

CELL COUNT



YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

FREEDOM - DECEMBER 2023 - #102

Nightmares & Daydreams II

By Zakaria Amara

A year ago, I was sitting in a prison cell on my 17th year inside unsure if I could handle another rejection from the Parole Board.

Today, I'm sitting in a bus heading to work unsure if this is just a day-dream waiting to be shattered by a rude awakening.

It's surreal how the seemingly immovable mountains of circumstance can suddenly evaporate.

Most people wonder, how does it feel?

Magical, but equally unbelievable.

After six thousand and twenty-two mornings of waking up to the depressing site of that stubborn steel door; to the clanking sound of keys; to the bright flashlights of guards checking on you for signs of life, not because they cared – although some genuinely did – but because they could lose their jobs if you died on their watch.

Count 'em like diamonds and treat 'em like shit.

And lastly, to the heartbreaking sight of the methadone-ians (as we called them) who were beckoned from their slumber to their daily dose of government sponsored synthetic heroin that sucked the color out of their faces and gave them eyes one would expect to find in a Tolkien novel.

"Our demons do not haunt us at nighttime." I once read, "They strike in the morning. We are at our most vulnerable when we wake, for that is when the memory of who we are, and how we got here, returns."

Even better was Solzhenitsyn's observation: "They dreamed; old men of their families, young men of women. They dreamed of lost possessions, a train, a church, their judges... Their dreams were all different, but whatever they dreamed, the sleepers were miserably aware that they were prisoners. If in their dreams they roamed over green grass or through city streets, it could mean only that they had tricked their jailers and escaped or had been released in error and were now wanted men. That total blissful forgetfulness of their shackles imagined by Longfellow in "The Prisoner's Dream" was denied them. The shock of wrongful arrest, followed by a ten- or twenty-year sentence, the

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits despite the challenging circumstances. As the Editor of Cell Count, it is both an honour and a responsibility to connect with you through the pages of our publication. Today, I want to share thoughts on a topic that resonates deeply with the human spirit - the unyielding pursuit of freedom.

Incarceration, in its various forms, often interferes with the dreams of many. Yet, it is in the darkest hours that the flame of hope can burn brightest. The power of the human mind to dream, to envision a life beyond the confines of concrete walls and barbed fences, is a testament to the indomitable spirit that resides within each one of us.

In our struggle for freedom, we must not only look within but also cast our gaze beyond our immediate surroundings. The world is a vast tapestry, woven with threads of struggle and resilience. It is crucial, even behind bars, to remain connected to the larger narrative unfolding beyond prison walls. One such narrative that demands our attention is the ongoing crisis in Gaza, a stark reminder of the harsh realities faced by people striving for their own liberation.

The plight of the people in Gaza, caught in a cycle of violence and oppression, echoes a somber resonance with the historical and contemporary struggles of Indigenous peoples in Canada. As we reflect on the injustices faced by these communities, it becomes apparent that the pursuit of freedom is not just an individual endeavor but a collective struggle that transcends borders and boundaries.

The parallels between the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada and those enduring the hardships in Gaza underscore the importance of solidarity in the face of systemic injustice. The echoes of colonial legacies and the struggle for self-determination resonate across continents, uniting various communities in the shared dream of liberation.

Liberation, at its core, is not just about breaking physical chains but dismantling the structures that perpetuate inequities, discrimination, and violence. As prisoners, you are intimately familiar with the challenges posed by such structures. Your dreams of freedom, though confined for now, have the power to create change not only within prison walls but in the broader context of societal transformation.

In closing, I want to emphasize that your dreams matter. They are the seeds of change that can sprout resilience and fortitude. The journey towards freedom is multifaceted, interconnected, and fueled by the collective dreams of people like you, the dreamers behind walls. As we navigate the complexities of our shared struggles, may the pages of Cell Count serve as a conduit for your dreams, a testament to the enduring power of the human spirit.

Stay strong, stay resilient, and keep dreaming.

Sincerely,
Sena Hussain
Cell Count Editor



A wall around Gaza

Exploring Reasons for Higher Hepatitis C Rates in Prisons

By Chance Cordon

Hepatitis C (Hep C) is a viral infection that affects the liver. If left untreated, Hep C can lead to severe liver damage, liver cirrhosis, liver cancer and even death. According to the Canadian Liver Foundation, an estimated 250,000 Canadians are living with Hepatitis C, with many of them unaware of their infection. Racial disparities in Hep C prevalence and outcomes have raised critical questions about healthcare access, social determinants of health, and the need for targeted interventions.

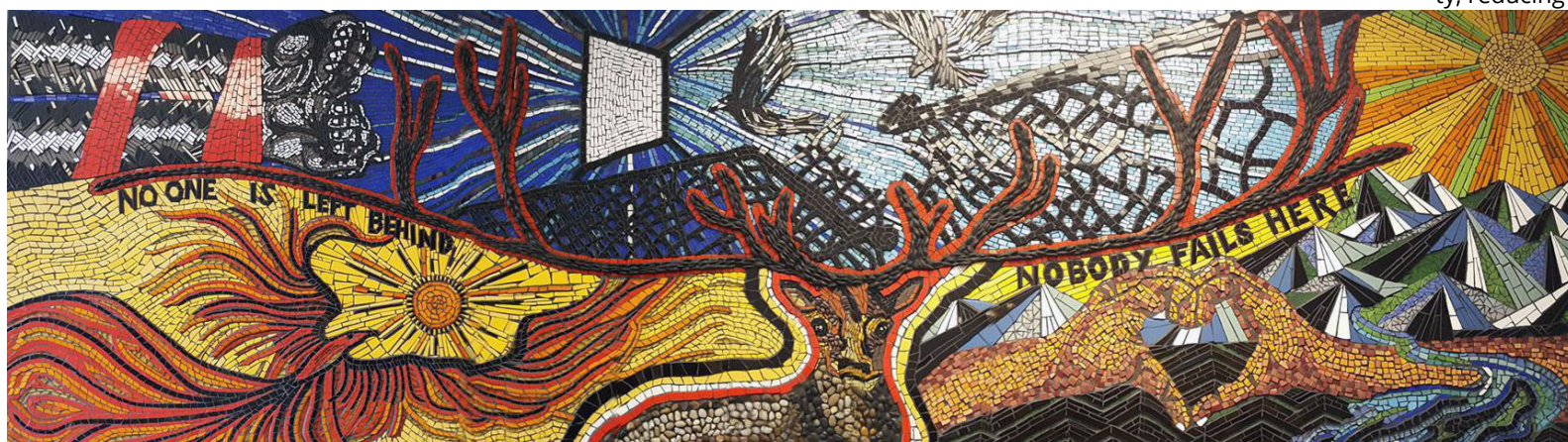
Recent studies and epidemiological reports have shed light on the alarming racial disparities in Hep C prevalence across Canada. Indigenous peoples, Black Canadians, and other racialized communities are disproportionately affected, facing higher rates of infection compared to the general population.

Indigenous Communities: Indigenous peoples in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations, experience a higher prevalence of Hep C. Factors such as historic trauma, socioeconomic disparities, and limited access to healthcare contribute to the increased vulnerability within these communities.

Black Canadians: Black Canadians also face a higher burden of Hep C, often linked to social determinants of health such as poverty, inadequate healthcare access, and systemic racism. Stigma surrounding Hep C and limited culturally competent healthcare services further compound the challenges faced by Black individuals in seeking testing and treatment.

Immigrant and Refugee Communities: Newcomers to Canada, including refugees and immigrants, may also be at an increased risk due to various factors, including exposure in their countries of origin, challenges in navigating the Canadian healthcare system, and potential language barriers hindering communication about testing and treatment options.

The disproportionate impact of Hepatitis C on racialized communities in Canada emphasizes the need for a multifaceted approach with targeted interventions. By addressing social determinants, promoting culturally competent healthcare, and implementing community-based initiatives, Canada can work towards health equity, reducing the Hep C burden for all residents.



PASAN is a community-based harm reduction/HIV/HCV organization that provides support, education and advocacy to prisoners and ex-prisoners. PASAN formed in 1991 as a grassroots response to the HIV crisis in the Canadian prison system. We strive to provide community development, education and support to prisoners and ex-prisoners in Ontario on HIV, Hepatitis C (HCV), overdose prevention and other harm reduction issues. Today, PASAN is the only community-based organization in Canada exclusively providing HIV and HCV prevention, education and support services to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families.

Support Services

- Individual support, informal coun-

selling, case management, pre-release planning, and referrals for those in custody living with HIV and/or HCV

- We assist our clients in accessing adequate medical care and support while incarcerated

- You can reach us via our toll free number at 1-866-224-9978. If you can't get through to us from our toll-free number, we also accept collect calls from prisoners across Canada at 416-920-9567, but we prefer people use our toll-free number
- Provide ongoing support, community development, resources and training for community groups across Ontario.

Outreach and Education

- Conducts HIV/HCV and harm reduction workshops inside many of the provincial and federal adult institutions in Ontario
- Produces a newsletter, Cell Count, which contains article, poetry and art produced by current and ex-prisoners
- Facilitates Prison Life 101, HIV/HCV

prevention and harm reduction/overdose prevention trainings for agencies working with prison populations

- Assist agencies to start prison in-reach and support and act as a referral "hub" for HIV/HCV positive prisoners who are transferred from one region to another, to ensure continuity of support
- Peer health/harm reduction workers where ex-prisoners assist those who are currently incarcerated, about to be released, or already released to get medical and health needs met.

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XYLAZINE AKA TRANQ WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What is Xylazine?

- Xylazine aka Tranq (Rompun, Anased) is a veterinary tranquilizer that has been found cut in dope – mostly in opioids (fentanyl), and less often in benzodiazepines-related drugs, cocaine and methamphetamine
- It is a non-opioid veterinary sedative, pain reliever, and muscle relaxant and has been compared to ketamine or clonidine
- It has varying colours and appearances when mixed with other substances, so it can be difficult to tell if your drugs have been cut with Xylazine

Why is it Being Used?

- Xylazine is being used both unintentionally and intentionally
- It may be cut into the supply for bulking purposes
- Due to the nature of a fentanyl high, like benzos, xylazine can be used to extend the "legs" or length of the high

Effects

- Xylazine can depress the central nervous system and respiratory system, and can also affect the cardiovascular system. This can look like lowering blood pressure, slowing your heart rate, and reducing your rate of breathing, which can happen regardless of how you use, ie. injecting/smoking/snorting
- As a strong sedative, xylazine can also cause extreme disorientation, blackouts and memory loss lasting several hours
- Because of these effects, it may worsen pre-existing wounds, not only in the injection site, but even in other cuts or bites
- The likelihood of this happening is increased if you are homeless, have limited access to a proper diet, or other physical or mental stressors in your life

XYLAZINE AKA TRANQ WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Harm Reduction Tips

- Try not to use alone, or let someone know when you're using
- Start low and go slow
- Because of its heavy sedative effects, try to be aware of surroundings and possessions
- Be in a comfortable seated position so that circulation to your arms and legs is not cut off, and so you won't fall and hurt yourself
- Try to keep all injection sites/cuts/wounds clean and covered
- If you develop wounds, they can be difficult and slow to heal on their own – see healthcare
- Talk to healthcare if you are interested in OATs, like Suboxone

In Case of Overdose

- When mixed with other central nervous system depressants (alcohol, opioids, benzos), the chance of overdose increases because of Xylazine's nervous system, respiratory, and cardiovascular effects
- Naloxone can reverse an opioid overdose but cannot reverse additional effects of xylazine. There is no approved antidote to reverse a xylazine overdose
- Because fentanyl/opioids may also be in their system, you should still respond to an overdose the same way
 - Hit the blue button to alert staff to get naloxone, administer rescue breaths if you've been trained to, and put them into rescue position if you need to leave them

Questions?

Contact the Federal Team at PASAN toll free at 1-866-224-9978

Prison needle exchange program expanding to new prisons despite calls for overhaul

'It's just an expansion of the status quo,' says correctional officers' union

CBC News · Posted: Oct 30, 2023

The federal government is moving forward with plans to expand its current prison needle exchange program (PNEP) with several more institutions across the country this winter, despite calls for a substantial overhaul of the program before it scales up any further.

Six more institutions have been chosen as potential locations for the expansion, according to a list obtained by CBC News: Dorchester Minimum, N.B. Bowden Medium and Minimum, Alta.

Mountain Medium, B.C. Collins Bay Institution, Ont. Beaver Creek, Ont.

Federal Training Centre, Que. Correctional Services Canada said several of the institutions are in their plans, but declined repeated requests to specify which ones.

"Although a few of the locations listed above are in the proposed plans for implementation of

PNEP, further consultation will be undertaken prior to the determination of an implementation date," the department said in an email.

The program has been available at nine other institutions for years, but criticized for low participation rates. Correctional officers and health-care advocates said flaws from the program's initial launch need to be fixed if it's going to help keep inmates and staff safe.

"We're extremely concerned [at the rollout as-is]," said John Randle, Pacific regional president of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers. "It's just an expansion of the status quo."

Program participation low for years, study found

The program launched in 2018 to prevent the spread of infectious diseases through shared needles, including HIV/AIDS and HCV, the virus that causes hepatitis C.

Participants receive a kit with one syringe, one cooker — a container used for mixing and heating a drug — three water bottles, filters and one vitamin C pill. Inmates need to keep the kits in a visible place inside their cells and visit a nurse when they need parts of the kit replaced.

They also need approval to par-

ticipate, including an evaluation by a nurse and a threat assessment approved by a warden.

The program has been available at nine of the 43 federal prisons since it last expanded in 2019, but uptake has been slow.

In 2021, Canada's correctional investigator said the program existed "more in name than in practice" because of low participation rates and needed "substantial reform" before scaling up.

The HIV Legal Network also published a study last year that found only 53 people were participating as of June 2022 — of nearly 13,000 offenders in federal custody. Some institutions didn't have any inmates sign up.

The study, published by the network and Toronto Metropolitan University last November, said multiple layers of institutional approval and stigma are key reasons inmates weren't signing up, along with confidentiality issues.

"You have to out yourself with security staff and tell other people in the institution that you're part of the program and therefore a person who uses drugs," said Sandra Ka Hon Chu, co-executive director with the HIV Legal Network.

"If all those confidentiality

barriers were done away with, I think the program would be far more accessible."

The HIV Legal Network said the program is necessary to prevent the spread of illnesses inside prisons, but needs substantial change if inmates are going to participate.

"[The expansion] is long overdue, but I'm also concerned that they're suggesting or indicating that they're not going to change the program model," said Chu.

In a statement, CSC did not say whether the program had been substantially updated but said it is expanding "in comprehensive consultation with patients, employees and labour partners."

"By implementing multiple targeted initiatives to our incarcerated population to prevent and manage drug use, including opioid use, we have shown that we are committed to the individuals under our care," the email read.

Union wants supervised sites over exchange program

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers does not support the PNEP because staff take a zero-tolerance approach to drugs in prisons. The union said it wants Ottawa to prioritize overdose prevention services (OPS) instead, so inmates aren't

keeping needles inside their cells or using them on their own.

The OPS sites in prisons include rooms for drug use where health-care staff are available to respond in the event of drug poisoning and provide counselling. Inmates stay at the site for half an hour at minimum so staff can monitor for signs of an overdose.

"We are deeply concerned about giving them even more tools to be alone in their cells when the majority of people dying from drug poisonings are already alone," Randle said.

"The changes and advancements are missing [from the expanded program] and we're not fixing the problem."

CSC has implemented two Overdose Prevention Services (OPS), namely in June 2019 at Drumheller Institution in Alberta, and in July 2023 at Springhill Institution in Nova Scotia.

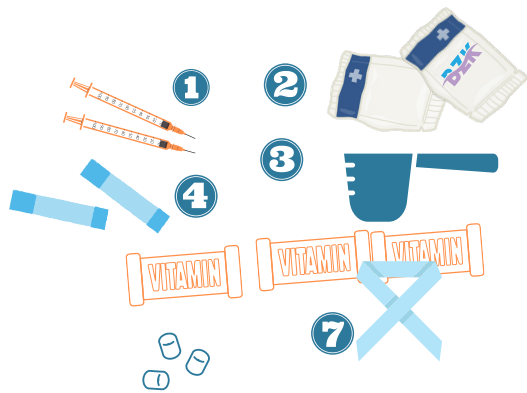
There have been no fatal overdoses at these sites since then. These OPS are the only existing prison-based supervised consumption sites known worldwide, according to CSC.

Planning and consultations are underway to implement an Overdose Prevention Service (OPS) at Collins Bay Institution in Ontario. Renovations are underway to offer the site as quickly as possible.

Please note: some of these tips are only doable when you're out, but if you're currently reading this from inside, use what is useful and relevant to you!

SAFER INJECTION SUPPLIES

Using pre-packaged, single-use supplies will help to prevent bacterial infections and lower the chance of passing viruses such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.



Needles and syringes have various gauges, sizes and lengths.

Alcohol pads are used to clean the skin before injection. We also provide BZK pads for after injection.

Cookers are used to prepare drugs for injection. The drugs are mixed with sterile water (and in some cases, vitamin C powder) in the cooker.

Sterile water is used to dissolve drugs for injection and comes in single-use packets.

Vitamin C powders, or “acidifiers” are only necessary for drugs that won’t dissolve in sterile water alone. Some examples are brown/black tar heroin, crack cocaine and fentanyl patches.

Filters are used when pulling drugs into a syringe from the cooker. Filters prevent undissolved solid particles from getting into the syringe and into your body, especially when you are injecting a crushed pill with a coating.

Ties and tourniquets (sounds like “turn-a-key”) restrict blood flow, making the veins bulge out and easier to find.

Everything new every time you use. To minimize the risk of vein damage and bacterial or viral infections such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV, it's crucial to adopt safer injecting practices by using new needles, syringes, filters, water, and cookers every time you inject drugs. Never share your equipment with others, and always use your own gear.

Reduce the chance of a fatal overdose. The best way to prevent a fatal overdose is to not use alone. Have a trusted person present with you while using drugs, ask someone to check on you periodically during drug use, or visit a safe consumption or overdose prevention site.

Carry naloxone, know how to use it and let others know you have it. Store your naloxone in a location that is easily accessible to others during an emergency.

Start low, go slow. Before using a full dose, it's recommended to try a small test dose. Keep in mind that the drugs may take some time to take effect, and their potency may be higher than you anticipate.

Know the source of your drugs and inject yourself. Be aware of the source of your drugs and learning how to inject them safely. Additionally, some harm reduction organizations provide drug testing services.

SAFER INJECTION



Harm Reduction information for Safer Injection Drug Use



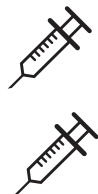
416-920-9567
TOLL FREE:
1-866-224-9978

Wash your hands with soap and water when opening supplies. Disinfecting with alcohol wipes is ok but remember to keep a few for injection.



Prepare your drugs in a place that is clean and has good lighting. It is important to be able to see where you injecting and to clean your preparation surface.

Find the right needle size for you. Start with a small needle in order to reduce track marks and swelling. If you find that you are poking many times before being able to inject, you could be damaging the vein. In this case try a slightly larger needle size.



Use sterile water to mix your drugs. If a sterile water has been damaged it is no longer sterile and should be disposed.

If using vitamin C powder to dissolve drugs start with a small amount

using to prevent the mixture from getting too acidic, which can damage your veins and cause infection.



Drugs can be cooked and mixed with sterile water, and sometimes vitamin C powder, before being heated in a cooker. However, it's crucial to heat the mixture for a minimum of 10 seconds and **let it cool** before injection to prevent skin burns and vein damage.



Filtering your substances can eliminate any un-dissolved fillers or particles that could be harmful when injected



It's essential to maintain sterile equipment throughout the process, using only single-use, sterile packages, and avoiding placing the uncapped needle and syringe on contaminated surfaces to minimize exposure to dust, dirt, and bacteria.



Certain areas of the body are considered safer for injection than others because injecting drugs can lead to severe harm, including vein damage, blood clots, and uncontrollable bleeding.



- These areas are dangerous
- Proceed with caution
- These areas are safer

Remember: inject drugs into veins and not arteries . Larger arteries have a pulse that can be felt with fingers. Injecting into an artery will result in intense pain, as the pressure inside the artery will push the plunger back and the blood in the syringe will appear frothy. If you inject into an artery, remove the needle immediately and apply firm pressure on the injection site until the bleeding stops. If the bleeding persists beyond five minutes, it's critical to seek medical attention at a hospital.

AFTER INJECTING

Taking occasional breaks from injecting drugs into the same vein and rotating injection sites can provide the veins with a much-needed rest to heal, minimizing the risk of scarring and vein collapse.

Use the BZK Wipes to clean your injection area and to help with healing. BZK wipes help with preventing infections. BZK wipes have a purple writing on them. If you have vein cream this may also help.

Seek prompt medical attention from a healthcare provider or harm reduction worker if you experience any pain or develop an abscess after injecting drugs. Missed shots or abscesses can worsen and lead to severe complications, making it essential to seek help at the earliest possible stage.



Human rights violations in prison should not be shrouded in secrecy

By Michael Spratt OPINION, Canadian Lawyer Magazine, 18 Dec 2023

In the intricate web of Canada's criminal justice system, where underfunding, court delays, and societal neglect intersect, a profound darkness overshadows all – the helplessness in the face of rampant injustice within our correctional system.

Let's not sugarcoat it – there is a palpable injustice within the walls of Canada's prisons. If you've waded into the correctional investigator's annual reports, you're well-acquainted with the litany of grievances: punitive use of solitary confinement, inadequate access to healthcare and mental health support, incidents of discrimination and racism, and the haunting prevalence of sexual violence.

These tragic abuses aren't confined to the pages of a report; they echo in the voices of my clients and their families. The frustration of hearing their stories is compounded by the realization that, often, very little can be done to seek justice.

Consider this plausible scenario: an inmate with mental health issues languishes in a "structured intervention unit," or as we used to call it, solitary confinement, for longer than the statutory limit of 15 days, deprived of humane treatment. Or worse, as detailed by experts at a recent Senate hearing, an inmate removed from solitary confinement after 14 days for one hour to restart the statutory clock, then rehoused in solitary confinement or even housed in a ghost cell (an off-the-books solitary cell). In any of these cases, the avenues for recourse are limited.

Individuals in custody cannot often advocate for themselves, and even if they do, internal complaints are discouraged. Reports to the correctional investigator may shed light on systemic issues, but they offer scant relief to those seeking justice on an individual level.

Contacting a lawyer becomes a Herculean task, as bureaucratic barriers and a shroud of secrecy impede progress. Even when information is obtained, pursuing a human rights complaint or civil action becomes a protracted, convoluted, and expensive endeavour with no guarantee of timely resolution.

It's a bizarre reality that there is no mechanism allowing individuals to return to the sentencing judge to address abuses occurring while serving the sentence. Instead, we handcuff ourselves with artificial restraints with pretentious Latin names – *functus officio*, they call it – to prevent judges from overseeing adult penitentiary sentencing they impose. Except we allow judges to vary all kinds of sentences in other situations. So, why not when there is torturous treatment while a person is serving a sentence?

Indeed, the sentencing judge, armed with knowledge about the offence and the offender's circumstances, is in the best place to grant a remedy when people they have sentenced are subjected to inhumane treatment.

Right now, the Senate's legal and constitutional affairs committee is considering legislation from Senator Kim Pate that would allow judges to do just that – modify a sentence they impose if there is misconduct by prison officials.

This is badly needed legislation. The absence of recourse for those in custody, facing inhumane and illegal treatment, not only risks health and safety but also encourages disparities within our justice system.

Judges can consider pre-sentencing jail conditions, collateral consequences, and

state misconduct when imposing a sentence, yet find themselves impotent when similar situations occur post-sentencing.

Senator Pate's bill promises to expedite remedies and ensure uniform treatment for individuals experiencing injustice behind bars, irrespective of when the injustice transpires.

A mechanism allowing sentencing courts to review the administration of a sentence would empower them to scrutinize documents, assess the circumstances of potential abuses, and ensure fairness expeditiously.

It's time to unveil the cloak of secrecy shrouding our correctional system and demand a more just and equitable path forward.

Ignoring the violations of human rights in prison, condoning degrading treatment, allowing prison officials to operate outside the law, and denying all possibility of accountability and transparency says a lot about us as a society – and none of it is good. It's time to step out of the shadows and confront the reality of our correctional system, demanding change that aligns with Canadian principles of justice and humanity.

Opinion: Canada must end the pervasive culture of inhumanity inside prisons
Soleiman Faqiri's death was horrific, yet our research into patterns of deaths in custody across Canada illustrates his death is not unique.

By Lindsay Jennings, Jeffrey Bradley, Alexander McClelland, Ottawa Citizen, Dec 01, 2023

A coroner's inquest into the beating death of 30-year-old Soleiman Faqiri by guards at an Ontario jail began recently. Faqiri died on Dec. 15, 2016, in a segregation cell at the Central East Correctional Centre (CECC). He was beaten, pepper-sprayed and restrained face-down in a spit hood, a controversial restraint device used to prevent someone from biting or spitting.

Faqiri was in CECC awaiting a psychiatric assessment. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia when he was 19 and was incarcerated during an episode related to his illness. Nine guards were involved in beating Faqiri. He died with 50 bruises on his body.

Faqiri's death was horrific, yet our research into patterns of deaths in custody across Canada illustrates his death is not unique. Preventing more incidents means addressing patterns of violence and a culture of inhumanity towards prisoners. To do so, systemic changes are needed – including banning the use of force against anyone experiencing mental health crises; banning spit hoods altogether; and accountability from guards involved in causing deaths.

We have tracked more than 1,532 deaths in custody across Canada since the year 2000 – 669 occurring in Ontario. Faqiri was one of 85 deaths in custody in Canada that year, and 21 people have died at CECC since it opened in 2002.

Deaths in custody are rarely natural; the average age of all those who have died across Canada is just 44.5. Which tells us that many deaths are due to conditions of confinement, including the actions of guards.

We know of at least 13 deaths of people diagnosed with schizophrenia who died under force by prison guards. Howard Hyde, who lived with schizophrenia, died while incarcerated in Nova Scotia in 2007. Instead of receiving a mental health assessment, Hyde was assaulted and restrained by guards. Hyde's death inquest resulted in 80 recommendations, including a call for an end to the use of force towards people in mental health crises.

The report was released two years before Faqiri's death.

In Canada, we have tracked a minimum of nine deaths of people in custody where spit hoods were used. Like Faqiri, Christopher Chastellaine, 40, died in 2014 while being restrained on the floor by multiple guards while in a spit hood. Despite evidence of their danger, deaths related to spit hoods continue. Just last year, Nicous Spring, 21, died in Quebec, while being restrained by guards while in a spit hood.

The use of spit hoods has been deemed inhumane in other jurisdictions. After the 2016 death of Wayne Fella Morrison, an Indigenous Australian who was killed while restrained in a spit hood, they were banned in custodial settings in south Australia. This year, the Australian Federal Police followed suit and banned spit hoods entirely.

Inquests into deaths in custody are limited in scope and can only determine the cause of death. The process seldom leads to institutional accountability, as recommendations are not binding, and no criminal charges can be applied to those responsible for the death. To bring justice for Faqiri, we must view the conditions that caused his death not as unique, but as part of a pattern of institutional violence and a lack of accountability. Adequate mental health care and supports in the community are also needed so that individuals experiencing a mental health crisis do not end up in the prison system in the first place.

We hope Faqiri's inquest will be another step in undoing the ongoing institutional harm and pervasive culture of inhumanity inside prisons. But more action is needed for real change and transformation to occur.

Lindsay Jennings is a Research Associate at Tracking (In)Justice. Jeffrey Bradley is a doctoral candidate, Carleton University and Research Assistant at Tracking (In) Justice. Alexander McClelland is Assistant Professor, Carleton University, Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Canadian prisons 'disturbingly and unconscionably Indigenous': corrections watchdog
The Canadian Press, Staff, Nov. 2, 2023

The federal prison watchdog says there are still too many Indigenous people behind bars in Canada.

In fact, correctional investigator Ivan Zinger says the problem has gotten significantly worse since he originally flagged it a decade ago.

Zinger's latest annual report says 32 per cent of all federal inmates in Canada -- and 50 per cent of the women -- are Indigenous, compared to 25 per cent in 2013.

The report describes the country's penitentiary system as "disturbingly and unconscionably Indigenous," with many lingering hallmarks of colonialism.

That, Zinger says, contributes to the ongoing marginalization, criminalization and over-imprisonment of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

The new report urges the transfer of federally run healing lodges to local authorities, calls for a national Indigenous "decarceration" strategy and better supports for Indigenous elders who work in corrections.

69 inmates died in Canadian prisons during 2023
This is the highest number of deaths since at least 2020.

By Kim Siever, Alberta Worker, 5 January 2024

Last year, I was combed through media releases from the Government of Canada to collect data on inmate deaths announced by Correctional Services Canada

in 2022.

I was curious to see how many deaths occurred in Canadian prisons during 2023, so I browsed through them all again, and here's what I found.

In total, 69 inmates died in custody in 2023.

Of those, 26 died of what CSC called "apparent natural causes", one of which was specifically from an illness. There were also 2 inmates who died after being assaulted.

The majority of the deaths, however, didn't have a cause listed. A total of 41 inmates fell under this category.

At the bottom of virtually every media release was the following statement:

Ontario had the highest number of inmate deaths, at a total of 20, followed by Québec at 16, and British Columbia at 14. Alberta had the lowest number of inmate deaths of all provinces that had inmates die in custody, with just 2 deaths.

The deaths occurred at 26 institutions, 9 of which saw only 1 death. Regional Psychiatric Centre, which is located in Saskatoon, was tied with Archambault Institution in Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, Quebec, for the highest number of deaths. Each of them saw 6 inmates die in custody.

Stony Mountain Institution in Stony Mountain, Manitoba, had the second highest number of deaths, at 5, with the following institutions all having the third highest number of deaths, 4: Pacific Institution (Abbotsford, BC) Mountain Institution (Agassiz, BC) Millhaven Institution (Bath, ON) Federal Training Centre (Laval, QC) Dorchester Penitentiary (Dorchester, MB) Bath Institution (Bath, ON)

January, April, September, and December saw the highest number of deaths in a single month, with each of them seeing 8 deaths. The lowest deaths seen in a single month was 3, which occurred in May and October.

Nearly all of the inmates who died were in custody because of pretty serious crimes, including murder, assault, arson, robbery, sexual assault, and kidnapping. Only 4 were in prison on trafficking charges.

There were 63 deaths of inmates reported by CSC in 2021, 3 of which were specifically classified as COVID-19 deaths, and 54 were reported in 2022.

Court certifies class action alleging decades of 'systemic' anti-Black racism inside Canadian prisons

The lawsuit, which represents current and former Black inmates dating back to April 1985, alleges that the Correctional Service of Canada is responsible for "systemic negligence resulting in the abuse of Black inmates."

By Emily Fagan, Toronto Star, December 20, 2023

Former inmate Abel Araya says he was in desperate need of medical attention following a serious head injury — but when he asked his parole officer to call for help, he says she refused.

Then, when he took himself for treatment, he says was scolded by staff from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). He should have first consulted his parole officer, he said they told him.

This was one incident of many involving alleged neglect, harassment, public shaming and racism that Araya says plagued his time at William Head Institution in British Columbia.

Now, Araya is at the centre of a class-action lawsuit against CSC, alleging widespread anti-Black racism within the country's prison system. Certified in a Federal Court decision released on Tuesday, the class action — which represents all living current and former Black inmates since

April 17, 1985, who say they were subject to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse while incarcerated — could have massive consequences on Canada's federal prison system.

In the lawsuit, Araya alleges that CSC is responsible for “systemic negligence resulting in the abuse of Black inmates” and that the prison system has breached Charter rights to life, liberty, and security, along with equal protections under the law.

He is seeking a declaration from the government that the CSC “systemically violated, and continue(s) to violate” these charter rights and payment for damages.

If successful, the scale of the class action brings the potential for significant change for Black Canadians involved in the criminal justice system, said Howard Sapers, who extensively documented the experience of Black prisoners during his former career as Canada's correctional investigator.

The lawsuit, which he is not involved in, “frustrates and angers me, but it doesn't shock or surprise me,” he said, noting about 10 per cent of 13,000 people currently in prison are Black.

Lawyers for the Attorney General of Canada argued Araya is not a representative plaintiff, that the claim is “overly broad” and that the class of Black inmates do not share common issues of law or fact. The federal lawyers also argued a class-action lawsuit is not the best way to resolve inmates' claims.

Esther Mailhot, a spokesperson for CSC, said it would be “inappropriate to comment on specifics” of the case as it is before the courts.

“Once in our custody, we are committed to working hard to address societal systemic barriers for offenders by providing programs and services that address offender's needs,” she wrote in a statement.

“We are committed to ensuring that Black and ethnocultural offenders are afforded the same protections, dignity and treatment as others, consistent with the Canadian Human Rights Act, and CSC's policies.”

University of Toronto criminology professor Akwasi Owusu-Bempah presented expert evidence of “CSC's practices, procedures, instruments, policies and other acts and omissions systematically disadvantage racialized prisoners” — issues he says were brought to CSC's attention in 2013 but did not lead to any meaningful policy or procedure changes.

CSC has also not implemented any recommendations in this area made by the Auditor General starting in 2015 and the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights in 2021.

Federal Justice Simon Fothergill certified the lawsuit as a class action in a decision released Tuesday, finding that Araya is sufficiently credible to act as a representative claimant.

Certification is the first major step in a class action, allowing

a plaintiff's case to go forward on behalf of a larger group of people.

The truth of Araya's allegations has not yet been tested.

Araya pleaded guilty in June 2019 to trafficking narcotics. He received a three-year federal sentence, which he began serving at Drumheller Institution in Alberta before he moved to William Head Institution, a minimum security facility in British Columbia, prior to his release in March 2020.

It was during his seven weeks at William Head, and after his release, that Araya alleges the “racial abuse” by prison officials and other inmates took place.

The class action details several examples of these allegations, including that Araya was “ignored or dismissed” by white prison officers, pressured to leave a halfway house to make room for “more vulnerable prisoners, all of whom were white,” and intimidated from filing his complaints regarding racism as formal grievances by CSC officials.

In separate instances, he says his parole officer told him she would not want him as a sports coach for her children, as he was “clearly a drug dealer,” while another officer told Araya that he “would not like someone like him living in his community.”

He says in the lawsuit that he was also threatened by a white inmate who directed derogatory racial slurs at him. He alleges prison staff did not intervene until he said he did not want to fight but if the inmate repeated the slurs, he would “have to settle the matter,” at which point Araya alleges staff claimed he had threatened the other inmate. That night, Araya says he was removed from his bunkhouse — which he shared with the other inmate — and told to go door-to-door to find another bunkhouse to take him in, or risk losing his place at William Head, while the other inmate received no punishment.

Since his release, Araya says he has continued to struggle with panic attacks, depression, anxiety and sleepless nights.

Rajinder Sahota and Patrick Dudding, lawyers representing Araya in the class action, declined to respond to questions from the Star, saying they were limited in what they could say about a matter currently before the courts.

“The plaintiff welcomes the federal court's certification ruling. We view this as the first step toward righting the injustices and mistreatment faced by Black people incarcerated in Federal prisons,” Sahota wrote in a statement.

“We hope the government of Canada will work with the plaintiff to resolve this matter in a fair and just manner.”

The court has not yet decided on a timeline for the class action.

Palestine prisoner: 'Negev Prison is like Guantanamo Bay'

Middle East Monitor

A Palestinian prisoner from the occupied West Bank, who was recently released, has stated that the Israeli occupation prisons have become exact copies of the notorious Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay detention centres regarding the torture to which the prisoners are subjected.

Louay Al-Taweel (37), from the city of Hebron, talked about the “torture, humiliation and deprivation of food and medicine” he endured in Israeli prisons. He described that prisoners detained at Negev Prison: “Do not see the sun, nor do they get fresh air.”

Al-Taweel explained that the Negev prison is an exact copy of the Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo prisons, both “notorious symbols” of US human rights violations.

Al-Taweel was arrested on 20 October, and an administrative sentence of six months was issued against him. He was imprisoned in Ofer Prison, west of Ramallah, before being transferred to Negev Prison.

Al-Taweel revealed that an administrative sentence was issued against him for six months before the sentence was reduced for a month, then extended for another month, and extended again for a third month: “The judge did not find any reason for the arrest, and each time, he extended the detention based on the recommendation of the intelligence service.”

Regarding the horrors of torture, Al-Taweel said: “We were held in challenging conditions, as prisoners were always exposed to torture of all kinds, including physical and psychological torture and were deprived of food and insulted.”

“After a few days of detention, I was transferred to the Negev Prison. It was extremely shocking, as prisoners are met with a trained rapid response known as Keter. Prisoners are stripped naked in a very humiliating manner and are subjected to severe beatings amidst insults and abuses.”

According to Al-Taweel: “The injured do not receive any treatment, and the prison doctor does not provide any care, leaving the disease to fate.”

Al-Taweel was arrested several times and held in Israeli prisons, where he spent about ten years, but he described the latest arrest as “the most difficult”.

“The situation in the prisons is hazardous, and the lives of the prisoners are literally hell. Prisoners are treated as a criminal and a Daesh member. There are no laws and there is a complete absence of human rights organisations.”

Al-Taweel complained about overcrowding in Israeli prisons and said that he was held in a room in the Negev Prison with ten other prisoners, noting that there are about 1,100 prisoners in the prison: “At all times throughout the day, prisoners are subjected to severe beatings, humiliation, psychological torture and being deprived of their belongings.”

Al-Taweel recounted that he lost 20 kilograms in two and a half months.

He added: “Any form of worship is prohibited, reading the Quran is prohibited, congregational prayer and raising the call to prayer is

prohibited.” Al-Taweel said that many prisoners are ill, especially the elderly, due to medical neglect and daily abuse.

31 Palestinian journalists currently held in Israeli prisons in record wave of detentions

Reporters Without Borders

Israel has arrested a total of 38 Palestinian journalists since the start of its attack on Gaza on 7 October and is currently holding 31, most of them without any charge, says Reporters Without Borders (RSF), condemning the use of detention to silence the Palestinian media and calling for the protection of all journalists and the release of those detained.

Reporter Diaa al-Kahlout's release on 9 January after more than a month in detention will not eclipse the scale of Israel's arbitrary imprisonment of Palestinian journalists. At least 31 of those arrested since 7 October — 29 in the West Bank, one in Gaza and one in East Jerusalem — are still held in Israeli jails, in most cases without being notified of any charge.

This unprecedented wave of arrests and detentions, while the war continues in the Gaza Strip, has clearly been carried out with the deliberate aim of silencing the Palestinian media. All of the detained journalists work for Palestinian media outlets such as J-Media, Maan News Agency, Sanad and Radio al-Karama or are freelancers.

Massive crackdown in West Bank

Most of the arrests have been in the West Bank. According to RSF's tally, a total of 34 journalists have been arrested there since 7 October, of whom only five have so far been released. When the war began, two were being held. The detained journalists cannot receive visits and most are held in locations in Israel that have not been revealed.

Some of those who have been released, such as the freelancer Somaya Jawbara, who was granted on bail on 22 November, 17 days after her arrest, are required to remain at home, are banned from using the Internet or talking to the media, and have been placed under surveillance for an unspecified period.

Since the start of the war, Israel has been using the procedure known as “administrative detention” to detain journalists. Under this procedure, a person is detained without notification of any charge on the grounds that they intended to break the law. They can be jailed for periods of up to six months that can be renewed on nothing more than an Israeli judge's order. At least 19 journalists are currently subject to “administrative detention.” The other 10 journalists are being held pending trial on trumped-up charges of inciting violence.

“At least 31 Palestinian reporters are currently held in Israeli prisons in connection with their journalism. This intimidation, this terror, these endless attempts to silence Palestinian journal-

ism, whether by chains, bullets or bombs, must stop. We call for the immediate release of all detained journalists and for their urgent protection.

Jonathan Dagher
Head of RSF's Middle East desk
Inhuman treatment of detained journalists

Some of the detained journalists are being subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. This was seen in the case of Diaa al-Kahlout, the newly released reporter for the Al-Araby Al-Jadeed news site. His family identified him in a video posted by an Israeli soldier in the north of the Gaza Strip on 7 December. Al-Kahlout was seen kneeling in the street in the middle of a group of half-naked detainees. An Israeli patrol had arrested him a few hours earlier at his home in Beit Lahia. His house was burned down. His two brothers, who had been arrested with him, were released. The reporter was briefly held in Eshel prison in Israel and was subjected to torture, according to several RSF sources. The Israeli authorities said nothing about his fate for more than a month, until his release today (9 January). In almost all cases of detained journalists, the families are given no information about their arrest and their situation.

Terrible ordeal for detained journalists in Gaza

In Gaza, where two journalists are currently detained, many reporters have been subjected to arrests of less than 48 hours in duration that have been no less traumatic.

They include Said Kilani, a photo-journalist who freelances for the Associated Press, Agence France-Presse and other international media, who was one of the few reporters to remain in Beit Lahia. On 13 December, Kilani was covering the fighting as Israeli forces advanced on Kamal Adwan Hospital when he found himself being arrested along with a medical team. “As I knew that journalists were being targeted by the Israeli army, I was afraid and I initially hid my helmet and my press vest,” he said.

Kilani was held for 14 hours at a military base in the north of the Gaza Strip. “We were forced to take our clothes off, we were insulted and humiliated,” he said, although he insists that he immediately identified himself as a journalist to those holding him. After being released, he found his wife and children, who had also been arrested and then released. While they had been held, their house had been set on fire, and the journalistic equipment that Kilani had hidden in the hospital had also been burned.

“The Israeli soldiers took everything from us,” he told RSF. “We are homeless, in the cold, with nowhere to go.” Five days after his arrest, Kilani was with his 16-year-old son when the boy was killed by an Israeli sniper before his very eyes.

Huge tragedy for journalism

At least 80 journalists have been killed in the Gaza Strip since 7 October, including 18 in the course of their work, according to information verified by RSF. More than 50 media offices in the Gaza Strip have also been completely or partially destroyed by Israeli strikes since the start of the war.



Art by Brian G. Kerr







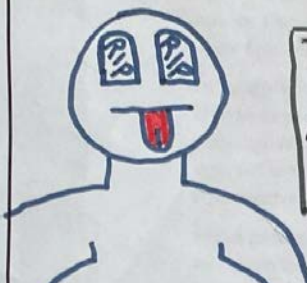
Punk Rock Lifer Girl

By Tanya Bogdanovich

Just doing a life bit in the women's sector. It is as bad as it sounds. There are very few programs. I am in a small federal prison (yet sadly I am in the largest women's federal pen) so I am stuck walking in small circles for miles and miles but never getting anywhere. Years and years just passing me by. I long ago finished my last correctional program and have done every Chaplaincy program at least twice even though I am a Buddhist. I am far away from all three of my children but cannot move any closer because, for those who do not know, there is only one federal prison for women in Ontario, so if your family is not close to Kitchener too bad for you.

There are only six federal facilities for women in Canada and that is including a Healing Lodge. There is not even one per province, not very helpful for keeping families together or building social supports. Not to mention our lack of halfway houses in every single province despite our ever-growing population. It is even harder when you are a Lifer who will need a halfway house for a minimum of two years if you are ever granted parole. Even when you get parole, you are not going anywhere until a bed opens up and others who get residency who HAVE TO be released get the bed before you. So really, getting parole does not necessarily mean you are leaving your federal prison life anytime soon, since the women's sector gets financially left behind every fiscal year. Our Lifer population grows and grows and grows yet that issue is continuously ignored, which means the other issues that go hand in hand (such as aging population, medical needs, MAID access, increased mental health needs) go unaddressed as well.

And why? Not just the All-Mighty

 <p>Today's Date August 11th 2023</p>	<p>Next Week</p> <p>Movement Pass Inmate Name: _____ Health Care _____ Dr: _____ Appt Date: Aug 12th 2024</p>
<p>when accessing Helicare inmate above is told to wait for movement pass in the mail</p>	<p>Please note date. This is a common CSC trick to appear as though they are offering services. END</p>
<p>Please notify nurse IMMEDIATELY if you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are having difficulty breathing 2. Have uncontrolled bleeding 3. Are dizzy or lightheaded 	<p>ONLY Knock if you</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have stopped breathing for 5 minutes or more. 2. Have no more blood left in your body 3. Are unconscious.
<p>what signs in the outside world say when accessing health care</p>	<p>OK, the sign at helicare at CSC locations are similar but this is what it MEANS. END.</p>

Green God That Rules All but because of age old gender stereotypes that women are always the "nurturers and caregivers so thus are less likely to commit murder". I wonder how they then try to justify the ever-growing female Lifer population? I guess the almost 30 of us Lifers, just on medium security compound here, are CSC's dirty little secrets. And the jobs here, shameful. Gender stereotypical. Cleaning jobs from here to hell. A few maintenance jobs, three SIS positions, 4 canteen positions, 3 inmate committee positions, some peer advocate positions (my current employment - which I LOVE!), two recreation assistant positions, a chaplaincy helper, an

elder helper position, a few food services positions, a hairdresser position, and house representative jobs. That is it. No electrician positions for training, no trades options, no painting, no plumbing, no culinary arts, no dog program, just no, no, no. Yet they seem oh so very confused by the rate of recidivism when no skills other than minimum wage cleaning have been made available to the women here. Obviously, they resort to criminality upon release. All they have done is shove CSC programs down some throats and see if people can regurgitate it well enough to justify REAL paychecks to non-incarcerated individuals. And to sleep at night they tell themselves, "Well we gave them skills; it is up to them if they use them." Choke on that and their well above \$6.90/day paycheck. I guess the only real "advantage" to the women's sector is that the harshest weapons they use on us is pepper spray and the Pinel Restraint System.

Here, we have not had a consistent Warden in YEARS, we have a lot of "Acting" management positions. "Acting" warden, "acting" deputy warden, "acting" A.W.O., and the list goes on and on. The nepotism existing here is sickening. It really is the six degrees of separation. Right now, my parole officer is also the person who was my first program facilitator in MAX when I arrived in 2016. Facts. Two months ago, a guard was Chief of Administration and was originally a volunteer (I can't make this shit up!), some guards started off 10 years ago in food services or stores. It is pure insanity. I know that nepotism exists in every prison, but imagine it confined to a VERY small area and it is not just guards, it's in ALL positions here. When people in food services are related to finance workers, who are related to SIS workers. And it continues down the lines.

Everything is a battle all the time, mostly because people think women are uneducated, will not know our rights (including things like Creating Choices), or perhaps they think us illiterate and will not know how to read CCRA's, Commissioner's Directives, and other

important human rights documents. I can write complaints and grievances almost in my sleep at this point. It is funny how we are all expected to be accountable for EVERYTHING ALL THE TIME, yet my new Correctional Plan Update was due in December and my P.O still has not completed it. Where is the accountability there? And that directly impacts my life.

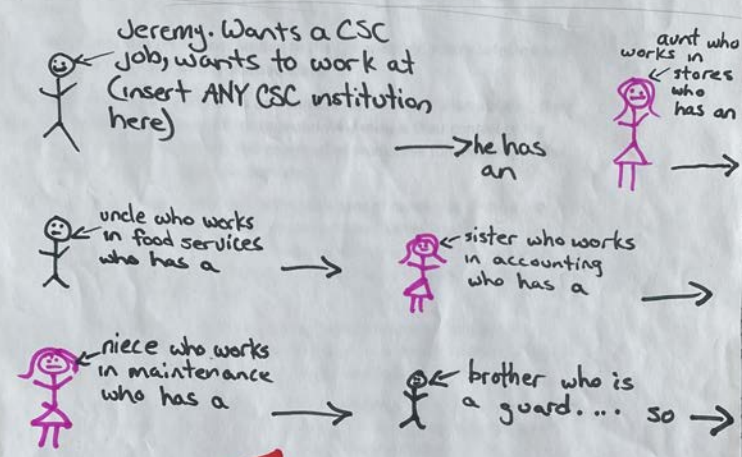
The issues never end here. Be it systemic racism, denial of basic rights in Maximum security, Lifer's being denied the right to cascade security levels due to reasons not even found in Commissioner's Directives (this also includes things like not lowering Escape Risk, even after 10 years

of incarceration with no attempts of escape, due to "length of time remaining in sentence") this is a regular occurrence. Once a parent contacted National to make some inquiries and when she stated that her daughter was at GVI, the reply the mother received was "Oh, GVI. That's like a u-uh-rogue institution." Yeah, National referred to this place as rogue. That in and of itself speaks volumes about the levels of accountability within this place, as well as how frequently Commissioner's Directives are abided by.

If you think it is hard to get people to band together, well you will never see things worse than in a women's institution. Even Lifers cannot stand together because the one who killed for money does not want the one who killed a child to benefit from anything. *face palm* Yet she fails to make the most basic connection that she herself would benefit, because her judgement and discrimination towards another murderer prevents that. So, the result is no one gets anything. *slow clap for the whole room of fools who got no further ahead*

Men think that women do "easy time" but what everyone fails to realize is we do not have the luxury of having 30 institutions to ship people to when they display MAX behaviors, and our MAX unit is small, so medium is overrun with MAX overrides who in the men's sector would be men's Max inmates. So here we adapt to a constant environment of high stress and anxiety and that is life in medium security. So, for everyone who thinks because we are women, that we band together and sing songs and have pillow fights on weekends, let me tell you, it is almost a constant environment of cattiness, gossip, smile to your face while stabbing you in the back, passive aggressiveness, and violence. And that is the reality of living in the women's sector.

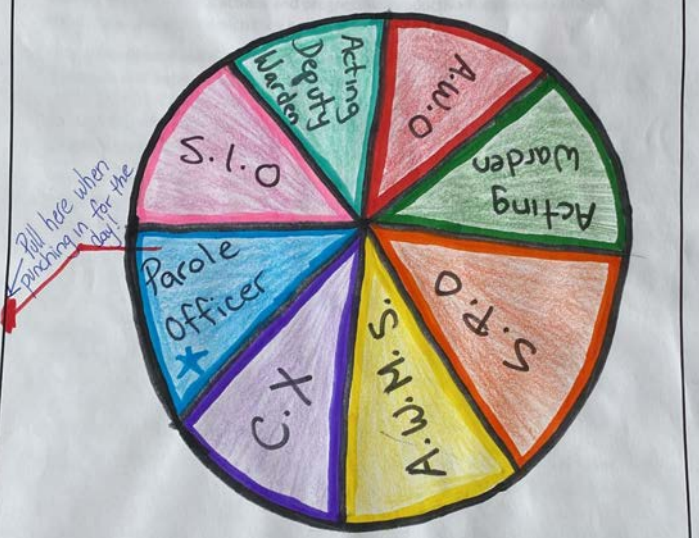
How to get a job at ANY CSC institution across Canada. 100%.



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Congrats Jeremy, although several more qualified people applied to CSC feels what helps hide their secrets is → **NEPOTISM!!**

CSC's "Wheel of Employment" How CSC employees know what they will be doing for the day.



* if you have landed on "Parole Officer" more than twice this week turn around and go home! You get to pretend to work from there and fall further behind on already overdue paperwork.

Call here when searching for the job!



we want to share our views with the entire world. One place where all of our friends and family and the public can read our content. This is what I call cell count to be. Create a blog on Medium.com or any blogging site and share inmate content with the world. I want to be able to send all of my poems and content to cell count and know it will be posted online. That way all of my friends and family and the public can find my content in one place. This will drive traffic to your blog, page or website and generate ad revenue for cell count. May Allah grant cell count 100 million dollar! Ameen! *Response from Cell Count Editor:* Thank you for these great suggestions! Just so our readers are aware, we do publish Cell Count online as well. It gets posted to our website as well as PASAN's social media accounts. In addition, people on the outside have the ability to subscribe to Cell Count and either receive it as a PDF file in their email inboxes, or hard copies in the mail, and they will often make a small donation to help us offset the costs. Any time we attend events or conferences, we also bring copies of Cell Count to hand out to the public. We want you to know, that there are many people on the outside who read and see your work as well! We believe it's important for everyone to know what goes on inside, especially since prisons are funded through tax dollars, people deserve transparency and the right to know how that money is being spent.

anti-Indigenous racism in CSC

Request from Joey T. to the warden:

Please take this serious, you might laugh at first. After, you'll know I'm right. I'm so fucking hungry, can you personally go to the food bank, and bring me back food? I am ashamed to eat the fucking shitty food that is being tampered with, this is a human rights violation. The food that's been tampered with, the shit feces, I refuse to eat the food that's unsafe to eat. I'm being treated mistreated and discriminated against by stereotypes, ignorant prejudices, so-called CSC Proud Boys, public servants, really fucked up people. They are acting like I've never been called racial names. What the fuck? Seriously. This colonial CSC federal racist institution is still incarcerating Indigenous peoples – and we are being mistreated, discriminated against, based on the skin colours, it's an act of genocide. I'm no longer Muslim, and I don't want to be Indigenous no more, because I got called "Savage goofball" and people laughed, why? I am still a human being and have feelings, like the rest of the billions of people on this planet earth. Please don't turn a blind eye.

Initial Grievance Response from warden Pattie Krafchuk, October 31st, 2023):

It is agreed that the term "Savage goofball" is incredibly disrespectful and could be triggering for those affected by Indigenous social history, name-calling and belittling has no place in correctional institutions, and if allegations are proven, staff will be disciplined in accordance with CD-060. However, the claim that

you were referred to as such by Correctional Officers cannot be substantiated. Conversely, SIU staff were extremely concerned for your mental health during this timeframe, numerous mental health referrals were made and followed on by mental health staff daily log books indicate that you frequently refuse to see anyone, or allow anyone to assist you with thoroughly documented as deteriorating mental health conditions. I can assure you no one is tampering with your cell, or your medications, or your meals. Staff do not enter your cell when you're using the common rooms or meeting with staff in the interview booths. This was confirmed through video reviews completed by AWO Chance S. at the request of the institutional head, no impropriety was found, it is noted that you were transferred to RPC on October 19th, 2023, I encourage you to access the full support available to you there. CD-81 Annex A provides a definition of what constitutes discrimination. Discrimination, when an Offender believes that actions, language, or decisions of CSC staff were made in a discriminatory manner, based on one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination, defined in Section 3 of the Canadian Human Rights Act. It is the institutional head's responsibility to decide if any allegations of discrimination in the complaint submission actually took place. As I am unable to prove allegations of discrimination at this time, this grievance is denied. In accordance with paragraph 42 of CD-081 corrective action, if applicable, will be completed within 30 working days.

Second response (November 1st, 2023):

Correctional Officers are calling racist names and laughing at you, and your SIU placements are not substantiated. Please be assured you will not be placed in the SHU. No SHU referral has been done, staff will never deliberately jeopardize your safety. Staff have only intervened to provide you support through periods of declining mental health. Your allegation that staff are refusing to allow you to make calls to your lawyer, the Canadian Human Rights commissioner and the Office of the Correctional Investigator is false. Log book entries indicate that you have made calls, and you have refused to attend VNC for arranged phone calls. Please note that phone availability is shared. And numbers must be registered to your PIN list. One call, on October 16th with Classic Law could not be facilitated on this day. Staff had significant concerns about your mental health and the safety and security of the institutions. You had revealed evidence of self-harm and made threats to assault staff. Staff intervened with mental health supports and rescheduled that call on your behalf. It is noted that you were transferred to RPC on October 19th, 2023, I encourage you to access the full support available to you there. As I am unable to prove allegations of discrimination at this time, this grievance is denied.

The Need to be Heard

By Abdul Jabbar Mahamoud
As human beings we have a need to be heard. A strong urge to share our views with others. That's why social media is so powerful, and popular. In prison, there is no social media. There is no outlet to share your

thoughts with the world. You can only share your thoughts with your fellow inmates, a handful of people. There needs to be an organization that handles social media posts for inmates via mail. Newsletters are nice, but

Who are we?
We are a group of community volunteers who help to support prisoners in having platonic, safe, and meaningful pen pal connections.

write to us!
A FREE, PLATONIC PEN PAL PROGRAM FOR FEDERAL PRISONERS

We are dedicated to social justice, anti-racism, and freedom. We believe in the right to dignity and humanity for all.

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Box 873
New Westminster, BC
V3M 6V3

send us a note to one of these addresses depending on your location for more info

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3. Get Unlimited Prison Calls To Your Cellphone or Homeline!
(prisoner only pays a local landline price of just \$0.57/hr. stop paying expensive inmate telephone system prison phone call costs! (Save over 60%)

SYSTEMIC RACISM IN PRISONS

Dear Cell Count,

I am an occupant of a medium-security federal institution in Canada called Collins Bay. I am the Ethnocultural Representative for that facility and have been for the last two years.

I am reaching out to you today in regards to the disheartening treatment and numerous incidents of blatant bias/systemic racism within the federal infrastructure. To be fully transparent with you, this is my third federal sentence so I have seen how the administrative operations have digressed further away from cohesive rehabilitation to what it is now, which is basically what us prisoners in here call "The Ticky Box System". CSC particularly CBI just renders the bare minimum for optic purposes, which leave no real sufficient solutions that amount to progressive gains for Afrocentric prisoners and the initiatives they claim to endorse.

In this package, you will find incidents that I'm currently personally facing, issues of how staff and administration are not following their own CSC policies, not being held accountable for violating policies and how systemic bias/racism whether conscious or unconscious is being disregarded.

Instances like staff taking photos on their personal cell phone of documents I had printed, supervisor/authority staff condoning and failing to take action when an employee has committed an infraction of the Standards of Professional Conduct, being deliberately subjected to amendments to my job because of publicly verbalizing those infractions and the blatant reluctance/avoidance by administration to acknowledge the Ethnocultural population's petition to have a member of the Ethnocultural Institutional Committee removed (although having over 240+ signatures). And this is just pertaining to myself. They had 15 days to respond, and it's now been over 30 working days, and still no response.

Band-aid remedies and equivocal statements are the typical outcome when these

kind of situations occur and it simply reinforces the voicelessness that Afrocentric prisoners possess in an infrastructure clearly entrenched with the white supremacy tendencies. Without a designated Afrocentric liaison or an Afrocentric Corrections Program Officer (ACPO), the Afrocentric prisoner population nationwide will continue to be disenfranchised.

I have read numerous issues of your Cell Count newsletters and have heard the plights of several similar individuals going through uncivil mistreatment by CSC and I feel their direst.

When individuals such as myself, who have positions of trust jobs and have remained out of the quote unquote "institutional subculture," take a stand and advocate on behalf of equality rights and opportunity, staff take offence to the protagonist approach, expecting you to be subservient and when you're not, you become susceptible to subjective and selective perception-based treatment.

I hope you are able to read this material and see for yourself the ailment that many others and myself are facing within these prison walls and can further bring awareness to the mission your syndication is already attracting.

Thank you for your time and consideration and all the support and attention you have given to prisoner's initiatives and wellbeing throughout the years and I hope we can establish a rapport to continue this positivity on the outside as I plan to pursue this calling as a pro-social advocate for prison reform and criminal justice improvement.

IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE.

I am a lifer. As many in my circumstances, I believe that I was wrongly convicted. As such, throughout my prison life I made numerous efforts to clear my name through our legal process to no avail. As a result of this conviction I have recently been labelled "antisocial" by a psychologist whose only knowledge of me is through "police reports" and nothing personal.

With respect to my support system, I had a beloved girlfriend

who supported my efforts. That was until the court recently rejected my appeal. She is now a part of the Christian community that shuns all evil, including me, in accordance with the scriptures. On the bright-side, I can now add this unnecessary phone expense to my future savings budget. Nevertheless, at this point in my life, I feel like every door that has been closed on me reveals some truths about our human existence. This led me to the conclusion that the phrase "it takes one to know one," likens me with those who condemn me.

For instance. Prior to the courts rejection of my appeal, my relationship with my girlfriend was promising. I would tell her all about my fantasies of what I would do with her once we meet in person, I would be honest about my coping methods, and felt totally safe to express myself with honesty and sarcasm, so long as I was not harming anybody. Following the court's decision, however, I realize that the tolerance of many, including my girl, for my coping behaviours has expired.

My girl no longer answers her phone, she and her mother now act more upright than the Virgin Mary, and I simply have to accept my diagnosis as a psychopath and seek rehabilitation through the phenomenal programming provided by our Canadian federal government (who recently welcomed a Nazi into parliament), if I want to make "the terrorized public" feel safe again.

My only recourse for the justice I desire is to now file an application to the Minister of Justice for a Ministerial Review. This is a process where a government body reviews a criminal conviction to determine whether or not there has been a miscarriage of justice. If so, then the Minister can direct the matter back to the Appellate or trial Courts for a remedy. If not then the Minister can reject the application leaving the Applicant with nothing more than the sacred hope in God for a peaceful end.

Time will tell on what God has in store for me. Meanwhile, in the face of my dilemma, I decided to reflect on my life through to this point in an effort to accept whether or not I am good or evil.

First, in reflecting on my historic relationship with the CSC, I found that my Case Management Team (CMT), did not make every effort to provide the most effective correctional plan at any time of my sentence, to prepare me for release as required by law. In fact, based on my record, they actually did the complete opposite. Not only do they continue to ignore all of my rebuttals to their profiling inaccuracies, they even refuse to retrieve the information from the courts that establish my claim, as required by law and policy. On that note, since the information they rely on, which is inaccurate, characterizes me as a "psychopath," wouldn't the "doctors" who purposefully ignore the information that vindicates the subject

actually be demonstrating the psychotic characteristics that they label me with? It's like going to the hospital for a sprained ankle and being diagnosed with a brain tumor, based on inaccurate file info, then sent for surgery against your will. In my lay opinion - "It takes one to know one!"

My ex-girlfriend's mother says I need to repent for my sins. She claims that what is missing from my protests of innocence is remorse. Recently her son was caught up in a scandal where my girlfriend, his sister, blamed him for cheating on his wife with his wife's sister. He proclaimed his innocence to his mother and she believed him one hundred percent. So, when I compared my claim of innocence to that of her son's, she couldn't see the different standard she was applying to me, the stranger. But, she is sure of her son's innocence on the irrefutable ground that her son would never lie to his mother. What ever happened to loving your neighbour as thy self?

Since the court dismissed my appeal, my girl, now ex-girl to be politically correct, can no longer stand to receive the phone calls of me protesting my love for her, my support for her parenting, my lust for her beauty, my faith to her heart, etc. Now, she doesn't need a boyfriend to speak carnally in her ear every single day, she now demonstrates her carnal lust with the world on social media, posting sexually suggestive photos of herself to the satisfaction of her loyal "admirers" who are not jail-birds like myself.

So, in judging my personal life experiences, the deliberation to determine whether or not I am as good as I believe I am, or as evil as I'm portrayed to be requires, reference to be made from a credible source of moral standards for comparison. Thus, since I consider myself to be a believer in the wisdom established by the teacher known as Jesus Christ, before the verdict can be delivered, I make reference to moral guidance for clarity. Since Canadians are a tolerant society I quote from the scripture respecting a standard of tolerance that people ought to observe. LUKE 18: 1-81 Then He spoke a parable to them that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2 saying:

"There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" 6 Then the Lord said, "'Hear what the unjust judge said. 7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man

comes, will he really find faith on the earth?"

By comparison, I am neither God's elect, nor am I perfect. If I were good, I don't think I would be seeking God and his mercy. I would probably be arrogant and unaffected by to the pleas of those in need. Since I am willing to accept that I am evil, I am able to admit that I do need God and his mercy in my life. So, when it comes to whether or not I am good or evil, "it takes one to know one." While my supporters continue to wither away, I will continue to carry my cross and pray for redemption and try to not lose heart along the way. Thank you for your time. ANONYMOUS!

Zakaria cont'd from cover

baying of the guard dogs, the sound of escort troops priming their rifles, the nerve-racking jangle of morning call in the camps, seep through all the strata of ordinary experience, through all their secondary and even primary instincts, into a prisoner's very bones so that, sleeping, he remembers that he is in jail before he becomes aware of smoke or the smell of burning and gets up to find the place on fire."

So how does it feel to wake up one morning out side this suffocating Matrix?

It's like preparing yourself to squat a thousand pounds, and just as you direct every ounce of force you have upwards: NOTHING, standing, almost jumping, nearly falling...

That's what it feels like—confusing, disorienting, enchanting, exhilarating, and uplifting—the five stages of sudden relief.

But that feeling doesn't last forever because life always moves on; a never ceasing treadmill that's constantly moving you forward to the tragic and exhilarating experience of being alive.

So don't you give up just because your life has suddenly turned into a nightmare.

Nightmares end. and so do daydreams. God, on the other hand, is forever...



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Mindfulness Inside

Excerpt from Chapter One from K.Vita Pires-Crisp's "Path of Freedom" workbook
Training the Mind

THE POWER OF MINDFULNESS

The Path of Trouble is a place you might know well and find yourself in over and over again. It's a path of unwanted thoughts and feelings that can lead to impulsive reactions and unskillful behaviors that can end up a big mess for you and everyone involved.

The Path of Freedom takes you on a different journey with a different conclusion. Step by step along the way, you recognize the habits and patterns that might have driven you on your own unique Path of Trouble. The Path of Freedom will teach you how to shift, change and ultimately transform your path.

Mindfulness is the core tool that supports the Path of Freedom. By slowing down your mind and developing awareness, mindfulness practice will help you work more skillfully with your thoughts, feelings and reactions, and create a "gap" where genuine choice and true freedom arise.

Why Meditate? & What is Mindfulness?

Meditation and mindfulness practices are powerful tools you can use to create peace and calm in your life. Meditation helps you see things more clearly, reduces stress levels and helps you live life more fully awake and alive. Practicing mindfulness will help you with controlling habitual impulses and reactions that might lead you into further problems. These practices are the foundation of the Path of Freedom.

Meditation and mindfulness are about training the mind to be awake, stable, peaceful, reflective and grounded in the present moment. It can be helpful to consider training your mind as you would train your muscles. Both take time and practice, and can be hard. If you grip something, the muscles in your hand and arm tense. If you continue to grip, your entire body tenses. Relax the hand and the tension leaves. Similarly, the mind might grab at thoughts and worries. The longer you grip onto these thoughts and stories and make them into 'Big Deals,' the more tense and agitated your mind becomes. Meditation will help you relax that tendency and allow you to experience your life from a more centered and peaceful place.

The Los Angeles Lakers and the Chicago Bulls have used meditation to improve player performance. Coaches have found that meditation helps players be more centered, focused, and aware—qualities which result in their game being much more effective.

Meditation and mindfulness practice helps on the path to inner freedom. It allows one to catch the moments where we have the choice and freedom to not react in a habitual or mindless way. Instead, we will be able to choose to act or not to act from a strong, clear and centered place in ourselves.

Thinking . . . Thinking . . . Thinking . . .

In every moment of the day, the mind is thinking, thinking, thinking. Thoughts come and go, racing around our heads endlessly. Sometimes one small anxious thought will capture all of our attention and we are off and running, making a huge disturbing story out of it. We might believe this story is absolute reality, even though it began with a simple thought that may or may not be based on reality.

Most of us race through life endlessly building our lives around the stories we create from one single thought. Our minds are rarely calm and quiet. Meditation is a tool we can use to calm our

minds and create space around thoughts and stories so that our thinking is clear and useful. Meditation is not a way to become thoughtless—thoughts are a necessary and natural part of being human. It's all the anxious stories, confusion, reactions, and worries we create from thoughts that turn into the problem. Meditation helps us with this by creating more spaciousness and clarity in the mind.

What did you have for breakfast two Thursdays ago? You might find it hard to remember unless you eat the same thing every day. But even if you could remember, you most likely wouldn't remember the specifics. For example, you may not remember any of the details or you may remember the breakfast was cold or under cooked. Sometimes many of us take our thoughts of the past to be reality, when in fact, memory is fuzzy and colored with interpretations. On the other hand, do you ever think about the future, and worry about a reality that hasn't happened, wondering, "What will happen to me?" It's important to remember, you have no way of knowing what the future will be, any more than you can be sure of recalling the past exactly as it was. The only thing you can know for certain is the present moment, which is your window into reality. Meditation will help you see and experience your life as it really is, in the present moment, with clarity and focus.

"You are so impulsive & out of control!"

Have you ever heard that? Being impulsive means you're acting so fast you don't have time to consider the results of what you're doing. Meditation is a powerful tool that will help you slow down so that you have space in your head to think and consider all the choices, before you jump into action.

Meditation: What It Is... & What It Isn't...**Meditation is...**

- A way to transform your life and find peace
- A way to deal effectively with stress and tension
- A tool you can use anywhere, anytime... in any situation

Meditation is NOT...

- A quick fix
- A way to become thoughtless zombie

Stress & Relaxation

When we meditate, we use our breath to relax. The breath can be a powerful and direct route to relaxation. When you are tense or stressed, have you ever noticed that your breath is fast and shallow and your muscles are tight?

By learning to meditate, you will become aware of how you are breathing, and you will learn how to achieve a state of deep and calm relaxation. Your breath will slow down and your muscles will relax. Simply by breathing deeply and evenly, you will become quieter and calmer. Your breath is a tool that you can use to create peace inside yourself.

We will be exploring many different types of meditation and mindfulness in this workbook—most will involve working with the breath in different ways to achieve relaxation and clarity.

Try this now:

Stop. Shut your eyes. Take four deep, slow, breaths . . .

. . . What happened?

How to Practice Meditation . . .

First we will explore formal meditation, sometimes called "sitting practice." The first thing we will work on is our meditation posture.

The Six Points of Good Posture

1. Seat: Sit comfortably on the floor or on a chair. Have a strong sense of being solidly on the earth. Your posture is regal, alert and

awake (as opposed to slumping). If you sit cross-legged, your knees shouldn't be higher than your hips (use a folded blanket or pillow to raise your seat if necessary).

2. Legs: Cross your legs comfortably at the ankles. If you are in a chair, don't cross your legs; instead plant your feet firmly on the floor, hip-width apart.
3. Arms: Let your arms hang loosely from relaxed shoulders. Rest your hands comfortably on your thighs, palms down.
4. Strong Back/Soft Front: Your torso is upright and dignified as if you are a king or queen on a throne with your spine straight. Your back feels strong and your chest is soft and open.
5. Eyes: Your eyes can be open or shut. If they are open, gaze softly downward about three to four feet in front of you.
6. Mouth: Relax your face and jaw. Open your mouth slightly. If it's comfortable place your tongue on the roof of your mouth.

If you sit cross-legged and your legs cramp, it is okay to stretch them out or briefly bring your knees up. Not everyone can sit cross-legged, so it's fine to use a chair or sit on the side of a bed; just make sure to have your feet firmly planted on the floor and your back straight. Lying down is also an option (although you might fall asleep if you get very relaxed, if so . . . enjoy your moment of rest!). Overall, awareness of the body provides a very helpful foundation for your meditation practice. You may want to take a minute or two at the beginning of each session to scan through your body from head to toe, cultivating awareness of all the internal and external physical sensations that make up the experience of being alive in your body. This will also help your mind settle into the practice.

Your Breath

Put your attention on your breath (breathing either through your mouth or nose). Take a few deep breaths, exhaling fully. Let your breath settle into its natural rhythm.

Sit still and keep your focus on your breath. When your attention wanders, bring it back to the breath again...and again...and again.

You might bring your attention back to the breath 1,000 times—that is the practice of meditation—constantly bringing your mind back to the peace and simplicity of the present moment, over and over.

Why put attention on your breath? Because the breath is a portable tool that is always with you. You can focus on your breath any time, in any situation, and use it to calm yourself. By practicing sitting meditation in a more focused 'formal' way you will remember to use the breath as a tool when you need to calm down.

Labeling Thoughts

When you notice your mind racing with thoughts, emotions, or sensations, simply return to your breath and continue putting your attention on the breath coming in and out of either your nose or mouth, or both.

You don't have to push away your thoughts—the point is not to get rid of thoughts and be thoughtless—the point is to simply not make a big deal out of them. You are learning to take a 'No Big Deal' approach to thoughts by simply returning your focus to your breath.

Labeling is one way to work with thoughts. When thoughts arise—and when you notice you are thinking, especially if you have been lost in thought,—simply say to yourself (silently) "Thinking." Then return to the breath.

Labeling is not meant to get rid of thoughts or sensations. It is a training tool that will show you what these thoughts really are—simply thoughts—nothing

more, nothing less. Many times we get carried away with our thoughts and stories. The labeling tool will help you not get so taken.

Labeling thoughts is done with a light touch—we aren't beating ourselves up by screaming or shouting internally, THINKING!! over and over!

Just gently say, "Thinking" when you notice you are caught up in your thoughts—and return to focusing on your breath.

So-called 'good' and 'bad' thoughts are all the same—you could be having a thought about hitting someone or about playing with a puppy—both are just thoughts. Simply label them 'Thinking' and return to your breath. Train your mind like this and you will soon realize that you don't need to act on every thought that appears. You'll see that thoughts come and go and you don't need to latch on to them or make a big deal out of them. Thoughts are natural. Simply let them come and go.

Practice Tips Willingness

Be willing to try. You will only know if meditation works if you give it a shot. Start slow, 5 or 10 minutes a day. Notice if you are calmer, more centered, or less angry.

Why?

Take a moment—just a few seconds before you meditate—to ask yourself why you want to meditate. Do you want less stress? To be calmer? To be less reactive? To be less angry? To sleep better? Whatever it is—just take a few seconds to reflect on "Why?" Setting an intention such as "I'm doing this to be less stressed," just before meditation can really help us clarify our motivations.

Resistance

If you find you are resistant to your meditation practice, well—that's normal! Consider your resistance as just another thought—don't let it dominate your life. Let it go. Meditation is mind training; it takes work, and embracing, working through and/or leaping over resistance is part of the work.

Doing it as a "Chore"

Try to avoid 'should-ing' yourself into meditation or making it into something you dread doing because you 'must.' Meditation is not something you should do or dread doing—it is something that will transform your life in many positive ways if you choose to practice it. The choice is yours.

How Long?

Meditate for as long as you feel comfortable, even if it is only five minutes a day. As you practice more and see that it helps—you will find yourself wanting to do it longer.

I'm Too Emotional To Sit Still . . .

When you are agitated or emotional, don't avoid practice. It may seem hard, but these are the times meditation can really help. Don't miss the opportunity to test this and see if it helps.

N.B.D. (No Big Deal)

Resistance, agitation, boredom, sleepiness, dreams, fantasies, schemes, plans, and emotions (such as anger, depression or anxiety) are normal things that come up during meditation. Your mind slows down when you meditate. Sometimes old or buried pain can surface when the 'noise' of daily thinking quiets. When this occurs, try to take a 'touch & go' attitude toward these feelings without resisting them or getting totally swept away by them. Feel them fully, and let them go, and return to your breath. Resisting or getting lost in the feelings will only make them a bigger deal. Take a "N.B.D." (No Big Deal) attitude about feelings that arise—experience them fully, let go and return to the breath.

Outreach & Support Schedule

Currently, as places are opening up slowly, we are also starting to do some one-on-one visits and limited capacity programs at a small number of provincial and federal institutions. Please keep an eye out for posters or call us at: **1-866-224-9978 for up-to-date information about when and where we are coming in.**

As things open back up in Ontario on the outside, we are increasing the number of days we are in the office. We are available Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm EST (to reach a specific staff member please dial **1-866-224-9978** followed by the extension):
Amina Mohamed x231
Women's Community Program Coordinator
Anton McCloskey x236
Federal In-Reach Community Development Coordinator
Jennifer Porter x235
Harm Reduction Program Manager

Nick Jakubiak x243
Harm Reduction Community Care Coordinator
Cherisa Shivcharran x233
Provincial Community Development Coordinator
Claudia Vergara x222
Federal In-Reach Community Development Coordinator
Claudia Medina x227
Program Manager
Eveline Allen x238
Regional Prison In-Reach Coordinator
Susan Shumba x239
POWER Project Coordinator

Janet Rowe x225
Executive Director
Kavita Maharaj x243
Harm Reduction Program Coordinator
Chance Cordon x230
Provincial HepC Program Coordinator
Sena Hussain x234
Communications & Resource Dev Coordinator
Trevor Gray x232
Community Programs Coordinator
You can reach us by mail at: PASAN, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3

Land Acknowledgment

PASAN's office, where we publish Cell Count, is on the historical territory of the Huron-Wendat, Petun, Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the New Credit Indigenous peoples. This territory is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peacefully share and care for the lands and resources around the Great Lakes.

HIV+ Client Services

- In order to be a client & access these services you need to have confirmed HIV+ status and be a prisoner or ex-prisoner (all times Eastern Standard time)
- Phone Hours: Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday mornings
 - Workshops and Programming - Scheduled usually on Mondays or Thursdays, give us a call or check out our website for a complete list of events we have scheduled.
 - ID Clinic - cancelled for now
 - Release Funds - \$50 (twice a year max)
 - TTC Tokens - 2 each for clients who attend workshops
 - Harm Reduction Materials - Mon - Fri from 9-5, except Tuesday AM (Safer-Crack-Use-Kits, Safer-Needle-Use-Kits, Piercing Needles, Condoms, etc.) - for everyone.

Sometimes we and the phones are very busy so please keep trying!

About Cell Count

PASAN publishes 'Cell Count', a minimum of 4 issues per year. We are based in Toronto on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron-Wendat and home to many diverse Indigenous peoples. It is sent out for FREE to Clients & Prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation @ \$20 per year. We are proud to release our 91st issue to you. We are also grateful for all the wonderful feedback we have been receiving from our readers, and encourage you to keep putting your two cents in. Our goal is to have most of our content written and produced by prisoners and ex-prisoners, so we highly encourage you to get in touch with us if you're interested in

being part of the Cell Count team. Publisher: PASAN
 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3

Circulation: 700+ - Recirculation: ???

All original artwork, poems and writings are the sole/soul property of the artist and author.

Fair Dealing in the Canadian Copyright Act:

Sections 29, 29.1, 29.2: "Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting does not infringe copyright."

A Note about Pen Pals:

Here is a list of correspondence services for people inside (alternatives to pen pals, which is, sadly, no longer a part of Cell Count):

Canadian Inmates Connect: Currently, there is a \$35/year subscription. Your ad will be placed on a website, and people with internet access browse through to decide who to connect with. A point of caution: you are asked to say what you have been convicted for, and your full name will be published online. Melissa is the person to contact for more information. Write or call her at: Canadian Inmates Connect Inc. 3085 Kingston Rd, Suite 267, Toronto, Ontario, M1M 1P1 - (647) 344-3404

Black and Pink: Specifically for queer and trans prisoners. They are based in the United States, it does not cost anything to be part of the list, and you don't have to tell them your conviction. Here is how to reach them: Black and Pink National Office, 614 Columbia Rd, Dorchester, MA 02125
 617.519.4387

Prison Fellowship Canada: This is a faith-based, Christian organization that connects prisoners with volunteers of either the same gender, or where there is a 15-20 year age difference. The point is for you to have an outlet to express yourself to someone who will listen. If you are of the Christian faith, this may be a great option for you. You can reach them for more info at: Prison Fellowship Canada - National Office, 5945 Airport Road, Suite 144, Mississauga, ON L4V 1R9
 905.673.5867

Prisoner Correspondence Project: "...a solidarity project for gay, lesbian, transsexual, transgender, gendervariant, two-spirit, intersex, bisexual and queer prisoners in Canada and the United

States, linking them with people who are part of these same communities outside of prison." - From their website. Write to them here: QPIRG Concordia c/o Concordia University
 1455 de Maisonneuve Ouest, Montreal, QC H3G 1M8

If you have had success using a pen pal service (other than ours) and would like to share it with other Cell Count subscribers, please write to us or call. We can list it in a future issue.

Moving?

We were getting about 75 Cell Counts sent back to us each mail-out labelled, 'Not Here'. Please help us reduce our mailing expenses by letting us know of any address change, ASAP! Thank you for taking care with this.

Calling all artists, writers (fiction, non-fiction), illustrators, cartoonists, poets, journalists (aspiring or otherwise), and other creative types:

We want your submissions! We get lots of letters from our readers telling us how much they love seeing all your work and they're hungry for more. Send us your stuff and get published in Cell Count. When you send us stuff, please make sure you write a line in that gives us permission to publish your work. Also, let us know if you would like your work returned to you or sent on to someone else! Please also type your work or write clearly if you can!

Writers: We get a lot of great work sent in that we are unable to use because of very limited space. Apologies. Please consider the column width & keep articles/poems tight & to the point. Honestly, the first items to go in are the ones that fit nicely and leave space for others - quality and quantity! Also, let us know in writing if it's ok to edit your work for grammar, spelling and so we can fit it in.

Please note: If you do send something to us, please give us a call if you can so we can look out for it in the mail. Also, call us again at least a week after you send it to make sure we got it. If not, if you're sending in a piece of writing, we can transcribe it over the phone for you, so keep a copy of everything you send us!

Women are the fast-

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Contact Numbers

If you are in any Federal/Provincial Institution or Detention Centre call us only with this #: Toll-free 1-866-224-9978

Next Cell Count Deadline

Please get your next submissions in by March 1st! If you submissions didn't make it into this issue, it will be prioritized for the next. Same with future submissions! So don't hesitate to send it in when it's ready!

Cell Count Evaluations

Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation form we've included with this issue and mail it back to us. We use these evaluations to make sure that Cell Count is useful to you and so our funders know we're on the right track. Call us if you would like to do your evaluation over the phone instead! **1-866-224-9978**

Cell Count Peer Liaisons

Cell Count is looking for peer liaisons who are currently incarcerated to be a representative for Cell Count inside. You would be responsible for gathering subscribers, letting us know when subscribers have

