

Sector Reports

Correctional Operations and Programs

Participants were very enthusiastic at the completion of training. One facilitator noted: "We can't wait... we've been talking all week about getting the program up and running as soon as we get back home." Others echoed that sentiment.

Power of the Circle

*By David D. Varis and Ellen Jones,
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An important milestone was reached in the development and implementation of an Aboriginal offender substance abuse program in September. Facilitators and Elders from each region attended two weeks of training at Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory in Ontario. Rod Jeffries of Ancestral Visions (a consultant firm that provides wellness, management and development services to Aboriginal people and communities across North America) and his associate, Gail Brant, delivered the training at Tyendinaga, in keeping with the program's foundation in culture.

Training stressed the importance of balance in the four life areas – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Aboriginal teachings tell us that life can be explained in relation to the circle and it was within the circle that the program came to life each day with participants sharing and demonstrating various Aboriginal ceremonies and teachings.

Each participant brought a wealth of experience and collectively they lived and breathed the program over its duration. The five modules – The Foundation of Culture; Substance Abuse-Historical Overview, Effects and Impacts; Understanding our Trauma and Healing; Managing Risk and



Left to right, back row: David Varis, Addictions Research Centre; Curtis Jacobs, Quebec Region; Don Beacham, Pacific Region; Raymond Gros-Louis, Quebec Region; Rod Jeffries, Ancestral Visions Trainer. **Middle row:** Jean Wasegijig, Pacific Region; Jean Nye, Atlantic Region; Tom Dahl, Prairie Region; Sarah Anala, Atlantic Region; Sandra Lewis-DenOter, RHQ Ontario; Winston Taylor, Ontario Region. **Front row:** Gordon Nepinak, Prairie Region; Ellen Jones, Addictions Research Centre; Gail Brant, Ancestral Visions Trainer; Linda Robertson, Quebec Region; Ed Wissian, Ontario Region.

Relapse Prevention; and Celebration – are guided by cultural traditions, empowerment and community. It was an opportunity for participants to learn important skills firsthand.

The Aboriginal Offender Substance Abuse Program (AOSAP) is rooted in work that began in Prairie Region. In early 2004 CSC, in partnership with Ancestral Visions, began work on a national program model that is firmly based in culture and, at the same time, incorporates effective correctional programming and recognized best practices in the treatment of substance abuse.

The Addictions Research Centre (ARC) is managing the development and testing of AOSAP with the support and collaboration of both the Aboriginal Initiatives Branch and the Aboriginal Programming Division of the Reintegration Programs Branch. Demonstration sites have been selected in each region: Mountain Institution (Pacific), Stony Mountain (Prairies), Joyceville (Ontario), Cowansville (Quebec), and Dorchester/Westmorland (Atlantic). The ARC will be monitoring the program and working closely with facilitators over the course of the demonstration period. ■