



Research at a glance

Assessment of the Aboriginal Women's Maintenance Program

KEY WORDS: *Aboriginal women offenders, Aboriginal programs, maintenance programs, program assessment*

Why we did this study

The Aboriginal Women's Maintenance Program (AWMP) was designed to allow women the opportunity to maintain and build upon knowledge and skills gained in previous CSC programs. These skills include, but are not limited to: building connections to the community, problem solving, self esteem and relapse prevention. Additionally, AWMP assists in maintaining the spiritual/cultural connection developed in previous Aboriginal programs, developing a Healing Plan and preparing for eventual release.

The following presents results of research conducted to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the pilot program.

What we did

Data were collected during the pilot phase of AWMP. This included a pre- and post-program assessment battery¹, as well as participant feedback questionnaires and Elder feedback forms. Participant demographic information was collected from the Offender Management System.

What we found

34 women participated in the AWMP pilot between December 2007 and December 2009. The sample was composed of 13 program completers² and 21 non-completers. Being released from the institution was the most common reason for women not completing the program

Scores from the assessment battery demonstrated a trend towards slightly increased self-esteem and personal efficacy upon program completion.

¹ The assessment battery included Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Sphere of Control's Impression Management and Personal Efficacy subscales; and, the Balanced-Inventory of Desirable Responding.

² As per the program manual, completion was defined as having completed a minimum of four program sessions and a detailed healing plan.

Elder feedback suggested positive program outcomes, noting that many women demonstrated increased levels of confidence, self-esteem and behavioural control upon completing the program.

Responses from participant feedback supported a general satisfaction with the overall content and methods of the program. Participants reported the greatest satisfaction with aspects relating to facilitators (e.g., concern for participants, organization of material and delivery). Although still positive, slightly lower ratings were reported concerning matters of group cohesion and program quality.

What it means

Small sample size resulted in cautiously interpreting current results; however, there was a tendency for outcomes to reflect positively on the program. This demonstrates the benefit of maintenance model programs and the importance of providing these programs for women offenders. Recently, the service has implemented the Aboriginal Women Offender's Self-Management Program (AWOSMP) which is based on a similar program framework.

For more information

Derkzen, D.M., & Allenby, K. (2012). *Assessment of the Aboriginal women's maintenance program*. Research Brief, B51. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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