-native attitudes, the main source or sources of this prejudice were sought. Offenders were asked from whom do they perceive these attitudes, and these data are presented in Table 24.

**Table 24. Perceived Source of Anti-Native Attitudes in the Institution.**

<b>WHO DISPLAYS THESE ATTITUDES ?</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Security Staff</b>	17.1 %
<b>All CSC Staff</b>	20.7 %
<b>Other Inmates</b>	19.3 %
<b>Some of Both Inmates and CSC Staff</b>	2.1 %
<b>Other</b>	4.3 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	36.4 %

Correction Service staff are implicated in most of the prejudicial attitudes (Security Staff, 17.1 %; 'All' CSC Staff, 20.7 %), although nearly one out of five (19.3 %) reported anti-native attitudes coming from other inmates.

The issue of personal support has been identified as important. Table 25 displays offenders' responses to the question of who they find most supportive of them in the institutional environment.

**Table 25. Who Does the Offender Feel is Most Supportive in the Institution.**

<b>WHO IS MOST SUPPORTIVE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Nobody</b>	10.0 %
<b>Other Native Inmates/Friends</b>	22.9 %
<b>Counsellors or Psychologists</b>	5.7 %
<b>Native Elder or Spiritual Leader</b>	16.4 %
<b>CMO or Other Institutional Staff</b>	15.0 %
<b>Native Liaison Officer</b>	23.6 %
<b>Institutional Chaplain</b>	1.4 %
<b>Only Himself or Herself</b>	2.9 %
<b>Other</b>	2.1 %

From Table 25, it becomes clear that native inmates tend to get most of their support from either their Native Liaison Officer (23.6 %) or from each other (22.9 %). Elders or spiritual leaders support is sought by 16.4 percent of the offenders, while Case Management staff account for 15.0 percent of the responses. The implications of this finding, often strongly suspected, is that aboriginal offenders are most comfortable with other natives when it comes to personal matters.

In contrast, participants were asked who they felt were the least supportive of them in the institution. This data is presented in Table 26.

**Table 26. Who Does the Offender Feel is Least Supportive in the Institution?**

<b>WHO IS LEAST SUPPORTIVE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Other Native Inmates/Friends</b>	3.6 %
<b>Case Management Staff</b>	14.3 %
<b>Native Liaison Officer</b>	1.4 %
<b>Security Staff</b>	22.9 %
<b>Institutional Staff in General</b>	21.4 %
<b>White Inmates</b>	1.4 %
<b>Both Inmates and Staff</b>	0.7 %
<b>Everybody</b>	2.9 %
<b>Other</b>	16.4 %

Reinforcing the findings from the previous table, Table 26 reflects an almost overwhelming perception that institutional staff are viewed antagonistically. While this might be true to some extent of the incarcerated population in general, it is nonetheless seen as significant for this population. Taken together with the results from the previous table, the overall pattern tends toward distrust or lack of confidence in institutional staff, with a greater sense of support coming mainly from other native inmates.

In response to perceived need, the Correctional Service has provided for some aboriginal activities and programming. The interviewees were asked

a series of questions relating to participation in native activities. The following set of tables presents the findings. Starting with Table 27, overall participation level is noted.

**Table 27. General Participation Level.**

<b>PARTICIPATES IN NATIVE ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	87.1 %
<b>No</b>	12.1 %
<b>No Response</b>	0.7 %

As expected, a high level of participation (87.1 %) was found. In order to determine the rate of participation, subjects were asked how often they took part in native activities. This data is presented in Table 28.

**Table 28A. General Participation Rate.**

<b>IF 'YES', HOW OFTEN</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Daily</b>	23.6 %
<b>Two or More Times a Week</b>	16.4 %
<b>Once a Week</b>	12.9 %
<b>Twice a Month</b>	5.7 %
<b>Once a Month</b>	11.4 %
<b>Other</b>	12.1 %

As can be seen in Table 28A, more than half of the offenders take part at least once a week or more. Moreover, nearly a quarter (23.6 %) report daily native activity. Table 28B identifies the type of activity the offenders nominated as their first chosen activity, and Table 29 notes their second choice.

**Table 28B. Offenders' First Chosen Native Activity.**

<b>FIRST CHOSEN ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Spiritual or Ceremonial</b>	23.6 %
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	12.9 %
<b>Sweats</b>	5.7 %
<b>Social Group</b>	11.4 %
<b>Native Art and Craft</b>	17.9 %
<b>None</b>	16.4 %
<b>No Response</b>	12.1 %

**Table 29. Offenders' Second Chosen Native Activity.**

<b>SECOND CHOSEN ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Spiritual or Ceremonial</b>	29.3 %
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	16.4 %
<b>Sweats</b>	19.3 %
<b>Social Group</b>	5.0 %
<b>Native Art and Craft</b>	4.3 %
<b>None</b>	22.9 %
<b>No Response</b>	2.9 %

Although there appears to be a fairly wide range of favoured activities, those which are spiritual in nature seem to come out as activities of choice for the offenders (see Tables 28 and 29).

Interviewees were also asked what they felt might be done to attract more participation. This information is reported in Table 30.



**Table 30. What Might Be Done to Attract More Native Participation?**

<b>TO ATTRACT MORE PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Reduce Existing Conflicts</b>	1.4 %
<b>Make Programs/Activities Native Specific</b>	11.4 %
<b>Make Activities More Accessible/Available</b>	6.4 %
<b>Create Activities Outside Institution</b>	1.4 %
<b>Involve Non-Inmate Individuals/Groups</b>	1.4 %
<b>Not Interested in Participation</b>	7.9 %
<b>Does Not Know/No Response</b>	68.6 %

Perhaps the first thing observed in Table 30 is the large non-response level (68.6 %). As such, caution is advised in interpreting this data. Nonetheless, a possible explanation could be as follows. Since it has already been established that there is very high participation (see Tables 27 and 28), it is quite possible that attracting more may not be seen as an important issue to these offenders. For those offenders who did respond, however, most replies seemed to related to making activities/programs more relevant to native culture, and more accessible or available.

Since Native Brotherhoods are almost universal in CSC institutions, it was felt appropriate to inquire about them. Offenders were simply

queried on their opinion of the Native Brotherhoods. The results are presented below in Table 31.

**Table 31. Offenders' Opinions on Native Brotherhoods.**

<b>OPINIONS ON NATIVE BROTHERHOODS</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Poor</b>	1.4 %
<b>Fair</b>	13.6 %
<b>Good</b>	40.7 %
<b>Very Good</b>	10.0 %
<b>Excellent</b>	3.6 %
<b>Separate Inuit From Other Brotherhoods</b>	20.0 %
<b>None Available, But Desired</b>	2.1 %
<b>Does Not Know/No Response</b>	8.6 %

On the whole, offenders held positive opinions regarding the Native Brotherhoods, with over half rating the Brotherhoods as 'good' or better. It was interesting to note that 20.0 percent of respondents thought that the Inuit offenders should have their own Brotherhood or group. This is probably because of cultural disparities between the Inuit and more southern cultures, but this requires further investigation.

Offenders were also asked whether or not they felt there was a sufficient number of native cultural activities offered in their institution.

Table 32 contains their responses.

**Table 32. Does the Offender Feel there is Enough Native Cultural Activities Offered.**

<b>ENOUGH NATIVE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES?</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	29.3 %
<b>No</b>	67.9 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	2.9 %

Just over two out of three (67.9 %) aboriginal offenders felt that there was not enough cultural activities available in their institutions. In order to be more specific in identifying areas where activities are lacking, a follow-up question was asked of those who answered 'no' (i.e., in Table 32). Subjects' responses can be found in Table 33.

**Table 33. Where is Native Activity Lacking?**

<b>WHERE IS NATIVE ACTIVITY LACKING</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>'Everywhere'</b>	6.4 %
<b>More Cultural Activities Overall</b>	31.4 %
<b>More Native-Sensitive Programs and Staff</b>	16.4 %
<b>More Access/Availability to Activities</b>	10.0 %
<b>More Involvement with 'Outside' Community</b>	2.1 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	3.6 %
<b>Not Applicable/No Response</b>	30.0 %

From Table 33, it would appear that the main perceived shortfall is a largely quantitative one; 31.4 percent simply felt there was an insufficient number of activities on offer. Relatedly, 10.0 percent felt access or availability of programs and activities problematic. More culturally sensitive programs and staff were nominated by 16.4 percent of the offenders as an area of concern.

The present study was also interested finding what activities the aboriginal offenders find most personally fulfilling. Their responses are reported in Table 34.

**Table 34. Most Fulfilling Native Activity.**

<b>WHAT IS MOST FULFILLING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>All Spiritual Activities and Traditions</b>	10.7 %
<b>Sweat Lodges</b>	46.4 %
<b>All Native Social Activities</b>	15.0 %
<b>Northern Traditions and Gatherings</b>	5.0 %
<b>Traditional Art and Craftwork</b>	3.6 %
<b>CSC Programs in General</b>	1.4 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	0.7 %
<b>No Response</b>	5.0 %

By a large majority (46.4 %), offenders replied that the Sweat Lodge ceremony was their most fulfilling activity. Native social activities (15.0 %) and Spiritual traditions (10.7 %) were also frequently nominated.

The reasons the offenders found their activities fulfilling was also queried, and the data presented in Table 35.

**Table 35. Reasons Given for an Activity’s Fulfilling Quality.**

<b>WHY IS IT FULFILLING?</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Keeps Unity and Culture</b>	15.7 %
<b>Positive Influence/Promotes Healing</b>	45.0 %
<b>Opportunity to Talk with an Elder</b>	3.6 %
<b>Resolves Conflict</b>	4.3 %
<b>Gets Family Involved</b>	2.1 %
<b>Other - Few or No Programs Offered</b>	7.8 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	4.3 %
<b>Other</b>	12.1 %
<b>No Response</b>	9.3 %

The vast majority (45.0 %) of offenders reported that the most fulfilling quality of their native activities was healing, and promotion of positivity. The second most frequent response, at 15.7 percent, related to promotion of unity, and the maintenance of their traditional cultures. An item of concern was that 7.8 percent reported that there were either few or no activities on offer. This was supported in Table 32, where about two out of three reported insufficient cultural activities.

Turning more specifically to issues of CSC programming offered in the institutions, another series of questions were asked. The first of these queried offenders as to what they felt was their most effective program. This data is presented in Table 36.

**Table 36. What is the Most Effective Program You Have Seen?**

<b>MOST EFFECTIVE PROGRAM SEEN</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Native Substance Abuse</b>	11.4 %
<b>Recovery Programs</b>	1.4 %
<b>Northern Talking Circles</b>	7.9 %
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	5.7 %
<b>Sweat Lodges</b>	7.9 %
<b>Social Gatherings</b>	3.6 %
<b>Sex Offender Programming</b>	2.1 %
<b>Anger Management</b>	2.9 %
<b>Employment Skills</b>	0.7 %
<b>Computers</b>	1.4 %
<b>Youth Offender Programs</b>	2.1 %
<b>Elder Visits</b>	2.9 %
<b>None</b>	1.4 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	27.9 %
<b>Other</b>	18.6 %
<b>No Response</b>	2.1 %

Offender responses spanned quite a range of programs, owing largely perhaps to the diversity of CSC programs offered. Oddly, the largest response set was reporting not to know (27.9 %). The large 'other' category (18.6 %) resulted from a wide variety of program names the subjects nominated, but which could not be clearly identified

as to type. The identifiable program with the largest offender endorsement was Native Substance Abuse (11.4 %). Other programs with considerable approval were the Northern Talking Circles (7.9%) and Sweat Lodges (7.9 %). The fact that the three identifiable programs most often nominated as effective were native-specific, points to the importance of the effort to ‘translate’ programs to culturally-relevant content or format.

As earlier on, it was considered useful to ask aboriginal offenders *why* they felt the programs they have enjoyed were effective. Table 37 reports offenders’ responses to the question of “Why did you feel it [the program] was good?”



**Table 37. Why Did Offenders Think The Program Was Good.**

<b>WHY WERE PROGRAMS GOOD</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Helped Deal with Alcohol and/or Drugs</b>	4.3 %
<b>Covered Areas of Concern Others Did Not</b>	2.9 %
<b>Working with People of the Same Culture</b>	12.1 %
<b>Small Group Setting Optimal</b>	5.0 %
<b>Chance to Meet People in Community</b>	1.4 %
<b>Wisdom of the Elders</b>	2.1 %
<b>Acquired Useful Skills</b>	13.6 %
<b>Feels Good/Promotes Healing</b>	23.6 %
<b>Other - No Effective Programs</b>	4.3 %
<b>Other</b>	2.1 %
<b>No Response</b>	27.9 %

In Table 37, there was a notable, and disappointing number of offenders who did not respond (27.9 %). The next most endorsed quality was the Feels Good/Promotes Healing category (23.6 %). The subjects also largely approved of a given program because of the skills they acquired (13.6 %), or because they enjoyed working with people of the same culture (12.1 %).

Offenders were also asked what program they knew about and considered the least effective. The responses are reported in Table 38.

**Table 38. What is the Least Effective Program You Have Seen?**

<b>LEAST EFFECTIVE PROGRAM SEEN</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Native Substance Abuse</b>	5.0 %
<b>Native Pre-Treatment Program</b>	1.4 %
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	5.7 %
<b>Spirit of the Eagle</b>	1.4 %
<b>Social Gatherings</b>	3.6 %
<b>Anger Management</b>	4.3 %
<b>Relapse Prevention</b>	0.7 %
<b>Choices</b>	1.4 %
<b>All Ineffective</b>	6.4 %
<b>None</b>	17.9 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	11.4 %
<b>Other</b>	12.1 %
<b>No Response</b>	26.4 %

The data from Table 38 is rather ambiguous, as it is heavily weighted toward the 'no-response', 'Does Not Know', 'Other', and 'None' categories. This, of course, makes interpretation difficult. Due to the negative nature of the question, it is possible that many of the offenders were reluctant to speak ill of CSC programming.

As was the case with the effective program questions, the reason for offenders' negative opinions regarding programs was also assessed.

This data is presented in Table 39.

**Table 39. Why Do You Think It Was Ineffective?**

<b>WHY INEFFECTIVE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Did Not Learn Anything</b>	11.4 %
<b>Not Interesting</b>	7.9 %
<b>Expected Something Else</b>	1.4 %
<b>Material Irrelevant to Self</b>	4.3 %
<b>Not Native Specific</b>	12.1 %
<b>No Long Term Effect Outside Program</b>	3.6 %
<b>Program Too Short to Be Effective</b>	1.4 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	2.9 %
<b>No Response</b>	55.0 %

Although it was found yet again, that 55.0 percent of the offenders offered no response to the question of why they felt a program was not effective, there were more who were willing to report a reason for their dislike. For example, 12.1 percent noted that a given program was not native-specific, which would seem to be in line with a common theme in their responding. The next most-endorsed category was the 'Did Not Learn Anything' category. Once again, however, caution is

recommended in interpreting negative questions such as this, especially when a large number of respondents fail or otherwise refuse to provide an answer.

It was also a goal of the present study to query native offenders regarding aspects of their spiritual lives while incarcerated. The series of questions began with an overall question which asked the offenders whether they felt their spiritual needs were being met in the institution. Their responses are reported below in Table 40.

**Table 40. Are Your Spiritual Needs Being Met?**

<b>SPIRITUAL NEEDS MET</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	54.3 %
<b>No</b>	40.7 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	3.6 %
<b>No Response</b>	1.4 %

It was found that just over half (54.3 %) of the offenders felt that their spiritual needs were being met in the institution. Unfortunately, 40.7 percent said the opposite. To better understand this, a follow-up question was asked; 'Why' or 'Why Not' are they being met, reported in Table 41.

**Table 41. Spiritual Needs Met: Why (+) or Why Not (-)?**

<b>SPIRITUAL NEEDS MET: WHY/WHY NOT</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>+ Programs Taken are Sufficient</b>	21.4 %
<b>+ Spiritual/Cultural Leader Available</b>	14.3 %
<b>+ Institution Not Involved</b>	0.7 %
<b>- Not Enough Native Programs</b>	10.7 %
<b>- More Diverse Representation Needed</b>	9.3 %
<b>- Needs to Be On-Going</b>	18.6 %
<b>- Too Much Negativity</b>	1.4 %
<b>Other</b>	4.3 %
<b>No Response</b>	15.0 %

From Table 41, it was found that 21.4 percent of the subjects reported feeling satisfied with the native-oriented programming in place in their institution, and 14.3 percent said they have sufficient access to an Elder or spiritual leader. On the other hand, 18.6 percent complained that spiritual activities lack continuity and should be on-going. Just over 10 percent (10.7 %) reported that there simply was not enough activities available. Nine-point-three percent of the offenders were disappointed that their culture was not represented in spiritual activities. This issue of cultural is considered in more detail further on.

It was also considered important to gauge the offenders' self-rated degree of spirituality. This data is presented in Table 42.

**Table 42. Offenders' Self-Rating of Their Spirituality.**

<b>HOW SPIRITUAL ARE YOU?</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Very Spiritual</b>	49.3 %
<b>Spiritual</b>	20.7 %
<b>Neutral</b>	12.9 %
<b>A Little Spiritual</b>	9.3 %
<b>Not Spiritual At All</b>	4.3 %
<b>No Response</b>	3.6 %

The pattern of results in Table 42 make it quite clear that native offenders tend to rated themselves toward the high end of the scale. Fully 49.3 percent even rated themselves as 'very spiritual', and 20.7 percent, the next most populated cell, said they were 'spiritual'. Only 4.3 percent of the offenders reported themselves to be 'not spiritual at all'.

In order to get an idea of the offenders' spiritual background, each was asked about the nature of their spiritual upbringing. This data is presented in Table 43.

**Table 43. Offenders' Spiritual Upbringing.**

<b>OFFENDERS' SPIRITUAL UPBRINGING</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Traditional Native</b>	15.0 %
<b>Christian</b>	31.4 %
<b>Mixture of Native and Christian</b>	41.4 %
<b>No Spiritual Beliefs</b>	5.7 %
<b>Other</b>	5.0 %
<b>No Response</b>	1.4 %

The majority of offenders (41.4 %) were brought up with a mixture of traditional native and Christian beliefs. The next most common upbringing was Christian (31.4 %), followed by Traditional Native (15.0 %). And with a figure similar to one presented in the previous table (i.e., Table 42), only 5.7 percent reported no spiritual beliefs in their backgrounds.

With aboriginal spiritual leaders now present, if only sporadically, in most CSC institutions, it was considered useful to get a sense of how often the offenders are able to have contact with a spiritual leader or elder. Subjects were asked how often they accessed their spiritual leader. The responses to this question are presented in Table 44.

**Table 44. How Often Does Offender Have Access to a Spiritual Leader?**

<b>FREQUENCY OF ACCESS</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Daily or More Often</b>	10.0 %
<b>Weekly</b>	22.9 %
<b>Several Times a Month</b>	5.0 %
<b>Monthly</b>	10.0 %
<b>A Few Times a Year</b>	27.9 %
<b>Only Once</b>	0.7 %
<b>Never</b>	5.7 %
<b>No Response</b>	17.9 %

The most common response (27.9 %) in this table was ‘A few times a year’. On the other end of the scale, 22.9 percent reported having weekly access to a spiritual leader, and 10.0 percent said they had daily access. These curious results probably reflect the uneven use or hiring of spiritual leaders in institutions.

Whether or not offenders have enough contact with elders may or may not be a serious issue. It was decided to ask the aboriginal offenders themselves whether spiritual counselling, or lack thereof, constituted an area of need. The responses are recorded in Table 45 below.



**Table 45. Does the Offender Feel This is an Area of Need?**

<b>AREA OF NEED</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	24.3 %
<b>No</b>	3.6 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	0.7 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	71.4 %

About one quarter (24.3 %) of the offenders interviewed felt that spiritual counselling was problematic. While this may be good news for the other three quarters or so, it was considered important to pursue further.

Acting on the suggestions from several CSC divisions, the issue of cultural differences was addressed. Initially, it was of interest to find out if offenders felt having a spiritual leader from a different native culture was a problem. The responses to this question are present in Table 46.

**Table 46. Does Offender Feel it is a Problem if the Spiritual Leader is of Another Tribe or Culture?**

<b>PROBLEM W/ELDER FROM DIFFERENT TRIBE OR CULTURE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	27.1 %
<b>No</b>	68.6 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	2.9 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	1.4 %

Similar to the data in Table 45 where 24.3 percent reported their spiritual life was problematic, here in Table 46 it was found that 27.1 percent felt that having a spiritual leader of another native culture to be a problem. While this reflects a real concern, it should probably not obscure the finding that the large majority (68.6 %) do not find this issue a problem. Nonetheless, those who found elders outside of their culture unsatisfying were asked a follow-up question; ‘why?’. The offenders’ responses to this query are reported in Table 47.

**Table 47. If the Offender Feels it is a Problem if the Spiritual Leader is of Another Tribe or Culture, Why?**

<b>WHY A PROBLEM W/ELDER FROM DIFFERENT TRIBE OR CULTURE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Only Comfortable Within Own Culture</b>	4.3 %
<b>Different Teachings</b>	19.3 %
<b>Other</b>	2.9 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	73.6 %

Of those who were uncomfortable with elders from different cultures, it was found that differences in their teachings were the sore point. Nineteen-point-three percent endorsed reported ‘different teachings’.

Another important interest this study examined was that of programming and specifically, native programming. The issue of culturally relevant programs has been voiced at the CSC, so it was given attention in the present study. One of the first areas addressed was that of native-specific programming. Here, aboriginal offenders were simply asked whether they felt programs should be made native-specific.

**Table 48. Does the Offender Feel Programs Should be Made Native-Specific.**

<b>NATIVE SPECIFIC PROGRAMS</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	68.6 %
<b>No</b>	20.7 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	8.6 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	2.1 %

Not surprisingly, most (68.6 %) thought native-specific programming was a good idea, although about one out of five (20.7 %) disagreed. As a follow-up, offenders were asked to nominate what program would be their first choice to be 'translated' as an aboriginal program. This data is presented in Table 49.

**Table 49. Which Program? - First Choice.**

<b>SHOULD BE NATIVE SPECIFIC</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
'All of Them'	17.9 %
Substance Abuse	17.1 %
Cognitive/Life Skills	6.4 %
Anger Management	6.4 %
Spiritual Counselling/Ceremonies	4.2 %
Educational/School	1.4 %
Native Socials	1.4 %
Living Without Violence	2.1 %
Sex Offender Program	0.7 %
Native Artwork and Crafts	0.7 %
Other	5.7 %
No Response/Not Applicable	35.7 %

Interestingly, 17.9 percent of offenders spontaneously responded "All of them" to the question. This was, in fact, the most common response. The second-most common response was substance abuse programs (17.1 %). It is useful to note that in a number of CSC institutions, native substance abuse programming is available.

Offenders were also asked to nominate a second choice program they would like to see 'translated'. This data is presented in Table 50.

**Table 50. Which Program? - Second Choice.**

<b>SHOULD BE NATIVE SPECIFIC</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	4.9 %
<b>Cognitive/Life Skills</b>	2.1 %
<b>Anger Management</b>	3.6 %
<b>Spiritual Counselling/Ceremonies</b>	1.4 %
<b>Educational/School</b>	0.7 %
<b>Native Socials</b>	0.7 %
<b>Living Without Violence</b>	8.6 %
<b>Sex Offender Program</b>	1.4 %
<b>'Nothing'</b>	33.6 %
<b>Other</b>	1.4 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	36.4 %

Clearly, with 36.4 percent offering no response, and with 33.6 percent reporting “nothing”, it would appear the vast majority fairly shrugged this question off.

The issue of counselling was also explored. First, participants were asked whether they felt they could use some counselling (Table 51). This was then followed by another series of counselling-related questions.

**Table 51. Does the Offender Feel They Could Use Some Counselling?**

<b>COULD USE SOME COUNSELING</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	86.4 %
<b>No</b>	12.9 %
<b>No Response</b>	0.7 %

A full 86.4 percent of the interviewees reported that they could use counselling. Counselling availability is addressed in Table 52.

**Table 52. Is Counselling Available?**

<b>IS COUNSELING AVAILABLE?</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	66.4 %
<b>No</b>	20.7 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	10.0 %
<b>No Response</b>	2.9 %

Nearly two-thirds (66.4 %) of the offenders interviewed reported that they felt they needed some sort of counselling. The subjects were queried on the area of need they felt they could use counselling for is presented in Table 53.

**Table 53. For What Area Would They Need Counselling?**

<b>AREA OF COUNSELING NEED?</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
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<b>Personal\Emotional</b>	35.7 %
<b>Spiritual</b>	24.3 %
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	5.7 %
<b>To Discuss Criminal Behaviour</b>	0.7 %
<b>Correctional and Release Plans</b>	5.7 %
<b>Conversation in General</b>	9.3 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	18.6 %

Personal or emotional counselling was named as the main need area reported by the majority of interviewees (35.7 %). The second most-nominated area of counselling need was spiritual, with 24.3 percent reporting.

Offenders were then asked who they felt made the best counsellors, or who they felt most comfortable with. Table 54 records their responses.

**Table 54. Who Does the Offender Feel Makes the Best Counsellor.**

<b>BEST COUNSELOR</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Elder or Spiritual Leader</b>	40.7 %
<b>CSC-Offered Counsellor</b>	2.9 %
<b>Substance Abuse Counsellor</b>	1.4 %
<b>Family and Friends</b>	15.0 %
<b>Native Liaison Officer</b>	13.6 %
<b>Case Management Officer</b>	2.1 %
<b>Own Community Member</b>	0.7 %
<b>Other</b>	8.6 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	18.6 %

By far, native offenders prefer an elder or spiritual leader as their counsellor. Interestingly, the nomination of a spiritual leader, at 40.7 percent, was more than double that for their family and friends (15.0 %) or their Native Liaison Officer (13.6 %). It was also noteworthy that various CSC-supplied staff generally ranked quite low.

In anticipation of release, and with an eye to post-release programs that likely will be available, offenders were asked what sort of post-release programming they feel might be effective. The responses are found in Table 55.



**Table 55. What Post-Release Program Does the Offender Consider Most Effective.**

<b>MOST EFFECTIVE POST-RELEASE PROGRAM</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Native Substance Abuse</b>	11.4 %
<b>Native After-Care Program</b>	5.7 %
<b>Spiritual/Cultural Programs/Teachings</b>	12.1 %
<b>Native Half-Way Houses</b>	2.1 %
<b>Native Community Centres</b>	10.0 %
<b>Employment Programs</b>	2.1 %
<b>Sweat Lodges</b>	6.4 %
<b>Life Skills</b>	1.4 %
<b>Anger Management</b>	1.4 %
<b>'All Programs' Good</b>	0.7 %
<b>No Programs Good</b>	17.1 %
<b>Other</b>	8.6 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	2.1 %

Although the offenders cited a wide range of program types, the most common spontaneous response was that there are no good programs (17.1 %). On the positive side, the most frequently endorsed programs tended to be aboriginal-oriented. These included spiritual/cultural activities (12.1 %), native substance abuse counselling (11.4 %), and native community centres (10.0 %).

It was another goal of the study to determine native offenders' use, or non-use, of the inmate grievance system. For those who reported never using the grievance system, it was the interest of the present study to find out why. These data are presented in Tables 56 and 57 respectively.

**Table 56. Has the Offender Ever Used the Inmate Grievance System.**

<b>EVER USED GRIEVANCE SYSTEM</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	33.6 %
<b>No</b>	65.0 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	1.4 %

From Table 56, it was found that just over a third (33.6 %) of the offenders ever used the grievance system. The reasons given by those who had not used the system are provided below in Table 57.

**Table 57. If “No” to Above, Why Not?.**

<b>WHY GRIEVANCE SYSTEM NOT USED</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>No Need</b>	32.1 %
<b>Does Not Help</b>	13.6 %
<b>Does Not Know About It</b>	10.0 %
<b>Takes Too Much Time</b>	3.6 %
<b>Administration Won't Deal With It</b>	2.9 %
<b>Does Not Like/Trust Authority</b>	1.4 %
<b>Not Applicable/Used System/No Response</b>	36.4 %

Of the 65.0 % who never used the grievance system (see Table 56), most reported to simply never had the need (32.1 %). Another 10.0 percent said they were unaware of the system. The rest of the reasons tended to revolve around the theme of lack of trust in the grievance system.

In order to ‘wind down’ the interview, it was decided to ask a short series of ‘easy’ questions. Because there was interest voiced in getting a language profile of the offenders, this point of the interview was considered the optimal position for these non-threatening items. (Not that any of the previous questions could be seen as truly threatening.)

Table 58 reports the offenders' reading abilities, while Table 59 reports the ability of the offenders to speak in their aboriginal language. Data in Table 60 reports offenders' native language background.

**Table 58. What Language(s) Can the Offender Read.**

<b>LANGUAGES READ</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>English Only</b>	72.9 %
<b>French Only</b>	3.6 %
<b>Both English and French</b>	20.7 %
<b>Neither</b>	2.1 %
<b>No Response</b>	0.7 %

**Table 59. Can the Offender Speak in their Native Language?**

<b>NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	47.1 %
<b>No</b>	34.3 %
<b>Some/Not Much</b>	17.9 %
<b>No Response</b>	0.7 %

**Table 60. Did the Offender Ever Used to Speak in their Native Language?**

<b>NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN PAST</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Yes</b>	60.7 %
<b>No</b>	34.3 %
<b>Some/Not Much</b>	4.3 %
<b>No Response</b>	0.7 %

The material reported in Tables 58 through 60 is fairly self-explanatory, but it is noteworthy that 47.1 percent still report speaking ability in their native tongue (see Table 59). However, from Table 60, it was found that 60.7 percent *used* to speak their language, suggesting a certain amount of slippage in ability.

The final question in the interviews was intended not only to gather valuable information, but also to give the offenders a chance to name some aspect of corrections *they* feel is problematic. They were asked to identify one thing that they would like change in the institution to improve their situations. This is presented in Table 61 below.

**Table 61. Offenders' Opinion of What They Would Change to Make to Improve their Situation in the Institution.**

<b>WHAT SHOULD CHANGE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>More/Different Programs in General</b>	6.4 %
<b>Need Programs Linked to the Community</b>	7.9 %
<b>More Native Oriented Staff/Programs</b>	32.1 %
<b>More Availability/Access to Programs</b>	12.1 %
<b>Have Natives Housed/Programmed Separate</b>	11.4 %
<b>Better Understanding of Native Culture for Staff and Non-Native Inmates</b>	10.7 %
<b>Does Not Know</b>	4.3 %
<b>'Nothing'</b>	2.9 %
<b>Other</b>	10.0 %
<b>No Response/Not Applicable</b>	2.1 %

The most common response to this question related to offenders' impression of a need for more native-oriented staff and programming. This included the desire for more staff who are themselves, aboriginal. Access to available programs was also mentioned as problematic (12.1 %). Eleven-point- one percent stated they felt aboriginals should be housed, or at least programmed separately from inmates of other cultures. There was also a number (10.7 %) who remarked that CSC staff and non-native inmates should be more familiar with native culture.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

The present study drew nation-wide samples of aboriginal offenders in federal custody for file review and face-to-face interviews. Criminal history data was also obtained from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). The samples represented all levels of security. (It should be noted at this point, that the interested reader should consult the tables in the Findings section, as it contains in-depth information too intricate to be presented as a simple summary. In fact, most of the tables are self-explanatory, and lend themselves easily to quick examination.)

The offenders' criminal histories were characterised by a prevalence of violent offenses, most common of which was assault. Property crime such as break and enter and theft were the most numerous, and failure during community supervision made a strong showing.

From the offenders' case files, information was collected regarding their childhood backgrounds. It was found that early drug (60.4 %) and alcohol abuse (57.9 %) were commonplace, as were behavioural problems (57.1 %). Other frequently-noted occurrences was both physical (45.2%) and sexual abuse (21.2 %), as well as severe poverty

(35.3 %), and parental absence or neglect (41.1 %). Suicide was attempted by 20.5 percent of these offenders.

Identified case needs were also found in the offenders' case files. Although the offenders' needs were across the board, the highest (i.e., the most problematic) areas were that of substance abuse and emotional/personal needs. In addition, over half this population had high employment and education needs identified by their case managers.

In terms of a Risk/Needs analysis, this group studied tended to be a high risk/high needs population. Over 40 percent of those surveyed fell into the high risk/high needs cell, according to their case files. The balance of the others tended to group around the high risk/medium needs or the medium risk/high needs cells (see Table 4).

From the interview data, it became clear that there exists a significant apprehension on the part of aboriginal offenders to deal directly with CSC staff. While this may be true to an extent of all offenders in custody, native offenders seemed quite solid in the belief that the persons whom they are most trusting of are other natives, and especially spiritual leaders and elders. This is an over-riding theme



from this study, but it should be acknowledged that it comes from offender responses to a variety of interview questions. These would include; How often does the subject talk to their Case Management Officer, their Correctional Officer (in those cases where COIs carry case loads), their Native Liaison Officer ... who makes the 'best' counsellor, who do they find most supportive in the institution, and such. In all such questions, the overwhelming response is that other natives, be they elders or Native Liaison Officers, hold the confidence of this population.

In terms of the offenders' spirituality, it was established that the native population constitutes, by their own account, a highly spiritual group, mostly placing a high value on their traditions and culture. There was also a reported high degree of participation in native cultural activities, and the desire for more of such. Concern was also voiced regarding the tribal affiliation of the various elders or spiritual leaders, with many expressing problems when the elder is of a culture different than their own.

Programming offered in their institutions reinforced this view, in that native-oriented programming was felt to more effective, and was participated in with a more positive attitude. Moreover, the majority

expressed the view that more programs should be 'translated' so that they might be more culturally relevant for natives.

In line with their needs assessments which noted a prevalence of emotional/personal needs, a vast majority self-reported the desire for some sort of counselling. When asked to nominate who they would like as a counsellor, a spiritual leader was overwhelmingly recommended.

In all, several themes presented themselves. First, it becomes clear that the incarcerated aboriginal population constitutes a high needs group. A group that largely shares a common background of physical or sexual abuse, early drug and alcohol use, emotional problems, poor parenting. This is also a relatively high risk group, often with histories of failure during community supervision.

Another theme relates to the offenders' cultural and spiritual life. Here, it was found that many enjoyed participating in native cultural activities, although most desired more to be available. This population also represented themselves as fairly spiritual, and frequent participants in spiritual or ceremonial activities. And again, there was the commonly-voiced concern that not enough was available, or that

access was difficult. It was also found that there was a very common request for culturally-relevant programming, or the translation of existing programs to be more native-specific.

A third theme related to the offenders' relationship with various individuals in their institution. In general, there tends to be a lack of trust, and overall acrimony with CSC staff. On the other hand, the offenders reported more comfort with other aboriginals, and trust of native spiritual leaders or elders. While tense relations between inmates and institution staff may be common for many inmates of any culture, the present study does not warrant the conclusion that relations are worse for natives. (That would require a comparative study.) The offenders *did* frequently recommend more native staff and program deliverers as a means to better relations and improve programs.

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