

A halfway house for Indigenous men: Moving towards individual healing and public safety

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Introduction

Background

The John Howard Society is a non-profit with a mandate to work with people at risk and or in conflict with the law. The John Howard Society of Hamilton, Burlington & Area (JHS-Hamilton) is one of 19 affiliates across the Province. JHS-Hamilton's motto and mission statement is "effective, just, and humane responses to crime and its causes," and is marking its 70th year in the city this year.

JHS-Hamilton approached the McMaster Research Shop in December 2018 looking for research into an alternative halfway home model for Indigenous men recently released from custody. An Indigenous halfway house aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action which seek to return power and rights of the Indigenous community to utilize Indigenous practices of conviction, rehabilitation, and reintegration. JHS-Hamilton envisions a working partnership with local Indigenous Services in Hamilton to provide a culturally responsive and effective service model in the community. The service provisions for Indigenous offenders under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) would inform the work.

Purpose

The John Howard Society needs research conducted for a pilot of a halfway home for Indigenous people in the Hamilton community. The purpose of this report is to articulate the need for, and important features, of an alternative halfway house for Indigenous men recently released from custody. Primarily, this deliverable will contribute to a funding proposal to Corrections Services Canada (CSC). Some form of this research may also be used as a public education tool to rally neighbourhood support around establishing the halfway home in their community.

Methods

A team of researchers from the McMaster Research Shop started the project in January 2019 and completed it in May 2019. The team met periodically to help form the research question and methods, discuss findings, reassess timeline plans, and write this report. The Executive Director of JHS-Hamilton helped inform the research plan and connect the team with relevant literature to review and stakeholders to interview.

This research is a synthesis of insights from multiple data sources, including reports from Hamilton's Social Planning and Research Council, statistics on Indigenous incarceration rates, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action, and the Office of the Correctional Investigator's 2017-2018 Annual Report. The research team also conducted six interviews with Indigenous community members and other community stakeholders within Hamilton. These interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by phone. The participants were from the HRIC; the Hamilton Legal Aid Clinic; JHS-Hamilton; Ikaarvik, an Indigenous community-based residential facility with Tungasuvvingat Inuit; and the John Howard Society of Ottawa. The research team also conducted a brief environmental scan of current and existing Indigenous halfway houses in Canada as well as secondary research into halfway houses and their impact on individuals and communities.

Structure of report

This is a preliminary report for a needs-assessment of an Indigenous halfway house in Hamilton. To establish context, we begin with a brief discussion of intergenerational trauma as a result of colonialism and its impact on Indigenous communities in Hamilton and incarceration rates. We highlight the TRC Calls to Action relating to Justice with Indigenous people in Canada as well as relevant findings from the Office of The Correctional Investigator 2017-2018. These urgent calls to action and recommendations emphasize a shared and collective vision in stepping forward to support Indigenous men within the justice system. We discuss the need for a halfway house in Hamilton as it relates to individual healing and public safety and the costs in implementing this supportive resource. In addition, we discuss some of the key features of an alternative halfway house, as brought forward in consultation with several Indigenous community members and stakeholders in Hamilton.

Context: Intergenerational Trauma and Indigenous Communities in Canada

"When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and

write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write....”

- (Sir John A. Macdonald, House of Commons, 1883).

To this day, the impacts of targeted government policies and practices can be felt by entire generations of Indigenous people. One of these policies includes the Indian Act (1876 to present), which led to cultural genocide and control of Indigenous peoples in Canada (Menzies, 2010, as cited in SPRC, 2017). In addition, there was Residential Schools (1840-1996) and the Sixties Scoop wherein, based on the belief that Indigenous peoples of Canada (including their culture and traditions) were inferior to white colonists, Indigenous children were physically removed from their families and land and forced to live in non-Indigenous communities (Menzies, 2010, as cited in SPRC, 2017). Children were put into residential schools where they were stripped of their Indigenous language, culture, traditions, and practices. Often, there was physical, emotional and sexual abuse within these residential schools and in the families the children were placed in. As a result, Indigenous peoples in Canada face increased social inequities and a decreased quality of health and wellbeing compared to the majority of society.

Indigenous communities in Hamilton and incarceration rates

“There has been lifelong trauma that Indigenous men have been forced to deal with... Some have come out, prepared to confront it and there are others who will have difficulty... There are people that dive right in, thinking they are ready and then they pull back and get scared [when they realize they are not ready]. Some get hesitant since they are told time and time again that “we’re going to be here for you” but then, actions speak louder than words... Everyone is coming at different stages of healing and acceptance.”

- (SH, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre).

Hamilton is located on traditional territories shared by the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations. In 2016 there were 13,640 self-identified indigenous people in Hamilton representing 2% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2019). Hamilton is located just 10 km away from the largest reserve in Canada: Six Nations of the Grand River (Six Nations). Six Nations is comprised of approximately 25,000 members, with many living off-reserve in Hamilton (SPRC, n.d.). A Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) community survey showed 21% of respondents were born in Six Nations. There appears to be a possible under-reporting of the Indigenous population in Hamilton as many Indigenous communities, including Six Nations, have refused to participate in official surveys due to mistrust of government. However, the SPRC (n.d.)

also reports that, similar to national data, Indigenous communities are growing more rapidly than the general population. Hamilton's indigenous population is younger than other Indigenous communities in Ontario and a decade younger than the general population in Hamilton. Figure 1 shows the Indigenous population as defined by the Indian Act among Hamilton and Ontario's Indigenous residents (Statistics Canada, 2011; SPRC, n.d.)

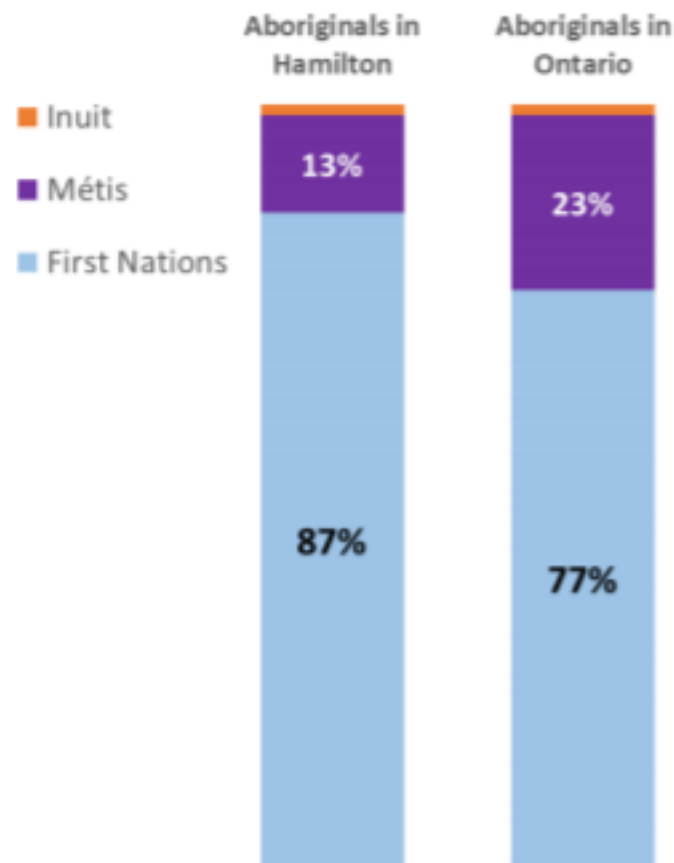


Figure 1: Indigenous groups as defined by the Indian Act in Hamilton and Ontario.

Indigenous communities in Hamilton face a number of challenges due to historical and present inequities. Indigenous people have lower rates of education than the general population. In Hamilton, 24% of Indigenous people have not completed high school compared to 13% of the city's general population. A similar disparity is reflected in the poverty rate with 29% of Indigenous people below the poverty line as compared to 16% of the general population of Hamilton. Inadequate housing and homelessness are significant issues and a survey by the SPRC reported that 20% of those that experience homelessness in Hamilton are Indigenous (SPRC, n.d.).

Incarceration rates for Indigenous people are disproportionately high. In Canada, Indigenous people account for 4.1% of the population yet represent 28% of admissions to provincial/territorial correctional services and 27% for federal correctional services (Statistics Canada, 2018). The proportion of Indigenous admissions to adult custody has been trending upwards for over 10 years. It has increased steadily from 2006/2007 when it was 21%. In Ontario, Indigenous people make up 2.8% of the population yet Indigenous men make up 11% of those in custody in 2016/17. This is up from 8% in 2006/7 (Statistics Canada, 2018). This demonstrates the consistent and ongoing gaps in services needed for Indigenous men within the justice system.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action

Indigenous people are disproportionately overrepresented in the criminal justice system (Department of Justice, 2017). Within the system and its various processes, they are further marginalized and traumatized as a result of systemic and institutional racism. In addition, there are many gaps in the current state of reintegration and rehabilitation facilities for Indigenous people leaving the system.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released Calls to Action to redress harm aimed to erase and assimilate Indigenous people, and to move forward with reconciliation. Many of the Calls to Action are directly relevant to the development and implementation of Indigenous-specific halfway houses. Specifically, call 37 states, *“We call upon the federal government to provide more supports for Aboriginal programming in halfway houses and parole services.”* Furthermore, other Calls to Action in relation to “Justice” continue to echo the need for Indigenous halfway houses and programming in Canadian prisons (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, n.d.):

31. *“We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending,”*

35. *“We call upon the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creation of additional Aboriginal healing lodges within the federal correctional system,”*

36. *“We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to work with Aboriginal communities to provide culturally relevant services to inmates on issues such as substance abuse, family and domestic violence, and overcoming the experience of having been sexually abused,”*

40. *“We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms,”*

42. *“We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to the recognition and implementation of Aboriginal justice systems in a manner consistent with the Treaty and Aboriginal rights of Aboriginal peoples, the Constitution Act, 1982, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed by Canada in November 2012,”*

50. *“In keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations, to fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes for the development, use, and understanding of Indigenous laws and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.”*

Key findings from The Office of the Correctional Investigator 2017-2018 Annual Report

The Office of the Correctional Investigator reviews complaints by offenders in the criminal justice system. Based on these complaints, the Office makes policy and procedural recommendations to ensure that systemic areas of concern are identified and properly addressed. As part of the Correctional Investigator’s message in the 2017-2018 Annual Report, he highlighted that *“progress appears stalled, stuck or even regressive in some highly visible areas of correctional practice”* and went on to describe that this included *“Indigenous corrections (influence of Aboriginal-based street gangs, not enough bed space, facilities and services operated by Indigenous communities for Indigenous offenders”* (p. 3).

Relevant findings from the report include:

- CSC tracks the proportion of offenders who are returned to custody on a new federal sentence. On this measure, offenders appear to be returning to federal custody less often (18% in 2001-02 versus 16% in 2011-12), though readmission remains elevated for Indigenous people at 23.4%, which is significantly greater than the general population.
- The current national base recidivism rate is unknown. However, in 2003, Public Safety Canada found that the two-year reconviction rate for federally sentenced offenders released in 1994-95, 1995-96, and 1996-97 was 42.5% overall: 42.9% for men, 27.5% for women and 56% for Indigenous men.
- In the ten-year period between March 2009 and March 2018, the Indigenous inmate population increased by 42.8% compared to a less than 1% overall growth

during the same period. As of March 31, 2018, Indigenous inmates represented 28% of the total federal in-custody population while comprising just 4.3% of the Canadian population. **As the number of Indigenous people admitted to custody continues to increase, bed capacity in the community has not kept pace.**

According to the Correctional Investigator,

“Indigenous offenders continue to serve proportionally more of their sentence in prison before release and in higher security settings than their non-Indigenous peers. They more often fail on conditional release and reoffend at much higher levels than their peers. These indicators and outcomes belie CSC’s claim that it bears no responsibility for the morass of Indigenous over-incarceration. While it is true that the Correctional Service is at the receiving end of the criminal justice system, it serves no purpose to continue to deny factors that fall squarely within its remit to positively influence and change for the better” (p. 11).

An Indigenous Halfway House in Hamilton

The need and rationale for a halfway house

“When we lift Indigenous men up, it affects them in a positive way, it affects their families, and it affects their communities... They are healthy and kind Indigenous men. And there are men who have always been kind but don’t have the support [to be who they are] ... Across the board, we have seen how trauma, judgment and suppression have affected Indigenous men because of colonialism.”

- (SH, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre).

“The more healing there is [for an Indigenous man], the less likely they will be to commit crime.”

• (JD, John Howard Society of Hamilton).

Halfway houses play an essential role in bridging the gap between living in CSC institutional care to ultimately entering back into the community (JHS, 2011). Halfway houses provide rehabilitation, residential services, and programming that is tailored to the needs of the residents and the broader community (JHS, 2011). Thus, in order for Indigenous offenders to best integrate back into their communities, it is essential that they receive Indigenous-specific care, programming, and services.

Currently, there is no Indigenous halfway house in Hamilton for Indigenous men. This is critical considering the significant Indigenous population in the city and surrounding areas, as well as the disproportionate overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system (The Office of The Correctional Investigator, 2018). Despite concern that implementing an Indigenous halfway house in Hamilton may increase crime, research has found that halfway houses do not contribute to increased crime rates and the majority of those in halfway houses are able to successfully complete their time (JHS, 2011). Research has consistently demonstrated that those who are gradually released back into the community through halfway houses are more likely to successfully complete their sentence without reoffending than those released without first transitioning through a halfway house (Clark, 2014; JHS, 2016). Furthermore, the CSC found that over 80% of offenders are able to successfully complete parole, with those who complete parole demonstrating a lower rate of recidivism. Figure 2 and Figure 3¹ demonstrate recidivism rates in Ontario and releases by assessed risk level. Providing sufficient services and a halfway-house specific to Indigenous men following their incarceration will prevent the rates of recidivism, contribute to Indigenous men's individual healing, and would be a concrete demonstration of a step towards TRC Calls to Action.

¹ From the Ministry of the Solicitor General: From the Ministry of the Solicitor General:
<https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/Corrections/RatesRecidivism.html>

Adult Recidivism Rates, 2001 to 2015

Year	6+ month jail sentences	Community supervision
2001/02	55.2%	21.2%
2002/03	49.6%	20.8%
2003/04	38.7%	20.8%
2004/05	41.8%	21.9%
2005/06	45.4%	22.7%
2006/07	40.5%	23.8%
2007/08	42.8%	24.0%
2008/09	44.7%	23.4%
2009/10	43.5%	24.5%
2010/11	43.6%	23.6%
2011/12	43.9%	22.3%
2012/13	42.9%	20.7%
2013/14	37.4%	21.4%
2014/15	34.9%	20.7%

Figure 2: Rates of Recidivism in Ontario

Adult releases by assessed risk level - 2014/15 (most recent year for which data is available)

Assessed Risk Level	Institutional Releases from 6+ month sentences		Community Releases	
	Number of releases	Number and percentage re-convicted	Number of releases	Number and percentage re-convicted
Very low	76 (3%)	2 (2.6%)	4,082 (12%)	153 (3.7%)
Low	265 (10%)	10 (3.8%)	7,936 (24%)	704 (8.9%)
Medium	668 (26%)	113 (16.9%)	11,247 (34%)	2,174 (19.3%)
High	934 (36%)	359 (38.4%)	7,139 (22%)	2,654 (37.2%)
Very high	667 (26%)	431 (64.6%)	2,484 (8%)	1,411 (56.8%)

Figure 3: Adult releases by assessed risk level (2014-2015)

Cost effectiveness of a halfway house

According to the CSC, it costs approximately \$115,000 to maintain an offender in correctional facilities whereas it costs approximately 72% less to maintain an offender in the community. Table 1 provides a comparison of costs outlined by reports from the CSC and the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Presently, it has been noted that in Canada there is an insufficient number of halfway houses for federal prisoners to live in, resulting in parole being delayed for up to 260 months (CBC, 2018). Delaying parole/entry into community living situations for so long and for so many people poses a huge financial burden and waste. Furthermore, the insufficient amount of space results in parolees being sent to communities where they lack family and support and do not intend to stay (CBC, 2018).

Table 1. Cost comparison of CSC institution vs. Halfway house (from CSC expenditure statistics, 2015-2016, and the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2018).

	Average annual cost of an offender	Average annual cost of an offender	Average annual cost of an offender
	2017 – 2018	2016 – 2017	2015 – 2016
CSC Institution	\$115,000	\$109,971 ²	\$116,000 ³
Community/Halfway House	\$35,000	\$18,058 ¹	\$31,000 ²

Similar to CSC's findings, Statistics Canada released a report which included operating expenditures of the adult correctional system. It was found that the average daily inmate cost in 2016-2017 was \$235 in Ontario. This translated to approximately \$659,818 for custody expenditures and \$116,249 for community supervision expenditures per inmate, per year. In addition, the report highlighted that community supervision consisted 15% of total expenditures compared to the 81% of the expenditures for custody in both the provincial and territorial adult correctional system.

Key features of a halfway house: Consultation with Indigenous community members

The following are insights from interviews with Indigenous community members and stakeholders around the key features of a halfway house for Indigenous men. It should

² Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2018

³ CSC Expenditure Statistics, 2015-2016

be noted that the research team consisted of non-Indigenous students who are mindful about the impact of their social location in relation to the purpose of this project. As individuals without the lived experience of Indigenous community members and their current and historical struggles with oppressive state policies and practices, we lacked this critical perspective when analyzing and presenting our findings. Moreover, we were only able to conduct six interviews with Indigenous community members, which we cannot claim to be fully representative of Hamilton's Indigenous community. As such, findings in this section are tentative, and we propose that a more comprehensive, community-wide consultation will be necessary to establish the most important features of an Indigenous halfway house in Hamilton. With these limitations in mind, we present the following insights:

- 1) Throughout this process, it must be acknowledged that Indigenous men have endured the devastating impacts of colonialism, which has impacted their identity and their roles in their communities. At the same time, they have demonstrated strength and resilience.

"No one grows up thinking I want to be a violent offender, an addict... We need to ask questions, "Why is this occurring?" We need to understand and know how important restoration is as opposed to punishment and confinement... I've seen it, making time and consistency, in supporting Indigenous men... they change immediately, especially for those who are ready."

- (SH, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre)

- 2) An Indigenous halfway house for men is an essential pathway. Indigenous community members mentioned that it is not about the 'aesthetics' or what the halfway house looks like, but rather it is the relational work that it will undertake with the men. Community members affirmed that The Good Mind teachings must serve as a foundation and in line with redressing the legacy of colonialism, that there should be an intentional consideration of the Indigenous gender identities, including Two-Spirit and Trans* men (Appendix B). In addition, a holistic approach which includes access to traditional food and on-the-land programming must be in place.

"Some [Indigenous men leaving the justice system] might say they just want to fulfill cultural obligations... It is still important to have supports in place... It is about making a conscious effort to not have judgment placed on them. Having people in place to do programming or people on-site to help with employment is important... It is no longer just getting by, they're living. We

encourage and promote each individual's gift and purpose... It is important to have Elders to help support men and heal men alongside other workers."

- (SH, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre)

- 3) In the halfway house, men need to take ownership of their healing and transition into their communities. The Edge of the Woods ceremony has been described by community members as a way to welcome men into their healing and honour their stories and journey. (Appendix C)

"What are their stories? Where are their stories? We need to create plans [with them] and not from a circle that hears and directs. We need to continue consulting with community. We need to understand the knowledge the men have [in working towards their healing]. We need to celebrate their stories."

- (SH, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre)

- 4) Restorative Justice principles (Appendix A) were brought forward as a way to assist men as individuals as well as in the collective development of an Indigenous halfway house.

"We need to emphasize that 'you have a place here just as I have a place to be here'... Every process needs to be restorative, intake is restorative... [We need to remember that] doing the work will produce good community minded Indigenous men and healing from childhood trauma"

- (JD, John Howard Society of Hamilton)

"We need to make it a place that the men are a part of it, not just taking a bed but taking a part of it. We need to create a space with a governance structure for the participants for ownership of their healing."

- (SH, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre)

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although research has consistently shown that supporting men through halfway houses decreases recidivism and the costs of the criminal justice system, there is still a significant lack of support for Indigenous men leaving the criminal justice system. Hamilton is home to a large Indigenous community and is well-positioned to be a city that pilots a halfway house for Indigenous men. Multiple reports from both the Correctional Services Canada and Statistics Canada have found that halfway houses and community supervision are cost-effective methods of support and rehabilitation. A

halfway house will also address needs for individual healing and public safety, recommendations in the most recent Office of the Correctional Investigator Report, and many of the TRC Calls To Action by embedding greater supports for Indigenous people in the criminal justice system.

This research report serves as a starting point for JHS-Hamilton to develop a comprehensive proposal to CSC to acquire funding to pilot a halfway house for Indigenous men leaving custody in Hamilton. Based on research in this report, along with consultations with Indigenous community members, the following are some summative recommendations as to the features of the halfway house:

- Incorporate the use of Restorative Justice principles in creating, implementing and developing programming within the halfway house (See Appendix A)
- Emphasize “The Good Mind” teachings, a philosophy from the Onondaga and Haudenosaunee that has parallels with evidence-based trauma-informed approaches (see Appendix B)
- Incorporate the “Edge of the Woods” Ceremony to welcome the men into transitioning the home (see Appendix C)
- Include Trans* and Two-Spirit people and the consideration of the colonial construct of gender identity
- Provide access to traditional food and on-the-land programming
- Continued and ongoing, timely and in-depth consultations with existing Indigenous community partners and stakeholders in Hamilton and the surrounding area.

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Appendix A: The Concept of Restorative Justice

Restorative justice aims to address criminal acts through methods that are constructive to the individual as opposed to harsher methods that aim to punish individuals for their actions (Daly and Marchetti, 2011). Additionally, restorative justice aims to include the experience of victims of criminal acts and facilitate dialogue and participation between offenders, victims, and the community (Daly and Marchetti, 2011). Restorative justice is unlike “Westernized” legal practices as it is more informal and provides a central role to citizens as opposed to just legal professionals.

Upon colonization, “white” law was introduced into Canada and imposed in Aboriginal communities, without consideration for how Aboriginal people previously maintained social order, prevented crime, and responded to criminal acts (Griffiths, 1996). Unlike “Westernized” systems of criminal justice that focus on retribution, traditional Aboriginal law and justice are based on a restorative model (Barkwell, 1991; Brodeur et al., 1991). Furthermore, traditional Aboriginal law seeks to achieve different objectives such as 1. Conflict resolution; 2. Restoration of group/community harmony and order; and 3. Healing the offender, victim, and community, whereas “Western” justice systems are more reactive to the problem (Ross, 1992).

In Aboriginal communities, restorative justice may be based on traditional practices and involve elders and the healing of victims, offenders, and communities (Griffiths, 1996). The inclusive nature of restorative justice allows for the needs of everyone involved to be addressed. Furthermore, such practices allow the Aboriginal communities autonomy in achieving justice.

Examples of the success of restorative justice in Aboriginal communities can be seen in various initiatives previously introduced in Canada. In the Teslin Tlingit First Nation Community in the Yukon, an alternative justice system that was designed to best meet the needs of the community and align with the non-Aboriginal justice system was put in place (Griffiths, 1996). Through this initiative, the Justice Council determines the sentences of criminals with the goal of restoring community harmony. The sentences imposed are limited by the Territorial Court of the Yukon and informed by defence lawyers and prosecution, with 98% of sentences falling in the limits set by the court (Griffiths, 1996). The 2% of cases that fell outside the limits of the court actually suggested harsher punishments than that recommended by the legal representatives. This demonstrates the efficacy of allowing Aboriginal communities autonomy in their approach to justice and the sufficiency of the imposed sentences.

Similarly, the Community Holistic Circle Healing Program in Hollow Water, Manitoba, demonstrated the efficacy of a community response to handle cases of sexual and family abuse (Griffiths, 1996). This traditional healing practice involved offenders and their relatives as well as victims and their relatives (Griffiths, 1996). This program required offenders to publicly apologize to community members and victims, with the goal of restoring peace and harmony in the community, family, and individual (Griffiths, 1996). In the nine years of the program's operation only two offenders had reoffended, demonstrating the efficacy of the program.

The tenets of restorative justice are vastly different than that of retributive models of justice. These differences have historically proven it difficult for the Canadian justice system to effectively reduce the amount of Aboriginal people incarcerated (Griffiths, 1996). The implementation of traditional practices through models like restorative justice can help to ensure that the needs of Aboriginal offenders and communities are met.

Appendix B: Edge of the Woods Ceremony

(Note: Adapted from a document created by the Oneida Nation)

The Edge of the Woods was designed around those not on the Confederacy entering the Iroquois territory. However, instead of responding with hostility, the Iroquois people have had long standing rituals around welcoming individuals and groups to their territory with music, shelter, food, and relieving any fears that they may have. Most notably, they aspire to alleviate any physical, spiritual, and intellectual burdens. During this ceremony, the visitor is expected to wait “at the edge of the woods” until the Iroquois people go to meet them and escorted onto the territory before an assembly of people. This is the first sign of trust. The visitor emerges both physically and symbolically emerges from the shadows of the forest to the sunlight of the fields surrounding the Iroquois community. While the individual is being escorted, the Iroquois people sing songs of welcome to elevate the spirit.

The gathering in front of the assembly is of particular importance. A speaker expresses gratitude on behalf of the community to the visitor for having arrived safely. The speaker acknowledges any and all burdens that the visitor may have experiences throughout their journey to this point and the speaker extends words of condolences for any suffering and loss, then restores their “good minds” so that they can meet the council to begin to understand one another. The Iroquois would bathe the visitor to cleanse them, mend their torn clothing, provide them with shelter, and have food ready for their nourishment. It is only after the visitor's needs are met and they are both comfortable and physically stable can formal discussions begin.

The following words were then spoken to symbolically offer comfort to the weary traveler:

“We now take this softest of deerskins, white in color and wipe away the dust that may have accumulated your eye’s upon your travel here. So that you may be able to see all that the Creator has provided for us here on the earth, and that you may be able to see clearly the generations ahead of us.

Secondly, we now take this white feather from the eagle, the softest down of white feathers and we brush away from your ear’s all the dust that may have accumulated your ear’s upon your travel here. So that you may be able to hear the words that our people convey to you and that you are able to understand clearly when you are asked to make a decision based upon what you are able to understand of the issue presented.

Now we stand you up and brush away all of the things that may have accumulated upon you from your travel. We start from your head, all throughout your body, right down to your feet. At this time we say to you that we now welcome you into our territory and that you may stay as long as you like.”

- (Bob Brown, Cultural Advisor at the Oneida Cultural Heritage Department (Brown, n.d.))

By incorporating the essence of this ceremony, individuals who are leaving the justice system and transitioning back into society will be surrounded and protected by the warmth of a community who is standing behind them and supporting them through this difficult journey. This not only aligns with their traditions but addresses the spiritual as well as the physical and emotional challenges that they underwent to get to this point.

Appendix C: The Good Mind and the Community

The concept of the 'good mind' is rooted in the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy (Beaton, 2009; Friends of Ganondagan, n.d.). The good mind can be conceptualized as a mental health model that aims to balance the mental, emotional, and spiritual health of a person (Brant, 2009). In Haudenosaunee thought, a person who is not of good mind is truculent, shows disrespect, engages in violence, creates chaos, and displays a lack of relationship with the world (Beaton, 2008). The Haudenosaunee teach that cultivation of a good mind can remedy these anti-social behaviours and also help heal those experiencing trauma and pain with the guidance of elders. Through the use of a guide or mentor, indigenous ways of knowing can be passed on to individuals helping them to engage in more positive thoughts and actions. Cultivating a good mind can be achieved by encouraging individuals to integrate the culture, values, language, and ceremony into their daily life. It is a traditional way of healing that gets people out of negative thought and action patterns and into a holistic space where they can have meaningful relationships, respect for people and the land, non-violence, and positive behaviours. Kelly Brant, a researcher at Carleton University, asserts mental distress is plaguing indigenous populations and states a return to traditional healing practices will greatly heal the community and help foster pro-social behaviour. As she states, "We believe that a revitalization and use of traditional treatment techniques are necessary for addressing the present healing needs of the Haudenosaunee." (Brant, 2009, pg. 15)

Some of the techniques used to cultivate a good mind are community circles (where people talk about past trauma and work through psychological issues), ceremonies (spiritual practices that connect one to the greater good), unburdening (or allowing oneself to feel pain and anger in order to move past it), realization practices (meditation to calm the mind) (Brant, 2009). Connection to family and community are central to the cultivation of the good mind to ensure that healthy relationships with people endure. The concept of the good mind highlights the possibility of change from anti-social behaviour to positive relationships with people and oneself. "The lesson for all of us is that no matter how demented one may have been in the past; the mind has the capacity of being restored" (Indigenous Values Initiative, n.d.).