Incorporating Aboriginal Spirituality into a Mainstream Violence Rehabilitation Program at a Maximum Security Institution.

By

Elisha Conway

A thesis submitted to the School of Community Services in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts in Behavioural Psychology

St. Lawrence College
Kingston, Ontario
Canada
April 1, 2013
DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my family,

because without your love and support,

none of this would have been possible.
ABSTRACT

It is an important focus for Correctional Services Canada to attend to the increasing need for more violence prevention programs for aboriginal men. In the past, aboriginal offenders with histories of violence have been offered either the mainstream Violence Prevention Program (VPP) or the aboriginal “In Search of Your Warrior” (ISOYW) Program. Evaluations of these programs revealed that the VPP is skills orientated but does not address aboriginal responsivity issues; while ISOYW addresses the spiritual component but lacks a sufficient variety of skills. The purpose of the present study was to evaluate if the offenders involved in the combined program (i.e., mainstream VPP with integrated aboriginal spirituality) changed the way they generally regard violence and reduced their use of violence in day-to-day situations by the midterm date. An Aggression Questionnaire, a Student Researcher Questionnaire, and a Violent Institutional Charge Review were measures used to evaluate the outcome of this combined program. Additionally, qualitative data was collected on the offenders’ perceptions of the combined program. The results of the three measures indicated that this program, at the midterm phase, was successful in decreasing some of the participant’s thinking about violence and the way they viewed violence; that incorporating aboriginal spirituality, culture, and traditions with the skills taught in the VPP was considered extremely important to the participants; and that the program was successful in decreasing the number of institutional violent charges. The results supported the hypothesis that the combined program would change the way participants generally regarded violence and reduce their use of violence in day-to-day situations by the midterm date.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my thesis supervisor, Yolanda Fernandez, for her ongoing support, guidance, knowledge, commitment and dedication to this thesis. I would also like to thank my agency supervisor, Meagan Fumerton for her wisdom, guidance, unconditional support, hard work and commitment in creating this thesis.

A special thank you goes out to everyone working in this agency, especially: Lisa Wlock the Program Department Manager, Crystal Sweeney the Aboriginal Liaison Officer, and Albert Dumont the traditional healing elder, for all of their guidance, wisdom, and support. I would also like to thank all of the participants in this study, for without them, this thesis would not have been possible!

Finally, I would like to thank my amazing family and friends for all the love and support they have shown me during this process. You have always been there for me and words cannot express how much you mean to me.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ............................................................................................................... ii  
ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................... iii  
ACKNOWLEDGMENT .............................................................................................. iv  
TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................... v  
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 1  
Purpose ....................................................................................................................... 1  
Overview .................................................................................................................... 1  
II. LITERATURE REVIEW .......................................................................................... 2  
III. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................. 10  
Informed Consent Procedures .................................................................................. 10  
Participant Characteristics ...................................................................................... 10  
Settings ...................................................................................................................... 10  
Skills .......................................................................................................................... 11  
Spiritual Concepts and Teachings .......................................................................... 11  
Testing Procedures .................................................................................................. 11  
Aggression Questionnaire ....................................................................................... 11  
Student Researcher Questionnaire .......................................................................... 12  
Violent Institutional Charges Review .................................................................... 12  
IV. RESULTS ............................................................................................................. 13  
Aggression Questionnaire ....................................................................................... 13  
Student Researcher Questionnaire .......................................................................... 13  
Violent Institutional Charges Review .................................................................... 13  
Summary ................................................................................................................... 13  
V. DISCUSSION ......................................................................................................... 15  
Weaknesses and Limitations ................................................................................... 15  
Strengths ................................................................................................................... 15  
Participant Feedback ............................................................................................... 16  
Multilevel Challenges ............................................................................................. 16  
Summary and Implications ...................................................................................... 18  
Recommendations for future studies ..................................................................... 18  
REFERENCES .......................................................................................................... 19  
APPENDIX A: Consent Form (2012/10/16) .............................................................. 21  
APPENDIX B: Demographic Information (2012/10/24) .......................................... 24  
APPENDIX C: Aboriginal Ceremonies .................................................................. 27  
APPENDIX D: Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) ............................ 29  
APPENDIX E: Student Researcher Questionnaire ................................................ 30  
APPENDIX F: Aggression Questionnaire Results .................................................. 32  
APPENDIX G: Student Researcher Questionnaire Results .................................... 33  
APPENDIX H: Violent Institutional Charges Results ............................................ 34
Chapter I: Introduction

According to Statistic Canada (2008) aboriginal people represent less than 4% of the Canadian population, but represent 17.9% of the federal offender population (Public Safety Canada, 2010). Aboriginal offenders tend to have higher risk and need ratings, to be younger, to be more likely to have served a youth sentence, and to have been convicted for a violent offense compared to non-aboriginal offenders (Mann, 2010). It is an important focus for Correctional Services Canada to attend to the increasing need for more violence prevention programs for aboriginal men.

In the past, aboriginal offenders with histories of violence have been offered either the mainstream Violence Prevention Program or the aboriginal “In Search of Your Warrior” Program. Evaluations of these programs have shown that they have their own unique strengths and weaknesses. The mainstream program is skills orientated but does not address aboriginal responsivity issues; while the aboriginal program has the spiritual component but does not teach as many skills.

Purpose

This was the first time that Correctional Services Canada, specifically the Ontario region, combined the mainstream violence prevention program with aboriginal spirituality for high risk violent aboriginal offenders. The purpose of the present study was to evaluate if the offenders involved in the combined program (i.e., mainstream VPP with integrated aboriginal spirituality) changed the way they generally regard violence and reduced their use of violence in day-to-day situations by the midterm date of the program. Additionally, qualitative data was collected on the offenders’ perceptions of the combined program.

This study is the first examination of some of the potential effects of the combined mainstream and the aboriginal program. This study will provide CSC with some preliminary information on the effectiveness of this new intervention by the midterm phase, providing an early indication of the potential success of this program once completed.

Overview

This thesis provides a review of the literature on the critical components of a successful rehabilitation program for violent offenders, an over-view and evaluation of the Violence Prevention Program, critical components of a successful rehabilitation program for Aboriginal Offenders, an over-view and evaluation of the “In Search of Your Warrior” program, and a discussion of how all of these components are related and potentially beneficial to the present program. The Method section describes- the informed consent procedures, the characteristics of the participants, the setting where the intervention took place, the Violence Prevention Program skills that were taught and the spiritual concepts and teachings that were incorporated from the aboriginal “Basic Healing Program” and the “In Search of Your Warrior Program”, and the three measures that were used to evaluate the intervention. The outcomes of the measures are presented in the results section and include the results from the Aggression Questionnaire,
Student Researcher Questionnaire and the review of the Violent Institutional Charges. The thesis concludes with a summary of the findings and a discussion of the strengths and limitations, recommendations, and the potential benefits of this thesis.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Critical Components in Successful Rehabilitation Programs for Violent Offenders

Chereji, Pintea and David (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of nineteen peer reviewed studies on the relationship between violence, cognitive distortions, and anger. Nine of the studies focused primarily on the relationship between anger and violence, while 14 studies focused on violent behaviour and cognitive distortions. Results from the meta-analysis strongly indicated that both anger and cognitive distortions are related to violent behaviour. This meta-analysis by Chereji, Pintea and David (2012) provides support for the theory that cognitive distortions and anger are related to human aggression, and consequently should be included in interventions.

A study by Howells et al. (2005), focused on an anger management intervention for serious violent offenders. While research has shown that anger management interventions can be effective for offenders, they appear to be less effective for serious violent offenders (Howells et al., 2005). The rationale behind the study by Howells et al., (2005) was to examine the effectiveness of anger management for a group of serious violent offenders, and compare them to a matched control group. There were a total of 418 male participants which ranged in age between 18 and 62 years. Two self-reported measures of anger, the Spielberger State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI) and the Novaco Anger Scale (NAS-PI) were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the anger management class. The STAXI evaluated state and trait anger and measured anger expression and control, and the NAS-PI assessed the intensity of participant’s anger and reactions to different provocation types. Pre-test and post-test scores were recorded and the results of this study indicated that offenders who took the anger management classes had slightly higher positive test results than those who did not have any intervention. None of the differences reached statistical significance, indicating the anger management intervention was not very effective. The researchers identified three important factors as to why an anger management program was not successful in prison for serious violent offenders. The authors suggested that this population has multiple needs besides anger that are not adequately addressed in this program. Additionally, the program is not skill focused and may not have provided the participants with the skills they need to be successful beyond controlling their anger. Finally the authors suggested that low motivation might be a factor. The participants self-reported that the concepts taught in the anger management program were not personalized or relevant to them. The study makes some suggestions as to what components could contribute to a more effective rehabilitation program for violent offenders.

Meta-analysis has shown that offender rehabilitation programs that include cognitive behavioural techniques and have a skill oriented focus, reduce recidivism rates among offenders most effectively when compared to interventions that do not focus on these critical components (Polaschek & Collie, 2004). The rationale for the Polaschek and Collie (2004) meta-analysis was to evaluate empirical evidence for interventions which were skill based and included Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques with violent offenders. Results ranged from small positive effect sizes to large positive effect sizes, supporting a positive correlation between CBT techniques used in treatments and a reduction in the rate of recidivism for offenders with a
history of violence (Polaschek & Collie, 2004). To date it appears that rehabilitation programs that focus on teaching skills and include CBT techniques are the most effective for violent offenders.

No research has been conducted on integrating components as a strategy for increasing motivation in offenders but a study with students suggests it may be an effective method. MacMath, Roberts, Wallace and Xiaohong (2010) demonstrated that using curriculum integration, which is combining subject areas and disciplines to make the concepts relevant, increased motivation and learning for high school students. The study examined the effectiveness of this intervention with regular high school students as well as students who were deemed at risk of not completing high school. The researchers found that when using the curriculum integration approach, all students self-reported higher levels of motivation and the unit test results showed increased academic success compared to previous unit tests. Higher levels of self-efficacy were also noted due to repetition of the unit material, directly increasing motivation and academic success. The findings from this study were relevant because the concept of curriculum integration and its relation to improving motivation can be linked to the previous study by Howells et al., (2005) which indicated that increasing participant’s motivation is an important factor in individual’s success with program material and a successful component in a good rehabilitation program.

The Risk, Needs, Responsivity Model (RNR) is the basic foundation for all CSC programming. This model has shown to be the best predictor for offender assessment, rehabilitation targets, and recidivism within Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). The RNR model suggests that rehabilitation programs need to focus of three important things for them to be successful: 1) Who, 2) What and, 3) How. The Risk principle addresses “who should be treated” by suggesting that rehabilitation programs should direct services and resources for offenders with the highest risk of recidivism over low risk offenders. Simply put, successful rehabilitation programs should focus only on offenders with moderate to high risk to commit another criminal offense. The Needs principle addresses “what should be treated” by suggesting that rehabilitation programs should focus on specific risk and need factors commonly associated with criminal activity. Simply put, successful rehabilitation programs should focus on the “big four” and “central eight” criminogenic needs that are functionally related to criminal behaviour and have been supported by the literature. These criminogenic needs (examples include: procriminal attitudes, antisocial personality, criminal associates, etc) serve as targets for change and are an essential focus in successful rehabilitation programs. The Responsivity principle addresses “how to” provide the most effective service that can be individualizes to suite each offender’s learning abilities and styles. There are two important aspects of this principle; the first focuses on general responsivity and the second focuses on specific responsivity. Simply put, general responsivity uses cognitive behavioural strategies because they have been shown to be the most effective correctional treatment; whereas specific responsivity focuses on individualizing this treatment to each individual’s ability, strengths, ethnicity, age, gender, and personality characteristics. The overall consensus as stated in the literature (Andrews & Bonta 2010; Andrews & Dowden 2007; and Bonta & Andrews 2007) is that programs that follow the RNR model are more successful reducing recidivism then those that do not; further supporting why the RNR model is the foundation of all CSC programming.
The Violence Prevention Program

The Violence Prevention Program (VPP) is a cognitive behavioural based intervention currently being used in the Canadian Federal correctional system. However, there are few Canadian studies specifically evaluating the effectiveness of the VPP. In New Zealand, the VPP has been used since 1987 and two studies provide an in-depth examination (Polaschek, Wilson, Townsend & Daly, 2005; Polaschek and Dixon, 2001). The authors note that the VPP is cognitive behaviourally based addressing the offender’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviours and linking them with violent offending (Polaschek and Dixon, 2001). Values and attitudes that support violence are challenged in this program. The VPP explores lifestyle issues including: crime, alcohol/substance abuse, criminal peers and attitudes towards violence. The VPP focuses on improving skills, such as anger and impulse control, problem-solving skills and conflict resolution (Polaschek, Wilson, Townsend & Daly, 2005). Both New Zealand studies found that offenders who completed the VPP had lower recidivism rates for both violent and non-violent crimes when compared with violent offenders who did not successfully complete the VPP (Polaschek and Dixon, 2001) or those who did not participate in any program aimed at reducing violence (Polaschek, Wilson, Townsend & Daly, 2005). Additionally, in both studies those individuals who completed the VPP and were eventually re-convicted, were in the community twice as long as the people in the comparison groups (Polaschek and Dixon, 2001; Polaschek, Wilson, Townsend & Daly, 2005).

Evaluating the Violence Prevention Program

Both studies, however successful, have similar weaknesses and limitations that need to be addressed and include: small sample sizes, a lack of background information on the participants, and no cultural diversity among participants. In Polaschek and Dixon’s study (2001) there was a total of 46 participants; 33 participants successfully completed the VPP were used as the target group, and the remaining 13 participants who did not finish the program were used as the comparison group. In addition to small and uneven sample sizes, the comparison group was made up of participants who did not finish the program either due to being removed from the program by the facilitator or by quitting the program on their own accord. This study did not further elaborate why these participants were removed from the program or why some chose to leave the program. This is a critical limitation of this study, because some of the reasons these participants might have been unsuccessful in the program could be due to responsivity issues such as impulsiveness, attention deficits, social problems, cultural issues, communication problems, trust issues, incomprehension of program material, psychological problems such as depression, and motivation problems; which could be confounding factors and contributed to the comparison group’s lack of success upon release. For all the reasons mentioned, the comparison group was probably at a much higher risk than the treatment group prior to the beginning of treatment. In the Polaschek, Wilson, Townsend and Daly’s study (2005) there was a total of 120 participants. The participants were split into two groups, 60 in the VPP group and 60 in the control group. The control group was made up of violent offenders who did not take any rehabilitation programs while incarcerated. A strength of this study was that the control group was selected based on a matching system based on: age, ethnicity, number of previous violent and nonviolent offences, number of incarcerations, and age at first violent conviction. However,
limitations to this study included a limited sample size and again a lack of cultural diversity among participants. Potentially confounding variables that were not controlled included individual motivation to change, willingness to follow correctional plan, family influences, religion, culture, and spiritually, which—may have influenced the success of the participants in the VPP.

The Violence Prevention Program is relatively new in Canada’s correctional system and there is currently only one study conducted on its effectiveness in Canada that is accessible to the general public. The study by Cortoni, Nunes & Latendresse (2006) evaluated the impact of the VPP on institutional misconduct and post-release recidivism. Results of this study are consistent with the two New Zealand studies in which participants who completed the VPP had significantly lower recidivism rates compared to non-treated offenders. In addition to lower recidivism rates, participants in this study who completed the VPP improved in their institutional behaviour, resulting in fewer major misconduct charges in the 6-month and 1 year period of program completion. However, the limitations of the Canadian study mimic those mentioned in the New Zealand studies.

Despite the limitations and weaknesses of the above three studies, the results still provide some preliminary support for the effectiveness of the VPP. Of note, the Violence Prevention Program consists of all the critical components identified above as important to successful violence programming. The VPP has modules aimed at identifying and challenging cognitive distortions, it addresses multiple risk areas, not just anger management, and teaches material that is individualized and relevant. The concept of curriculum integration is used within the VPP to increases participant motivation. The VPP is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques, has a skill oriented focus and is centred around the RNR model. Mutatively the VPP incorporates all the critical aspects of a successful rehabilitation program; except a lack of attention to aboriginal responsivity issues such as: aboriginal culture, spirituality, teachings and traditional components.

Critical Components in a Successful Rehabilitation Program for Aboriginal Offenders

A discussion paper written by Waldram in 1993 identifies the importance of incorporating aboriginal culture, spirituality, teachings, and traditional components into rehabilitation programs for aboriginal offenders. The rationale behind integrating aboriginal culture into a program is that aboriginal offenders have the opportunity, through the guidance of an Elder and Aboriginal Correctional Programs Officer, to learn about their individual heritage, background, and traditional language as well as participate in ceremonies, and obtain individual counselling which is believed to help the offenders gain a sense of self-respect, respect for others, and respect for their culture and community. Further it is felt that this teaches the offenders to take responsibility for themselves and their community and gain a sense of self identity. It is theorised that these components create an avenue to healing, potentially reducing the use of violence. Waldram (1993) highlights incorporating aboriginal spirituality, culture, and teachings into a rehabilitation program as an important component in successfully reintegrating aboriginal offenders and reducing violent recidivism. However, it is important to note that the paper written by Waldram is based on literature about individual experiences working with this population, not empirical evidence.
Kiyoshk (2003) also provides a reflection on how traditional spirituality, specifically ceremonies and rituals, can be incorporated into rehabilitation programs for aboriginal offenders and provides reasons as to why this is important. A Smudge Ceremony is ideally conducted at the beginning of each group session and any significant event. It is a way to purify and cleanse oneself and their environment of negative thoughts and energies and by giving an offering to the spirits. The rationale for incorporating Smudging into rehabilitation programs is that it creates a positive environment for sharing personal information and allows honest words to be spoken. Talking Circles, commonly referred to as Sharing Circles, are a ritual that gather people to talk about important issues. The Talking Circle is helpful in rehabilitation programs because it gives everyone a chance to share their thoughts and feelings on critical issues brought forward by the Elder or group leader without the fear of being interrupted or criticised. The Sweatlodge Ceremony is a form of mental, physical and spiritual purification and cleansing. Everything shared in the sweatlodge is considered sacred and is not discussed outside of the lodge. Being in the sweatlodge is a sacred time for releasing tension, shame, guilt, and other negative emotions. As well, it is a place to make commitments to positive change. Kiyoshk notes that the long term goal of incorporating these aspects into rehabilitations programs for offenders is to give them a sense of belonging and acceptance while reuniting them with their traditional roots, in the hopes that they will not separate spirituality from everyday life. Similar to the Waldram (1993) paper, Kivoshk (2004), while postulating some interesting ideas does not evaluate the effectiveness of this approach.

A study by Puchala, Paul, Kennedy & Mehl-Madrona (2010) evaluated whether incorporating a traditional healing elder would decrease the amount of domestic violence within 69 Aboriginal families that were referred to domestic violence counselling. The Elders used traditional stories and incorporated aboriginal spirituality with each individual as well as with their partners and families. The authors suggest that incorporating an Elder was effective because they were able to provide the perpetrators and victims of domestic violence with traditional stories about healthy relationships that do not include violence. The Elder was reported by the participants to have been gentle, kind, compassionate and did not judge. Sweatlodge ceremonies were used frequently with the families, as was Smudging Ceremonies and Talking Circles. The Elder’s focus was not on blaming the person committing the violence (sometimes both partners) but the blame was put onto the stories and teaching that the perpetrators used to supported their use of violence. The most important role, according to the authors, that the Elder possessed was the ability to help the participants see for themselves that change was necessary to find a better life for every member of their family as well as for themselves. A major limitation to this study is that the results were based on self-report, and as such were susceptible to recall bias and impression management. Another limitation to this study was that the authors of this study did not say how many sessions each person and their families got with the Elder nor did they say how long each session lasted, making it difficult, if not impossible to replicate the study.

A study conducted by Heckbert and Turkington in 2001 examined 68 Aboriginal ex-offenders who had lived crime-free for at least two years and had assimilated successfully back into their communities. The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that influenced and sustained change. Participants consisted of 56 men and 12 women, ages ranging between 21 and 64 with the average age being 43 years old. The participants were interviewed using a unified
questionnaire and their responses were tape recorded. The tapes were transcribed and the transcripts were used as the primary source of data for this study. The results from this study indicated that the factors that influenced change were unique, but there are a set of fundamental variables involved in lasting change. The participants indicated that cultural influences were essential in prompting change for them. These influences included the Elder (72%), being involved in Aboriginal spirituality and ceremonies within the institutions (71%), gaining a sense of cultural identity (94%) and personal values (94%). Participants indicated that some of the main cultural influences for remaining prosocial included participating in Aboriginal spirituality and ceremonies (71%), gaining a sense of personal identity (76%), and taking part in cultural activities such as sweats, sweetgrass, pipe ceremonies, and sacred circles (68%). Although the information is self-reported, the results suggest that aboriginal culture, traditions and spirituality are considered to be effective in influencing and maintaining positive change among aboriginals, and consequently worth bearing in mind in any intervention with this population.

The “In Search Of Your Warrior” Program

The “In Search Of Your Warrior” (ISOYW) program is a rehabilitation program that focuses on building a foundation of knowledge about aboriginal culture, teachings and sacred ceremonies for aboriginal participants. (Trevethan, Moore & Allegri, 2005). This program was originally developed by the Native Counselling Services of Alberta to meet the increasing need for aboriginally based rehabilitation programs for violent offenders. ISOYW is a 13 week program that is designed to help aboriginal men break their cycle of violence. The program contains 75 sessions which fall under eight modules. The modules include topics such as: anger awareness, violence awareness, family of origin awareness, self-awareness, skill development, group skill development, cultural awareness and cognitive learning. This program focuses on a holistic healing approach, which is done by isolating aspects of the Medicine Wheel including physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological, in order to recognize how violence begins and is passed from generation to generation. In order to heal it is asserted that an individual must be connected with and in touch with his unique physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological self. Aboriginal cultural teachings, taught by an Elder, are used to guide the offenders back to a peaceful way of life.

Evaluating The “In Search of Your Warrior” Program

A preliminary evaluation conducted by Trevethan, Moore & Allegn (2005) assessed the ISOYW program by examining 136 Aboriginal offenders who had taken this program and matching them to Aboriginal offenders in the system who did not participate in this program or in the VPP-HI. The results indicated that both groups received lower criminogenic needs ratings and had higher reintegration potentials, with no significant difference between offenders who completed ISOYW and offenders who did not take this program. These results indicate that both groups demonstrated changes in these variables over the course of the study. The authors note that the participants in the ISOYW program self-reported that incorporating the ceremonies and spiritual content was a crucial element for them and they enjoyed these aspects of the program. A weakness of this study is that the authors did not clarify whether the participants in the control group took any other program besides the VPP-HI, for example VPP-MI, a substance abuse
program or the family violence prevention program which all teach similar skills. Thus at present there is a lack of empirical support for this program, although self-report from participants suggests they enjoy the aboriginal aspects of the programming. The authors and this researcher believed ISOYW was not a successful program because it is short 13 week program focusing on aboriginal cultural and healing, but does not focus on the necessary skills needed to help violent offenders stop using violence.

**Gaps in the Literature**

The reviewed literature identified that the mainstream Violence Prevention Program has unique strengths which include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques and a skill based focus. However, a lack of attention to responsivity issues for aboriginal offenders and limited Canadian research are fundamental issues needing to be addressed. The literature also identified that the aboriginal In Search of Your Warrior has unique strengths which includes a holistic approach to aboriginal culture, traditions, and spiritually; but research lacks empirical evidence and adherence to supported participants in aboriginal programs.

**Summary**

The literature that was reviewed for this thesis suggests there are five critical components that should be included in a rehabilitation program to maximize success: identifying and challenging cognitive distortions, addressing multiple risk factors, individualize material that is relevant and motivating for the participants, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques and skill-based focused programs. The Violence Prevention Program has all the previously mentioned components that are related to successful rehabilitation program for violent offenders and is supported by empirical (although limited) research. Additionally, despite the lack of empirical support, there is consensus among theorists that for aboriginal offenders, the inclusion of aboriginal spiritually, culture, teachings and traditional components may be critical components for successful rehabilitation. ISOYW was a condensed program that lacked a variety of necessary skills, contributing to the program’s unsuccessful outcome. The present thesis was designed to evaluate if the combination of the skill focus of the VPP and the aboriginal spirituality components of the ISOYW program into one program might be a more effective approach for aboriginal offenders.
Chapter III: Methodology

Informed Consent Procedures

A CSC consent form was necessary to obtain written consent prior to participation in the Violence Prevention Program. This CSC consent form pertained only to the VPP and not to this thesis, and is a standard CSC document. An additional consent form was designed by the Student Researcher (Appendix A) which provided the participants with a description of the intended project, potential benefits and risk, and made it clear that they could withdraw their consent to participate at any time without penalty. The consent form allowed the student researcher permission to access participant’s institutional files to obtain demographic data and institutional behavioural data. The participants were provided the opportunity to read the form and have any questions answered to their satisfaction. If they were interested in participating in this project, they were asked to sign the consent form, indicating their consent to proceed. All six participants signed the consent form.

Participant Characteristics

Six male federal offenders were accepted into the Aboriginal Violence Prevention High Intensity Program. These six offenders ranged in age between 24 and 34 years. The selection criteria for admission into the Aboriginal VPP-HI included: two or more schedule one (violent) offences (as per CSC guidelines), must self-identify as an aboriginal, be willing to participate in aboriginal ceremonies and spirituality, have previously taken The Basic Healing Program, and be rated as maximum on the Custody Rating Scale (CRS). Refer to Appendix B to view demographic information on each participant.

Setting

This intervention took place Monday to Friday inside a classroom in a maximum security correctional facility. The classroom contained a white board, a flip chart, ten individual desks and chairs, and posters. The program officer, student researcher, and offenders would sit together in a circle, in front of the desks. In the middle of the circle there was a candle and the sacred bundle which included the four medicines: sage, tobacco, cedar, and sweet grass. Posters on the walls included: class rules, spiritual quotes, and previously taught skills. The materials needed for this program included a white board, flip chart, dry erase markers and six work books. The dry erase markers are used to write on the white board and the flip charts to enhance the offenders learning, by illustrating the VPP concepts and skills in different ways. This included pictures, written definitions, examples, lists, and diagrams, all which helped the offenders learn the concepts and skills taught during VPP. The work books included exercises that the offenders would complete, which assisted them in learning these skills. The work books also include definitions, examples of skills and concepts taught during the VPP; which could be used as a reference for the offenders when needed.

This intervention was provided by the Aboriginal Correctional Program officer, the Elder and the student researcher. The VPP-HI is a six month program, covering nine modules and has a total of 82 sessions. Data collection only focused on the first half of the program, which was the
first five modules and covered the first 43 sessions. Data collection was over a three month time frame.

Skills

The Aboriginal VPP incorporates the 52 skills taught in the mainstream VPP and the numerous spirituality concepts and aboriginal teachings taught in the aboriginal programs. There are a total of nine modules taught during the VPP and they focus on: anger and emotion management, problem solving, high risk thinking, goal setting, communication and conflict resolution, friends and associates, and self-management. There are twelve main skills taught within the modules that help the offenders control their violent behaviour. The skills designed to help the offenders leave the immediate situation and distract themselves include thought stopping, time out, and progressive muscle relaxation (PMR). The skills designed to help the offenders to think of their goals and their personal standards related to using violence: stop and think, goal setting, decisional balance, CPR (Consequence check, Personal Standards Check and Reality Check) and FOCUS (Facts, Options, Consequences, Using a plan and Stand back and Evaluate). The skills designed to help the offenders to communicate effectively and avoid conflict are the skills of active listening, asking for help, saying no effectively and expressing; feelings, needs, and wishes.

Spiritual Concepts and Teachings

The concepts and teachings of aboriginal spirituality include: the seven Grandfather teachings (wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth), good wolf/bad wolf (in each person there is good and evil, the one who wins is the one you feed the most), HABC (healing issues, acting event, behaviour and consequences), ceremonies (refer to Appendix C for a detailed description), sacred medicines (sweet grass, cedar, sage, and tobacco), smudging (the act of burning medicines to pray and purify one’s self) and elder teachings (life experiences and allegories).

Testing Procedures

On the first day of the program and the last day of the program, the inmates were asked to fill out three self-reported assessment measures as part of CSC VPP program guidelines. For the purpose of this thesis, the student researcher only used the Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) from the CSC testing battery which was administered on the first day and at the program midterm. In addition to the Aggression Questionnaire, the participants were asked to fill out the student researcher questionnaire at midterm.

Aggression Questionnaire

The participants were asked to complete the AQ before the program started and again at the midterm point. As part of the program the offenders would normally complete the AQ twice, prior to beginning and after completing the program. However, as part of the present thesis the participants were asked to complete the AQ at the midterm point of the program. The AQ is a 29
item index with four sub scales: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. The reason for choosing this measure out of the CSC battery was to evaluate if there was a change in the way the participants thought and viewed violence half way through this program. The participants completed the AQ in the classroom. They were each given the questionnaires and a pencil. The program facilitator and student researcher were there to answer questions if needed.

**Student Researcher Questionnaire**

The student researcher developed a brief five question questionnaire (please refer to Appendix C) that asked the participants to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 their perceptions of the program and whether they believed incorporating aboriginal spirituality was beneficial. The student researcher believed this was an important area to evaluate and was interested in the participant’s responses. Below the questionnaire, there were five additional questions that required each participant to provide a written answer. The results from the student researcher’s questionnaire were used as a midterm assessment only, due to time restraints. A mean of the likert scale responses was calculated. On the 1-5 scale, scores below a 3 were considered to indicate that the participant did not consider this item to be relevant to them and scores above a 3.5 indicates that this item was relevant and important to the participants. The participants’ written answers were included in the discussion section of this thesis.

**Violent Institutional Charges Review**

A file review was conducted to determine the number of violent institutional charges per participant four months before the program started compared to the number of violent institutional charges they received during the four month period of the program. The participants agreed to have their files reviewed and details were outlined in the consent form. The rationale to include this as an evaluation measure was to assess if the program had an impact on reducing institutional violent charges over a short period. The number of violent institutional charges each participant received during the four month period prior to the program starting and the number of violent institutional charges they received during the first four months of this intervention was collected. The total group mean was also calculated pre intervention and post intervention.
Chapter IV: Results

Aggression Questionnaire

The Aggression Questionnaire revealed some important findings (please refer to Appendix E to view the raw data). The total score for all the participants’ pre-program was 553 with a mean of 92.16 compared with the total score at midterm of 564 with a mean of 94. The results suggest that as a total group there was no difference on the AQ from pre-program to midterm. Interestingly, however, a closer review of the individual participants scores on the AQ revealed that two participants (participant 1 and 6) had midterm scores that were higher than their pre-program scores, increasing the group’s total score. It is important to note that these two outliers standout from the rest of the group in other ways such as: extensive criminal histories, extremely high number of institutional violent charges, time spent in segregation, and serving life sentences. Other possible reasons for this finding are elaborated upon in the discussion section. Four out of the six participants had lower scores on the AQ at the midterm phase as compared to the pre-program scores. The total pre-program score for the subgroup (excluding participant 1 and 6) was 387 with a mean of 96.75 compared with the total score for the same group at midterm of 353 with a mean of 88.25. This was a 67% decrease in the scores for the subgroup of participants and suggested a substantial change in the way the participants thought about and viewed violence according to the AQ results.

Student Researcher Questionnaire

The results from the student researcher’s questionnaire supported that the issues on the questionnaire were relevant and important to the participants perspective (refer to Appendix F to view the raw data). These questions were rated on a 1-5 scale with 1 indicating the issue was not important, and 5 indicating the issue was extremely important. Out of the five questions asked, the participants indicated that the issues described in question #2, #3 and #1 were the most important to them (in order of most importance) and that #4 and #5 were not as important in comparison but were still important to them. Questions 1 and 2 were about practicing, learning and incorporating aboriginal spirituality, culture and teachings into this program; question 3 was about learning the various skills in VPP. Questions 4 and 5 were about changing the way the participants used and viewed violence. The question that was rated the highest among participants was question 2: Practicing and learning about my aboriginal culture which had a mean score of 4.83; the question that scored the lowest was question 5: Changing the way I view violence which had a mean score of 4.25. These close ratings suggest that all the issues discussed in questionnaire were important; but incorporating aboriginal spirituality, culture and teachings plus the skills in the VPP were considered slightly more important to the participants.

Violent Institutional Charges Review

The results of the violent institutional charges review revealed that four months before the Basic Healing program (the aboriginal program these offenders took immediately before this program) four out of the six participants had at least one violent institutional charge that resulted in segregation time. Of those four, two participants had three separate violent charges each and one participant was in segregation during the entire four months that was evaluated. These
results were compared with the number of institutional charges during the four month period that this program took place (refer to Appendix G to view the raw data) which revealed that all six offenders received no institutional charges for violence during this period. The total number of institutional charges before the program was 8 compared with 0 during the period of the program. This is a 100% decrease in institutional violent charges by all participants during the period of the program implementation.

**Summary**

The results of the three measures supported that this program, at the midterm phase, was successful in decreasing some of the participant’s thinking about violence and the way they viewed violence; that incorporating aboriginal spirituality, culture, and traditions with the skills taught in the VPP was considered “extremely important” to the participants; and that participating in the program had the effect of decreasing the number of institutional violent charges during the first half of the program. The results supported the hypothesis that the combined program (VPP & incorporated aboriginal spirituality) could change the way participants generally regard violence and potentially reduce their use of violence in day-to-day situations by the midterm date.
Chapter V: Discussion

The results from this study support the original hypotheses. The data obtained from the Aggression Questionnaire supported the hypothesis that the offenders involved in the combined program would change the way they generally regard violence. The data obtained from the Violent Institutional Charge Review supported the hypothesis that the offenders would reduce their use of violence in day-to-day situations. In addition to the original hypotheses, the data obtained from the student researcher’s questionnaire supported the hypothesis (previous studies mentioned in the literature review) that incorporating aboriginal spirituality, culture and traditions were as important to participants as incorporating mainstream skills into a rehabilitation program.

Weaknesses and Limitation

The results gathered from this study suggest that this program has been successful, despite a few weaknesses and limitations. As noted previously two participants scored higher on the AQ at the midterm than they did pre-program. Potential explanations include: 1) the program material made them realize they have stronger positive feelings about violence than they previously believed; or 2) the participants were not honest when taking the pre-program AQ, while the midterm testing more accurately reflected their true beliefs. Another weakness to this study is that the institutional violence charges could have decreased because of variables other than the influence of this program such as: family influences, age, changes to security or social pressures within the institution, and individual circumstances. For example this researcher overheard one participant mention that if he were to get another institutional charge for violence he would be sent out of province to another maximum security prison. One important limitation of this study is that the Violence Prevention Program- High Intensity normally takes six months to complete. This student researcher was only there for four months and therefore was not able to collect post-program data or look at long term outcomes. Another important limitation of this study was that the material taught in the mainstream VPP was intensive and time consuming; leaving very little time for the facilitator to incorporate a wide variety of aboriginal teachings, ceremonies and cultural aspects into this program. It is important to note that the Elder was involved in the combined program, but was only available once a week to provide teachings about spirituality and how it relates to living a non-violent lifestyle free from drugs, alcohol and crime. Other limitations of this study potentially include the level of client participation and, as noted above, the honesty of the participants in completing the self-report measures, and the small sample size used. Limitations to the student researcher’s questionnaire included a limited number of questions, participant honesty in feedback, and a lack of validity data on the measure. Critically examining these findings, it is unclear whether participants actually changed the way they think about violence. Conclusions can be drawn that they did change based on self-report, but as mentioned previously, self-reported measures are not an accurate portrayal. It is however, a positive step in the right direction. Finally, there is no way of knowing whether the combined program, was more effective than the regular VPP would have been in achieving the same results.
**Strengths**

A strength of the current study was that the material presented in the program was based on empirical literature. The skills taught in the VPP are based on cognitive behavioural techniques, which have been shown to effectively change behaviours within a correctional context, and on what has been suggested as appropriate in the aboriginal culture, teachings and spirituality literature. This study adds empirical quantitative and qualitative data that supports a program that involves the inclusion of aboriginal based theoretical components (spirituality, culture, teaching and ceremonies) in a skills based rehabilitation program for violent offenders. This study is the first evaluation of a mainstream violence prevention program addressing aboriginal responsivity issues; incorporating the two separate components into one program. Another strength is that given this is a preliminary study, it allows opportunities for improvements and revisions for future implementation based on findings. The greatest strength of this study was the ability to gather qualitative data from the participants in the form of written feedback. This allowed the student researcher insight into the participants’ responses and perceptions of this program and was useful for the program facilitator who was completing the remainder of the program. Consistent with the previous studies (Heckbert & Turkington, 2001; Kiyoshk, 2003; Puchala, Paul, Kennedy & Mehl-Madrona, 2010; Trevethan, Moore & Allegn, 2005; and Waldram, 1993) which found that participants felt that providing written feedback was important to them.

**Participant Feedback**

When asked how participants felt about incorporating aboriginal spirituality into the program they responded positively. Some responses included: “I can relate to it better and feel like it is modeled for me”, “I feel more comfortable so it’s easier for me to open up and express my thoughts and feelings”, “it brings a whole new aspect to the program that makes it easier to remember because it relates to my everyday way of life”, and “it makes it easier for me to care about it more cause it teaches me more than just a mainstream VPP would.” When asked if practicing and learning about their aboriginal culture and traditions has helped them in this program, responses included “it has helped me see the person I want to be from a spiritual point of view”, “it has given me a better understanding of aboriginal culture, and now I know that unfulfilled needed (from childhood) resulted in this obvious self-destructive behaviour”, and “it makes me more interested in the program because while learning skills to avoid violence I am also practicing and learning about the native culture and spirituality”. When asked which skills taught in the VPP so far, have been the most effective, responses ranged from: stop and think, self-monitoring, time out, making more accurate assumptions, Eagle eye, FOCUS, WHEEL, PMR, to calming self-talk and mental imagery. It is important to note that all the skills mentioned, with the exception of the Eagle eye and WHEEL check, are mainstream skills not aboriginal ones. This could be due to time restraints, as the material taught in VPP was time consuming, the facilitator focused more on the mainstream skills while incorporating aboriginal spirituality, teachings and culture into the program; it left very little time to incorporate aboriginal based skills. When asked if this program changed the way they view violence responses ranged from “yes, it’s brought to my attention that violence is not the only way you can solve problems there are other options and solutions to every problem” to “I will always view violence the same, the world is a violent place and shit does happen, I’m just going to try and make a better life for myself.” When asked if this program changed the way they used
violence, responses varied from “yes, it helped me to see the whole picture instead of just having a bias opinion about everything” “yes I now do not allow my thinking, feelings or emotions to dictate my decision making when it comes to using violence”, to “my view on violence has not changed but when violence is acceptable and necessary has certainly changed”, and “I know when I get out of prison things will take a complete 360° but in prison it’s still hard to completely avoid violence because any given day anything can happen”. The participant responses validated and supported the incorporation of aboriginal spirituality into the mainstream program as an important and therefore potentially effective responsivity tool. The results obtained from the participant feedback and questionnaire can be generalized to support the findings that participants are less likely to drop out of a program that addresses their aboriginal culture, traditions and spirituality (Heckbert & Turkington, 2001; Kiyoshk, 2003; Puchala, Paul, Kennedy & Mehl-Madrona, 2010; Trevethan, Moore & Allegn, 2005; and Waldram, 1993). The participants in this study identified that the inclusion of the cultural aspects were “extremely important to them”, that it was “more enjoyable” for them, indicating that they are more likely to complete the entire combined program. Drop-out rates are a huge issue that need to be addressed within CSC, however the combination of mainstream programs with aboriginal components could help to solve the issue of drop-out rates at it pertains to aboriginal offenders.

**Multilevel Challenges**

There are numerous obstacles and challenges that occur when working in the field of corrections, more specifically in a rehabilitation program for violent offenders in a maximum security institution. These challenges occur at a variety of different levels and include the client level, program level, organizational level and societal level.

**Client Level**

It can be challenging to work with this population, especially when the majority of these clients are so entrenched in the criminal lifestyle that violence seems acceptable and justified to them. Another challenge with this population is that the clients are not intrinsically motivated to change. Some of clients in this population emphasize that they do not wish to change their lifestyles and verbally express that they are only doing a rehabilitation program because it is on their correctional plan. Another challenge with this type of population is the reliability and honesty of their work and evaluations. There are many reasons why clients in this population lie, the most common being impression management. At the end of a program a final report is conducted on each offender by their program facilitator. These reports address individual participation, progress, and comprehension of program material by using examples of the verbal answers given in class discussions and individual written answers, as evaluations of progress and understanding by each offender. These final program reports stay on the offender’s file and will be read by their parole officer and will be brought to the attention of the parole board, explaining why clients may be dishonest.

**Program Level**

It can be challenging to teach a rehabilitation program in this population, because as a facilitator your job entails so much more than just teaching a program. A facilitator must be able to multi task, be receptive to different learning styles and abilities, and incorporate the program
material while individualizing and personalizing the concepts for each client. A program facilitator constantly has to improvise and expect the unexpected.

**Organizational Level**

Within the correctional service, especially at a maximum security institution, it is common that the majority of clients have more than one issue needing to be addressed. As taught in school, a multi-disciplinary team is required to work together to help the clients overcome these challenges. This is a big problem in the correctional service. It is the ideal, but in reality a lack of communication occurs between different groups of professionals working with the same individual in the same institution.

**Societal Level:**

The attitudes, beliefs, and biases that the majority of society holds against this population can be discouraging. The beliefs that “nothing works for these guys” and “rehabilitation programs are just a waste of tax payers’ money” negatively impacts everyone working in corrections and the inmates themselves. The staff working in corrections can be negatively affected because society views their jobs as worthless and a waste of time and resources. The inmates are negatively affected because after repeatedly hearing this, they may start to believe it, and could resort back to their criminal lifestyle when released (self-fulfilling prophecy).

**Summary and Implications**

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate if the offenders involved in the combined program (i.e., mainstream VPP with integrated aboriginal spirituality) change the way they generally regard violence and reduced their use of violence in day-to-day situations by the midterm date. The results supported the hypotheses that the combined program changed the way participants generally regarded violence and reduced their use of violence in day-to-day situations during the period of the program.

This has been beneficial to both Correctional Services Canada and the Behavioural Psychology field because it is a first examination of some potential effects of the combined mainstream and the aboriginal program. This study will provide CSC with some preliminary information on the effectiveness of this new intervention at the midterm phase, potentially providing an indication of the future success this program will have once completed. The qualitative data provides some direction to the facilitator in terms of areas the participants find important and may offer a way to help increase motivation and rapport during the remainder of the program and future programs.

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

Recommendations for future studies include: comparing the pre-program results with post program results. This program only focused on the midterm results, evaluation is needed to compare results with the same group after the program is complete. A long term follow up and comparison study is recommended in the future to determine if this combined program is better than other programs at reducing recidivism rates for violent aboriginal offenders specifically.
References


APPENDIX A: Consent Form (2012/10/16)

CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: Incorporating Aboriginal Spirituality into a Mainstream Violence Rehabilitation Program at a Maximum Security Institution.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: ELISHA CONWAY

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Yolanda Fernandez

NAME OF INSTITUTION: ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE

INVITATION
I am a student in my 4th year in the Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College and I am currently on placement at Millhaven Correctional Institution. As a part of this placement, I am completing a special project called an applied thesis and am asking for your assistance to complete this project. The information in this form is intended to help you understand my project so that you can decide whether or not you want to participate. Please read the information below carefully and ask all the questions you might have before deciding whether or not to participate.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?
The purpose of this study is to collect some preliminary information on the effectiveness of the combination of the skills taught in the mainstream Violence Prevention Program (VPP) with the spirituality concepts taught in the aboriginal program In Search of Your Warrior (ISOYW) and basic healing. At the beginning and midterm point, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire to see if the way you view violence has changed. Additionally, I will be looking at your institutional file information regarding institutional charges for violence to see if there is a change in the amount of violence used in day to day situations by participants. Finally I will ask you to complete a questionnaire asking you some questions about your perceptions of the program.

WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO DO IF YOU TAKE PART?
As a participant in the VPP-H1 you will participate in class discussions, assignments, the self-management plan and aboriginal cultural activities (smudging, ceremonies and sweat-lodges, etc). At the beginning of the program you will be asked to complete three questionnaires. For this project you will be completing one of these questionnaires again at the midterm point. This questionnaire will take 5 minutes to complete and happens two times: before the program begins and again at the midterm point. Along with this questionnaire you will also be asked to answer five questions using a 1 to 5 scale (1= not important, 5= very important) that relate to your views on violence and if incorporating your aboriginal culture and spirituality was helpful in this program. This portion of the questionnaire will be asked once at the midterm point and takes 5 minutes to complete. On the next section of this questionnaire you will be asked to write down your thoughts about this program so far and this will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete and happens once at the midterm point. You will also need to give me permission to access your
in institutional file for information on institutional charges in the four months before the program and during the first four months of the program.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO ME OF TAKING PART?
The potential benefits of you participating in this is that you have the opportunity to provide some feedback to CSC on this new program and to provide some preliminary information on its effectiveness. By gathering information halfway through this program you will help identify if there are areas that need to be changed while there is still time for the facilitator to make changes.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO OTHERS?
The potential benefits to others include future participants in the program. Any changes made as a result of the findings of this study could benefit participants who take this program in the future.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES OR RISKS OF TAKING PART?
This program focuses on personal issues and healing issues which may be difficult for some people. The potential disadvantages and risks of this research study are minimal but may include strong reactions including: anger, sadness, guilt and shame. Completing the questionnaire about violence may remind you of distressing things.

WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG?
Everybody is different and if you have any strong reactions to the program material or questionnaire, you may talk to Meghan the facilitator, Albert the elder or myself Elisha the student researcher.

WILL MY INFORMATION YOU COLLECT FROM ME IN THIS PROJECT BE KEPT PRIVATE?
I will keep any information that identifies you strictly confidential unless required by law. You will be assigned a number to enter on the questionnaire sheet. The consent forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and kept at St. Lawrence College for 10 years. Any information on the computer will be password protected. You will not be identified by name in any reports, publications, or presentations resulting from this project.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?
Taking part is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study to be enrolled in and participate in the Aboriginal VPP. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this research project. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without incurring any penalty or negative effects continuing in the Violence Prevention Program.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.
This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at St. Lawrence College. The project has developed under the supervision of Dr. Yolanda Fernandez my supervisor from St. Lawrence College. I really appreciate your cooperation. If you have any additional questions or concerns, feel free to ask to talk with me during class. If you have any further questions about
this research project or any ethical concerns that I am unable to address, please come see me during class and I can provide you with contact information for Yolanda and the Research Ethics Board.

CONSENT
If you agree to participate in the project, please complete the following form and return it to me as soon as possible. A copy of this signed document will be given to you for your own records. An additional copy of your consent will be retained with the Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for 10 years as mandated by St. Lawrence College. A Correctional Services of Canada consent form was obtained prior to beginning the Violence Prevention Program. This CSC consent form pertains only to the VPP and not to this research project.

CONSENT
By signing this form, I agree that:

- The research project has been explained to me.
- All my questions were answered.
- Possible harm and discomforts and possible benefits (if any) of this project have been explained to me.
- I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.
- I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the research project.
- I have been told that my personal information will be kept confidential.
- I understand that the results of this project may be published or presented in a professional forum.
- I understand that no information that would identify me will be released or printed without asking me first.
- I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

I hereby consent to take part.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Signature of Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Printed Name</th>
<th>Signature of Student</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offender # and Pseudonym</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Marital Status and Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender #1: Billy Jack</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Common Law 2 Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender #2: Ray Pound</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Single 3 Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender #3: Carl Pillkington</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender #4: PonyBoy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender #5: Smashimus Maximus</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender #6: Eric Cartman</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Common Law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C: Aboriginal Ceremonies

Kiyoshk (2003) provides a reflection on how traditional spirituality, specifically ceremonies and rituals, can be incorporated into rehabilitation programs for aboriginal offenders.

A **Smudge Ceremony** is ideally conducted at the beginning of each group session and any significant event.

- It is a way to purify and cleanse oneself and their environment of negative thoughts and energies and by giving an offering to the spirits.
- The offering is done by burning any one of the four sacred medicines: sage, tobacco, cedar or sweatgrass in a container such as a seashell or hollow rock.
- Everyone stands in a circle and the Elder or group leader fans the flaming herb with an eagle feather.
- Moving from person to person, each participant uses their hands to waft the smoke onto themselves. As this is being done the group leader or Elder holds the eagle feather over the person’s head while a silent prayer is said.
- The smoke symbolizes that prayers are being sent to the Creator.
- For the purpose of incorporating Smudging into rehabilitation programs, the rationale is it creates a positive environment for sharing personal information and allows honest words to be spoken.

**Talking Circles**, commonly referred to as Sharing Circles, are a ritual that gathers people to talk about important issues.

- The leader of the Talking Circle, preferably an Elder, is a person generally held in high regard and respect by those in attendance.
- A spiritual object, commonly an eagle feather, is held by whoever is speaking. This means that whoever is speaking has everyone’s undivided attention and can speak without being interrupted.
- When the speaker is finished, words of thanks (Miigwetch) are given and then the sacred object is passed to the person on the left who will then share. This is continued until everyone in the circle had an opportunity to speak.
- The Talking Circle is helpful in rehabilitation programs, because it gives everyone a chance to share their thoughts and feelings on critical issues brought forward by the Elder or group leader and allows participants a chance to speak openly without the fear of being interrupted or criticised.

The **Sweatlodge Ceremony** is a form of mental, physical and spiritual purification and cleansing.

- The lodge is a dome-like shape.
- The number and type of wood used varies between different tribes.
- The frame is usually covered by animal hides, but in prisons blankets and tarps are generally used.
The lodge is completely dark, as to allow the spirits to come when prayers and offerings are made.

A fire is built close to the lodge, and in this sacred fire the rocks, called Grandfathers, are heated until they are red hot.

The number of rocks that are used varies.

Participants usually smudge and offer one of the four medicines into the fire before entering the lodge.

Once the rocks are heated, they are then placed into the middle of the lodge.

The participants sit in a circle around the heated rocks while prayers are offered verbally and through songs.

Herbs are placed upon the rocks and water is splashed onto them causing steam to fill the lodge and intense heat throughout.

This ceremony consists generally of four rounds. Each round is a time for prayer, chanting and singing and each round is dedicated to a specific purpose.

As each round ends, the flap to the door is opened to allow fresh air.

Everything shared in the sweatlodge is considered sacred and is not discussed outside of the lodge.

Being in the sweatlodge is a sacred time for releasing tension, shame, guilt, and other negative emotions; as well it is a place to make commitments to positive change.

Kiyoshk (2003) notes that the long term goal of incorporating these aspects into rehabilitations programs for offenders is to give them a sense of belonging and acceptance while reuniting them with their traditional roots, in the hopes that they will not separate spirituality from everyday life.
APPENDIX D: Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992)

Please rate each of the following items in terms of how characteristic they are of you. Use the following scale for answering these items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely uncharacteristic of me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely characteristic of me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Once in a while I can't control the urge to strike another person.
2) Given enough provocation, I may hit another person.
3) If somebody hits me, I hit back.
4) I get into fights a little more than the average person.
5) If I have to resort to violence to protect my rights, I will.
6) There are people who pushed me so far that we came to blows.
7) I can think of no good reason for ever hitting a person.
8) I have threatened people I know.
9) I have become so mad that I have broken things.
10) I tell my friends openly when I disagree with them.
11) I often find myself disagreeing with people.
12) When people annoy me, I may tell them what I think of them.
13) I can't help getting into arguments when people disagree with me.
14) My friends say that I'm somewhat argumentative.
15) I flare up quickly but get over it quickly.
16) When frustrated, I let my irritation show.
17) I sometimes feel like a powder keg ready to explode.
18) I am an even-tempered person.
19) Some of my friends think I'm a hothead.
20) Sometimes I fly off the handle for no good reason.
21) I have trouble controlling my temper.
22) I am sometimes eaten up with jealousy.
23) At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life.
24) Other people always seem to get the breaks.
25) I wonder why sometimes I feel so bitter about things.
26) I know that "friends" talk about me behind my back.
27) I am suspicious of overly friendly strangers.
28) I sometimes feel that people are laughing at me behind me back.
29) When people are especially nice, I wonder what they want.
APPENDIX: E: Student Researcher Questionnaire

Please rate the following on a 1 to 5 scale: 1 = not important at all, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = doesn’t matter, 4 = very important, 5 = extremely important

1) Incorporating Aboriginal spirituality and teachings into this program is:

   1  2  3  4  5
Not important  Somewhat important  Doesn’t matter  Important  Extremely important

2) Practicing and learning about my aboriginal culture is:

   1  2  3  4  5
Not important  Somewhat important  Doesn’t matter  Important  Extremely important

3) Learning various skills in VPP to stop using violence is:

   1  2  3  4  5
Not important  Somewhat important  Doesn’t matter  Important  Extremely important

4) Changing the way I use violence in day to day situations is:

   1  2  3  4  5
Not important  Somewhat important  Doesn’t matter  Important  Extremely important

5) Changing the way I view violence and use violence is:

   1  2  3  4  5
Not important  Somewhat important  Doesn’t matter  Important  Extremely important
1) By incorporating Aboriginal spirituality and teachings into this program I feel ------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2) Do you think that practicing and learning about your aboriginal culture and traditions has helped you in this program? Why or why not? -------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

3) Which skill(s) taught in the VPP so far, has been most effective for you ----------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

4) Has this program changed the way you view violence? Why or why not?----------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

5) Has this program changed the way you use violence in day to day situations? Why or why not?------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
### Appendix F: Aggression Questionnaire Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender 1: Billy Jack</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.756604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender 2: Ray Pound</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.148492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender 3: Carl Pillkington</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.127279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender 4: Ponyboy</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.148492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender 5: Smashimus Maximus</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.417193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender 6: Eric Cartman</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.346482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>92.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Group Total (Excluding offenders 1 &amp; 6)</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>96.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>88.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Student Researcher Questionnaire Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender #</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Question 4</th>
<th>Question 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offender 1: Billy Jack</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 2: Ray Pound</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 3: Carl Pillkington</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 4: Ponyboy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 5: Smashimus Maximus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 6: Eric Cartman</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Total Score ((\text{out of a possible 30}))</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question #1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question #2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question #3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question #4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question #5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix H: Violent Institutional Charges Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender #</th>
<th># Of violent institutional charges four months before BH program started <em>(That resulted in Segregation time)</em> (03-06)</th>
<th># Of violent institutional charges during four months of the VPP program <em>(That resulted in Segregation time)</em> (09-12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offender 1: Billy Jack</td>
<td>1 <em>(Was in Seg. from 01 to 06)</em></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 2: Ray Pound</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 3: Carl Pillkington</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 4: Ponyboy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 5: Smashimus Maximus</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender 6: Eric Cartman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>