BRINGING CULTURE INSIDE: ENHANCING ABORIGINAL CULTURAL IDENTITY IN A YOUTH JUSTICE FACILITY: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INITIATIVE

PREPARED FOR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bringing Culture Inside (BCI) initiative at the NSYF represented a different thrust for the programming and Aboriginal world view that had been available to the incarcerated youth at the facility. The NSYF had pioneered programs in the educational field (e.g., the 24/7 program, an off-site project that provided schooling in a singular experiential fashion and included at-risk youths in the community as well as those incarcerated at the NSYF), Afrocentric initiatives especially targeting African Nova Scotian youths at the NSYF (e.g., cultural programs such as the Rites of Passage, and iMOVe focused on cognitive behavioral change). It sponsored an annual Aboriginal Day (in collaboration with MLSN) as well as monthly sweats conducted by Aboriginal elders. Youths of Aboriginal heritage could participate in 24/7 and iMOVe though the former required good standing (i.e., few serious write-ups) and the latter in its earlier years did have an Afrocentric approach. As well, of course, all NSYF youths participated in the required conventional NSYF programs such as CALM (i.e., reducing violent response), Substance Abuse and on-site schooling. BCI specifically targeted youths of Aboriginal heritage and provided them a voluntary program featuring Aboriginal perspectives, Aboriginal craft activities and mentoring one full day a week beginning in the summer of 2013 and ending in May 2015.

This report is an assessment of the BCI initiative focusing upon the central goal of the project, its 5 explicit chief objectives and the associated processes and outputs. In addition, the report discusses other processes and impacts that represent salient aspects of the evolution of the BCI project and advances suggestions and recommendations for future initiatives related to the incarceration and subsequent reintegration of Aboriginal youths in Nova Scotia. The evaluation was a formative evaluation with the researcher meeting frequently with the BCI team members in one-on-one sessions and participating in the general advisory committee meetings (including representation from MLSN, BCI, Public Safety N.S. and the NSYF) where project issues and options were discussed and program strategies developed. Fundamental to the assessment, there were informal and

formal interview sessions carried out at the NSYF and in the community. The evaluation team engaged in over 50 visits to the facility, observing the BCI group sessions and interviewing the key players. The evaluator conducted all one-on-one interviews with NSYF management and staff while the evaluation assistants interviewed the participating youths. All formal interviews with the different types of participants followed prepared interview guides; these research instruments and the BCI operational logic model are appended to this report. Interviews were also completed with service providers and youths involved in the BCI's community outreach and the research instruments utilized are also appended.

The BCI's objectives were implemented at little cost to the NSYF, did not result in extra work for the YWs, and did not apparently conflict with their established formal responsibilities. There were no significant hardships for youths as a result of the BCI initiative, no increased vulnerability among the youths, and no significant interference with or diminution of any of the on-going NSYF programs and services.

Despite the challenges of the formally authoritarian prison context, the many issues posed by the youths incarcerated for typically serious offences or otherwise "out-of-control" behaviour as determined by the CJS, and the turnover due to either short sentences or remand status, the assessments below of findings anticipated in the initiative's logic model, processing and outcomes charts, indicate that the initiative largely achieved what it set out to do and in the manner prescribed. There was overall much positive acceptance of and participation in the BCI program by the eligible youths, coupled with resource support and relative operational autonomy within the NSYF. There was clear evidence for the hypothesized incremental change and other benefits attested to by both youths and youth workers. And some evidence was obtained for a modest synergetic effect through linkages with other programs, especially the educational program and the chaplaincy.

The major area of direct benefits for the youths appeared to be, by consensus among them, in their cultural learning, identity and self-esteem, and cognitive capacity.

Changes in youth behaviour were more modest in most instances, basically reflected in fewer write-ups and informal sanctions for minor offences, and more earned privileges in everyday activities. The BCI initiative's impact on underlying explosive predispositions such as impulsivity and aggression was more difficult to assess but there was evidence for that impact among several of the participants. Whether in implementation or in impact, the BCI initiative continued to evolve in a positive, anticipated fashion and has been a good beginning for a long-run vision of an enhanced Aboriginal presence in the youth facility.

This assessment begins with an introduction to the BCI project and places it in several key contexts, namely the recent developments in Aboriginal justice, the patterns in youth correctional policies and incarceration trends, the evolution of policies and incarceration demographics at the NSYF, and a description of the youth population at the facility. Substantive sections follow dealing with project implementation, the views and experiences of the participating BCI youths, the perspectives of the BCI team, the views of NSYF staff and other service providers and the community dimension of the BCI initiatives; each section concludes with a short summary. As well there is a detailed analysis of the BCI project in terms of its achievements in relation to the project's objectives and logic model and its processes and outcomes matrices.

Many suggestions and recommendations have been advanced throughout this long assessment. Clearly the program should be extended at the NSYF with more collaboration and information exchange between the BCI team and NSYF staff (management, youth workers and other service providers at the facility). More attention should be also directed to transitional issues and the community dimension of BCI's reintegration thrust for high-risk youths. Within the context of a successful BCI initiative that has generated positive change and can be built upon in the future, several major recommendations / suggestions are offered here for consideration:

1. A BCI-type initiative offered by MLSN should become a regular part of the NSYF programming as is the case with the Rites of Passage program available

to African Nova Scotian youths and provided on contract by the HCJS. Due to the BCI efforts, the diverse social backgrounds of the Aboriginal youth at the NSYF and the comparatively large numbers of youths eligible for a BCI-type program are now appreciated by all parties.

2. The BCI project has clearly established that sustaining and building upon the positive impact of the program at the NSYF and its potential for cognitive behavioural transformation requires resources and strategies directed also at transitional concerns. These latter include collaborating with NSYF staff in release planning and, after release, with community service providers and circles of support. Such a project has been in operation for several years for adult Aboriginal prison inmates through MLSN's long-established Bridges program contracted by the federal penal institutions in the region. Research has clearly affirmed the necessity of this thrust; as one researcher observed, "once released the prisoner often experiences difficulties in sustaining the plans and intentions when in custody. There is sometimes a need to provide some community support and involvement through a formal circle of support and accountability" (Newell, 2002). This approach is especially well-recognized for the high-risk youths currently incarcerated at the NSYF and is congruent with recent new directions adopted by Nova Scotia Community Corrections.

3. Shortfalls with respect to orientation and presentations and, more generally, information exchange between the BCI team and NSYF staff limited the BCI's working with the NSYF staff who were most involved with the youths whether at the cottage level or in special services (e.g., education, IWK). While there was a good collaborative relationship "at the top", neither the NSYF management nor the BCI team leaders provided significant orientation about the BCI objectives to these key front-line role players and consequently opportunities were missed to impact on the youths' situation (e.g., YWs reportedly would have contributed more if they knew more about the BCI

objectives and also perhaps consulted with BCI staff on issues of release planning). The benefits to the NSYF staff and service providers of greater information exchange could be significant in so far as BCI team members may have the confidence of the youths and able to provide helpful ideas for their release and reintegration. Even "at the top" there were emergent policies and arrangements concerning the implementation of the BCI program that could have benefited from more initial discussion, such as the role of elder and information exchange about the content of BCI sessions. Perhaps, for future use, a document could now be prepared outlining in some depth, the BCI program advanced at the facility, its objectives and implementation strategies, as has been done in the Rites of Passage program delivered frequently at the NSYF by the HCJS (i.e., Afrocentric Rites of Passage Program, HCJS, 2010).

4. There were two dominant base milieus outside the facility for the youths participating in the BCI project at the NSYF, namely metropolitan Halifax (HRM) and the FN communities. Depending upon which of these the youths were linked with, the effective transitional strategies would vary much. In the case of the now-ended BCI initiative, most participating youths were from HRM and, as noted, they had had scant previous involvement in Aboriginal social networks and cultural heritage and no formal membership in bands or in Native Council. Creating opportunities for them to build on their awakened Aboriginal cultural heritage and having urban community circles of support to assist with crucial issues of education, housing and employment will require much mobilization and collaboration, by a BCI team presumably managed by MLSN, with the service providers at the MNFC and with the urban programs managed by Native Council as well as with other non-Aboriginal services. The modified Tapwe program developed by MLSN may be a valuable approach for further orienting both the Aboriginal service providers and the youths.

5. The other smaller group of youths participating in BCI consisted of band members, usually with status and, while quite mobile, basically living on reserve. Here the problems for reintegration are different. Community interviews indicated that high-risk youths were usually not much involved in community activities and may be alienated from service providers and elders and vice versa. More outreach and bridge-building (i.e., appreciation of one another circumstances and actions) would appear to be required, not necessarily more youth activities and programs. This in turn suggests that the BCI / MLSN strategy of emphasizing the Tapwe model – which can generate such mutual understanding – could be effective in working with pertinent community service providers and subsequently engaging them in the implementation of that approach with the selected youths.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AANDC Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
AD Adult Diversion
ADHD Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AM Alternative Measures (Youth Diversion)
ANS African Nova Scotian
APC Atlantic Provinces Chiefs
APTN Aboriginal Peoples Television Network
ARJ Adult Restorative Justice
AVRJ Annapolis Valley restorative Justice
BCI Bringing Culture Inside
CALM Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it
CBRM Cape Breton Regional Municipality
CC Criminal Code (offence)
CCRA Corrections and Conditional Release Act 1992 (amended)
CCRSO Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview
CJF Community Justice Forum (RCMP)
CJS Criminal Justice System
CRCVC Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (also NRCVC)
CSC Correctional Services of Canada
DOF Department of Fisheries Canada
EJS Extra-Judicial Sanctions
FGC Family Group Conferencing
FN First Nation
GSS General Social Survey (conducted by Statistics Canada every 5 years)
HCJS Halifax Community Justice Society
HRM Halifax Regional Municipality
IARJPP Integrated Adult Restorative Justice Pilot Project
ICJS Island Community Justice Society

IIRP International Institute for Restorative Practices

IRS Indian Residential School

IWK Isaac Waldon Killam Health Program

JEIN Justice Enterprise Information Network

JHS John Howard Society

MLSN Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network (Nova Scotia)

MNFC Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre

NS Nova Scotia

NSRJ Nova Scotia Restorative Justice

NSVS Nova Scotia Victim Services

NPB National Parole Board (Canada)

NSYF Nova Scotia Youth Facility

OCI Office of the Correctional Investigator

PMR Performance Monitoring Report

PO Probation Officer

PPS Public Prosecution Service (Nova Scotia)

PSE Post-Secondary Education

PSR Pre-sentence Report

RCAP Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

RCMP Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RJ Restorative Justice

RP Restorative Practice(s)

RPP Reintegration Plan Profile

RLP Reintegration Leave Program

RRP Reintegration Release Plan

SAP Strategic Action Plan

SC Sentencing Circle

SrecC Sentencing recommendation Circle

SCC Supreme Court of Canada

TAPWE Youth Warrior Program

VIS Victim Impact Statement

VOM Victim Offender Mediation

VRJ Valley Restorative Justice Program (Kentville)

VS Victim Services

YCJA Youth Criminal Justice Act

YLS/CMI Youth Level of Service / Case Management Inventory

YOA Young Offender Act

YP Youth Incarcerated at the NSYF

YW Youth Worker (employee of the NSYF)

24/7 Special NSYF offsite experiential educational program

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"We need exposure to our identity. We need to learn our roots and culture, our Aboriginal ways. Knowing what I am I don't feel as lost as before … They (staff at NSYF) have given support. They made room available for BCI sessions and seemed to have more respect for Aboriginal youths back in the unit" (Young Inmate, 17, Aboriginal linkage but No Status and resident of metropolitan Halifax all his life)

THE "BRINGING CULTURE INSIDE" INITIATIVE AT THE NSYF

Introduction: The Opportunity and Challenge

The Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network (MLSN) has been in existence for roughly 15 years with roots in justice-related initiatives in Nova Scotia going back a further ten years. It was established essentially in keeping with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall Jr. Prosecution (Hickman, 1989). MLSN has experienced considerable growth as an organization engaged in a wide variety of justice programming for Mi'kmaw people and indeed for all Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. It has well-recognized, active and effective services especially – but not only – reflected in its court worker program, its reintegration initiatives, its Gladue pre-sentencing reports and, perhaps most publicly recognized, its restorative justice (RJ) programming. This latter thrust serves both youth and adult Aboriginal offenders referred to it by officials at all levels of the criminal justice system (CJS). MLSN provides a variety of restorative programming including customary law circles, healing circles and sentencing circles. In carrying out its services MLSN has established strong collaborative networks with Nova Scotia court administration, public prosecution service (PPS), legal aid (NSLA) and especially the province-wide Nova Scotia Restorative Justice program (NSRJ). MLSN has become a major partner with other Mi'kmaw organizations as well as provincial and federal officials in the NS Tripartite Forum on Justice Matters, a body which meets regularly to discuss Aboriginal justice issues and chart new directions and initiatives and which was the central recommendation of the Marshall Inquiry to ensure that its recommendations would not just "stay on the shelf" but that a new vital justice partnership would be set in motion. It has and MLSN has evolved with it, becoming

recognized throughout Canada for its multiple programs and initiatives and serving all the NS First Nations as well as urban and non-Mi'kmaq Aboriginals.

There are several areas where MLSN has appreciated a need for its greater activity to assist Aboriginal people. These include strengthening its collaboration and networking with the mainstream CJS in specific areas such as jails and prisons, providing services to incarcerated youths and adults in the provincial facilities similar to its "Building A Bridge" program aimed at the reintegration of Aboriginal inmates in the regional federal prisons. A second, related thrust for MLSN has been to work with Mi'kmaw helping organizations at the community level since there has been increasing concern that a widening gap has been developing between local leaders / elders and at-risks youths where the latter may be defined as "bad seeds" and act accordingly, not participating in positive community life and thereby making the reintegration of those coming into contact with the CJS much more difficult. The December 2015 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has emphasized similar issues in describing "a growing crisis for indigenous youths" (CBC On-line December 14, 2015). In the case of incarcerated youths in Nova Scotia there has been extant a consistent long-term pattern of over-representation in the facility and, as was common among all incarcerated youths, a very high level of recidivism and re-incarceration. Accordingly, MLSN welcomed the opportunity made available by special federal multi-year funding to enhance its partnerships at the institutional and community levels and develop its capacity to deliver cultural programming and cognitive skill curricula appropriate to and relevant for at-risks Aboriginal youth in both milieus.

The "Bringing Culture Inside" initiative launched by MLSN focused on the sole facility for incarcerated youth in Nova Scotia namely the NSYF located at Waterville in the Annapolis Valley. At the NSYF, established in 1988, there was an on-going but limited exposure to Aboriginal culture, basically an annual Aboriginal Day and elders conducting sweats once a month (separately for boys and girls) where feasible. The BCI project aimed, primarily but not exclusively, at an enhancement of the "Aboriginal presence" at the NSYF and the development of a legacy resource there providing cultural

support programming for Aboriginal youth; in other words, strengthened connections to Aboriginal perspectives and collaborative networks and enhanced cultural competencies. This core goal was seen to have five objectives, namely

1. Developing the partnership with the NSYF for the creation and promotion of unique, culturally-specific learning opportunities addressing the needs of Aboriginal youth within the NSYF. The main ways this objective was to be accomplished were through collaboration of all partners in the creation and delivery of the project, negotiating procedures for admitting youths into the project, engagement of the youth in feedback and evaluation of the project, developing a best practices model that could be used within other similar institutions, increased cultural competency for the NSYF staff, and identifying the impact of the project on the institution's approach to the care, supervision and reintegration of Aboriginal youth.
2. Increasing youths' access to and aware of their culture within the NSYF through weekly gathering times set aside for cultural reconnection, supplementing the existing Aboriginal activities there (i.e., the annual Aboriginal Day and the monthly sweats), and where the youths would be able to explore their cultural heritage and discuss current Aboriginal issues in a culturally safe environment. This objective would be implemented through the weekly time set aside for discussion and engagement in salient cultural activities, as well as cultural celebrations and sessions with elders. Increased cultural appreciation and competency and greater social connection with Aboriginal mentors, perspectives, practices and services would be expected.
3. Increasing youths' access to culturally-appropriate support services by building an accessible network and resource guide of Nova Scotian Aboriginal and culturally respectful service providers for the incarcerated youths that, in collaboration with NSYF staff, would lead to effective release planning and improve their societal reintegration. This objective would be implemented through the creation and distribution of a resource guide for youths and NSYF

staff and building support networks with community participation that can facilitate meaningful reintegration planning.

4. Providing NSYF program staff the means and opportunity to develop enhanced cultural competence and sensitivity through relationship building and exposure to elders and other respected Aboriginal leaders. This objective would be implemented through organizational meetings and the participation of the facility's program officers in Aboriginal cultural training sessions.
5. Ensuring that Aboriginal spiritual leaders and elders are accessible to the young persons and correctional staff for cultural sharing and that they are considered as a community resource linked to the reintegration planning developed for youths by the NSYF staff. This objective would be implemented mainly by identifying and facilitating NSYF access for a number of appropriate elders and creating an Elder protocol (i.e., specifying the role and responsibilities of an Elder within the NSYF).

Clearly the BCI initiative was welcomed by Mi'kmaw leaders and provincial justice authorities. The NS Minister of Justice emphasized the project's target on reinforcement of elder-youth relationships and advanced the expectation that "the beneficial outcome of this is that we'll have young people that won't repeat illicit activities and won't be re-incarcerated", while MLSN leadership emphasized that the BCI project would fill a void at the NSYF and that the cultural activities entailed would help the incarcerated youth better understand their behaviour, appreciate the hurt it causes and be better equipped to desist re-offending (The Chronicle Herald, February 28, 2013). It was noted that CSC-endorsed healing lodges have had success in effecting desistance and facilitating the community reintegration of Aboriginal inmates through cultural programs and elder mentoring that facilitate inmates engaging themselves spiritually and traditionally with who they are as Aboriginal persons; no healing lodges for incarcerated Aboriginals exist in Atlantic Canada, underlining the need for programs such as the BCI.

Challenges

From the outset, numerous challenges to an effective BCI realization of the objectives noted above were appreciated by all parties to the project. Demographic trends in Nova Scotia have yielded a considerable decline in the youth population even among Aboriginals though less so than in the population at large. In conjunction with the justice policies and practices entailed by the 2003 YCJA and the growth of alternative justice programming (e.g., NSRJ, MLSN) these demographics have resulted in a consistent and sharp decline in the number of youths, Aboriginal and otherwise, incarcerated at the NSYF. The youth population at the NSYF is also characterized by a high proportion being there on remand (usually a short remand period) or short custody sentences so there are challenges to mounting an effective program when the youth can access the program but one day a week within a short stay at the facility. An additional challenge acknowledged was that the BCI program would be a voluntary option for the targeted youth, thereby requiring an implementation approach that would be interesting and appropriate to the young teenagers. Both the MLSN and NSYF leadership were willing to take on the challenge and open to "some adaptive thinking" if the number of participants was quite modest. Both parties were experienced in dealing with such situations in a variety of ways such as enlarging the target population among the inmates or putting more effort and resources into related community reintegration linkages and activities.

A further challenge anticipated was the selection of the most effective, feasible specific programming and implementation strategies given the variety of best practices elsewhere, the targeted population (i.e., high risk incarcerated Aboriginal youths), and constraints imposed by the factors cited above, namely small number of potential participants, limited access to youth in light of the NSYF's extant full schedule of programs, and the incarcerated youths' short stays at the NSYF.

THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Objectives and Processes

This report is an assessment of the BCI initiative focusing upon the central goal of the project, its 5 explicit chief objectives and the associated processes and outputs. In addition, the report discusses other processes and impacts that represent salient aspects of the evolution of the BCI project and advances suggestions and recommendations for future initiatives related to the incarceration and subsequent reintegration of Aboriginal youths in Nova Scotia. The evaluation was a formative evaluation with the researcher meeting frequently with the BCI team members in one-on-one sessions and participating in the general advisory committee meetings (including MLSN, BCI, Public Safety N.S. and NSYF representation) where project issues and initiatives were discussed and program strategies formulated. The two part-time research assistants, both band members and engaged in Mi'kmaw cultural activities, were serially employed to interview youths and observe and assist in the BCI project implementation. There were informal and formal interview sessions carried out at the NSYF and in the community. The evaluation team engaged in over 50 visits to the facility, observing the BCI group sessions and interviewing the key players. The evaluator conducted all one-on-one interviews with NSYF management and staff while the evaluation assistants interviewed the participating youths and the community contacts. All formal interviews with the different types of participants followed prepared interview guides; these research instruments and the BCI operational logic model are appended to this report. A small number of interviews were completed with service providers and youths in the community outreach dimension of the project and the research instruments utilized are also appended.

The BCI project was multi-year and multi-dimensional but its three central directives were (a) providing new legacy at the NSYF (more Aboriginal "presence" and cultural competency among NSYF staff and in its programs), (b) providing a program of activities and counsel contact that would be of Aboriginal – Mi'kmaw specificity, and (c) impacting on the participating youths via a cognitive transformation (through their engagement in that Aboriginal culture developing a healthy sense of self and a greater

desistance to violence and offending behaviour) and ensuring their awareness of Aboriginal - and other - support systems and cultural activities accessible upon their release. Key concepts / indicators for success would be the permeation of the BCI perspective at the NSYF, the impact of the programming received on the Aboriginal youths, and the implications for their behaviour at the NSYF and reintegration upon release.

Specific Methodologies

The specific methodologies employed in this evaluation included the following:

1. Document review: the documents reviewed included the BCI Operational Model (logic model), the NSYF administration forms (e.g., the offender summary admission card for each BCI young person), the Youth Referral Report completed on participating youths for the federal Youth Justice Fund, and the Clairmont 2013 report on Restorative Practices in the NSYF.

2. Literature review: the literature review focused on three areas namely the evolution patterns in Aboriginal Justice, the Marshall Royal Commission (including the 2014 McMillan report), and Aboriginal initiatives in prisons and jails and related programs and patterns of desistance and reintegration.

3. Participant Observation: The evaluation team observed 22 BCI afternoon sessions and participated in most of them in the activities held. As well during these visits they regularly engaged the participating youths in informal discussions. A report was prepared on each observation session indicating who attended and what was done as well as the engagement of the youths and other pertinent information.

4. Interviews: One-on-one interviews, usually following interview schedules (see appendices) were conducted by the evaluation team with the different role players. The evaluator went to the NSYF on 40 occasions to interview NSYF staff and NSYF-contracted service providers, and on a few occasions to meet with research assistants and observe BCI sessions.

5. Interviews with the youths: In the period Fall 2013 to May 2015, 23 YPs at the NSYF were identified as having some direct Aboriginal ancestry and 17 were significantly involved in the BCI project. The other six either had no or minimal contact with the BCI team (usually because they were at the NSYF for only a short time on remand) All the 17 were interviewed formally at least once and 8 on multiple occasions, usually a second time close to their release date or occasionally after release. (See forms in appendix)

6. Interviews with the NSYF staff: 15 NSYF staff persons (management, program coordinators and YWs) were interviewed by the evaluator, six on multiple occasions and 3 key officials on a regular basis (see basic interview guide the evaluator used in the appendix). Additionally 3 interviews were carried out with other NSYF-contracted service providers. Youth workers assigned to provide monthly reports on the progress of 10 Aboriginal youths in particular were interviewed (the basic interview guides the evaluator used are available in the appendices)

7. Six members of the BCI team were interviewed by the evaluator, 5 on multiple occasions and the project director on a regular basis. The evaluator also attended the project's advisory group meetings.

8. BCI Community Dimension: Instruments were created (see appendix) and interviews were completed with 10 community-based service providers to at-risk youths in metro Halifax, Millbrook First Nation and the Annapolis Valley First Nation.

Evaluation Issues

There were three complications in carrying out the evaluation, namely

1. The BCI project in adapting to the initial problem of securing Aboriginal-linked youth at the NSYF considered incorporating a larger than anticipated community dimension for the project but the BCI team's efforts did subsequently identify a sufficient pool of possible Aboriginal participants and maintained its central focus on incarcerated youths. The evaluation kept in sync with these developments, preparing the appropriate evaluation strategies and research instruments.

2. It was anticipated in the evaluation logic model that the youths participating in the BCI project would be formally interviewed as early as possible during this participation and subsequently when they were released into the community. This strategy was directed at getting a measure of the impact of the BCI participation by comparing "before" and "after" responses. Unfortunately the youths upon release were quite difficult to track down so only a few were interviewed after release. A compensatory strategy was adopted of interviewing youths as close as possible to release date.

3. Research assistants engaged part-time in the Fall and Winter) were elders and, paid by MSLN, they were expected also to be directly engaged in the project's implementation. There were advantages and disadvantages of that dual role for the evaluation's data collection and also some misunderstandings concerning the evaluation role (e.g., taking notes in public, confidentiality);

solutions were reached but the dual role did highlight the need for more communication between the evaluators and the project managers.

CONTEXTS FOR BCI AT NSYF

CONTEXT ONE: AUTHORITATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

The signal events in the past 30 years that have shaped the context for justice possibilities for Aboriginals in Atlantic Canada have been (a) the 1982 Constitutional Act ("the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed"); (b) the 1989 report of the Hickman Inquiry on the Wrongful Prosecution of Donald Marshall Jr.; (c) the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) report, Bridging The Cultural Divide, which laid out a revitalizing agenda for Aboriginal justice in Canada; (d) the (SCC) Supreme Court of Canada's 1999 Gladue decision which was a culmination of earlier court decisions and sentencing policies and emphasized the unique considerations that should be taken into account by judges when sentencing Aboriginal offenders; (e) the SCC's 1999 rulings in the case of Donald Marshall Jr's conviction for illegal eel fishing (a regulatory conviction whose overturning by the SCC had profound effects for Aboriginal economic development and Aboriginal regulatory governance, attacking the roots of First Nations' (FN) social problems). These developments have been discussed by the evaluator in depth elsewhere (Clairmont, 2013) and will receive brief reference here.

The Hickman / Marshall Inquiry impacted most directly on Nova Scotia but its ramifications were important for both justice policy and Aboriginal-mainstream relations in Canada. The three commissioners determined that the wrongful murder prosecution of Marshall in 1971 was directly a function of the fact that Marshall was Aboriginal and that Nova Scotia's justice system had been "racist and two-tiered", a damning indictment by respected, mainstream judges. The Inquiry's recommendations were wide-ranging, extending well beyond redress for Marshall and Aboriginal issues to the organization of policing and prosecutorial services in Nova Scotia and advancing new policies to respond to the problems of disclosure, wrongful prosecution and political interference. The

Inquiry has had a profound impact on issues of Aboriginal justice in Nova Scotia generating initiatives such as a revamped court worker program, restorative justice programs, a province-wide Mi'kmaq justice agency and regular provincial court sittings on the largest FN, Eskasoni. Currently, a wide range of province-wide Aboriginal justice services are provided through the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN) which may represent the most effective and well-established, province-wide, multi-FN, Aboriginal justice programming in Canada. The Inquiry's report was generally seen as progressive by First Nations and, overall, was favourably received by the Union of Nova Scotia Indians.

The Inquiry's recommendations arguably have mostly been implemented; indeed, the justice services provided by MLSN in some ways have gone well beyond them. A key factor in this progress has been the Inquiry's recommended Tripartite Forum on Native Justice whereby high-ranking federal, provincial and Mi'kmaq representatives meet regularly to monitor current justice initiatives for the FNs and consider new ones. The Tripartite Forum launched in 1991 continues on and has recently spawned the multi-year "Made in Nova Scotia" treaty process. In her 2014 community-based assessment of the Marshall Inquiry's legacy, McMillan noted that while further developments were called for and are required (e.g., more direct collaboration by FNs in the administration of justice and more emphasis on the reintegration of offenders) the legacy has been profound. She observed that **"**the majority of people understand the Marshall Inquiry recommendations … as providing a basis upon which to build a Mi'kmaq Justice system" and "this review of the tools of justice available to Indigenous persons in Nova Scotia regards the Marshall Inquiry as transformative and transforming**".**

The Marshall Inquiry advanced – as did most, but not all, such Canadian inquiries on Aboriginal justice issues between 1985 and 1992 – an agenda oriented to greater engagement and decision-making on the part of Aboriginal people within a more progressive mainstream justice system. The underlying ethos of the Marshall Inquiry and its recommendations might best be described as focused on "fairness and integration". The vision and the accompanying agenda were to eliminate racism, reduce negative

legacy effects (e.g., the impact of the IRS experience) and secure the more satisfactory inclusion of Mi'kmaq people in mainstream society. As the Commissioners emphasized they were not proposing "a separate system of Native laws but rather a different process for administering on reserve certain aspects of the criminal law". In their view Aboriginals should be so empowered "Because they are Native" (Hickman, p168), having a history and culture prior to colonization, and could generate successful measures for resolving disputes. In a modest way the Inquiry's approach had "legs" that could go significantly beyond simple fairness and integration. Also, while the recommendations focused on the criminal justice sector there were aspects that referred to family justice issues and the general use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in civil and regulatory (e.g., band bylaws) matters; clearly these justice issues have become more salient in Aboriginal society over the past two decades.

In 1996, at a general meeting of Nova Scotia FN chiefs, there was consensus that, given the realization of the gist of the 1989 Marshall recommendations, the appropriate agenda for Aboriginal justice services in Nova Scotia, going forward, should be that advanced by recently concluded RCAP hearings. In the RCAP analyses and recommendations prominence was given to "autonomy and difference" through a set of arguments , namely (a) the mainstream criminal justice system (CJS) was imposed, alien and ineffective for Aboriginal peoples; (b) treaty rights to develop alternatives exist, and (c) community controls would be appropriate given the treaties, cultural differences and pragmatic imperatives. The RCAP agenda called attention to two additional points that are salient in considerations of Aboriginal justice in general, namely (a) the possible importance of transcending community-specific justice programming to construct tribal or multiple-FN, partnered justice services in order to achieve cost efficiency and better cope with conflicts of interest and favouritism, and (b) the importance of justice segments other than the criminal sphere in order to effect more culturally appropriate and need-specific justice services (e.g., family justice and regulatory or band-initiated administrative justice initiatives). RCAP discussed jurisdictional and collaborative issues with respect to both law-making and administration of justice and, in arguing for significant Aboriginal rights in both areas, differentiated between core and peripheral

concerns; core concerns, defined as crucial to Aboriginal culture and society and not profoundly impacting on mainstream society, were the areas where, in the RCAP argument, significant Aboriginal autonomy could be exercised.

The other two signal turning points noted above sprang from two decisions (including related judicial clarifications and subsequent policy imperatives) of the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) in 1999, one dealing with criminal and the other, regulatory justice. A major SCC decision and entailed policy directive announced in 1999 concerned the Gladue case where the conviction and incarceration of an Aboriginal person was successfully challenged on the grounds that more attention in sentencing should have been paid to the attenuating factors associated with the unique legacy of the Aboriginal experience in Canada which has long been associated (and continues to be) with a very highly disproportionate level of incarceration. The policy called for judges to ensure that Aboriginal offenders being sentenced were recognized as such and that special Gladue reports be submitted indicating the salience of the Aboriginal legacy, if any, in relation to the offence before the court.

This SCC imperative has been adhered to most strongly in Ontario where there are several designated Gladue courts and where the applicability of the Gladue policy has been, in principle, extended to bail, another point at which a person's freedom from incarceration is at stake. Elsewhere in Canada, the Gladue policy has been much less implemented if implemented at all. Most judges have left the determination of whether a formal Gladue report should be prepared to the crown prosecutor, and especially to the defence counsel, and, generally, Aboriginal probation officers and court workers were presumed to deal with the Gladue issues in their regular court roles. But Gladue is important for directing attention to alternatives to incarceration and for a better appreciation of how legacy, in terms of an offender's personal history and social circumstances, links up with offending patterns. The emphasis too is on having a holistic approach, avoiding custody if possible and providing access for the offender to treatment programs and other beneficial social services. In 2012, SCC intervention in R v. Ipeelee

reinforced the importance of the earlier Gladue decision and recommendations, emphasizing that the CJS should be doing a better job in implementing Gladue.

In Atlantic Canada Nova Scotia has led the way in having Gladue reports submitted at sentencing for Aboriginal offenders. Nowadays, Gladue reports are commonplace in Nova Scotia; in 2014 there were over 50 Gladue reports submitted to the courts - court requests are provided to MLSN which coordinates report preparation by experienced persons and both are compensated per case through the NS Department of Justice.

The SCC's 1999 decisions and recommendations on the Marshall eel fishing case has had a major impact in Atlantic Canada on Aboriginal economic development, supporting an Aboriginal right to earn an average living from commercial fishing and leading to the provision of funds for the purchase of fishing licenses and equipment. They have also had implications for band governance since they created a situation where it has become more important for the FNs to exercise their governance capacity both in convincing members to adhere to the agreements entered into by the band, whether with governments or the private sector, and to effectively be part of any required enforcement. In essence, then, the SCC's 1999 decision has reinforced the RCAP position that the regulatory area of justice would be a major, growing focus of Aboriginal justice as Aboriginal rights are fleshed out. This evolution builds upon the fact that increasingly FNs in Canada have been developing a dispute resolution capacity which appears essential to sustain effective self-government.

While Aboriginal fisheries activities facilitated through Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) programs have preceded the SCC's Marshall decision, there is little doubt that a qualitative change occurred as a result of it, especially in Atlantic Canada. The significant impact on Aboriginal fishing resources, clear rights and employment has been highlighted by both federal DFO officials and Aboriginal leaders; a spokesperson for the Atlantic Policy Congress of FN Chiefs noted that, "the money has had a positive effect on Aboriginal communities. Our communities have a new sense of hope. It is not a money thing. It's a whole mindset. And it has fundamentally changed our communities

forever and that is really good". While the fisheries agreements signed with DFO did not live up to expectations in many FN communities and certainly did not readily yield the "moderate livelihood" that the SCC decision sanctioned, they have apparently often produced the changed mindset referred to by the APC spokesperson above, generated funds for the bands to provide needed social and recreational programs, and allowed for local leaders to organize their fisheries in such a way as to distribute the work opportunities to fish, thereby spreading the benefits and E.I. eligibility. The economic developments have reinforced the significant expansion of FN government. The combination of economic developments, expansive government activity, and optimistic mindset usually can be expected to impact positively on the root causes of social malaise, crime and other, related problems.

Overall, then, the five signal events discussed above have generated a very positive social context for the development of Aboriginal justice activity especially at the community level, and it is fair to conclude that they have generated exciting times in Aboriginal justice across Canada as First Nations and other Aboriginal groupings seek to realize the promise of their constitutional rights and the new federal and provincial policies, in developing justice programs that respond to their own needs and wishes as their societies evolve in terms of a meaningful form of self-government.

Developing Collaborative Justice Initiatives

Initiatives such as the BCI fit well with the above developments in the justice area. And the collaboration it entails is increasingly, properly seen as emanating from theory and research on the foundations for Aboriginal self-government in Canada. The dominant narrative on that theme now considers Aboriginal self-government as more a question of how rather than why (Belanger and Newhouse, 2004). Interestingly, the courts have consistently rejected claims of analogous rights to Aboriginal programs and services (e.g., sentencing circles, Gladue 'rights') on behalf of advocates for Black Canadians. Court rulings have contended that Aboriginals are in a unique position vis-à-vis the justice system. But, while Aboriginal uniqueness is essentially a consensus view

within the Canadian justice system, there has long been significant divergence on its underpinnings. A large and growing academic and policy literature appears to have reached a consensus that self-government is appropriately based not on cultural differences or over-representation in prisons but on the pre-settlement exercise of governance.

While the SCC has yet to rule directly and definitively on the question of Aboriginal self-government, its decisions on other Aboriginal rights issues have undeniable consequences for any future ruling. Murphy (2001) traced the key court decisions from the Calder case in 1973 through the Constitutional Act in 1982 to Sparrow and Sioui in early 1992 to Van der Peet in 1996. He argued that the SCC's choice thus far to anchor the legal recognition of Aboriginal rights in the distinctive character of Aboriginal cultures (their Aboriginality) constitutes a serious diminishment of the legal and political status of Aboriginal peoples. Murphy contended that scholars and activists increasingly have based their position on Aboriginal self-government claims not on Aboriginals having a distinctive culture but essentially on their being the original sovereigns in their traditional territories, analogous to "national minorities living within the boundaries of multinational states, grounding claims on self-government in their authority as separate and independent peoples forming their own political community and being neither derivative nor subordinate to the self-governing authority of the more powerful national communities with whom they share a state". He advanced a model of self-government rooted in a normative authority claim to the design, delivery and administration of selected services and institutions in an urban or rural setting or to a process of gradual capacity building in specific sectors such as education, resource extraction or small business development. SCC rulings clearly have stated that the Crown has ultimate sovereignty so the relation between Crown and Aboriginal peoples established by this position is not one of equals. Still, it appears that even a SCC interpretation, congruent with the model of national communities with a substantial degree of autonomous self-governing authority, would arguably seem very much like the approach that is already part of the official federal policy for the recognition and negotiation of Aboriginal self-government, and quite a reasonable fit to RCAP

recommendations, as well as reaching back to the Hawthorn (1963) "citizenship plus'" model.

Underlying any Aboriginal arguments for collaborative initiatives within the justice system increasingly then are two major premises, namely a form of self-government rights (to administer and to some degree do things differently) and cultural differences (a different culture / world view reworking mythology and cultural heritage in today's understandings). The widespread Aboriginal view also appears to be that effective Aboriginal collaborative justice services would likely spawn a growth of beneficial restorative practices and facilitate better reintegration of offenders throughout Aboriginal society. There is empirical support for this perspective of significant legal pluralism in the new constitutional space for thinking about the relationship between non-state indigenous law and state laws; examples include the Labrador Inuit Treaty, court decisions in the recent Six Nations case of a young girl's treatment for cancer which ultimately negotiated a collaborative treatment regimen between chemotherapy and holistic strategies. Another case involving poaching and two different FNs in BC was settled when the court and the crown counsel agreed to a format whereby traditional aboriginal justice was used to resolve the case. The resolution was praised by all parties as a better way of effecting reconciliation and healing in the matter (Globe and Mail, January 9, 2016). Clearly, then, the above recent policy and theoretical developments in Aboriginal justice provide strong justification and support for a BCI initiative. .

CONTEXT TWO: DESISTANCE, RECIDIVISM AND REINTEGRATION

As noted above, developments in Aboriginal justice – constitutional, policy-wise and theoretical – have created a favorable environment for Aboriginal justice initiatives, especially those of a collaborative nature such as the MLSN-NSYF's BCI project. While the authority mandate has clearly been established, there remains the daunting problem of designing and implementing initiatives that address successfully the legacy of colonialism, the IRS, racism and cultural depreciation as well as current aggravating factors. The three main areas of implementation focus from the national Aboriginal perspective arguably are (a) levels of crime and incarceration; (b) revocation and

recidivism, and (c) reintegration. Clearly the levels of crime and incarceration among Aboriginal people are excessively disproportionate; revocation and recidivism rates follow the same pattern (e.g., CSC performance monitoring reports have consistently shown that Aboriginals are by far more likely to be revoked for breaches of conditions of release) and, despite widespread awareness of their importance for effective reintegration of offenders, only in recent years has there been any real emphasis on enhancing community and familial integration.

Desistance (McNeil et al, 2012) focuses on how and why people stop offending and identifies a number of key principles behind effective desistance – being realistic about complexity, building hope, fostering self-determination and recognizing people's strength, developing social and human capital, and working with and through relationships. The desistance process has been described as keyed to a cognitive transformation entailing openness to change, exposure and reaction to possible turning points, envisioning "a replacement self" and transforming one's views about crime and offending. The outcomes for participants include developing a pro-social coherent identity for themselves and a sense of control regarding their future.

The desistance perspective seems especially apt in initiatives such as MLSN's "Bringing Culture Inside". As Milward (2012) notes with respect to federal Aboriginal inmates, CSC in responding to the mandate of assessing the needs of Aboriginal offenders has, in some institutions, provided programs (e.g., the Pathways initiative) that are tailored to the inculcation of Aboriginal values and facilitate inmate participation in cultural activities, such as pipe ceremonies and sweat lodges; indeed CSC has established 8 healing lodges (i.e., correctional facilities based an Aboriginal motif) though none in Atlantic Canada. These services are often delivered by Elders or other members of the Aboriginal communities with similar cultural authority. The rationale behind them is that the CSC identifies "the loss of cultural identity as an underlying cause of Aboriginal criminality" and its appropriate re-inculcation as pivotal to developing what desistance theorists would characterize as a replacement self with a pro-social identity and a sense of control regarding their future. In many Canadian correctional institutions there are now

Aboriginal programs that emphasize that approach, ((including Pathways, Warrior programs such as Tapwe (see below), and Seven Sacred Teachings)), and where the crucial vehicles for the anticipated cognitive transformation include stories, elders, sweats, and crafts (e.g., culturally informed learning about and making dream-catchers, medicine bags and drums).

There is a huge literature on issues of recidivism (including the revocation process) and it has strongly underlined the importance of the ex-inmat**e** having dealt with his/her substance issues (Heckbert 2001). The positive impact of re-awakened cultural identity and spirituality has also been found to be significant, especially in studies that have been based on individual success stories rather than general statistical analyses of secondary data. Most studies found positive results (i.e., less recidivism) associated with participation in such cultural activities (e.g. Pathways in Westmoreland prison as reported by Clairmont 2009) and concluded that there should be greater access to them provided to the Aboriginal inmates.

Several large studies have attempted to determine whether the risk factors for recidivism and parole revocation are different for Aboriginal inmates than for non-Aboriginal inmates. A recent study (Rugge, 2006) found that the best predictors of recidivism were the so-called "Big Four", namely adult criminal history, antisocial personality, type of companions and criminogenic needs (e.g., antisocial cognitions or values), and that they were of equal applicability to Aboriginal offenders. Risk factors such as lack of cultural identity and negative self-image, were considered as possibly adding predictive power to risk assessment and making a case for appropriate programs and services but as yet there remains uncertainty as to effective implementation and need for more specific projects and their evaluation.

Reintegration has been an important dimension of Aboriginal justice for several reasons. The CSC perspective has been that **"**the more community and family involvement, the better the chances are for the offender to succeed" in avoiding revocation and recidivism. Another factor has been the general "rights" imperative of

Aboriginal control over justice issues in their communities and exercising greater administrative decision-making over dealing with offenders and the re-integration process. CSC's section 84 of the conditional release act (1992) authorizes collaboration between the state structure (i.e., parole officers) and designated community-based representatives in determining conditions for and co-managing early parole releases. While explicitly a CSC response to the disproportionate incarceration of Aboriginals and their noted reluctance to apply for parole given uncertainty about the community's response to them, section 84 can also be seen as an acknowledgement of the above stated Aboriginal "rights". Section 84 in theory allows for an effective reintegration process that links up and continues what could be developed on the 'inside'. Unfortunately it has had a limited impact to date for a variety of reasons such as limited awareness among Aboriginal leaders and lack of community resources (e.g., employment, housing) to facilitate reintegration etc (see Garnett 2010). It was also basically limited to aboriginal FN communities, not the urban milieu.

There is much consensus that the reintegration process to be effective starts inside the correctional facility where the offender's needs are assessed and access provided to programs and services that can effect a culturally-informed desistance such as discussed above. Beyond the correctional institution there must be continuity in services, opportunities, cultural engagement and social supports. Reintegration presumably is directed at the offender becoming a valuable community contributor and not simply avoiding revocation and recidivism. Imaginative social bonding projects such as the Natuashish (formerly Davis Inlet) leaders using hunting trips to convey and engage at-risk youths in the traditional cultural perspective and establish greater sense of identity can be effective (Globe and Mail, March 7, 2015).

In sum, there is much happening with respect to the central dimensions of desistance, recidivism and reintegration for responding to Aboriginal offenders but more evaluated projects are required to sort out what works best for whom under what circumstances. For example the well-known Cherokee "Two Wolves" perspective can be operationalized (implemented) in different ways such as via the Young Warrior Tapwe

program or the Seven Sacred Teachings approach so which is best for whom and why?. How effective can culturally informed craft activities be for different offenders? How can valuable programs given within the institutions be best linked up with diverse reintegration strategies upon release in the different milieus (e.g., reserve or urban). Despite the considerable growth in recent years in Aboriginal-directed programs and services the levels of serious violence reflected in crime and incarceration have not significantly improved at the national level so clearly projects such as the BCI possibly have an important role to play in furthering Aboriginal justice imperatives.

CONTEXT 3: THE NSYF: TRENDS AND CAPACITY

Over the past roughly two decades the two key factors that have impacted the incarceration patterns for youths in Canada have been the federal justice policy for youth throughout Canada and the demographics of an aging society, particularly pronounced in Atlantic Canada. The YOA, and especially its revisionist YCJA promulgated in the spring of 2003, have revolutionized youth justice policy in Canada. The demographic long-term trends have significantly reduced the number of youths, in Nova Scotia featuring a 50% decline in the percentage of the population aged 17 years and less over a 35 year period (Clairmont 2008). There have been two main implications of these two factors for youths in the criminal justice system, namely a major reduction in the number of youths incarcerated (in Nova Scotia from an average of 120 youths pre-YCJA to as low as 20 in 2016) and, secondly, a significant challenge in determining how to respond to those who are incarcerated. Incarceration subsequent to the YCJA has declined sharply but overall youth crime levels have also declined (Bala, 2009) though violent youth crime neither as much nor as consistently. Incarceration of young offenders in Canada had been declining modestly from 1990 to 2002, then sharply in 2003-2004 immediately following the implementation of the YCJA, and has fluctuated around comparatively lower levels (particularly sentenced custody as opposed to remand) in the following years. As Bala and associates found, in Canada the rate of custodial sentences handed down in youth court in 2006-2007 was less than half that in 2002-2003; combined with that decline has

been a major decline in volume of cases coming to youth court in the first place (Bala, 2009).

Scholars have noted that, in line with the SCC's rulings on the YCJA, the courts' narrow specification for the use of custody and other SCC interpretations have emphasized that youth are to be treated differently than adults while not being deprived of the constitutional rights of the latter. The interpretation of "violent offence" has been narrowed for young offenders (e.g., dangerous driving in a stolen car is not violent) and an anti-step policy in sentencing has been interpreted as proper so in effect, sentencing considerations are usually back at square one regardless of the number of offenses that a youth has on record.. The YCJA, and its subsequent court interpretations, have sharply differentiated among young offenders, no longer prioritizing repeaters in property crimes and the like (here encouraging where possible a restorative justice approach) but clearly marking off the violent offenders and, to a lesser degree, the "out-of control" youth, allowing them to go through the court system and be incarcerated. Certainly there is the issue then of what to do about these latter, the youth whose actions, usually violent, place the public at risk (Perrott, 2010) or simply flaunt their disregard of the justice system. Informed professionals such as Judge Nunn who headed up a special commission on youth justice in Nova Scotia a decade ago emphasized that while such youths may be properly incarcerated, it would be totally unethical to simply warehouse them because they are at a lower level of maturity and are malleable and hopefully can be rehabilitated; their interests and status and therefore their social rights are different from adults. Other policy advocates, and indeed Corrections officials themselves, share that perspective, highlighting the danger otherwise of irrevocably marginalizing already marginal youths and discounting the social rights of the still maturing young persons (Savage, 2011, Black 2011).

Until 2004, young offenders in Nova Scotia were basically incarcerated in the Nova Scotia Youth Centre (NSYC) and Shelburne and only occasionally in other provincial facilities. Shelburne received both females and younger males. In the years 2000 to 2002 inclusive, Shelburne usually held about 30 youths, roughly equally split between females and males. Youths in the provincial facilities other than NSYC or

Shelburne at any point in time during this period never numbered more than five and virtually all were being held on remand. Since 2004 Shelburne has been closed and, for all intents and purposes, all incarcerated youth are now housed in the Nova Scotia Youth Facility (NSYF) at Waterville. Since 2000 the level of incarceration had been declining but with the YCJA it was cut by 55% in 2003-2004 from the previous year (i.e., 315 in 2002-03 to 160 in 2003-04). For roughly a decade thereafter there was no discernible trend in the number of youths sentenced to incarceration (i.e., it hovered around 40 on daily count) but in recent years, lock-step with the declining Nova Scotian youth population, the number has shrunk to less than 30 on average . Also, there has been no clear trend in the number of youths being remanded, though data for the last two few years suggest a possible upward trend. During the period 2003 to 2008, the average (median) ratio of males to females at Waterville on a given day was 8 to 1 and that ratio appears to be holding in subsequent years.

A study conducted by the Department of Justice's Policy, Planning and Research, (Patterns of Offending among Incarcerated Youth 2004) traced the recorded criminal activities of all 228 youths incarcerated at Waterville and Shelburne in the year 2000. It was reported that the majority of incarcerated youths had been convicted of property crimes and breaches, less than 25% of a violent crime and but 3% for any drug-related offence. 95% of the youth had a criminal record and 45% had been previously incarcerated. Subsequent to their release (the majority served 90 days or less) and up to the end of 2003, fully 79% re-offended at least once, usually within one year of their release; 58% were re-incarcerated. In light of the above discussion of the post-YCJA sentencing patterns, the inmates nowadays at the NSYF would be expected to be – and are – more serious offenders, likely with deeper problems compelling their criminal acts, usually violent and often involved in illicit drug dealings. The level of recidivism and re-incarceration appears to have increased, and the % with a previous incarceration at the NSYF is now almost double that of the earlier period (i.e., 80% compared to 45%) Additionally, a review of the NSYF data on incident write-ups has indicated that incidents involving "detrimental behaviour" have increased considerably, going from a low of 48 in 2007 to 841 in 2011 (such a huge increase also appears to reflect changes in

the classification of incidents but notwithstanding that, the increase is very significant). Clearly the challenges facing a rehabilitative strategy at the NSYF could be expected to be considerable.

Opportunities and Challenges for Innovative Programming

The YCJA and the Nova Scotian demographics have resulted in much smaller numbers of young inmates but the round-the-clock NSYF custodial responsibility still requires an almost similar number of staff so the opportunity is there to provide more varied and in-depth programming and explore options in managing youth-staff relationships. The role of youth worker also appears to be changing more to one of a change agent than a guard, though informally youth workers to varying extents might well have already been utilizing that approach in their work with the youths. Throughout the justice system in Nova Scotia, the YCJA and youth demographics are having a similar impact and leading to significant change. In the case of Nova Scotia's much praised restorative justice program, all nine community-based, non-profit agencies (including MLSN) providing the RJ program for youths cases referred to them by police and crown prosecutors have seen their caseloads diminish sharply in recent years (see table in the appendix where, on average, caseloads for the agencies have declined by roughly 50% since 2009) and have been exploring additional venues and strategies for their services. Both crown prosecutors and NSLA defence lawyers have commented on the sharp decline in youth criminal cases throughout the province. In the case of NSLA there has been the development of a more proactive advocacy role for youth. As one senior NSLA staff explained, they find that they can assist the young at-risk person with many of their problems (e.g. advocating for the youth at a school, referral to mental health services, etc.) thereby providing a more holistic service.

The NSYF has itself been in the forefront of innovation and program development for a decade and half. Its Centre 24/7 program, established for about fifteen years, has been unique in Canada for its off-site programming that brings together NSYF and community-based at-risk youths. It provides a comprehensive, unique educational, and life style support program and often has held circles and employed other RP strategies.

The NSYF provides on-site a comprehensive rehabilitative program that includes educational upgrade, substance abuse and anger management, and access to IWK counseling and religious mentoring. Other programs, funded in whole or in part by the NSYF, have been put in place with the assistance of outside parties for minority groups (especially African Nova Scotians and Aboriginals (regular sweats by gender are open to all interested youths). In addition, the NSYF has funded a biweekly RJ orientation provided by the Annapolis Valley RJ Agency for newly received inmates for the past dozen years. The combination of programs has created a full schedule of activities for the NSYF youths. For its approach to working with young inmates the NSYF has received high praise from Judge Nunn referred to above. Since 2011 the NSYF has also embarked on an ambitious restorative practices program aimed at transforming the NSYF institutional culture and strengthening positive relationships among the varied role players; currently the objective has been to establish a total restorative relationship model throughout the institution (Clairmont, 2013).

A widespread view at the NSYF is that, while nowadays youths are in custody typically because of violent offences and egregious offending that do indeed place the public at risk, their small number, combined with a revulsion among policy makers at mere "warehousing", require, and make feasible, imaginative programming that may involve teaching new skills and ways of thinking that can balance incarceration with opportunities for reintegration. There is apparently much receptivity to link up these internal developments with community initiatives that can facilitate reintegration; in other words collaboration in transitional activities has become a key objective. The NSYF seems quite receptive to collaboration with alternative schools in the area and especially with minority networks given the disproportionate number of the incarcerated youth who have either African Nova Scotian or Aboriginal heritage. It could be expected then that the BCI initiative would fit well with NSYF priorities.

CONTEXT 4: ABORIGINAL POPULATION AND INCARCERATION IN NOVA SCOTIA

Although rates of population growth in Aboriginal communities generally follow essentially the same downward trajectory as the rest of Canada, there remains a significant, constant difference sustained by their higher rates of natural growth and larger proportions of children. In Nova Scotia that pattern holds and Mi'kmaw FNs are still increasing their population outside the Halifax metropolis unlike virtually all other such Nova Scotian communities. The average age for the FN population is 25 years compared to 41 years among the overall NS population. The facts also show that increasingly Nova Scotian people of Aboriginal identity live off-reserve, and especially in the Halifax area. According to the AANDC (Industry Registry, 2014) there are 16,245 registered in the 13 Mi'kmaw bands in NS (in any of 42 reserve locations), of whom roughly 5875 live off-reserve, chiefly in HRM. In comparison, the overall Aboriginal-identified population in NS (according to the 2011 National Household Survey) is roughly twice that number, namely 33,845, of whom 21,895 are FN people. Clearly the Mi'kmaw reserve population is about 1/2 of total FN population in Nova Scotia and 1/3 of the overall population that can be identified as Aboriginal-linked in NS.

The population in the NSYF eligible for the BCI program could be expected to reflect well that proportion with at least 50% not having status or even identified on administrative forms as of native ethnicity. There might well be profound differences between the two major groupings – (a) status / designated Native and (b) non-status / designated 'Other' who have Aboriginal-linked heritage - in terms of their involvement and interest in Aboriginal culture, activities and networks and how the BCI programming can impact on them. That circumstance perhaps indicates well the relevance of the BCI approach and especially the challenges for subsequent follow-up and community reintegration among BCI participants. These realities extend the challenges of MLSN initiatives beyond working with youths increasingly drawn from the disadvantaged groupings (low socio-economic status, weak family support, community alienation) living in an Aboriginal milieu but MLSN has always had a perspective of inclusivity and we-ness, on and off reserve, and serving the diversity of Aboriginally-linked people (see

McMillan 2014 p92). And Aboriginal society generally has supported a positive and generous, open response to prevention and offender reintegration (ibid, pp 70-72).

Incarceration Patterns

Incarceration patterns in the federal prison system (i.e., CSC) have been described and analyzed in-depth especially with respect to Aboriginals sentenced to custody so only a brief overview is given here. It has long been established that "as compared to their representation in the adult and youth populations, Aboriginal adults and youth were highly represented in admissions to all types of correctional services. Furthermore, trends in both adult and youth corrections have shown that the proportional representation of Aboriginal people among females admitted to correctional services has been greater than for males" (Juristat, 2005). At the time of that comment it was reported by CSC that taking federal and provincial custody into account, the overall incarceration rate for Aboriginal people in Canada was 1,024 per 100,000 adults whereas the comparable figure for non-Aboriginal Canadians was 117 per 100,000 adults so Aboriginals were 9 times as likely to be incarcerated. While praising the fact that culturally sensitive programs have been established and Aboriginal issues have become a priority for CSC, the CSC investigator observed that Aboriginals are less likely to be granted temporary absences and parole, get parole later in their sentence, are more likely to have their parole suspended or revoked and more likely to be classified as high risk.

Subsequent years have seen the steady increase in CSC programs to deal with the disproportionate Aboriginal incarceration but the disproportionality has continued unabated especially in Western Canada and the North. The number of incarcerated Aboriginal women increased steadily from 59 in 1997-98 to 148 in 2006-07, an increase of 151% in the last ten years. For Aboriginal men, the respective numbers were 2,049 and 2,432, an increase for the same period of 19%. The CSC performance monitoring reports for 2007-09 and 2008-09 showed also that Aboriginals were by far more likely to be revoked for breaches of conditions of release.

It is hard to find improvements in current federal data. According to the Office of the Correctional Investigator's report released November 26 2013, over the past 10 years, the Aboriginal incarcerated population increased by 46.4%. Aboriginal people represent a staggering 23% of federal inmates yet comprise at best only 4% of the total Canadian population. One-in-three women under federal sentence are Aboriginal. "These are disturbing trends that raise important questions about equality and our justice system in Canada," (Sapers, 2013).

Nova Scotia Incarceration

According to official JEIN documentation the ethnicity of an incarcerated person is identified by Corrections staff using: a) observation of physical characteristics; and b) information obtained from the incarcerated person during the admissions process. Tables in the appendix present data on youth incarceration in Nova Scotia for the years 2000-01 through 2008-09 and by race-ethnic identity. The significance of the YCJA is evidenced by the sharp reduction in the number of youth sentenced to custody after its implementation in fiscal 2003-04. Over the 2000 to 2009 period, Aboriginal youth incarcerations (sentenced to custody) hovered around 6% of the annual total (with occasional increases or decreases) while Black percentages were usually at least double that level, Caucasians generally accounted for about 75%, and "Other" averaged roughly 4%. The Aboriginal 6% represented a modest but significant disproportionate percentage (roughly double the expectations based on population) especially since it is likely that some of the "Other" grouping would have some Aboriginal linkages.

McMillan (2014) provides interesting NS JEIN data on Aboriginal youth incarceration for selective years 1991-2, 1996-97, 2001-02, 2006-07, 2011-12, and 2012-13 (ibid, pp 119-122). That data set indicates that there has been a modest trend for increased admissions to custody, that the number of instances of remand custody has been relatively constant since 2001-02 though the last year, 2012-2013, had the largest number (roughly 30) of youth remands, and that the number of sentenced to custody cases declined to less than 5 in each of 2011-12 and 2012-2013. The data show a significant gap between the remand and sentenced to custody cases which would suggest

that the youth on remand usually avoid sentenced incarceration, thanks to YCJA-inspired Justice policy and also perhaps to the effective work of the MLSN court workers.

Incarceration trends for adults in Nova Scotia have indicated that in the past decade Aboriginals sentenced to custody have usually accounted annually for 7% of all such incarcerations while Blacks accounted for roughly 12%, Caucasians for 75% and "Other" for 5%; the patterns closely approximate those for youths sentenced to custody (Clairmont, 2014). When the results are tabulated separately for HRM's Central Nova and Cape Breton jails, there is a higher percentage of Aboriginal adults in the latter than in the former (roughly 15% to 6% in an average year). JEIN data, reproduced in McMillan 2014, indicate that there has been a trend for increased admission custody for Aboriginal adults over the 20 year span from 1991-2 to 2012-13, especially in the later years. The trend for remand custody follows a similar trajectory though the numbers are fewer while the trend for sentenced to custody has been a fairly stable annual number of about 100.

Overall, then, incarceration trends at the national and, to a much lesser degree, in the Nova Scotia jurisdiction show significantly disproportionate Aboriginal 'sentenced to custody' cases. For a variety of reasons (e.g., justice policy, socio-economic and cultural developments within the Aboriginal communities, the work of MLSN) in Nova Scotia that difference has declined for the youth population.

BCI IMPLEMENTATION

The BCI initiative was operational basically for the period 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 and a few months thereafter. An offshoot of the BCI continues still but here the focus is on the official, MLSN-managed initiative. The BCI has been implemented in a multi-dimensional fashion, at the NSYF and in the community, but primarily in the former context which also is the main focus for this assessment. In discussing implementation, it is useful to distinguish between phases of the BCI. The first main

phase of the program stretched from the Spring of 2013 to late Winter 2014 and the second main phase from March 2014 to May 2015.

Implementation: First Main Phase

The BCI project's priority concerns in advancing on the opportunity to meaningfully extend their work at the NSYF were to put together an advisory team consisting of provincial government officials, NSYF administrators and MLSN key staff persons and to build the BCI team. This was accomplished early in fiscal 2013-2014. The advisory group met several times over the length of the project to discuss options and issues (e.g., strategies, legacy outcomes, sustainability). The BCI team consisted of a full-time coordinator and, on a part-time basis, several elders (in all 7 elders participated, all but one being a status Indian) experienced in similar programming. In this early period, attention focused on three major operational issues, namely the uncertainty of the number of NSYF youths of Aboriginal heritage who could be eligible to participate in the BCI program, the substance of the program to be offered, and scheduling issues.

All parties acknowledged that since the number of eligibles might be few and their participation would be voluntary, adaptive strategies such as extending the program to youths on probation and /or becoming more engaged with at-risk youths at the community level, might become appropriate. The complexity of identification was appreciated by the advisory group and it was understood that the BCI coordinator would have opportunity to assist in identifying eligible youth and discussing the BCI program with them. Upon admission to the NSYF all youths were identified by whether they had status and also what their ethnic origin was ("native" was an option) so clearly either of these two responses (i.e., status, native) would put the youth into the BCI eligibility pool. A good number of youths, as it turned out over the two year project period, did not give either response but were subsequently identified as youths of mixed race/ethnicity with Aboriginal or native being one. Some of these youths were recognized by the BCI coordinator as having Aboriginal heritage based on her experience in MLSN's RJ and court work or came to her attention when she frequently attended the admission unit (usually when the AVRJ was making its regular presentation on RJ to new admissions).

A few youths were recommended by other youths in the program or by NSYF staff. Interestingly, when checked by the evaluator, it was found that virtually all these youths had indicated on the admission form that they were of mixed race/ethnicity (including 'native') so clearly the identification preceded their involvement in the BCI .

The scheduling of the BCI program at the NSYF was quickly negotiated and the BCI was allocated one full day per week –Thursday – to deliver its program. The NSYF schedule of activities for youths makes up a full calendar so that agreement was significant and greater than any previous NSYF commitment to other outsider-delivered programs apart from the IWK. BCI's Thursday period was split between one-on-one morning sessions with the participating youths (typically the BCI coordinator did these sessions but on occasion they were done by an elder who had a central role in the project) while the afternoon was set aside (maximum two hours) for group sessions featuring presentations by the BCI team, much craft activity, and bonding among the participants (e.g., a smudging ceremony, food, films etc). Arranging for participating youths to move about whether to or from single or group sessions and for space and items such as the smudging kit to be available, required the cooperation of NSYF management including the supervisors / program coordinators for the youth cottages. In the second main phase of the project a specific youth worker (YW) was designated as liaison to facilitate this process. Overall, the scheduling worked well and when issues arose related to an activity (e.g., smudging, procedures for YWs to inspect medicine bags, determining what tools and crafts could be kept in a youth's cell), they were readily and amicably resolved. NSYF management encouraged the designated youths to participate in the BCI program and some cottage staff said the encouragement just stopped short of being a "must do" for the eligibles.

There was initial uncertainty about the specific dimensions of the program that the BCI team would offer its participants. The two major frameworks being considered were the Seven Sacred Teachings (analogous to Seven Grandfathers' Teachings as utilized in some other areas) and TAPWE (the Young Warriors program developed by Aboriginals in Alberta). Both approaches have been utilized with positive impact in some Canadian

correctional facilities and have a strong desistance thrust emphasizing cognitive transformation as the key to healing and wellness and subsequent successful reintegration. The Tapwe program was especially focused on changing violent dispositions among Aboriginal persons caught up in a context of violence and was cited as effective by CSC. MLSN arranged for the Alberta Tapwe team to come to Nova Scotia in January 2014 and provide 13 attendees with a fifteen day training session on Tapwe.

Earlier, in the summer of 2013, the BCI coordinator, along with two experienced elders, spent the first eight weeks (eight Thursdays) of implementation at the NSYF discussing each of the Seven Sacred Teachings (Wisdom, Bravery, Love, Respect, Honesty, Humility and Truth) with small groups of participating youths (3 youths on average). Each session began with a prayer and smudging, included a video presentation and ended with a closing prayer. The BCI team utilized the book and video produced by Bouchard (2009) and were generally of the view that the youths expressed interest and could readily identify with particular teachings.

While the Seven Sacred Teachings was the principal ideational framework for the BCI program, the Tapwe Young Warrior framework was significant too. In the fall of 2013 MLSN negotiated a special arrangement for Tapwe "certification" (e.g., a short training period) and the January training was well-received and the attendees (MLSN staff, BCI team members and other Aboriginal service providers) were considered by the Tapwe Alberta instructors to have successfully completed the abridged program. Several factors at the NSYF - the scheduling, the short periods of youth incarceration and the young participants' dispositions - did not lend themselves to the presentation format assumed in the Tapwe program. A more interactive, hands-on, group format was seen by BCI staff as more feasible and acceptable to the youths. The four BCI team members who participated in the Tapwe training subsequently weaved it into their work with the youth but did not specifically and explicitly follow the Tapwe format. The strategy was adopted of exploring a modified version of the Tapwe program - a Mi'kmaw version as it were – in any community-based thrust of the BCI.

By the end of the first main phase, the BCI program was essentially in place. The morning sessions explored individual issues, family trees and awareness and possible use of Aboriginal networks and activities in the community. The afternoon group sessions featured a variety of activities including smudging, short presentations by elders on specific themes, salient films or videos, and especially crafts. Youths were engaged in traditional Aboriginal (Mi'kmaq) crafts producing items such as a medicine pouch, a drum, and a dream catcher for themselves or loved ones, and, in the process, having informed elders and sometimes others talk with them about traditional attitudes and inspirations involved with these products. The number of participating youths remained small but was increasing. The average number stayed at two or three until mid-November 2013 when the average attendance for the next month was five male youths. In December a NSYF manager observed that most of these youths had not initially self-identified but rather the Aboriginal heritage was brought to his attention by the BCI coordinator. The BCI did well in engaging eligible youths and usually a high percentage did attend the group sessions. Female youths were generally few in number at the NSYF and where there were one or more Aboriginal girls, separate sessions were held and, interestingly, frequently attended by all the incarcerated girls residing in the female unit.

Implementation: Second Main Phase

Observationally, the second main phase of the BCI program, March 2014 through May 2015, began several weeks after the conclusion of the Tapwe training at Debert Nova Scotia. The BCI program at the NSYF remained essentially as described above. There were however three distinct sub-phrases during this period, namely Spring through Summer 2014, Fall through January 2015, and February to May 2015. The first sub-phase - Spring and Summer of 2014 - involved BCI focus on both the NSYF and community contexts. At the NSYF the sessions continued the same format and the median number of youths participating in the BCI sessions was 3 with a range between 1 and 4; since the total number of youths incarcerated at the NSYF hovered around 30 at this time, the BCI participants generally accounted for 10% of its total youth population. The median number of BCI team members at the sessions was 4 with little variation. Session observations noted a wide range of craft items (medicine pouches, drums, face masks,

dream catchers etc) being produced with the mentoring elders providing information on the cultural context for the item as well as technical knowledge on how to make it. There were presentations on the medicine wheel, tracing family heritage and spirit names; on occasion special traditional foods were consumed such as fry bread, herbal tea and molasses. Evaluation observers reported that the sessions were generally very well received by the youth with especial interest on the topics of family trees and acquiring a spirit name.

During this first sub-phrase there was much discussion and strategizing regarding the use of the Tapwe format and training at the community level, working with local service providers and at-risk youths in that milieu. It was driven partly by concern about the small numbers of Aboriginally-linked youths in the NSYF facility but mostly by the mandated, continuing focus on reintegration. Over several meetings (March, April and September) it was decided that a community-based program should be developed featuring a modified version of the Tapwe program (selecting a smaller number of themes and adapting them where appropriate to Mi'kmaw culture and behaviour), utilizing if possible local service providers receiving that orientation, and working with at-risk youths residing in the Indian Brook and Millbrook FNs.

The second sub-phase, Fall through January, was especially marked by a substantial increase in the number of youths participating in the BCI program at the NSYF. The average number of such youths per session was 7 with a range from 5 to 7; the number of eligible Aboriginal youths averaged 9 so at some points during that period the BCI eligibles constituted roughly 1/3 of all the incarcerated youths at the NSYF. The average number of BCI team members (i.e., coordinator and elders) per session decreased to 3. The format and activities remained the same as above; in the afternoon group sessions, in addition to crafts (e.g., dressing a feather) there was also a re-orientation on the Seven Sacred Teachings as well as more social activities such as singing and drumming and celebration. Observers noted that the youths were enthusiastic about participating in the sessions. Given resources and staffing most BCI attention in this sub-phase focused almost exclusively on the original objectives involving the BCI youths and

their milieu, in the facility and upon release. The ambitious plan for advancing reintegration for other at-risk youths through Tapwe-adapted programming in two FN communities was put on hold for the nonce but did receive some attention in the subsequent third sub-phase.

The core group of youths participating in the BCI during this second sub-phrase was comprised of seven older, non-status youths who were not initially identified as either having status or being native on admission forms but all of whom were quoted on the form as stating that they were of mixed race/ethnicity, one part of which was native. All did identity a parent or grandparent who they believed had Indian status. None of the seven had been raised in an Aboriginal milieu nor participated in any meaningful way in any Aboriginal / Mi'kmaq cultural activities. All had many previous convictions and all but one had had previous incarceration at the NSYF. Clearly, whatever the impact of the BCI, their reintegration would be challenging and the BCI team properly did place more emphasis in this sub-phase and the next one on establishing communication links with the youth prior to their release (e.g., phone numbers, facebook), assisting them in networking with appropriate service providers, and explaining how to go about obtaining status cards whether formal FN status or Native Council membership.

The third sub-phase beginning in February 2015 saw a decline in the number of BCI participants with a median number per afternoon session of 2 youths and a range of 2 to 4; the total eligible averaged just 3 youths throughout this phase. Most of the core group referred to above had been released but the two that remained continued to be the frequent participants. The number of BCI team attendees remained at 3. New crafts were taught such as making traditional jewelry, moccasins, tobacco pouches, fishing rods, arrows and snares, again provided with cultural context. Creating posters, learning some Mi'kmaw expressions and enjoying traditional food provided by an elder were other activities the youths engaged in. As mentioned above, there was some assistance provided youths to facilitate their networking upon release and being able to continue what for many participants had been a new engagement with Aboriginal society and

culture. Again, observation indicated that the youths were interested in and pleased with the group sessions.

In the third sub-phase there also was some focus on the community dimension, following in a limited way the strategy developed in September 2015. There were attempts to recruit local service providers and at-risk youths and utilize an amended Tapwe program with them but those tasks proved difficult for a variety of reasons, principally scheduling (availability often limited to evenings and / or weekends) and because project resources apparently did not permit sequestering (e.g., weekend sessions at special site) potentially interested persons in either grouping. Still, ten local service providers for youths were interviewed on project themes (see below) and a few youths attended several sessions managed by the BCI staff member. The implementation then identified issues, providing essentially information on how at-risk youths are responded to in the FN communities and how to carry out a reintegration strategy such as Tapwe at the community level in the future.

Implementation: Summary

Overall, then, the BCI project was implemented in keeping with its central goal of focusing on the youths in the NSYF and leaving a legacy of greater Aboriginal sensitivity and cultural competence at the facility. MLSN's BCI team had the benefit of an advisory group drawn from its partners in government and the NSYF. There was consensus among the advisory group and BCI leadership with respect to the above priorities of the project. The extensive scheduling of BCI activities at the NSYF was well developed and allowed for both individual mentoring and group sessions. Valuable advance was achieved in identifying the appropriate pool of eligible participants and in particular older, weakly Aboriginally-linked youths who were very high-risk but also very eager to learn more about their Aboriginal heritage and the alternative way of thinking and acting that could well enhance their likelihood of change (desistance) in the future. The programming of the group sessions, its interactive style, hands-on culturally informed craft work, and the focus not on the youths' offences but on alternative positive life approaches salient to their enhanced identity struck a responsive chord. The implementation's pertinence for

the youths' reintegration planning process while at the NSYF and their networking and social support upon release was quite modest especially given that the core youths were highly mobile and did not live in an Aboriginal community. To a significant degree the resources were not available for what was required. Finally, the possible focus on developing the BCI program for community reintegration of young offenders in FN communities was considered largely as part of a possible, adaptive strategy dependent on the number of participants at the NSYF. When those numbers increased and the resource requirements for effectively responding to the challenges proved quite limited, that community option became less feasible; nevertheless, sufficient implementation was carried out that should stand an BCI approach at the community level in good stead in the future.

NSYF AND ABORIGINAL YOUTH AT THE NSYF: THE CHALLENGE FOR THE BCI PROGRAM

The MLSN's BCI project had some earlier roots at the NSYF (e.g., holding an annual Aboriginal Day celebration for over a decade there) and could draw upon the multi-year experiences of its Bridges programming dedicated to working on community reintegration with adult Aboriginal inmates at the federal prisons in the Maritimes. In addition, under a personal contract with the NSYF, sweats were frequently held at the NSYF (once a month, separately for male and female youths), if youths and designated sweat directors / elders both were available. But aside from these considerations there was little Aboriginal presence at the facility. There had never been an Aboriginal employee at the NSYF whether on staff or in management, and, with one brief exception, (a few years back there was an Aboriginal woman participating in the delivery of an addictions program one day a week for a 6 month period) no Aboriginal person in a supportive service-providing role (e.g., religious ministry, teaching program or IWK mental health counsel).

The BCI initiative was then largely cutting new ground at the facility. Perhaps the most profound implication concerned eligibility. Few youths were designated on

NSYF administrative forms as having Indian status or were self-identified (whether on these forms or in everyday life at the facility) as being native (Aboriginal); as a result the initial expectation was that there could possibly be very few eligible youths and some consideration was being given to having the BCI program open to non-native NSYF youths as well, following an open format characteristic of Aboriginal Day participation and also adopted in the afrocentric-inspired iMOVe reintegration project there. Over time however BCI staff was able to identify a significant number of non-status male youths with meaningful Aboriginal ties and thus mount a feasible program that limited eligibility to those with evidently Aboriginal-linked heritage; indeed, at one point in the Fall of 2014 almost one-third of the youths at the facility were acknowledged by NSYF management to be appropriately BCI-eligible.

In describing the experiences and viewpoints of the youths participating in the BCI project, first there will be a comparison drawn with an overall sample of the NSYF youth taken in 2013 (the year the BCI project began) and then a presentation of the main themes in the youths' participation in the BCI and subsequently an assessment of the implications of that participation based on interviews and observations.

It was noted earlier that subsequent to the implementation of the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) in 2003 the number of youths in custody at the NSYF facility declined significantly, going from well over 100 on daily counts in 2002 to half that number in 2004 and declining modestly but steadily thereafter. Data available for the overall description of youths incarcerated there at the beginning of the BCI initiative in 2013 are drawn from the two central NSYF living units accounting for the majority of the incarcerated youth and come from several sources, primarily JEIN (i.e., admission card data), youth worker interviews, unit program coordinators and managers, interviews with the incarcerated youths and researchers' observations. This sample of 27 different NSYF youths provided a reasonable basis for a portrait of the male, youth-in-custody population and is quite congruent with the characterization of youths in custody throughout Canada where violent offences, repeat incarceration and disproportionate minority group identity have been features of youth in custody especially since the implementation of the YCJA. The data on the BCI participants come from similar sources and yielded a sample of 19

males and 3 females (the latter are not included in the tables below). Both samples involved youths incarcerated at the NSYF some time during a fifteen month period between 2013 and 2015.

Table 1 indicates that 59% of the youths in the general sample were 17 years of age or older (70% if one included those of age 16); the BCI youths were significantly older as 84% were at least 17 years old. The general NSYF youth sample was mostly Caucasian (63%) with 30% linked to African Nova Scotian ethnicity/race and 7% Aboriginal (that 7% Aboriginal figure has been almost a constant since 2000). Both Blacks and Aboriginals, especially Blacks, were over-represented compared to their maximally 3% in the overall Nova Scotian population. Clearly, as noted above, the general sample had a restrictive or limited definition of "Aboriginal". Among the BCI grouping, since all youths were Aboriginally-linked, the feature highlighted in the table was whether they had Indian status or not; only 40% did.

In the general sample, the youths' home residence was given as 48% HRM and 52% other, while among the BCI grouping the percentages were reversed. These percentages understate the extent to which youths in either grouping lived for periods of time, for a number of reasons, in the metropolitan area. The BCI youths typically displayed much such mobility whether from reserve to HRM or from small cities and towns to it. Employment and educational upgrade opportunities, availability of social services, anonymity, life style and networking with others were some of the key factors for such mobility. Since the early 2000s group homes for provincial youths in trouble or at high risk and aged 16 or under have been increasingly concentrated in HRM; as well, many non-profit community service agencies such as Phoenix House or the Micmac Native Friendship Centre located in Halifax provide a variety of services for youths (Clairmont 2012). Outside the larger reserves, there appears to be little alternative to the draw of the metropolitan area though permanent residence in HRM also does not appear to be norm for youths not reared there. And according to both the youths and service providers, troubled youths even in the larger reserves often drift to the metropolitan area.

Tables 1 indicates that youths in both the general and BCI samples have had difficulties in school and were well behind the norm in formal educational achievement for their age. In both samples only roughly a quarter of the youths were beyond grade 10 in their studies; the situation was worse for BCI youths given the combination of a lower percentage beyond grade 10 (i.e., 21% to 26%) and a higher percentage age 17 or older (i.e., 84% to 59%). The shortfall in educational attainment was aggravated in both samples by the youths' apparent lack of employment experience as attested to by service providers in HRM and the youths themselves, and clearly raised serious challenges for the youths' reintegration in society upon release from the NSYF and for initiatives at the facility which purport to facilitate that reintegration.

There were only modest differences between the general and the BCI youths with respect to the type of offence committed and the length of their sentence. In the general sample, the majority of youths (56%) were in the NSYF for serious violent offences against persons; these offences included assault, threats and robbery. Comparisons with data for most serious offence associated with youth custody at the NSYF in earlier periods indicate that violent offences have become increasingly common, rising from 17% in 2005-2008 to 26% in 2010 to the 56% noted here. Also, fully 52% were currently serving sentences of at least 180 days. Among the BCI grouping the percentages were similar, namely 53% sentenced on violent offences and a modestly higher percentage, 63%, serving sentences of at least 180 days (this higher difference appears to reflect the older ages among the BCI group). While the common patterns are valid, there were interesting variations by subgroups noted by NSYF officials and service providers. For example, the recorded assessments of NSYF staff pointed to proportionately less gang attachment among the BCI youths but more substance abuse, more familial issues, and more "out of control" behaviour (e.g., more administration of justice and YCJA offences and more "acting out") than among the African Nova Scotian youths. Such variations suggest that the BCI approach which emphasizes personal identity, cultural belonging and the seven sacred teachings may indeed be especially appropriate for Aboriginal youths in their developing effective strategies of desistance to improve the likelihood of their positive reintegration in society upon exiting the NSYF.

Table 1 clearly highlights the issues of re-incarceration and weak reintegration results among the NSYF youths, whether in the general or the BCI groupings. Despite the restrictive ceiling given that youths committing new offences (apart from breaching parole) once they turn 18 years of age cannot be re-admitted to the facility, the norm has been for at least three-quarters to have been previously incarcerated and roughly 40% in both groupings have had multiple previous bouts of incarceration. There was insufficient data in several BCI cases so these cases were not counted as having previous incarceration - if the cases were excluded from the calculation or if such data were available, it is very likely that the BCI group's percentages for previous incarceration and multiple previous incarcerations would be at least as high as found among the general youth population at the NSYF. Not surprisingly older youths were most likely to have experienced previous incarceration and multiple bouts of it.

Table 2 focuses on the behaviour and attitudes of the NSYF youth and sets the context for the more in-depth analyses provided by interviews and observations below. These data come from all the sources noted above and it can be noted at the outset that there are limitations associated with dependence on any one data source but a composite picture can be advanced with confidence. Level 3, the most serious write-up, often involves assault or significant non-compliance with NSYF policies and proscriptions (e.g., theft, making homebrew), and usually means that the youth so designated is sent to segregation (Unit 1B) though sometimes the young person may instead be "confined to cell" in his living unit. At the low end of non-compliance are level 1 incidents, usually entailing refusal to comply with a NSYF policy (e.g., not participating in a scheduled activity, not making one's bed) or a youth worker's command (e.g., maintenance of social order). Write-ups can have serious negative impact on the youth's opportunities for earned benefits such as some NSYF income or some desirable work assignments.

Among the general sample, during their current incarceration period**,** 38% of the youths received no level 3 write-up but 62% had at least one such write-up and 27% had four or more. Level 2 and "other" (basically level 1s) write-ups were significantly more commonplace; only 15% of the youths had not receive a Level 2 and only 11% were not given a Level 1 during their current period of incarceration. Among the BCI youths, the

percentages were not significantly different. About a third had no level 3 write-ups compared to only half that percentage without the less serious level 1s. In each of the two groupings, roughly 25% of the youths could be designated as having significant non-compliance (i.e., more than four level 3 and / or five level 2 write-ups). Data reported elsewhere (Clairmont, 2013) show that the more serious write-ups and the multiple write-ups were more frequent among the older youths. Rewards for positive behaviour, especially avoidance of level 3 write-ups, were secured by slightly more than a third of the youths allowing them special work opportunities outside the living units and / or making them eligible for the special off-site 24/7 learning program.

Table 2 also shows for the general sample, the assessments of youth workers regarding the attitude, behaviour and overall compliance of the youths whose experience at NSYF they were assigned to monitor regularly (the pattern is for each youth to be assigned a particular youth worker who usually submits monthly reports for the youths' Release Report Process). Generally, over the whole sample of 27 youths, the youth workers assessments indicated a 50 -50 split in whether or not the youth was seen as having good attitudes and behaviours, and being regularly in compliance of the rules. The data for the BCI youth, excluding half the sample for whom appropriate data were unavailable, were similarly split on essentially the same 50-50 basis. There will be a more detailed discussion of the BCI youths' experience and self-assessments below.

Summary

In sum, the data indicate that the BCI participants were quite similar to the general youth population at the NSYF in terms of offence patterns, previous incarceration and incident write-ups. As a grouping, they were slightly older and had poorer educational achievement. Interview data and perusal of administrative records suggest (these data are limited and thus the word 'suggest' is used here) that the BCI grouping (including females in this instance) were more likely to have substance abuse issues, less likely to be gang-affiliated and had less conventional family support. YLS/CMI scores produced by Nova Scotia Correctional Services (2012) indicate that the top three factors associated with high risk for incarcerated youths were prior or current offences, negative

leisure and recreational styles (e.g., type of friends, minimal involvement in well-regarded community organizations) and substance abuse. It should be noted that high risk has also been strongly associated in the criminological literature with age (late adolescence), weak family support and a grade-age gap (West, 1984; Smandych, 2012). Clearly, overall the BCI grouping was high risk but at the same time, as will be discussed in the next section, had some underlying issues that might well lend themselves to cognitive and behavioural transformation with alternative identity formation and social supports.

TABLE 1

DESCRIPTION OF YOUNG PERSONS, SELECTED VARIABLES*

FEATURE	OVERALL %	BCI YOUTHS
AGE 17 or more	59%	84%
CAUCASIAN / IND STATUS**	63%	40%
EDUC LEVEL >grde10	26%	21%
HRM RESIDENCE	48%	53%
ON REMAND AT CONTACT	26%	21%
VIOLENT OFFENSE SENTENCE	56%	53%
180+ DAYS SENTENCE	52%	63%
NSYF PRIOR TERMS***		
YES	80%	74%
MULTIPLE PRIORS	40%	37%

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* The total sample was 27 male youths, 16 in Unit 2A and 11 in Unit 3B. There were 19 male youths flagged for the BCI program.
** For the general sample, the % refers to those identified as Caucasian by NSYF administrative forms and self-identified. For the BCI group, the % refers to administrative and self-identified as having status under the Indian Act.
*** There was insufficient data available in several BCI cases so it is likely that, including both remand and 'sentenced to custody' cases, the % in the BCI grouping could be modestly higher for both previous incarceration (e.g., 80%) and multiple terms of incarceration (45%).

TABLE 2

BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG PERSONS, NSYF, SELECTED VARIABLES

FEATURE	OVERALL %	BCI YOUTHS
LEVEL 3 WRITE-UPS		
NONE	38%	31% - 35%*
4 OR MORE	27%	21% - 24%
LEVEL 2 WRITE-UPS		
NONE	15%	21% - 24%
5 OR MORE	22%	26% - 30%
LEVEL 1 OTHER WRITE-UPS		
NONE	11%	16% - 18%
5 OR MORE	52%	37% - 41%
YOUTH WORKERS ON Ys ATTITUDE		
GOOD	47%	
FAIR-POOR	53%	
YOUTH WORKERS ON Ys BEHAVIOUR		
GOOD	53%	
FAIR-POOR	47%	
YOUTH WORKERS ON Ys COMPLIANCE		
GOOD	53%	
FAIR-POOR	47%	

* A range is provided here since some data were unavailable in two instances so two values are given, one including the missing cases and the other (higher value) excluding them.

BCI YOUTHS: VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES

Background

Over the period Fall 2013 to May 2015, there were 23 youths, including three females, identified as eligible (i.e., having some direct Aboriginal ancestry) to participate but four were "no contact" and a few others were either on short remand and/or had no meaningful participation in the BCI program (e.g., just attended one session). Seventeen were interviewed formally at least once and eight on multiple occasions, usually a second time close to their release date or in a few instances after release. The richest data – the core as it were - were provided by the most frequently attending participants, namely nine youths who were non-status and not identified on as "native" on NSYF admission forms, and two with Indian band status. With few exceptions most of these core BCI youths were born and raised in the metropolitan Halifax area and all had spent much of their teenage lives there. Of the eleven, none reported significant, prior involvement or engagement with Aboriginal culture or Mi'kmaq activities. Indeed, more generally, even those BCI youths with status and /or living on reserve typically reported that they had had little engagement with Aboriginal cultural activities at the community level. Compared to the other BCI participants the Halifax-based males were more likely to have been associated with quasi-gangs; the other participants were more likely to have primarily had problems with substance abuse.

Roughly half the BCI participants reported some health issues, usually mental health problems such as ADHD, sleep problems and a need for IWK counseling with respect to alcohol and drug abuse. About a third had a pattern of frequent incident write-ups, suggesting an "out of control" behavioural tendency. Family support was unclear. Most of the BCI participants did report significant family support even the several (at the least, five) that had been in group homes prior to incarceration. In discussing their future upon exit, the large majority indicated that they would be living with family members and here a few mentioned hoping to improve their family relations when released. NSYF youth workers, drawing on their experience with the specific youths

assigned to them for regular progress reports, generally considered the youths' family support to be modest at best. Consistent with their age-grade gap, it was quite common for the BCI youths to indicate that they did not like school. At the same time, in common with virtually all the young people at the NSYF, when asked about future plans, they typically talked about completing their high school study (or its equivalent certification); only one BCI participant indicated that he hoped to attend university. The BCI youths also anticipated, after release, obtaining blue collar work whether painting, working in the fisheries, roofing work, or, most commonly among the males, "going out West".

About 80% of the BCI youths had been previously incarcerated at the NSYF and almost 50% had had multiple prior incarcerations there. Not surprisingly then, perhaps, they were used to the living arrangements and the various NSYF policies and practices. Virtually all the BCI youths reported that they got along well with the other youths and the youth workers and there was no mention of bullying or unfair treatment. There was little enthusiasm expressed about other programming at the facility such as anger management (i.e., CALM) or Restorative Practices, but a few youths did expressly appreciate the more individually-focused NSYF on-site educational program and the four who had been accepted into the NSYF's 24/7 off-site educational program during the latter part of their sentence, were enthused about it. Also, several of the BCI youths were happy to earn, by good conduct, the opportunity to get the sought-after work assignments available to youths at the facility which yielded tuck money and interesting work experience.

Experiencing the BCI Program

Congruent with the many observations of the evaluation team, most BCI participants, and certainly all the core participants, stated that they were glad they had decided to participate in the BCI program. Attendance was generally good despite being voluntary and the youths having valued options such as recreation. It was testimony to the engaging diversity of activities offered and the enthusiasm of the BCI

team in presenting it. The participants themselves varied in highlighting their favorite activity. The one-on-one sessions were praised for the information provided on Aboriginal networking on the "outside" (e.g., pursuing cultural activities, seeking status or becoming Native Council members, and utilizing Aboriginal services), and for the mentoring these conversations provided on a variety of issues. The craft activities (the hows, whys and the cultural significance presented by skilled elders) were highlighted by all the youths; indeed, while the observers typically rated virtually all the group sessions as positive with respect to the youths' interest and apparent enjoyment, the several sessions rated "very positive" or "great" all involved youths making items such as moccasins, arrows and snares; one core group youth expressed such enthusiasm as follows: " I loved learning how to make dream catchers, and the legend behind the dream catchers. How when the dream catcher is hung above your bed or on a bedroom window, the bad dreams get tangled in the web, and are taken away by the good spirits by the morning dew".

The presentations on the Seven Sacred Teachings, the Medicine Wheel, and a few of the Tapwe themes were well received as were the several movies and videos shown (e.g., the Donald Marshall Jr film, the APTN's "Fish Out of Water" production about urban young people like the BCI core group visiting FNs and learning more about native culture). One core group youth apparently was "put at ease knowing there are sacred teachings … respect is my favorite teaching … to respect myself as well as others. I have always wanted to learn my culture, my roots and through the BCI program I have learned a lot."" The inclusive stretch of the youth's stated positive experience with the BCI is reflected in the comment of another core member that, "I learned how to make different things (crafts), how to pray, smudge, and my culture"; that youth actually crafted a small table featuring Aboriginal symbolism (the four directions and feathers) for BCI use.

Both the morning and afternoon group sessions were basically attended only by BCI team members and the participating youths. In the afternoon's group sessions a NSYF staff member was sometimes involved, especially in 2014-2015, but usually just for start-up activity (e.g., space issues, the smudging kit, sometimes food items). NSYF

staffers were not unwelcomed but they also were not invited so the BCI sessions were largely autonomous, a "safe" environment for their expression, with a bonding, we-ness character that was frequently celebrated by the youths; as one of the youngest BCI participants commented, ""it's good to get away from others and be with our own people".

Youth Views on the Impact of the BCI Program

The most common impact advanced by the BCI youths was that they learned much about their cultural heritage and developed a more confident sense of who they were**.** That view was expressed well by one youth who considered that he "got a lot out of it", adding "knowing what I am, I don't feel as lost as before … my culture helps me to grow as a person. I feel comfortable now knowing there are other aboriginal youths who feel lost as well". Clearly the BCI program effectively focused not on the youths' offences but on desistance, that is facilitating the youths' cognitive transformation that might provide an alternative, socially positive self-image and identity.

There was among the BCI participants a sense that, because of their participation, they were learning more about themselves and that was causing them to reflect on their lives and behaviour patterns. One youth with many convictions and incarcerations noted that that he was impacted by a particular elder's story telling (it involved one of Tapwe themes), noting "It made me think ... I really haven't done anything with my life". The youths conveyed the idea that the BCI program generated both self-knowledge and self-esteem; as one youth put it, "we need exposure to our identity. We need to learn our roots and culture, our Aboriginal ways". Youths who were re-interviewed, whether post-release and in the community or just prior to release, strongly reiterated that view and the value of the BCI initiative.

Several youths highlighted an impact cited as pervasive by the BCI team, namely that the group activities – the smudging, the stories, the crafts – had a calming effect on them. One youth noted that the sessions helped him control his anger, have more

patience and a better outlook on life. Another youth commented, “at times I get written up on purpose, because I like being in disciplinary, just to think and calm down and to think some more. I also enjoyed listening to the Mi’kmaq music, the chanting which is like our heartbeat. I enjoyed learning how to smudge, and the sacred medicines cedar, sage, sweet grass, and tobacco. I feel at ease with my ADHD after the smudging ceremony”. This dispositional or emotional impact was manifested by youths in a more behavioural fashion too; one youth observed “I’m not scared to hug anymore” while observers noted that hugs were common among the youths and BCI team members on meeting up and leaving at the groups sessions.

Participation in the BCI program did have an impact too on the youths’ attitudes and behaviour in the NSYF. Several of the youths for example noted that, due to the BCI participation, they got along better with other NSYF youths and the youth workers assigned to their cottages, for several reasons, namely the BCI program made them less disposed to frustration, anger and violence, made them more likely to try to cultivate a different, more social and positive persona, and, in their view, it garnered for them more respect and status from the other youths and the youth workers who developed an awareness of their special heritage and identity; one BCI youth commented, “**“**they {NSYF staff) made room available for the sessions and staff seemed to have more respect for Aboriginal youths back in the unit”. Several youths reported that they found their current incarceration better than earlier ones because of the BCI program (e.g., “this time being at NSYF is better because of the project”).

The data on incident write-ups suggest that associated with the BCI participation there were fewer level 2 and level 3 write-ups and while the small numbers of youths and lack of a control group necessitate caution about behavioural change, there is some additional support for deducing a positive behavioural impact in the section below on the youth workers’ perceptions of the BCI impact. In three notable instances, youths’ high levels of write-ups dramatically declined concurrent with their high level of BCI participation; in one case the youth had 41 write-ups in 2012 but zero in 2013-2014. And, as noted above, four youths were permitted to attend the 24/7 program offsite and

several obtained desirable work assignments at the NSYF, perks contingent upon good behaviour. There also appears to have been a synergetic impact on the participating youths' engagement in other NSYF programs and services such as the IWK and the chaplain ministry (e.g., there was a significant increase in the number of youth wanting to earn from the chaplain a wooden cross to wear around their necks, something that they observed Donald Marshall wearing in the film on his prison experience); one youth spoke to that impact as follows: "I don't feel as lost as before. I was able to participate more in the other programs, like seeing and praying with Mike the Minister".

Looking to the Future

Virtually all the BCI youths, especially the core group that had had little if any involvement prior to the BCI experience, indicated that they wanted to continue and build upon the engagement with the Aboriginal heritage they had been exposed to in the BCI project. The majority of non-status youths spoke of either exploring the possibility of obtaining band status or getting membership in Native Council. There were also now aware of the practical benefits that could result if successful in these quests and also of the need to encourage a presumably eligible parent or grandparent to become involved in that process. There was some thinking as well that continuing and building upon the BCI experience in cultural awareness and activities could facilitate their adopting a different mind-set and avoiding recidivism; as one young female BCI participant – a status Indian living on reserve – commented, "involvement in cultural activities would help me stay straight". Interestingly, most of the youths also thought of the BCI legacy at the NSYF, explicitly hoping that the NSYF would proceed with a discussed painting of an Aboriginal mural on the gym wall.

Despite the positive experience that the BCI yielded for the youths, the challenges for continuity and enhancement of the BCI experience post-release are very significant. As noted above, the plan to interview the youths after release could not be realized since the youths were highly mobile and either could not be reached or did not want to be interviewed. The few who were interviewed on the outside reported quite limited

contact with the BCI team or any other Aboriginal service providers and thus the likelihood of significant continuity in their Aboriginal cultural awareness and activity was poor. Also, half of the core group youths were re-incarcerated at the NSYF in the last year of the BCI program there. The BCI team made an effort to maintain contact with the youths and facilitate their networking with the Aboriginal services and programs at the community level but limited resources provided only a small window of opportunity and the BCI team had no role in NSYF's release planning process (see below).

Summary

Twenty-three youths made up the eligibility pool for the BCI program at the NSYF. Seventeen were engaged and eleven constituted a core grouping of regular participants whose views and behaviour constitute the lion's share of the data analyzed here. Nine of the eleven lived in metropolitan Halifax (HRM) and were neither status nor involved in any meaningful way in Mi'kmaq culture and activities prior to their BCI experience. The BCI participants had many issues including mental health problems, substance abuse and questionable family supports. They had done poorly in the school system and there was a significant age-grade disparity. Still they had aspirations to finish high school, get a basic labour job and strengthen their family ties upon release from the NSYF. Over 80% of the BCI participants had previous incarcerations and reported getting along well with other NSYF youths and youth workers. Prior to current incarceration, gang involvement was common among the core grouping usually residing in HRM.

The BCI youths expressed much pleasure and appreciation for the BCI program. Attendance at the Thursday sessions was generally high at both the one-on-one mentoring sessions in the morning and the group gatherings in the afternoon. The latter sessions were quite varied providing smudging ceremonies, presentations by the coordinator and elders, craft activity, occasional movies or videos, and an easy going bonding among the youths and members of the BCI team. Different youths highlighted different activities but all the dimensions of the program were participated in enthusiastically. The youths reported that they learned much about their cultural

heritage and realized a better, positive sense of who they were. They identified the initiative as creating a basis for an alternative, positive self-image and identity. Most youths emphasized that the BCI experience had a calming effect on them, helping them deal with anger and ADHD-type issues. Their observed behaviour in the afternoon sessions was congruent with these statements. It was consistent too with the data on write-ups and the assessments by the youth workers. Most core group youths also identified a synergetic impact of the BCI participation for their involvement in other NSYF programs and services.

Most BCI participants, especially the core group, expressed the wish to continue with and build upon their BCI experience when released, linking up with Aboriginal networks, seeking status or Native Council membership, participating in cultural activities and enjoying the mentoring of elders. The challenges to realizing such wishes were profound and initial data indicate that not much was being achieved along those lines.

THE BCI TEAM'S PERSPECTIVES

The BCI team consisted of a full-time coordinator and, on a part-time basis, several elders (in all 7 elders participated, all but one being a status Indian) experienced in similar programming. Their perspectives and comments can best be discussed in terms of ten themes, namely

1. There was initial concern as noted earlier about the few recorded Aboriginal youths at the NSYF and the team was open to adaptive strategies such as also working with high risk youths at the community level. But when decision-time was upon the project as to its focus, the coordinator's collaborative role with NSYF management in identifying other youths with significant Aboriginal heritage had largely eliminated that potential necessity and the team was generally delighted that the focus on the NSYF youths could be maintained.
2. The BCI team's coordinator and lead elder had regular contact with senior NSYF management, periodic engagement with the cottages' program

coordinators and, in 2014-2015, with the liaison staff assigned by NSYF management. Other BCI team members had little contact with any NSYF staff, basically sometimes with the liaison personnel and on rare occasions with the senior manager for programming at the facility. There was minimal formal orientation on the BCI objectives provided to or requested by the NSYF management or youth workers, and little equivalent orientation from NSYF to the BCI team. Still, BCI team members generally considered the relationship between the project and the NSYF staff to be limited but cordial and helpful. The NSYF management was seen to agree with BCI eligibility designations, to facilitate the youths' participation in the BCI program, and when issues developed, such as what the youths were allowed to take back into their cells (dream catchers and medicine bag but not drums, drum sticks, masks, talking stick, and feathers etc) and ensuring that various tools used in making crafts were accounted for, they were usually quickly and amicably resolved.

3. There were two areas in the relationship between the BCI team and the NSYF that were somewhat problematic, namely (a) some tension around the autonomy of the BCI program activities within the institution and (b) the possible BCI contribution to assessments of the participating youths for the release planning process. The BCI team appreciated the collaboration with the NSYF while at the same time was concerned about maintaining a high level of autonomy that would provide for the youths a milieu where they would feel confident to be themselves and discuss their concerns. NSYF management on the other hand while acknowledging these concerns, needed to know what was happening in the sessions both for its own management responsibilities and for its assessment of the youths (i.e., what they were learning and whether they were engaged). This tension sometimes led to disquiet among BCI team members regarding NSYF staff's type of involvement at the afternoon group sessions, and, on the other hand, some frustration among NSYF management in not having good information on how the participating youths were

responding to the BCI program. Additionally, the BCI team had virtually no contact with the youth workers responsible for the preparation of monthly assessments of the participating youth nor of course did the YWs have much idea of how the youth was behaving in the BCI program; thus potentially valuable information exchange that might advantage the youths did not occur. Such tensions are to be expected and can easily be overstated, but significant autonomy may effect a kind marginality vis-à-vis the other party (the BCI leaders noted "we were outsiders"). Perhaps better up-front discussions between the BCI team and the NSYF staff could have minimized the tensions and generated more of a sense of partnership in working with the youths.

4. The BCI team was united in the view that the BCI program was very appropriate for the participating youths. Given that most participating youths had virtually no experience with Aboriginal culture and activities, that attendance was voluntary and that the youths frequently had problems such as ADHD, they considered that hands-on, interactive activity coupled with effective conveyance of cultural significance via story telling and visuals along with snacks and bonding would be preferable to formal presentations and compliment well the one-on-one sessions in the morning. They all emphasized too the Seven Sacred Teachings framework as something that the youths could readily relate to. One team member commented: "using interesting crafts to teach and communicate about our culture and show its value and world view was a good strategy". Another mused that the youths talked about the seven sacred teachings (especially "respect") and "if they are practiced throughout their life, than they may have a chance at living a better life… To have a balanced life, spiritual, physical, mental and emotional". Most BCI team members appreciated the value of the alternative Tapwe framework but considered it problematic given the scheduling and other factors at the NSYF and so thought it more appropriate in the more flexible community settings.

5. The BCI team all considered that the BCI program was having an impact on youths' thinking and behaviour. They believed that the enthusiasm and good attendance record of the youths indicated that they were gaining a better self-image and identity amid a supportive social grouping of similar youths. A male elder whose specialty was crafts observed: "Having the BCI program at the facility has been very positive for the youth as well as the staff at the facility. As a matter of fact our herbal teas, medicines, and our traditional food such as luski, four cents bread, moose meat, fish, deer meat, rabbit meat, give our Aboriginal youth especially an insight to have a healthy way of life. To have a healthy mind, body and soul keeps us in balance. So these Aboriginal youth can carry on these teachings, and to practice them, a new way to cope in life, with prayers, smudging, being kind, learning the seven sacred teachings, and also to practice them in everyday life**".**

6. While acknowledging that the positive impact for the participating youths might be more latent than actualized depending upon their reintegration success, the team members cited successes and challenges for the BCI project. Among the successes were identifying and engaging an otherwise neglected grouping of youths with significant Aboriginal heritage, developing an effective and appropriate program (e.g., the 7 Sacred Teachings, crafts in a cultural context) for very high risk youths at the NSYF, establishing a good basis for collaboration with NSYF officials, and increasing the Aboriginal presence at the facility. Several BCI team members pointed to some policy development with respect to Aboriginal youths at the facility such as the possibility of the youths smudging if they request to do so and more staff knowledge of Aboriginal customs such as the use and official scrutiny of medicine bags.

7. The BCI team members were all quite aware of the challenges facing the participating youths in following up upon and sustaining if not enhancing the BCI experience. The elders living on reserve were concerned about the access

to Aboriginal programs and services that the off-reserve and non-status HRM-based core group members would ever be able to access; in their view it would be next to impossible for them to access band-based programs. The BCI leadership reported that in HRM little community support in housing, employment and other major concerns was otherwise available for the youths either through non-profit agencies or through the Native Council or the MNFC (in July 2015, after the BCI project formally ended an office was opened at the MNFC to assist youths of Aboriginal heritage with employment). Beyond these basic needs, some BCI team members expressed concern about the difficulty that the youths would encounter seeking status or membership in Aboriginal networks.

8. The awareness of such challenges to the youths' developing alternative cognitive behavioural life patterns on top of the usual recidivism potential of these high risk youths caused serious concern for the BCI team. They did put an effort into maintaining contact with the youths subsequent to their release in the 2014-2015 phase via visits, telephone and the social media. Unfortunately the mobility of the youths, the pressing nature of their immediate needs and the limited resources available to the BCI project at that point in time limited their putting into place an effective social support network.

9. Generally the BCI team members considered that the project has yielded a legacy for Aboriginal sensitivity at the NSYF. Certainly they hoped that the NSYF would continue some of the BCI initiatives such as making smudging available for Aboriginal youths and also enhance the Aboriginal presence symbolically by finishing the dedicated wall mural in the gym. It was noted that in the wake of the BCI project the NSYF itself has funded a more modest version of BCI for 2 days a month. The BCI project in their view has succeeded in advancing a feasible program aiming at a strong desistance

impact among high risk offenders and that is something that the NSYF should be interested in given its progressive and inclusive thrusts in recent years.

10. BCI team members suggested a number of improvements that could improve their project's objectives including more orientation provided by both the NSYF and a project such as their own, and a greater collaboration / partnership in reintegration planning. The main suggested improvement by far focused on mobilizing community social support to nurture an alternative identity and life style and assist in the conventional needs for housing, employment and education; successful reintegration requires both attention and resources for these broad factors and currently are scarcely available.

Summary

Despite initial concerns, the BCI team was able to identify a significant number of NSYF youths who had Aboriginal heritage and were interested in participating in the program. Good communication and collaboration was established between the BCI coordinator and the NSYF program coordinator and issues regarding eligibility, scheduling and the BCI activities within the institution were resolved expeditiously. Other members of the BCI team and other NSYF staff had little engagement or orientation vis-à-vis one another views or activities but the consensus view of the BCI team was that relationship between the two staffs was cordial and helpful. The BCI program overall received more supportive accommodation at the NSYF than most other outside-provided projects but two unresolved issues limited the collaboration, namely the tension between autonomy (important to the BCI) and information exchange (important to the institution), and the absence of any meaningful input by the BCI into the release planning process for the youths.

BCI personnel considered that the program developed and the implementation strategies employed were appropriate for the needs, capacity and circumstances of the youths and a good fit to the scheduling and other constraints at the NSYF. All BCI team members considered that the program did have the desired impact on the youths as reflected in their enthusiasm, attendance and behaviour. Successes highlighted included

(1) engaging an otherwise neglected group of youths with Aboriginal kinship ties that could benefit from the BCI program; (2) establishing a positive collaborative relationship with NSYF staff, and (3) enhancing the Aboriginal presence in the facility in a variety of ways. The major challenge was deemed to be sustaining the youths' awakened interest in their Aboriginal heritage after their release from incarceration since there was little social support and networking with Aboriginal services and mentors in the community. The BCI team appreciated the need to maintain contact with the released youths but the mobility of the youths and the limited resources of the BCI project made that very difficult. There was much hope that the legacy at the NSYF could be significant in presence (e.g., an Aboriginal mural in the gymnasium), institutional policy adaptation to Aboriginal practices (e.g., smudging, crafts) and the NSYF funding for a continuation of a modest BCI-type program. Three major suggestions for future direction advanced by most BCI team members were (a) more mutual orientation presentations between the BCI and the NSYF staffs; (b) some collaboration between BCI and NSYF staff in exit planning for the participating youths; (c) mobilizing community circles of support for released youths.

THE NSYF STAFF: COLLABORATION AND PERSPECTIVE

Interviews were completed with fifteen NSYF staff persons (management, program coordinators and YWs), six on multiple occasions and three key officials on a regular basis. Additionally, three interviews were carried out with other NSYF-contracted service providers at the facility. In particular, youth workers assigned to provide monthly reports on the reintegration progress of ten Aboriginal youths were interviewed about the youth's views on the BCI program, their participation in it and its impact on the youth's behaviour and attitudes. The main themes deduced from interviews with the NSYF staff were as follows:

1. The consensus view among the NSYF staff was that there had been a very limited Aboriginal presence at the facility prior to the BCI project. One veteran youth worker expressed that consensus in commenting that pre-BCI NSYF did very little for Aboriginals and "there was no celebration of being native … they were not high on the status list and did not especially proclaim their identity". Several veteran youth workers and other front-line employees stated that there has never been a full-time regular Aboriginal youth worker or staff member at the NSYF and the Aboriginal presence was limited to occasional sweats and, since the early days of the 21st century, the festive Aboriginal Day put on and cost-shared by MLSN.

2. The veteran NSYF staff members reported that in past years the identified Aboriginal youths were more clearly Aboriginal in appearance and by status and reserve residence, and were numerically common though never making up a large proportion of the incarcerated youths. They appreciated that nowadays there is more Aboriginal diversity among the youths. The general consensus of the staff members was that the Aboriginal youth of the turn of century period or earlier were better "grounded" but then they added that that was also true of the non-Aboriginal youths at the facility in that era. Generally the NSYF staff who expressed an opinion considered that there was little difference noticeable in attitude or behaviour between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal NSYF youths then or now. A significant sub-grouping did suggest that African Nova Scotian youths were different from other NSYF youths in recent years in having stronger family support and gang involvement.

3. NSYF staff responsible for female youths also considered that there was no major difference between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youths in behaviour or attitudes. They noted that there was little sense of hierarchy or exclusion among the young girls and that they were typically collegial and helping to one another. In any group BCI activity (e.g., smudging, making

dream catchers, Aboriginal Day) all the girls would participate, not just the Aboriginal ones.

4. The youth workers professed no ambivalence about the appropriateness of the BCI program drawing in youths who were not status or did not check off "native" ethnicity on the administration forms or had minimal involvement with Aboriginal culture or social networks prior to their current incarceration. They readily acknowledged that there would be identity issues among these teenagers and perhaps the BCI program could be of value to them in those regards; several added that, in any event, it would not hurt. For other NSYF staff who had responsibilities for programming, shuttling the youths to and from diverse spaces and felt an obligation, personal or as a matter of institutional policy, to encourage somewhat reluctant youths newly identified as Aboriginal by the BCI team to participate in the program, there was some initial ambivalence and skepticism but they ceded to the BCI designations for eligibility and became more positive about the value of doing so (i.e., being more inclusive) over time.

5. None of the youth workers reported being well-informed about the BCI program and its objectives and most considered that to be unfortunate in that they might have been able to be helpful in its successful implementation (e.g., encouraging youth attendance, noting that youth participation in their monthly assessments of youths for release). One youth worker commented that "I knew nothing about the BCI so all I could write in my reports on [the youth assigned to him] was how many BCI sessions he attended". Management and liaison role players were better informed and most had participated at least in one orientation session.

6. Virtually all the NSYF staff from top management to youth worker considered that the facility was placing some emphasis on collaborating with the BCI program. It was noted that the BCI had significant autonomy in its sessions at

the NSYF, that it accounted for a full day in a busy NSYF program, that its designation of eligibility was invariably accepted, and that NSYF encouraging youth to attend even stretched to asking a reluctant youth to at least talk with the BCI coordinator and hear her out. As noted earlier, management support was seen by a few NSYF staff as making the program "pretty much a must do" for the designated youths. Clearly for a variety of reasons, reflecting the progressive characterization of the NSYF, its leadership in programming for incarcerated youths, and the declining number of incarcerated youths, and sensitivity to possible issues of Aboriginal rights, the NSYF administration was seen to be fully behind the BCI initiative. As one senior Corrections official stated, "the BCI thrust was in keeping with our mandate and direction".

7. Youth workers and other NSYF staff usually considered that the BCI-eligible youths did have some identity issues and that the BCI initiative could have a quite positive impact on them. One NSYF staff member, well-informed and more actively involved in the BCI than other staff, considered that the BCI initiative has been important for native youth identity especially given the weak family connections of the native youths at the NSYF (he compared the family support unfavorably with the family support of the African Nova Scotian youths). Another YW observed that some of the participating youths exhibited a special pride in their Aboriginal identity at the Aboriginal Day festivities.

8. Generally the NSYF staff believed that the BCI participants were positive about the program, and happy to attend as reflected in the attendance rates. One youth worker observed that all five youths in her unit participated and "some came clearly out of the woodwork about their legacy". Another YW noted that his youth (i.e., the youth assigned to him for monthly reports) was an enthusiast who contributed creatively to BCI crafts and that "his participation was fine as were most youths once they got engaged in the

program". There were a few exceptions where the participating youths according to one cottage program coordinator 'simply drifted out" of the BCI program without any apparent or stated reason.

9. There was virtually complete unanimity, among those who ventured an opinion, with respect to the value of the BCI initiative and the appropriateness of its program – the mentoring, the crafts, the cultural messages - and most indicated that it has helped make the youths' attitudes and behaviour more positive. Several youth workers and liaison staff reported that there has been for some participating youths a decline in write-ups and they have earned sought-after work assignments, something that might well be related to the BCI engagement. One YW noted that the youth assigned her for monthly progress reports was impulsive and sometimes had a poor attitude so she had to make a special effort to convince him to go to the BCI sessions but once he began, she noticed positive changes in his behaviour and he began to request other NSYF therapy such as counseling from the IWK. Several other youth workers reported that for the youths "BCI seems to have helped and may be filling the void". Another youth worker commented that "the BCI impact on youths' conduct may be latent but is there".

10. Data were not available for an adequate assessment of the synergetic implication of the BCI program largely because the youths' monthly RPP assessment was uninformed about their BCI engagement. Still. there was some evidence for such an effect. The chaplain reported that since the BCI program there have been more Aboriginal youth who have attended church services and earned their wooden crosses; he referred to a 60% increase in youth participation largely attributable to the BCI participation. Other more casually acquired data are congruent with such a synergy impact.

11. Staff in the girls' cottage also considered that the girls appreciated the program and participated much in it. They made dream catchers, medicine

bags and often (though irregularly) smudged. In addition to participating in Aboriginal Day, the girls had their own special Aboriginal day and all the girls were drawn into participating. The staff considered the BCI to be good for the girls and for the institution and would encourage its legacy and some funding to sustain it.

12. Many NSYF staff members were skeptical about the long-term impact of the BCI experience for the incarcerated youths. They considered that, given the youths' background, especially the pre-BCI, minimal engagement in Aboriginal culture and service and support networks, the legacy for most youths could be minimal as their BCI involvement would not be sustainable once released. One YW indicated that he was impressed with the youth's positive behavioural change but also thought that continuance would be unlikely upon release into his HRM milieu. Another YW expressed the same view, acknowledging that the BCI has helped the youths on identity issues and been a useful complement to the NSYF programming but wondering "if it has any traction"; in his words, "it will be up to the natives to keep it going". At best, the NSYF staff was uncertain about the BCI's fundamental impact on the youth, highlighting their limited Aboriginal ties in the community and issues of housing and employment upon release.

13. The BCI program did impact on the NSYF facility in a variety of way including a generally positive assessment of the program by the NSYF staff, greater staff awareness of the diversity of Aboriginal characterization, the cultural significance of indigenous artifacts / crafts such as dream catchers, drums, medicine bags, and of ceremonies such as smudging, more NSYF access to services and elders in the Aboriginal community through personal contacts and the Mi'kmaq Resource Directory produced by the BCI / MLSN. Public Aboriginal postings (e.g., poster, dream catchers), plans for a major Aboriginal mural in the facility's gymnasium, and the 2015-2016 fiscal year continuance, solely at NSYF expense, of a BCI-spin-off program, all point to

a significant potential legacy. Most importantly perhaps the NSYF has developed a more in-depth sense of the requirements and issues for future programming involving Aboriginal offenders and the likely collaborative service providers (e.g., MLSN). It is clear too that some shortfalls could be readily improved upon such as (a) developing some guidelines for the elder role in the facility, (b) facilitating more presentations on the objectives and implementation strategies of the program by the engaged collaborator (here the BCI) to relevant sub-groupings (e.g., the YWs to whom Aboriginal youths were assigned for release planning, the IWK staff keenly interested in identity and cultural issues) and (c) pre-implementation discussions between the NSYF and the outside service providers with respect to issues of information exchange and the balance between autonomy and accountability.

Summary

The assessment of the views and experiences of NSYF staff persons and service providers vis-à-vis the BCI project was based on interviews with eighteen different role players. There was a consensus among them that prior to the BCI there was a quite limited Aboriginal presence, both numerically and culturally, at the facility. Veteran staff persons pointed to significant changes in the Aboriginal youth population at the NSYF over the past 20 years but also noted that then and now there was little difference in attitudes and behaviour between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youths. The YWs expressed little problem about the wide ranging, inclusive criteria used by the BCI in determining eligibility for the program, while for a variety of reasons there was more initial questioning expressed by NSYF staff charged with the responsibility of facilitating the BCI program at the facility; however the BCI designations were completely accepted by NSYF management as the BCI program was deemed to be in keeping with the mandate and direction of the NSYF. Information about the BCI's objectives and implementation strategies was largely limited to NSYF management while other NSYF groupings such as the YWs and the IWK staff inadvertently received little information, which in their view limited their contribution to the program.

The NSYF staff agreed that the BCI-eligible youths had identity issues and that the program could have a positive impact on these underlying problems. They considered that with few exceptions the Aboriginal-linked youths were positive about the program and attended it regularly. There was virtually complete unanimity among the staff concerning the value of the BCI approach and the appropriateness of its implementation. Among the positive attitudinal and behavioural impacts they cited were fewer write-ups, earned sought-after work assignments, and synergetic effects on other NSYF programs (e.g., education, religious activity via the chaplaincy). Most NSYF youth workers and other staff expressed much uncertainty about the long term impact of the BCI program, pointing to the mostly metro youths' lack of involvement pre-BCI in Aboriginal activities and networks and the major problems they would encounter upon release with little in the way of a support network. The legacy of the BCI for the NSYF was also uncertain in their view but here they pointed to changes that had occurred (including the 2015-2016 funding of a BCI-spin-off program) and the experience that the institution has gained about accommodating an Aboriginal program. They also identified several recommendations for consideration (e.g., more information exchange, engagement of YWs and NSYF service providers) as more Aboriginal programming is developed at the NSYF.

THE COMMUNITY DIMENSION OF THE BCI INITIATIVE

The community focus of the BCI initiative was not highlighted in the project's logic model but objective # 3 did refer to increased culturally relevant community support for the incarcerated youth and for an enhanced partnership between the NSYF and Aboriginal community services. At the outset of the BCI initiative there was much concern expressed by all parties – provincial government, NSYF and MLSN – regarding the ostensibly few Aboriginal youths incarcerated at the NSYF facility. It was considered that the adaptive strategies might as well include targeting high risk youths in the community, whether on probation or with a pattern of high risk identified by MLSN

employees and other community service providers. Following the Tapwe orientation provided by the Alberta group, BCI / MLSN planning in the Spring and September of 2014, subsequently did incorporate a possible community dimension and by the fall of 2014, a community intervention program was developed to that end. It included a revised Tapwe framework of sessions using fewer topics and tailoring them to Mi'kmaq realities, targeting high risk youths and possibly young adults in two First Nations, and engaging local community service providers and elders who were to receive orientation in the Tapwe approach. However, as the community dimension was being fleshed out, the BCI's original priorities at the NSYF loomed larger and more demanding of available resources (both financial and staff attention). BCI staff in collaboration with NSYF management had identified a large number of incarcerated youths as having Aboriginal heritage (i.e., direct blood lines) and thus eligible for participation in the program; at one point in late fall 2014, one-third of all incarcerated youths at the NSYF were deemed eligible and most were usually participating in the BCI program there.

While no substantial community-based programming occurred in the BCI initiative, significant work was done on creating the format and structure for such activity. A project framework was developed and interviews were completed with ten community-based service providers to at-risk youths in metro Halifax, Millbrook First Nation and the Annapolis Valley First Nation. The following themes emerged from these interviews:

1. There was much consensus that the significant problem for at-risk youths and young adults on reserve was alcohol and drug abuse. No one identified violence or property crimes as being major issues. The high-risk grouping was seen to be small in number, most estimates referring to about 10 young people in Millbrook; in the Annapolis Valley FNs the service providers held that there were few high risk youths (e.g., several ADHD cases were noted) and little extant CJS problems (i.e., violent or property crimes).

2. In Millbrook the presumed roots of the problems for the high risk youths generally reflected the area of expertise and service of the interviewees,

whether that be in family support, educational services or in collaborating with other community services, but most common was a reference to inadequate family support and experiences. A service provider in family services contended that "There are community services and facilities and "if their [the high risk youths] own problems were addressed at home first then there would be honest to goodness help for the youths that need it"; others suggested that high risk youths have been frequently registered with child welfare services. A service provider in counseling identified the underlying problem as not enforcing and monitoring treatment orders; he noted, "The youths get drunk and get themselves in trouble with the law. And when they go to court they get a slap on the hand by the judge; get probation but fail to follow through … the trouble-involved youths or youth adults have low participation in reintegration activities such as workshops, sweats …"

3. The consensus view in Millbrook was that there were adequate levels of community resources (i.e., facilities and services) available for youth but that these were not getting to or directed at the high-risk youths. An educational director commented, "There is no focus on the youths at-risk**.** There is no outreach to youths if they are headed in the wrong direction but plenty of activities (e.g., elder-youth etc) for youth who are not at risk … Non-problem youths are more involved with elders". An elder commented, "The local youth worker and other local service providers seem to work with the youths who are not at risk and that has to be changed somehow if reintegration support and strategies are going to be effective". An MLSN employee listed a long paragraph of programs in the schools, lunch allowances, funding for sports programs etc which somehow do not involve the high risk youths. In the smaller Annapolis Valley FNs the resources / facilities (e.g., NADACA, community support for cultural activities, recreational advisors) for youths were considered adequate for the reserve population.

4. Identity and self-esteem issues were seen as common problems among the high risk young people and more involvement in community cultural activities (e.g., sweat, pow wows) and programs (e.g., elders-youths get-togethers) was considered to be an important part of any community reintegration. One Millbrook interviewee remarked that "At-risk youths are kind of rootless in the community and rotating between jail and child welfare". A service provider and strong community activist commented that the high risk youths typically have poor family supports, consequent feelings of inadequacy and poor school performance. Typically the interviewees indicated that given the small population where local knowledge of residents is deep and the many deep kinship cross-ties among reserve residents, an early preventative approach would be both feasible and effective.

5. Several interviewees noted that the issues of identity and limited access to cultural programs and reintegration support would be more significant among young Aboriginal persons living off reserve. Band members living off-reserve would likely receive newsletters referring to community events and services but accessing them could be problematic. One such service provider in the Annapolis Valley commented, "Some youth have identity issues especially those band members who live off of the reserve; they usually are unaware of any cultural events or feel that they are not invited. Most programs and \ or activities are funded for on-reserve band members, so most off-reserve band members or non-status Indians, or others [with Aboriginal heritage] don't have the opportunity to learn crafts, language etc".

6. There was consensus that the high risk Aboriginal youths need exposure to Aboriginal cultural ways and access to proven programs when incarcerated and follow-up and circles of support when they are released back into the community. One service provider articulated the former need as follows "Yes it is very important for Aboriginal youths to be exposed to Aboriginal culture when incarcerated – it will nourish their mental and emotional well-being". Another service provider held that "there is no positive image or self-esteem

in some of the youth … they need a system [like Tapwe] to motivate them and monitor them carefully**".** In more general terms, a community activist in Millbrook observed "there is need for "a proactive program not an intervention program". She held that lacking cultural pride and positive identity is common among these youth so strongly favoured a BCI-type program for incarcerated youth, better communication between service providers, whether aboriginal or not, and a community-based model of reintegration.

7. The two service providers in HRM, representing MLSN and the MNFC respectively, highlighted the importance of the metropolitan area for high risk young persons. They saw the metro area as the hub for mobile, troubled reserve youth, former residents of group homes (most of which are located in HRM) and off-springs of mixed race/ethnic backgrounds. They emphasized that some resources and services were available but not enough and without circles of support that facilitate their use by troubled youths. One respondent, providing employment-related assistance to young persons, had only recently assumed the position and had yet to establish linkages with the NSYF while the other service provider person worked essentially with adults exiting federal prisons in Atlantic Canada. Both respondents strongly supported the need for a BCI program in the NSYF and close collaboration among the Aboriginal service providers in responding to the needs of high risk young persons in prevention, exit preparation in the NSYF and community support circles upon release.

Overview

The community dimension of the BCI initiative was considered at length and planned for in some detail. However, the implementation was limited since the BCI's success at identifying at the NSYF a larger than expected pool of eligible youths with significant Aboriginal heritage and issues of identity and self-direction, required priority for the resources and staff attention, as initially set forth in the project's logic model. Nevertheless, a useful framework was developed which could guide future initiatives

with high risk young persons at the community level. The modest implementation did identify some issues such as the need to provide orientation along the line of the Tapwe framework to the local service providers in order to enhance their reaching out to the high risk youths, scheduling issues and the need for inducements to youths for participating. The interviews conducted yielded significant points including that the number of high risk youths in trouble with the criminal justice system is small in the FN communities discussed but services and programs for youths apparently do not engage them, and off-reserve youths have very limited access to them as well. The interviewees held that these youths could profit from programs like the BCI operating within jails and prisons and mobilizing community support circles for released persons. The particular strategies utilized in a BCI-type model may need tailoring to the different milieus on reserve and in the metropolitan HRM; for example the high level of knowledge of persons and families and the collaboration among service providers on reserves suggest the value of an early preventative approach there.

OVERVIEW FINDINGS: THE LOGIC MODEL

The general objectives as set out in the project's logic model (see appendix) called for a greater Aboriginal presence at the NSYF, providing awareness to designated youths of cultural beliefs and practices mediated through craft activities and mentoring by experienced Mi'kmaq counselors and elders, and developing more networking and collaboration between the Aboriginal service providers and NSYF programs and staff in response to the problems and reintegration challenges of youths with Aboriginal heritage. Other objectives included the development of an effective BCI program aimed at generating a positive alternative way of thinking and acting among the youths that could assist their avoidance of the identity and behaviour that was anti-social and criminogenic. Also the implementation was to involve NSYF staff becoming more aware of and collaborative in facilitating the Aboriginal presence and sensitivity at the facility (the five

basic BCI objectives and the successes and shortfalls in their realization are discussed in capsule detail in the appendix).

The above objectives were to be achieved through a variety of implementation strategies, such as one-one mentoring, culturally informed craft activities, exposure to Aboriginal world views and social bonding among youths involved with similar circumstances. The format, creative and singular but integrating valuable traditions and useful approaches such as the Seven Sacred Teachings, constituted one full-day programming per week and youth involvement was voluntary.

All the activities specified in the logic model were in fact implemented to some extent. The centerpiece was two-fold, namely one-on-one individual mentoring sessions in the morning and a group session for all the young participants in the afternoon. In both activities the BCI team was composed of members who were experienced in relating to high risk youths. Those engaged in the craft work were experienced as well in those activities and could inform the youths about the cultural meanings and traditions associated with such crafts as making drums, dream catchers and the like. The ideational framework adopted by the BCI team was the Seven Sacred Teachings but other frameworks such as Tapwe also informed the stories and mentoring that characterized the sessions. There was significant collaboration between BCI and the NSYF management with respect to selection of eligible youth participants, scheduling and space for individual and group sessions, and resolving issues that arose. Much less implementation was achieved with regard to orientation and collaboration vis-à-vis the NSYF youth workers.

In the BCI logic model short term outcomes were considered to be developing an appropriate BCI team, linking it up with an advisory group consisting of representatives from the NS Department of Justice, NSYF and MLSN (the BCI parent), reaching the targeted population of youth and engaging them in the program, exemplified in their participation and solid attendance. These short term outcomes were all well accomplished. The only shortcoming was the limited involvement of the BCI team with

the NSYF staff responsible for the daily activities and regular pre-release monthly assessments of the youths.

Medium term BCI outcomes were hypothesized in the logic model to include modest changes in cognitive behavioral dimensions among the participating youths. These anticipated changes in attitudes and behaviour within the NSYF including possible positive changes such as fewer write-ups and earning work privileges by appropriate behaviour; as well, a synergetic effect of greater youth use of other NSYF programs and services was expected. As evidenced in the comments of the youths, the BCI team members and the youth workers responsible for monthly reports on specific BCI youths, the hypothesized changes in the youths' self-image, identity and demeanor did occur and there was as well a significant synergetic impact.

In the logic model there were long-term outcomes cautiously advanced for the youths, namely greater desistance, less recidivism and better social integration in mainstream society. They were cautiously advanced since there was a high level of recidivism among the youths and factors such as housing adequacy, family support (indeed family support was indicated to be of especial important for these youths), gang involvement, and so forth, were clearly seen as major determinants of behaviour once a youth is released. The BCI project could devote few resources to these major outside issues. And, as emphasized throughout this assessment, most participating BCI youths, concentrated in HRM, had minimal involvement in Aboriginal / Mi'kmaq culture and networks prior to their BCI engagement and little such social support upon their release from the NSYF. Overall, the long term outcomes were shown to be very problematic. Other long-term outcomes focused on the legacy effects of the BCI initiative for enhancement of programming in the NSYF for Aboriginal youths.

In 2014-2015 there was also a BCI initiative to explore the use of the Tapwe approach in working with elders, service providers and high risk youths in one Mi'kmaq community. The timing of this initiative was problematic as it was launched when the main objectives of focusing on the NSYF youths were most pressing given the large

number of youths participating in the BCI, the significant challenges to their reintegration and the limited resources available to the BCI. Nevertheless, some modest progress was achieved and a number of service providers were interviewed on the issues of reintegration of high risk youths in the community.

Overview Findings: Processes

The process issues were highlighted in the evaluation, the indicators for each, and the source of information gathered on the indicators. As indicated, the first process task was selecting the BCI team and developing the organizational base for working with NSYF staff and collaboration. Determining youth eligibility was a major process issue for the project since few youths citing an Aboriginal heritage had official status or had declared themselves "native" on the NSYF admission form; they had however identified themselves as "other" and noted that either a parent or grandparent had direct Aboriginal blood ties. A third major process was developing an appropriate program for engaging the eligible youths who typically had little awareness of their Aboriginal heritage and usually no significant prior involvement in Aboriginal events or activities. BCI team members were experienced in dealing with the targeted youth population and enjoyed a solid reputation for their effectiveness. Save one death, there was no turnover in the staff during the period from the training and orientation to the conclusion of the project. There was significant turnover among the participating youths but a core was in long-term incarceration due to the seriousness of their offence and so the challenge of turnover was significantly reduced.

A fourth process focus was working with the NSYF staff who were most involved with the youths whether at the cottage level or in special services (e.g., education, IWK).This process consideration proved to be quite problematic since neither the NSYF management nor the BCI team leaders provided significant orientation about the BCI objectives to these key role players. There were some significant relationships established (e.g., the Chaplain's office) but minimal engagement with NSYF youth workers,

including the YWs who were who were responsible for monitoring youths' conduct at the NSYF and assisting in the planning for their release and reintegration.

Overall, from a process perspective, the BCI implementation was on target and well-implemented, something not all that common in projects of this type. It was appropriately directed at the needs of the participants that were amenable to the BCI approach, such as self-esteem and cognitive development. The two strategies utilized and explicitly emphasized, the morning individual mentoring circle and the afternoon group activities, were appropriate and their planning and facilitation by the BCI program coordinator was well-received by the youths. There were shortfalls (especially the lack of involvement and orientation vis-à-vis the NSYF youth workers) and difficult challenges from a process vantage point but a viable new approach was put in place at the NSYF.

In the case of the community thrust in 2014-2015, the process issues were adapting the Tapwe model to the Mi'kmaq community and engaging local service providers and high risk youths in the program. The former was accomplished but the latter was very limited in execution though, through interviews, useful information was obtained on the value of a BCI approach in the community context.

Overview Findings: Outcomes

As with processes, for each key anticipated outcome there were, in the evaluation proposal, indicators specified and sources of information identified. In a most general sense, the BCI initiative has represented an effort to effect cognitive behavioural transformation through its program of mentoring, cultural awareness, identity appreciation and social support among high risk youths with Aboriginal linkages. There is evidence that the BCI initiative did effect the desired impacts on the youths. There clearly was a "buy-in" by most youths as strongly indicated in the interviews and observations carried out by the evaluators. Youths reported that they understood and appreciated the purposes of the initiative, that they were comfortable with it and confident about functioning within it. Youths readily volunteered to participate and attendance was generally good. There were positive cognitive and personal benefits identified by the youths, the NSYF youth workers and the BCI team. The project did

enhance the Aboriginal presence at the facility and had modest but positive impact on other programs and services there. Lower level violations and write-ups appear to have been reduced according to the available statistics and accounts of both youths and YWs.

There were virtually no negatives in the adoption of the BCI approach. The YWs' workload, by their own accounts, did not increase nor did their multiple responsibilities and role expectations became conflicted. No extant programming was reduced and by most accounts there was some synergy with other services provided to the youths. While the program did not impact on the NSYF in some anticipated ways, such as producing a set of guidelines for the elder role in the facility, training YWs to perhaps co-deliver some Aboriginal activities or establishing an Aboriginal cultural program on a regular basis as a component of NSYF programming, nevertheless a collaborative structure has been put in place, NSYF management has a greater awareness of Aboriginal perspectives on certain activities and artifacts, and extended, and funded, a slimmed down but faithful version of the BCI program for the next year. Other elements of the legacy for the NSYF include much more awareness of the inclusiveness of Aboriginal identity, more information on consulting with Aboriginal service providers, some modest development of guidelines for monitoring smudging and making Aboriginal crafts, and knowledge that a viable program was implemented at the facility for Aboriginal youths, analogous to the Rites of Passage Program for African Nova Scotians.

There is no doubt that the challenges for generating effective desistance and a reintegration approach that would be congruent with much less recidivism are formidable. The BCI experience met expectations in meeting challenges for high risk youths while incarcerated but the program was unable to do much to facilitate their building upon the alternative identity and self-images, new values and pro-social behaviour, subsequent to their release. In respect to needs for housing, employment, education, family engagement, networking with Aboriginal elders and services, the program was quite limited. It did however sharply underline the requisites for a more comprehensive program that many youths, BCI team members and NSYF staff hoped may follow.

With regard to the BCI's community thrust, the key outcomes were the modified Tapwe program for use among FNs in Nova Scotia and the two main findings of the interviews namely that there may well be plentiful services and activities on reserve for youths but that the high risk youths are not well served by them and there is a growing estrangement between these youths and the elders / service providers. These outcomes suggest that indeed a Tapwe approach could be valuable in dealing with high risk youths through providing the elders and youth service providers a Tapwe orientation and subsequently incorporating them in the local delivery of the program to the high risk youths**.**

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The BCI initiative in the NSYF represented a different thrust than has been common in youth and adult prisons to date. Its target was providing youth with an alternative world view that could result in their taking a new direction in their lives. Its objectives in these regards were quite unusual and a major challenge for cognitive transformation. As such, the BCI project represented a creative initiative with significant potential implications in the long-run for incarcerated youths, and prison management. Judged from a "do no harm" perspective, there were few if any negatives. It was implemented at little cost to the NSYF, did not result in extra work for the YWs, and did not apparently conflict with their established formal responsibilities. There were no significant hardships for youths as a result of the BCI initiative, no increased vulnerability among the youths, and no interference with or diminution of any of the on-going programs and services. The BCI initiative was a robust project with wide scope to impact on both Aboriginal youth and the NSYF's accommodation to the Aboriginal heritage, and much autonomy in implementation.

Despite the constraints in the formally authoritarian prison context, the many issues posed by the youths incarcerated for typically serious offences or otherwise "out-

of-control" behaviour as determined by the CJS, and the turnover due to either short sentences or remand status, the assessments above of findings anticipated in the initiative's logic model, processing and outcomes charts, indicate that the initiative largely achieved what it set out to do and in the manner prescribed. There was overall much positive acceptance of and participation in the BCI "program" by youths. There were benefits garnered and attested to by both youths and NSYF youth workers. And some evidence was obtained for a modest synergetic effect through linkages with other NSYF programs such as the chaplaincy.

The major area of direct benefits for the youths appeared to be, by consensus, self-esteem, a stronger sense of identity and possibilities for enhancement of desistance vis-à-vis the life style that led to their incarceration. Changes in youth behaviour were more modest in most instances, basically reflected in less use of write-ups and informal sanctions for minor offences and more earned privileges in everyday NSYF activities. However, whether in implementation or in impact, the BCI initiative over time continued to evolve in a positive, anticipated and fashion. Modest legacy effects were also produced both for the NSYF and for MLSN programming but how significant all these various modest impacts will be will depend on future developments in responding to the reintegration challenges for high risk young Aboriginal offenders.

Many suggestions and recommendations have been advanced throughout this long assessment. Clearly the program should be extended at the NSYF with more collaboration and information exchange between the BCI team and NSYF staff (management, youth workers and other service providers at the facility). More attention should be also directed to transitional issues and the community dimension of BCI's reintegration thrust for high-risk youths. Within the context of a successful BCI initiative that has generated positive change and can be built upon in the future, several major recommendations / suggestions are offered here for consideration:

a). A BCI-type initiative offered by MLSN should become a regular part of the NSYF programming as is the case with the Rites of Passage program available to

African Nova Scotian youths and provided on contract by the HCJS. Due to the BCI efforts, the diverse social backgrounds of the Aboriginal youth at the NSYF and the comparatively large numbers of youths eligible for a BCI-type program are now appreciated by all parties.

b). The BCI project has clearly established that sustaining and building upon the positive impact of the program at the NSYF and its potential for cognitive behavioural transformation requires resources and strategies directed also at transitional concerns. These latter include collaborating with NSYF staff in release planning and, after release, with community service providers and circles of support. Such a project has been in operation for several years for adult Aboriginal prison inmates through MLSN's long-established Bridges program contracted by the federal penal institutions in the region. Research has clearly affirmed the necessity of this thrust; as one researcher observed, "once released the prisoner often experiences difficulties in sustaining the plans and intentions when in custody. There is sometimes a need to provide some community support and involvement through a formal circle of support and accountability" (Newell, 2002). This approach is especially well-recognized for the high-risk youths currently incarcerated at the NSYF and is congruent with recent new directions adopted by Nova Scotia Community Corrections.

c). Shortfalls with respect to orientation and presentations and, more generally, information exchange between the BCI team and NSYF staff limited the BCI's working with the NSYF staff who were most involved with the youths whether at the cottage level or in special services (e.g., education, IWK). While there was a good collaborative relationship "at the top", neither the NSYF management nor the BCI team leaders provided significant orientation about the BCI objectives to these key front-line role players and thereby opportunities were missed to impact on the youths' situation (e.g., YWs reportedly would have contributed more if they knew more about the BCI objectives and also perhaps consulted with BCI staff on issues of release planning). The benefits to the NSYF staff and service

providers of greater information exchange could be significant in so far as BCI team members may have the confidence of the youths and able to provide helpful ideas for their release and reintegration. Even “at the top” there were emergent policies and arrangements concerning the implementation of the BCI program that could have benefited from more initial discussion, such as the role of elder and information exchange about the content of BCI sessions. Perhaps, for future use, a document could now be prepared outlining in some depth, the BCI program advanced at the facility, its objectives and implementation strategies, as has been done in the Rites of Passage program delivered frequently at the NSYF by the HCJS (i.e., Afrocentric Rites of Passage Program, HCJS, 2010).

d). There were two dominant base milieus outside the facility for the youths participating in the BCI project at the NSYF, namely metropolitan Halifax (HRM) and the FN communities. Depending upon which of these the youths were linked with, the effective transitional strategies would vary much. In the case of the now-ended BCI initiative, most participating youths were from HRM and, as noted, they had had scant previous involvement in Aboriginal social networks and cultural heritage and no formal membership in bands or in Native Council. Creating opportunities for them to build on their awakened Aboriginal cultural heritage and having urban community circles of support to assist with crucial issues of education, housing and employment will require much mobilization and collaboration, by a BCI team presumably managed by MLSN, with the service providers at the MNFC and with the urban programs managed by Native Council as well as with other non-Aboriginal services. The modified Tapwe program developed by MLSN may be a valuable approach for further orienting both the Aboriginal service providers and the youths.

e).The other smaller group of youths participating in BCI consisted of band members, usually with status and, while quite mobile, basically living on reserve. Here the problems for reintegration are different. Community interviews indicated that high-risk youths were usually not much involved in community activities and

may be alienated from service providers and elders and vice versa. More outreach and bridge-building (i.e., appreciation of one another circumstances and actions) would appear to be required not necessarily more youth activities and programs. This in turn suggests that the BCI/MLSN strategy of emphasizing the Tapwe model – which emphasizes such mutual understanding - in working with pertinent community service providers and subsequently engaging them in the implementation of that approach with the selected youths, could be effective.

APPENDICES

BRINGING CULTURE INSIDE: OPERATIONAL MODEL

BCI Project Goal and Objectives

Goal	Objectives
Strengthen the capacity of NSYF to build new partnerships with Mi'kmaw helping organizations, develop community delivered cultural programming and develop cognitive skill curricula appropriate to and relevant to Aboriginal youth	1. Develop a partnership with Nova Scotia Youth Facility and the MLSN for the **creation and promotion of unique, culturally-specific learning opportunities** that address the needs of Mi'kmaq and other Aboriginal youth within the Nova Scotia Youth Facility; 2. Ensure that Mi'kmaq and other Aboriginal young persons within the Nova Scotia Youth Facility gain access to and awareness of their cultural knowledge, identity, practices, ceremonies, history, and traditional methods of teaching and learning. **This will be accomplished via whole institution cultural celebrations (once per annum) and weekly gathering time set aside for cultural reconnection experiences and linkages to elders for social and spiritual support.** These weekly gatherings will provide Mi'kmaw and other Aboriginal **young persons within the Nova Scotia Youth Facility with the opportunity to carry out self-exploration and accountability exploration in a culturally safe environment**, and to engage in meaningful discussions that address current issues important to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia; 3. Increase access to culturally-appropriate, support-service providers by **building an accessible network, and resource guide of Nova Scotia's Aboriginal and culturally respectful service providers** for the Aboriginal young persons incarcerated in the Nova Scotia Youth Facility and, in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Youth Facility staff, build linkages that will ensure their integration into **release planning** for high risk youth incarcerated in the nova Scotia Youth Facility; 4. Provide Nova **Scotia Youth Facility program officers with a means to participate in Aboriginal specific cultural sensitivity training,** with an Elder or respected Spiritual Leader, for the purposes of increasing awareness and understanding of Mi'kmaw and other Aboriginal ways and relationship building; 5. Research and develop a cognitive skills program geared to Aboriginal youth that can be provided **to enhance their capacity to problem solve and achieve a more successful reintegration.** The components of this program will be tested as part of the weekly gathering activities, thereby collecting input from youth as to what elements of the proposed program are effective. 6. Ensure that **a formative evaluation** is conducted to both guide progress on the evaluation and to interpret outcomes

	7. Create **opportunities for Aboriginal Spiritual leaders and Elders to connect with the young persons and correctional staff** for guidance and cultural sharing and as a community resource linked to reintegration planning by the institution.

BCI ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

Objective # 1: Develop a partnership with Nova Scotia Youth Facility and the MLSN for the creation and promotion of unique, culturally-specific learning opportunities that address the needs of Mi'kmaq and other Aboriginal youth within the Nova Scotia Youth Facility

	Activity	Timeframe	What do you expect to achieve as a result of this activity?
1.	Planning sessions		Enhanced communication between institution and community, staff and community organizations assisted in the creation and delivery of project, identified safety measures to meet the needs of youth, staff and other participants involved in project.
2.	Hire Project Coordinator		A dedicated project coordinator will be hired to run the project.
3.	Develop program operating context		All necessary procedures will be in place to accept referrals and provide services during the project.
4.	Focus Groups with Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal youth		Engagement of youth in the creation and evaluation/feedback of the program
5.	Professional development workshop		Increased cultural competency for staff of the institution
6	Develop a Best Practices model		A model will be created to promote the project's progress, challenges and successes to be used on a national scale within other institutions
7	Evaluation procedure		Identified impact and effectiveness of the project on the institution's approach to care, supervision and reintegration of Aboriginal youth. Identified the impact Aboriginal youth's participation in activities.

Objective #2: Ensure that Mi'kmaq and other Aboriginal young persons within the Nova Scotia Youth Facility gain access to and awareness of their cultural knowledge, identity, practices, ceremonies, history, and traditional methods of teaching and learning.

	Activity	Timeframe	What do you expect to achieve as a result of this activity?
1.	Elder sessions		Increased cultural knowledge and practices. Engagement in historical and traditional methods and stories. Increase in social connection.
2.	Cultural Celebrations		Participants will engage in a common celebration. Increase in social connection. Increased cultural competency for all participants (staff, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth)
3.	Sharing Circles		Engagement in cultural activities. Increased cultural appreciation. Enhanced knowledge of culture.

Objective#3: Increase access to culturally-appropriate, support-service providers by building an accessible network, and resource guide of Nova Scotia's Aboriginal and culturally respectful service providers for the Aboriginal young persons incarcerated in the Nova Scotia Youth Facility

	Activity	Timeframe	What do you expect to achieve as a result of this activity?
1.	Facilitate Community Network with professionals and community organizations		Enhanced communication between community, professionals and youth. Increased support for youth that is culturally relevant. Increased community participation and support. Build partnerships between the institution, community services and Elders towards a meaningful reintegration plan.

2.	Create, print and deliver a resource guide		Identification of service providers. Promotion cultural programs.

Objective#4: Provide Nova Scotia Youth Facility program officers with a means to participate in Aboriginal specific cultural sensitivity training, with an Elder or respected Spiritual Leader, for the purposes of increasing awareness and understanding of Mi'kmaw and Aboriginal ways and relationship building

	Activity	Timeframe	What do you expect to achieve as a result of this activity?
1.	Facilitate partner and organization meetings		Increased awareness of the Aboriginal culture. Enhanced communication and relationship building between staff and community.
2.	Plan and deliver training sessions		Activities planned for cultural sensitivity sessions. Increased participation of facility program officers in Aboriginal cultural training. Enhanced awareness and understanding of the Aboriginal culture.

Objective #5: Ensure that Aboriginal Spiritual leaders and Elders are accessible to the young persons and correctional staff for guidance and cultural sharing and that they are considered as a community resource linked to reintegration planning by the institution.

	Activity	Timeframe	What do you expect to achieve as a result of this activity?
1.	Identification of Elders and Spiritual leaders		Increased communication between community and institution. List of appropriate Elders are identified and have access to the institution.
2.	Create an Elder protocol		Identified safety measures to meet the needs of youth, Elders and staff within the institution. Identified role and responsibilities of the Elder within the institution.

TRENDS RE # YOUTH RJ REFERRALS ACCEPTED

	ALL AGENCIES	HCJS	MLSN	VRJ
BEST YEAR	**2007 (1736)**	**2007(803)**	**2007 (82)**	**2003 (177)**
2010	**1565**	**750**	**61**	**77**
2011	**1235**	**594**	**UNAV**	**88**
2012	**1228**	**519**	**79**	**50**
2013	**883**	**401**	**76**	**51**
2014-2015	**656**	**328**	**41**	**37**

The Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

The highest # of youth referrals accepted occurred in the years 2007 and 2008 with the former reaching 82 and the latter 80. Since then the # of youth referrals has declined and is now roughly half the 2007 figure. That pattern of decline has been the norm for all RJ agencies in Nova Scotia.

Initially, up to and including 2010, police annual youth referrals were generally more numerous than crown referral (e.g., in fiscal 2005-2006 police referrals accounted for approximately 70% of all accepted referrals) but since 2012 crown referrals have been modestly greater. That trend was also generally found among the other eight agencies in Nova Scotia providing the RJ service. Typically crown referrals have involved more serious offences and repeat offenders than did police referrals.

Re adult referrals in the two pilot project areas, in the first two years, February 2011 to February 2013, there were 98 referrals while in the similar two year period for 2013-2015, the adult referrals declined to 67. That downward trend was also found among the other agencies involved in the adult pilot. CHECK WITH MY TABLE FOR JANET

APPENDICES: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

THE BRINGING CULTURE IN PROJECT AT NSYF

This is an initial preliminary questionnaire to be used with youths engaged in the BCI initiative at the NSYF. It will be used to develop a more finished questionnaire for the BCI project. We are exploring how deeply rooted in Aboriginal culture and cultural activities the youth is, how are his relationships with his kinfolk and fellow community residents, what he thinks about the BCI program to date, and how it may help him deal with life while in the NSYF, and later help him reintegrate in his community. So that is the challenge for us and the questions below are attempts to explore those themes but do not limit yourself to these questions if you think other ones would yield better insights. We are at the exploratory stage.

YOUTH SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A: Introduction

1. How long have you been in the NSYF? _____ (# weeks)

2. What Unit are you currently in? _____ (2A, 2B, 3A, 3B?)

3. A. Have you previously been in custody at Waterville? Yes___ No___
   B. If yes, have you noticed any difference this time?

   (i) In the programs then and now?
   _____
   _____

   (ii) Is the Youth Worker – Youth relationship any different?
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. How do you find the relations among youths in the Unit you are in?
   _____
   _____

Do you feel safe and secure?	No	Some	Much
Do you think you understand them?	No	Some	Much
Do you get along well with most?	No	Some	Much

5. How do you find your relations with the Youth Workers In this Unit?

_____

_____

Are they easy to talk with?	No	Some	Much
Quick to write-up youth?	No	Some	Much
Open to youths' ideas?	No	Some	Much

6. There is now a "Bringing Culture In" project here that I'd like to talk with you about? .How would you describe this program to a new youth coming into NSYF?

_____

_____

7. Do you think you understand what BCI is all about?	No	Some	Much
Are you comfortable with it?	No	Some	Much
Do you find it interesting?	No	Some	Much

How many BCI sessions have you participated in? _____

8. What BCI activities have you participated in so far?

_____

_____

One-on-one chats with BCI staff?	No	Some	Much
Working on crafts?	No	Some	Much
Drumming?	No	Some	Much
Circle discussions?	No	Some	Much
Sweats?	No	Some	Much
Other? (what?)	No	Some	Much

9. Is there some BCI activity that you find most interesting? Why?

_____

_____

10. Is there some other Aboriginal activity that you would like to see BCI staff do?

_____

_____

11. What two or three things have you been learning from involvement in the BCI program that might help you when you go back into the community?

_____

_____

_____

12. Are there some changes that you would recommend in the BCI program? What changes do you think could be made to make the program better for youths like yourself?

_____
_____
_____

B: Youth's Background and Future Prospects

It helps me understand the impact of the BCI program if I know a little more about you, so could I ask about

(a) school attitudes and behaviours: where are you in your schooling? Is school something you have enjoyed in the past?

_____
_____
_____

(b) family attitudes and relationships: do you feel you have strong, loving family support?

_____
_____
_____

(c) Peer attitudes and relationships: do you have good friends on the outside who help you cope with life's challenges? are they good role models for you?

_____
_____
_____

(d) Community involvement: have you been much involved in sports or other hobbies or community organizations? Elaborate?

_____
_____
_____

(e) Self-esteem and personal strengths or weaknesses: do you think positively about yourself? Is there some particular achievement that you identify with?

_____
_____
_____

(f) On the outside, do you live on reserve? Participate in Aboriginal activities?
_____
_____
_____

(g) Before coming to the NSYF, did you ever do any of the following

Attend a sweat?	No	Some	Often
Attend a pow wow?	No	Some	Often
Have a good chat with an elder?	No	Some	Often

(h) Have you wanted to know more about your Aboriginal roots and culture?

_____

C: **Exit Planning**

(iii) When you leave the NSYF, what do you hope for regarding

(a) educational schooling –hopes / challenges
_____
_____
_____

(b) employment – hopes / challenges
_____
_____
_____

(c) family relations – hopes / challenges
_____
_____
_____

(d) living arrangements – hopes / challenges
_____
_____
_____

(e) social and recreational life – hopes / challenges

_____
_____
_____

(f) Have you thought much and planned for what you might do when you leave the NSYF?

_____
_____
_____

(g) Have your future plans changed since you began to participate in the BCI program? If yes, how?

NSYF STAFF AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

INTERVIEW GUIDE THEMES

ROLE AND EXPERIENCE AT NSYF

TRENDS RE NUMBERS AND TYPES OF YOUTHS

ANY SPECIAL BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS / ATTITUDES AMONG YOUTH (RACE/ETHNIC BACKGROUND, FAMILY ENGAGEMENT)

AWARENESS OF ABORIGINAL ISSUES AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL YOUTH

IDENTITY ISSUES AND MULTI-RACIAL BACKGROUND AMONG YOUTHS

INFORMATION RE BCI FROM NSYF ADMINISTRATION, FROM BCI STAFF

PARTICIPATION IN ANY BCI ACTIVITY

NEW OR MODIFIED NSYF PRACTICES AS A RESULT OF THE BCI INITIATIVE (SMUDGING, ARTIFACTS, CIRCLES, SWEATS)

ASSESSING THE BCI OBJECTIVES

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