

## A Profile of Community Case Management Officers in Canada

A typical Case Management Officer who works in a community setting has been employed with the Correctional Service of Canada for 10 years or more, holds a bachelor's degree in the social sciences, is male, and in his mid-thirties. This profile of community CMOs was revealed by a recent survey conducted by the Laboratory for Research on Assessment and Evaluation in the Human Services of Carleton University, and the Correctional Service of Canada, Research Branch<sup>(1)</sup> The survey included information about employee work history, educational experience, training needs, and perceptions about the Case Management Strategies system. A total of 396 institutional and community CMOs and 49 CMO supervisors responded to the survey questionnaire.

Non-supervisory CMOs who worked in Parole Offices and Community Correctional Centres made up the largest occupational group in the sample (n =203). About two thirds of the community CMOs were male and the average age was 36.5 years. Half of the community CMOs in the sample had been employed with the Correctional Service of Canada for 10 or more years. Those with two years or less of service accounted for only 10% of the sample. Most of the respondents had also occupied their current positions as community CMOs for at least five years, with the average tenure being seven years.

For 45% of the sample, the position of community CMO was their first post with the Correctional Service of Canada. The remainder had held other jobs within the Service before accepting positions on the community side. Of those who had earlier employment experience in the Service, most (63%) were former CMOs in the institutions. The remainder held a number of different institutional positions including Living Unit Managers, Regional Transfer Officers, and various administrative posts.

As a group, the community CMOs were very well educated -close to 90% had completed university degrees. Sixty-seven percent of the sample had received bachelor's degrees and 20% held degrees at the master's level. One third of the respondents indicated that they specialized in criminology at university. An additional 20% had training in psychology, 15% in sociology, and 13% in social work. There was an indication that community CMOs participated in the educational system on an ongoing basis. Of those who had received degrees, 8% had completed their studies since becoming a community CMO. Five percent of the sample were also pursuing graduate degrees at the time the survey was conducted.

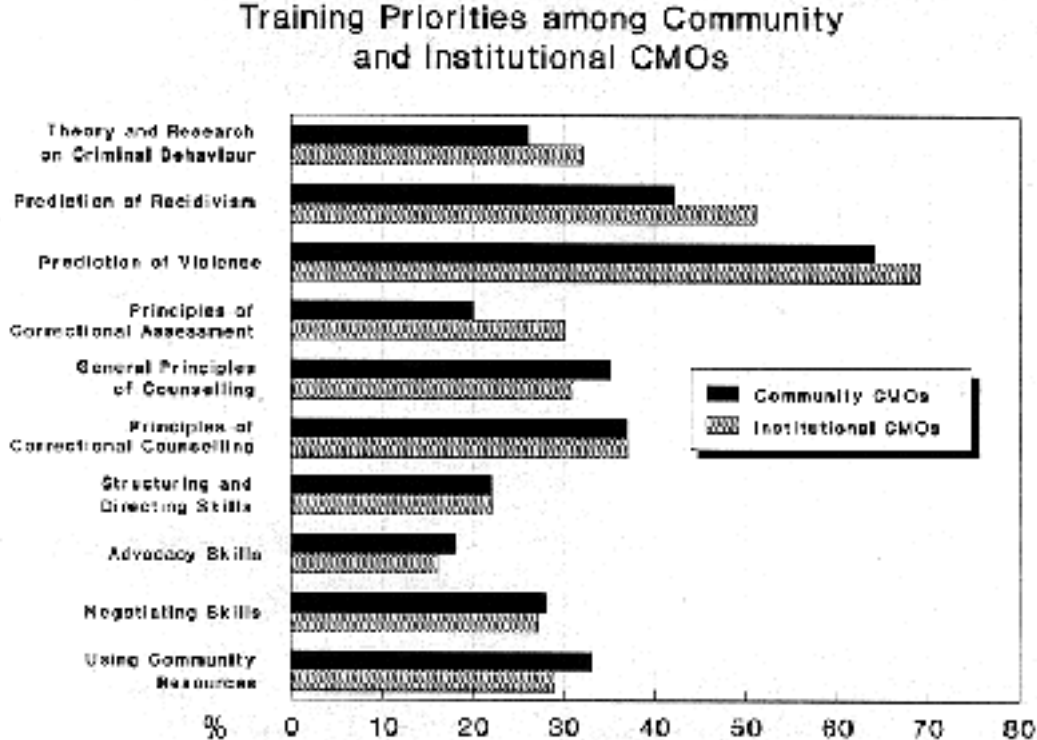
The CMOs employed on the community side were similar in a number of characteristics to CMOs who worked in institutions. For example, the two groups had similar age distributions and the proportion of female CMOs was approximately one third in both subsamples. However, institutional CMOs had slightly lower educational levels and had also been employed with the Correctional Service of Canada for a shorter time period. Thirty percent of the institutional CMOs had only two years of service or less, while the comparable figure for the community group was 10%. Another difference in the work histories of the two groups was that institutional CMOs were more likely to have been employed in other occupational categories within the Service before assuming a position as a CMO.

The survey also provided information about the training needs that community CMOs considered most relevant to their work in community corrections. The respondents ranked a series of topics in terms of level of training priority. The prediction of violence was the most frequently cited high-priority training

issue among the community CMOs. In addition, training in the prediction of recidivism, principles of correctional counselling, and the use of community resources were also viewed as important by many of the respondents.

The figure shows the percentage of CMOs who rated each of ten issues as high-priority training issues. The responses of institutional CMOs are also included in the figure for comparative purposes. Interestingly, CMOs in institutional and community settings identified very similar training priorities. For example, the majority of respondents from both groups indicated that the prediction of violence was an important training need. As the figure also shows, comparable proportions from both CMO groups perceived a need for training in issues related to providing offenders with services (e.g., counselling, community services).

**Figure 1**



The perceptions of training needs suggest that, in contrast to the shift toward a surveillance and control orientation in the U.S., our case managers in Canada continue to remain committed to an "assistance" function in working with offenders.

(1) Andrews, D.A., Hoge, R. D., Robinson, D., & Andrews, F. J. (1990). Case Management Strategies Survey. Ottawa: Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada.