

Yukon Corrections Branch

CORE PROGRAMMING DESCRIPTIONS



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Introduction

Objectives and Principles

The Yukon Department of Justice's Corrections Branch is committed to providing offenders with criminogenic and non-criminogenic programming options that effectively address the needs of the individual, as defined by risk assessment and case management processes.

By assigning offenders the most appropriate programs for each individual offender, we look to contribute to public safety by reducing risk of reoffending and increasing the probability of safe reintegration into our communities. Criminogenic programming requires the matching of programs to an offender's level of risk and identification of primary and secondary program needs.

The programs described herein are all culturally-neutral programs, meaning they are deemed to be effective in reducing offender recontact with all people engaged in the courts and justice systems.

Criminogenic programming is defined as a structured, evidence-based intervention/program that addresses factors directly related to an offender's criminal behaviour.

Non-criminogenic programming is an intervention that addresses other factors that may not directly relate to offenders' criminal behaviour, but has been identified through a case management or wellness plan.

Correctional Program Intervention

There are three primary areas addressed by criminogenic programming: violence, substance abuse and general criminality.

Three types of programs are offered by Yukon Corrections in relation to violence prevention: general, family and sexual violence prevention.

Referrals to programs hosted outside of Corrections, or to individual counselling, cannot replace a program offered within Corrections and must not be used when a Corrections program is made available to target specific offender needs. Outside agency programs are meant to compliment the core programming options found in this resource.

As per program guidelines, offenders who are identified as having attended all sessions or who have successfully completed a criminogenic program are not to be referred to repeat that program within the same program area during the same sentence unless new convictions or information is added to the offender's criminal history.

Non-criminogenic programs can be offered to any offender to help address non-criminogenic needs that may be acting as barriers to dealing with their criminogenic needs.

Core Programming Descriptions

Violence Prevention Program

The Violence Prevention Program is provided to offenders with generalized violence identified as a need area. It is a 10 session program based on a cognitive behavioral therapy, social learning theory and brain based learning. This approach strives to look at the impact of aggressive, violent and criminal behavior. The program presents information and tools to facilitate a change in beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, skills and habits that lead to criminal behavior. It looks to identify precursors to violent behavior, identify the impact of violent behavior on one's self and others, to recognize thinking patterns that lead to violent behavior and attempt to reframe them, to identify stressors and tensions that lead to violent behavior and to look at risk factors, triggers and high risk situations.

Substance Abuse Management

The Substance Abuse Management program is provided to offenders with substance abuse issues identified as a need area. It is a 12 session program that is based on the bio/psycho/social/spiritual model of addiction as well as the Stages of Change Model. The Biopsychosocial model recognizes that there are multiple pathways to addiction and that the significance of these individual pathways depends on the individual. It was one of the first models to recognize the importance of treating the whole person, not just the addiction. At the end of the program, participants should be able to identify the theoretical precursors of substance abuse, and apply this understanding to their own lives. They will acknowledge the impact using has had on them physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Common thinking errors will be identified and participants will reframe these thinking errors into positive thinking patterns. Concrete and realistic goals about recovery will be set while utilizing interventions and controls for managing cravings. It is intended to develop and modify a relapse prevention plan with each participant and help them create a list of resources to assist in continuing their recovery.

Relapse Prevention

The Relapse Prevention Program is provided to offenders with substance abuse issues that have completed the Substance Abuse Management program. This 6 session program is aimed at helping offenders identify their risk-risk situations and/or triggers. The focus of this program is to increase knowledge regarding relapse prevention and how it can be managed. Offenders will develop their own individualized relapse prevention plan and learn how to integrate successfully into the community. Participants will increase their knowledge about the short and long term effects of drugs and review what triggers their cravings. After acknowledging these triggers, participants will develop their own plan to address these cravings and learn how to say no effectively.

Core Programming Descriptions

I am a Kind Man

I am a Kind Man is a pilot program. The seven session program is directed towards aboriginal men and was developed by Ontario First Nations through the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. It is designed to offer Aboriginal men and youth a safe place to begin to understand their roles and responsibilities to end violence against Aboriginal girls and women. It provides a supportive, holistic model for healing and can be easily adapted to suit individual communities. The overall purpose is to engage men to speak out against all forms of abuse towards Aboriginal women by embracing the Seven Grandfather Teachings which show us how to live in harmony with Creation through wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth.

Respectful Relationships

The Respectful Relationships Program is a 10 session program that is provided to low to moderate risk male offenders with spousal abuse identified as a needs area. The intent of the Respectful Relationships Program is to provide participants with a deeper understanding of their abusive behaviours and to provide them with some basic tools and strategies to end the violence in their lives. There is a weaving of skill development and information throughout the program. The order of sessions is designed to allow the participants to slowly increase their knowledge and skills by building on previous learning. Depending on the dynamics of the group and behaviour of individual group members, facilitators may find it necessary to spend more or less time than suggested on any particular activity.

Relationship Violence Treatment

The Relationship Violence Treatment Program is a 17 session program that is provided in conjunction with the Respectful Relationship Program for high risk male offenders with spousal abuse identified as a needs area.

Respectful Relationships for Women

The Relationship Skills for Women Program is a 12 session program that is provided to female offenders. This program provides participants with an opportunity to become more skilled at developing and maintaining healthy relationships. Relationship Skills for Women is a program that is aimed at addressing dynamic risk factors such as criminal attitudes, impulsivity, egocentrism, a taste for risk, weak problem solving/self-regulation skills, weak socialization skills, aggressive energy and self-injurious behavior that are associated with reducing recidivism. This program attempts to help the women address some of these factors in the context of their experience in relationship.

Core Programming Descriptions

Emotional Management for Women

The Emotional Management Program for Women is a 10 session program which provides participants with an opportunity to become more skilled at managing difficult emotions in a way which leads to healthy, productive outcomes. This is a program aimed at helping female offenders become more skilled at managing difficult emotions. The benefit of addressing dynamic risk factors such as attitudes, impulsivity, egocentrism, a taste for risk, weak problem solving/self-regulation skills, weak socialization skills, restless aggressive energy, and self-injurious behaviors are associated with reduced recontact. The focus of this program is on addressing cognitive distortions and emotional dysregulation that leads to criminal behaviours. This program is aimed at raising emotional self-awareness, increasing the ability to self-regulate, increasing motivation and optimism and increasing the ability to identify and respond effectively to others' emotions. It is intended to begin the work of building a personal foundation of safety and self-regard upon which the women can build more effective relationship skills, and is an introductory module for the Relationship Skills for Women program.

The Courage to Change Series

The Courage to Change Series is a cognitive behavioural interactive journaling series which allows participants to address individual problem areas as they are able to personalize the information presented. The series includes workbooks on the following topics:

Peer Relationships

Focuses on addressing risks related to criminal peers. Participants consider their past and present peer relationships, learn the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, practice handling social peer pressure and learn how to build a positive support network.

Self-Control

Focuses on addressing risks related to low self-control. Participants explore the connection between criminal behaviour and their self-control. Participants consider the consequences of a lack of self-control and explore strategies for handling difficult emotions.

Responsible Thinking

Focuses on addressing risks related to criminal personality. Participants examine whether their thinking is objective and accurate and explore what is involved in changing habits.

Substance Abuse

Participants evaluate substance use and the consequences of using and develop a plan to help them maintain their recovery. This is a supplement to the SAM program not a substitute for it.

Core Programming Descriptions

Social Values

Focuses on addressing risks related to antisocial values. Participants identify their values, where they came from and the impact on themselves and others. They develop positive life values and challenge roadblocks to incorporating healthy values.

Family Ties

Focuses on addressing risks related to dysfunctional family ties. Participants explore strategies related to help them reconnect with their families and create action plans to rebuild important family relationships. It includes a section on parental roles and responsibilities.

Successful Living

Encourages participants to start thinking about the life areas of education, finances, employment and physical health. It includes practical tips on each topic and participants are encouraged to develop long-term goals in each area.

Sex Offender Maintenance Readiness

The Sex Offender Maintenance Program (SOMP) Readiness program is a psycho-educational program which aims to educate participants in the concepts outlined in the Behavioural Progression Plan (BPL) and the Self-Management Plan (SMP). Participants in the program must complete both of these plans before they begin the Sex Offender Maintenance Program (SOMP), either in the community or in the institution. The program consists of up to 20 sessions divided into 5 modules; Introduction, Interpersonal Relationships, Emotional Management, Thinking and Beliefs and Completing the Plans. During these modules, participants are presented with information about common risk factors and strategies to address them. This program is not a sex offender treatment program, but designed to orient the participants in the language and their risk factors which may be addressed in the Sex Offender Maintenance Program.

Sex Offender Maintenance Program

The Sex Offender Maintenance Program is participant driven and intended to maintain the gains made in the SOMP readiness program and assist clients with managing risk in the community. It is a continuous intake program which commences upon completion of the SOMP readiness program and runs the length of an offender's sentence (custody and community).

Men's Wellness Group

Men's Wellness Group is a non-criminogenic program focusing on health and wellbeing, addictions, and relapse prevention.

Core Programming Descriptions

Self Management & Awareness Group - Dialectical Behavioural Therapy

The Self-Management and Awareness Group is a 10 session psycho-educational-based dialectical behavioural therapy program. It focuses on exploring mindfulness-based practices to assist individuals in becoming more self-aware in both body and mind.

The purpose of the group is to learn about and practice mindfulness techniques, gain self-awareness and self-management tools, understand trauma and its effects as well as explore the types of healing journeys one can take. It is also about learning healthy coping strategies and creating personal safety.

It is recognized that each individual will have their own trauma history, but the purpose of the group is not to disclose these events, or provide personal trauma therapy. The idea behind the group is to give individuals the information and skills needed to decide if and when they are ready to take their own trauma healing journey.

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy is a practice that combines standard cognitive-behavioural techniques for emotion regulation and reality testing, with concepts of distress tolerance and mindful awareness. Mindfulness is the core concept behind all elements of this program as it helps individuals accept and tolerate the powerful emotions they may feel when challenging their habits or exposing themselves to upsetting situations. The goal is to lend context and perspective to experiencing one's emotions and senses in a positive manner while living in the present moment.

Life Skills Program

Four Session Life-Skills is a non-criminogenic program that assists clients who are struggling with making the changes needed to move towards a pro-social lifestyle. This program will help normalize the struggles many clients have when making the changes needed in their lives when they are attempting to make healthier life choices. The topics covered include: social anxiety, communication, loneliness, budgeting and nutrition.

Other Programming & Services

The Whitehorse Correctional Centre also offers medical and dental services, work programs, spiritual services, a psychiatrist and psychologist, educational upgrading, work-related training and work programs for offenders.

First Nations Strategy and Programs

With respect to First Nations programming, Yukon Corrections has adopted a strategy that attempts to incorporate First Nations culture into the fabric of Whitehorse Correctional Centre operations where it is feasible to do so.

Healing Room & the Elder's Advisory Board

For example, the Whitehorse Correctional Centre was built with a healing room where ceremonies, smudging, and circles can be undertaken. The architects worked with the Elder's Advisory Board to design the healing room and feedback on the design has been positive. It is a place for restoration, contemplation and calm within the correctional centre.

The Elders play an important role at the Correctional Centre. They work with inmates on a one to one basis; they provide advice to the management team, they teach correctional officers and others about traditional practices and bring wisdom and calm support to the inmates.

Partnerships & Collaboration

- We facilitate access to the Jackson Lake Healing Camp for all clients who are eligible to attend and Randall Tetlich, a Vuntut Gwitchin Elder, offers a program on Traditional Healing and Sweats to clients on community supervision.
- In partnership with CYFN, we have a First Nations re-integration worker under contract to provide additional assistance with the transition back to the community. This includes the availability of some funds to assist individuals with immediate needs or to remove barriers from successful re-integration.
- We have also entered into a contract with Andy Nieman, a member of the White River First Nation, to develop a culturally relevant program over this year and next. Thus far, Mr. Nieman has been attending Whitehorse Correctional Centre and talking with the inmates to try and ascertain what programming gaps exist for them.

Staff Training & Employment

- All correctional officers, probation officers and managers take a new two day course on Yukon First Nations Culture and Traditions that has been developed by the Northern Institute of Social Justice.
- We have undertaken specific initiatives to hire First Nations to work in Corrections.

First Nations Strategy and Programs

Education & Programs

- Whitehorse Correctional Centre has worked hard to invite and engage First Nations people who are willing to teach traditional skills to inmates in the correctional centre. There are now several members of the community who attend to put on workshops such as drum making, carving, spirit rattles, handling hides, First Nations language courses Southern Tutchone, Kaska and Tlingit, making ceremonial vests and moccasins, among many others.
- Partnering with the Yukon College to deliver the Heritage and Cultural Essential Skills which is a unique program lasting 5 weeks. The course was tailored to the WCC schedule and focused on skills essential to being involved in heritage and culture departments/centres in Yukon communities. These skills included: mapping basics, indigenous knowledge gathering, museum collections and interpretation principles, critical thinking skills, problem solving, basic research fundamentals, and cooperative learning.
- A Career and Professional Development Program facilitated by Yukon College addresses personal and life-skills challenges which may be holding First Nations offenders back. It imparts lessons on the importance of volunteering in the world of work, creating a Career Portfolio and finalizing each inmate's Career and Education Action Plan. The Personal Development component provides information about history and the role of oral traditions, interpersonal communications, team building, and understanding preferred learning styles.
- The Health and Wellness course develops awareness of substance abuse; understanding stress and time management, relaxation techniques, eating healthy and the holistic approach to the medicine wheel. A component on environmental concerns and an individual's relationship to Mother Earth offers knowledge about the importance of stewardship to the land, understanding traditional medicines, Guiding Circles and how to make dream catchers. The instructors work with individuals and the group to build a plan that creates a path to success.

Multimedia

- We have started a library of Yukon First Nations books and we currently have 19 volumes. We continue to build this resource for inmates.
- We have started a video library project that involves the Elders talking about their clans, cultural practices, and telling stories (we have two completed). Our goal is to make these available to offenders on the televisions.

First Nations Strategy and Programs

Traditional Medicine & Wellness

- We are working to incorporate traditional medicines into Health Services. These are comprised mainly of topical medicines and inmates are given the option of choosing that treatment when it is appropriate for them to do so.

Special Events

- Solstice celebrations occur twice yearly that include a feast with traditional foods (when available). Family members or friends are invited, and cultural or inmate-led events such as storytelling by the Elders, art displays by the inmates, or music recitals are featured.



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