

CELL COUNT



YOUR PRISON HEALTH RESOURCE SINCE 1995

FREE - FOR PRISONERS, EX-PRISONERS & THEIR FAMILIES

THE UNITY ISSUE, MARCH 2022 - #96

A LETTER TO MY FELLOW INMATES

My name is Devon Catchpaw and I am currently serving a 27-month sentence at a federal pen. I have heard of Cell Count before but never read one until recently for the single fact issues are not available much in provincial institutions and this is my first (and hopefully last) federal bit. The message your paper portrays is wonderful and the article that really plays my heart strings is the "Criminal Lives Matter" by B.G Kerr in issue #92. That article is the motivation for me writing now to share my recent experiences in the system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the conditions in institutions are becoming horrendous and the culture between fellow inmates or "Inmate Brotherhood" is almost non-existent these days.

First, I want to give a little background information, this is not my first rodeo. My upbringing was a good one with both parents still together today and living in a middle-class neighbourhood in the Niagara Region, so I never grew up wanting. I was the chunky kid so kids would try to pick on me but true to my dad's wisdom, I used my fists to put an end to that real quick. That wisdom paved the way for my involvement in the criminal justice system, enter the teenage years with sex and the drugs and the already established notion of defending one's "manhood" with violence. Soon, I was standing before judges and doing time behind bars. Up until I was 24, I was constantly in and out for a few months at a time, always for expressive violence done under intoxication, then the revolving door stopped. I didn't want to be a man serving a life sentence on the installment plan, so I started to make changes. I was finally growing up, I remained out of jail for 3½ years but since I still drank at times it was only a matter of time before I slipped up and got in a fight while drunk again. This time it was taken seriously due to my past record, and I got significantly more time for the charges. I did a year and I got out January 3rd, 2017, knowing what I had to do finally, quit drinking and drugging completely. I had great success with employment, finances, assets, you name it, started my own company as a sub-contractor doing a new home build with years of sobriety under my belt, it was great. No one could foresee the coronavirus pandemic coming, so when it did hit I was totally unprepared for the financial strain and mental distress now upon me, along with all this free time on my hands (the builder closed the site down). With every single social support I had ever used closed down due to COVID-19 within 6 months, with all this change in my life, I relapsed and found myself incarcerated, sentenced to a total of 27 months and sent off to the federal system.

Okay, so here is a summary of my involvement with the criminal justice system to show I am not new to this. Jail has never been a glorious place, but in the last 10-15 years the conditions in jails has gone to the crapper and not just through funding cuts and the like. There is no more unity between inmates, we are fighting amongst each other and following some other twisted version of jail politics where in truth it just comes down to "he said, she said" scenarios. When I first did time the man who ran the ranges did so with fairness and respect towards their fellow inmates. Road problems never

cont'd on pg 8

Locked Away

Locked away is what you are, connected by letters and calls is what we have, even though your not far it feels like your in another universe, I lay in bed every night dreaming about the day I'll roll over and you will be right there beside me forever you and I till the end of time our connection and love is never ending

*Art By: Chad Potvin
Poem By: Sherri Potvin*

Nov 10 2021

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

To our Cell Count readers,
Whether you have been a long time subscriber or are reading Cell Count for the first time, I want to thank you for picking up this issue. I very much value your feedback and use it to try and make each issue better and more useful to you than the last. Also, whether you are incarcerated and nodding and agreeing with many of the submissions you see, or are on the outside and surprised, shocked or outraged at some of what you see, I hope you take something from this. It is clear that things need to change, the question is, how to make that change happen.

We are now moving into a new phase of the pandemic, where, on the outside, masks are coming off and vaccination status is no longer a barrier to entry for most places. This does not mean that the pandemic is 'over', it seems a new wave is upon us, and we are all keeping our fingers crossed that our healthcare system can handle it. I have received many letters and calls about the many outbreaks that continue to rage through prisons across Turtle Island, it is heartbreaking to say the least. I also truly admire, with everything those of you on the inside have been through, you continue to move through each day with courage and strength. I am always blown away when I receive submissions from inside during these times. Stress can be a huge blocker to creativity, yet somehow, you still manage to create and share your experiences with all of our readers. It's quite remarkable and you should be very proud of yourselves, I know I am proud of you.

In this issue, you will read about the need for unity amongst those on the inside to push for the changes you want to see happen, you will read articles about racism and discrimination that happens in prisons, beautiful fiction that mimics real life, insights from a lifer and someone who has lived on the streets of Toronto,

and a revelation about the war happening in Ukraine.

I would love to hear your thoughts on this issue either through an evaluation or directly from a phone call or letter.

All my best,
Sena - 1-866-224-9978 x234

INTRODUCING ANTON!

Kwey kwey!

My name is Anton and I am new to the Federal team - Nicole and Aanya were the workers before. I'm Anishinaabe and Irish, I have a small dog with a big personality, and watch a lot of movies, both old and new. Some of the stuff I'm doing at PASAN is putting together online meetings for workers who support (ex)prisoners on Prison Health and Supports. I'm always down for input on the next topic, so feel free to give me a shout with any ideas. I'm looking forward to getting to know you all more in the coming months! 1-866-224-9978 x222

HEPATITIS C AND STIGMA

By Olivia Gemma, Provincial HepC Program Coordinator

Hepatitis C (Hep C) is a common health concern inside Canadian prisons. Many of us don't know that Hep C is spread through blood alone. By sharing knowledge and information about Hep C, hopefully the stigma (negative beliefs) around transmission (the process of getting the virus) can be put to rest.

The only way to get Hep C is through blood-to-blood contact where infected blood gets into your bloodstream through a cut or open wound. While some may argue otherwise, you absolutely CANNOT get Hep C from:

- Sharing a cell or range,
- Using the same showers and toilets,
- Kissing or hugging,
- Shaking hands,

- Coughing or sneezing,
- Or sharing food or drink

So if you find out your cellmate or someone else in the range has Hep C, the best thing you can do for them and yourself is show care. Hep C isn't "dirty" or "bad," in fact, many people across Canada are living with it and seeking care today. Stigma and fear of judgment is one of the main reasons people don't seek testing or treatment. Not only that, but it can also lead to feelings of isolation and depression. Hep C-related stigma arises from misinformation about the virus and

fear of its transmission. It's time to get the facts straight!

You can be living with Hep C and not know it. If you believe that you have come in contact with Hep C - get tested! Talk to healthcare or call PASAN (1-866-224-9978/416-920-9567, ext. 236) for support. **Hep C can be cured**, and you can still receive treatment while using drugs and alcohol!

Word Search Puzzle

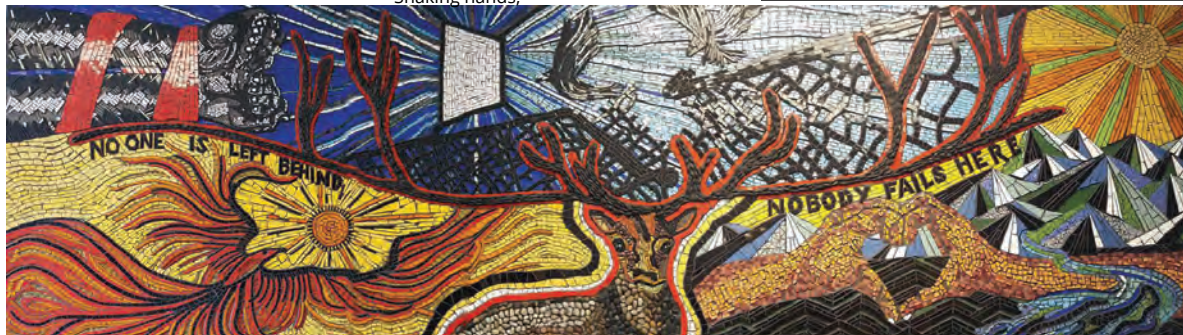
Take a moment to think about the words you find. Which traits do you embody, and which would you like to work on?

Positive Affirmations

E	T	N	R	T	T	N	M	R	R	H	E	R	L
S	N	I	V	R	H	R	D	E	R	O	L	E	A
E	E	I	H	U	O	E	E	S	T	P	B	S	C
V	G	N	L	S	U	L	T	O	P	E	A	P	R
I	I	D	H	T	G	I	E	U	A	F	R	O	E
T	L	E	O	W	H	A	R	R	T	U	E	N	A
I	L	P	N	O	T	B	M	C	I	L	N	S	T
U	E	E	E	R	F	L	I	E	E	O	L	I	I
T	T	N	S	T	U	E	N	F	N	Y	U	B	V
N	N	D	T	H	L	M	E	U	T	A	V	L	E
I	I	E	S	Y	P	H	D	L	N	L	T	E	O
H	I	N	C	I	T	E	H	T	A	P	M	E	L
T	L	T	T	S	U	O	I	R	U	C	V	P	E
L	C	O	M	P	A	S	S	I	O	N	A	T	E

- COMPASSIONATE
- EMPATHETIC
- TRUSTWORTHY
- INTUITIVE
- RESOURCEFUL
- INTELLIGENT
- RESPONSIBLE
- DETERMINED
- INDEPENDENT
- PATIENT
- VULNERABLE
- CREATIVE
- CURIOUS
- LOYAL
- THOUGHTFUL
- HONEST
- RELIABLE
- HOPEFUL

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/3313842/>



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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1-866-224-9978

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BLACK CAP: HIV DISCLOSURE AND THE LAW

In Ontario, Black communities are over-represented in charges against people living with HIV who have not disclosed their status. The reality is that a disproportionate number of charges are brought against members of our community. Resulting in more HIV positive Black people facing trials and criminal investigations. It's important for members of our community to be aware of the law in relation to non-disclosure and HIV. To make things more challenging, interpretations of the law and its requirements are difficult to follow. Here's what you need to know:

What is HIV disclosure?

To tell someone that you are living with HIV

What the criminal law says about sex and HIV?

In Canada, there is a legal obligation for people living with HIV to tell their sex partners that they are HIV-Positive before having sex that poses a "realistic possibility" of HIV transmission.

The legal obligation to disclose one's HIV-positive status applies only to people who know or suspect that they are living with HIV.

You have a legal duty to disclose your HIV status before sex with a person who you know has HIV.

The criminal law about HIV non-disclosure is strict and the consequences can be severe. You may not like what the law says. You may not agree with it. But it is still the law.

Here is what can happen to a person living with HIV who exposes someone else to a "realistic possibility" of HIV infection during sex but did not disclose their HIV infection before sex (adapted from HIV disclosure: A Legal guide for Gay Men in Canada - updated legal information May 2013, HALCO)

The police can investigate and charge a person living with HIV with a serious crime, usually aggravated sexual assault. The police can arrest the person living with HIV and put them in jail. The person's picture, HIV status, other personal information and the crime they're accused of committing may appear in a police press release, in the media and on the internet. Usually, criminal court trials are open to the public and the media.

If the person pleads guilty, or if the court decides they are guilty, they will almost certainly be sentenced to time in prison. They will have a criminal record. Their name may be put on a list of sex offenders. A DNA sample may be taken and placed in a data bank of convicted criminals. If the person is not a Canadian citizen they may be deported.

However, if the charges are dropped or they are found "not guilty" after a trial, they should be set free.

Because there is a risk that you might be charged and convicted for not telling him or her that you have HIV.

What are the downsides of using the criminal law in cases of non-disclosure?

Black CAP is highly opposed to the use of the criminal justice system in cases of non-disclosure for the following reasons:

As with other areas of criminal justice, Black and other marginalized people experience a higher level of scrutiny, prosecution and severity of charges. Women are especially vulnerable because they often cannot choose to use a condom in their relationships and have partners who use non-disclosure charges as a form of manipulation, control and domination.

The law places the full responsibility of condom use on PHAs and not their partners.

The use of charges does nothing to promote disclosure of HIV status in high stigma communities - in fact it makes disclosure more unlikely. People may be charged when there has been no transmission

Prisons are not places where the health of PHAs can be managed well and the prevalence of sexual violence increases the likelihood of transmission

How can I reduce the likelihood of charges?

Proving that you disclosed to your partner is especially important, consider the following steps:

Tell your sexual partners you are HIV positive before sex and try to get proof that you told them. When doing so use very clear and direct language such as "I have HIV", "I am HIV positive" or "I am infected with HIV".

Also make sure your partner understands what HIV means and how it is transmitted. For more information see HIV disclosure: A Legal guide for Gay Men in Canada - updated legal information May 2013, HALCO. Contact HALCO at 416-340-7790 or visit them at halco.org

- If you disclose to your partner online, by text or over email save it so you have proof.

- If you tell them in person make sure you have a witness or have your partner sign and date a document saying they know about your HIV status

- Consider making a video of your disclosure

- Create support and counseling records in a session with healthcare workers.

What do you need to do if you are being investigated or charged?

Contact HALCO immediately at 416-340-7790 or visit them at halco.org

OAHAS: INDIGENOUS HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM

The Indigenous Harm Reduction Program provides outreach and support to Indigenous people who use drugs. We work from a culturally safe place to ensure the needs of our people are met through a continuum of holistic care. We provide FREE access to clean drug use supplies such as needles and utensils, snorting, smoking and inhalation supplies, and condoms, lube and basic health and sanitary needs such as chapsticks, clean waters, matches, ties and more.

We also supply traditional medicines and resources to access traditional supports through community networks.

We work to raise awareness and conquer stigmas through our educational talks and workshops which are co-developed and led by our peers who bring a wealth of lived experience and expert knowledge. We aim to reduce barriers to our People by educating our partners and friends in the service sector to broaden our collective awareness and responsibility to promote inclusion and access in a safe and holistic way.

We offer support services and access to resources, referrals to services and programs such as mental health, housing/shelter, treatment, employment and much more.

Our Peer Outreach Workers are our champions out there and they work tirelessly to promote harm reduction in our communities and to ensure continued opportunities for peer engagement and

training and greater access to peer-led programs and services. For more information about our services please contact one of our Indigenous Harm Reduction Workers.

Address: OAHAS, 282 Parliament St, Toronto, ON M4X 1A8
Phone: 1-800-743-8851

PASAN: HIV & THE JOINT: FACT VS FICTION

What you need to know:

You cannot get the HIV virus from:

- Sharing a cell or range
- Sharing towels/soap/shampoo
- Showers and toilets
- Sharing food/drink/forks/spoons
- Playing cards
- Playing sports together
- Shaking hands
- Kissing and hugging
- Saliva
- Sweat
- Tears

HIV is only transmitted through these body fluids:

- Blood
- Cum (sperm/semens)
- Vaginal fluids
- Breast milk

So... the only way the HIV virus can enter your body is through:

- Unprotected sex - not using condoms for vaginal and anal sex
- Sharing your works - needle, spoon, filter, water, or bleach for shooting up
- Sharing needles and ink or dye for tattooing and body piercing
- Sharing sharps for cutting

So.. unless you are participating in these activities, YOU as an HIV negative person are not at risk at all of getting the HIV virus.

What about fighting and biting?

No one has ever got the HIV virus through biting or fighting. Though this is a theoretical risk (could possibly happen) it has not. When you bleed, your blood is pushing out, so it makes it hard for someone else's blood to get into your cut. To become infected with the HIV virus, the virus has to enter your blood stream, so your skin is a great defense.

So... you think someone on your range has HIV, maybe it is even your cell partner.

You might be feeling:

- Angry - someone should have told you
- Scared - can you get HIV from them?
- Pissed off - they should not be on a range
- Sad - why did this happen to someone like you
- Concerned - what can you do to help them?

You might want to:

- Get them kicked off the range
- Get them "checked in"
- Let everyone else know
- Ignore and isolate the person

What can you do:

- Ask questions and educate yourself
 - Maybe go to an HIV education session
 - Be a friend
 - Be supportive and compassionate
- Remember - you cannot tell by looking at someone if they have the HIV virus. A lot of people are living with HIV but do not know it until they go for a test. Respect yourself and others by practicing safer sex and needle use.

So.. if someone on your range is HIV positive, you could:

- Educate yourself on HIV

- Stop rumours and misinformation
- Treat the person as you would anyone else
- Respect their privacy
- Be a buddy - they could probably use a friend
- Call someone to get the answers you need

PASAN: 416-920-9567 or 1-866-224-9978

MANAGING YOUR HEALTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV



What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. The virus can affect people differently.

Common symptoms of COVID-19 are: fever, dry cough, tiredness

Less common symptoms include: aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, loss of taste or smell

Most individuals are infectious for several days before they develop symptoms. Some people who get COVID-19 never develop symptoms, but they can still transmit the virus to others.

Most people will experience mild to moderate illness and will recover on their own. However, about 20% of people diagnosed with COVID-19 will go on to develop severe illness. Some of these people may require hospitalization, and a few may require intensive care. A small number may die from COVID-19 infection.

While anyone can experience severe illness from COVID-19, certain risk factors significantly increase the chance that a person will have severe illness.

What are the risk factors for serious illness for people living with HIV? For people living with HIV, there are three main risk factors that can increase the risk of serious illness from COVID-19: a weakened immune system, underlying health conditions and older age.

Weakened immune system

A person with HIV who is on HIV treatment with an undetectable viral load and a strong immune system (CD4 count above 200) is not expected to be at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

However, a person who is not on HIV treatment and/or has a low CD4 count may be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Underlying health conditions

Some people living with HIV may have other underlying health conditions that are known to increase the risk of serious illness from COVID-19. These health conditions include: cancer, dementia, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease, liver disease, lung disease, obesity, older age

The risk of serious illness from COVID-19 increases for everyone with age (regardless of HIV status).

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19. It is transmitted through small droplets (aerosols) from the mouth, throat and nose of a person who is infected with the virus. Transmission occurs mainly through contact with the droplets from a person who has the virus either directly or indirectly. It can also be transmitted through contact with contaminated objects or surfaces.

Direct contact with people

The virus is transmitted through small droplets from the mouth, throat and nose



of people when they breathe, talk, sing, laugh, cough or sneeze. When an individual is in contact with someone who has the virus, these droplets containing the virus can enter their body through viral receptors in their eyes, nose or mouth. The virus cannot enter the body through skin. The closer and more prolonged the contact, the greater the chance of transmission.

Indirect contact with aerosols

Very small droplets of the virus (aerosols) may remain suspended in the air for longer periods of time, similar to the way cigarette smoke can linger in the air. This means there is an increased risk of transmission when aerosols are present, particularly in indoor spaces and crowded outdoor spaces.

Contact with surfaces

Although most transmission happens through small droplets in the air, objects and surfaces can become contaminated when someone with the virus has been near them. Transmission can happen if someone touches a contaminated surface or object and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth without washing their hands first.

How can transmission of the virus be prevented?

The best way to avoid getting sick with COVID-19 is to avoid exposure to the virus. Try to avoid close contact with anyone who may have been exposed to the virus or has symptoms of COVID-19, such as a fever or cough.

The following methods should be combined to help prevent transmission:

Wear a new or clean face mask or face covering when you are in public and you may come into contact with others. You should also wear a new or clean face mask or face covering when you are in an indoor space with people not in your household or social circle. Social circles, sometimes called "bubbles", are the limited groups of people that you have close physical contact with, including the members of your household and those outside your home. Some jurisdictions have made it mandatory to wear face masks or coverings in public areas.

Avoid or reduce your time in indoor spaces with people outside of your household or social circle and avoid crowded outdoor spaces.

Maintain a distance of at least two meters from people outside your household or social circle to help prevent transmission of the virus.

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer to prevent transmission from contact with contaminated surfaces. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands and regularly clean frequently touched surfaces with disinfectant.

Get vaccinated for COVID-19 as the vaccine becomes available. Vaccination greatly reduces the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and it may also help to prevent transmission. People who have been vaccinated should still follow the prevention methods listed above.

Community transmission of COVID-19 will vary with time and between regions as the number of active cases rises and falls. When community transmission is very high, additional prevention measures may be recommended. Consult local public health authorities for the latest guidance on how to prevent transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Should I get vaccinated against COVID-19 if I have HIV?

It is important to consider getting vaccinated against COVID-19 if you have HIV. Many people with HIV have or are at an increased risk for developing the underlying conditions that increase their chances

of developing COVID-19 or severe disease if they become infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

Experts consider COVID vaccines to be safe and effective for people with HIV. Clinical trials of the vaccines have included a relatively small number of people with HIV, all of whom were taking ART and who were healthy and well. Further studies are needed to determine if the vaccine works as well for people with HIV as it does for the general population.

There is no information yet on how well the vaccine works in people living with HIV who have a compromised immune system. If you are not on treatment and have a very low CD4 count, discuss vaccination with your healthcare provider. Some experts recommend starting HIV treatment first to prevent HIV-related complications and to potentially improve vaccine effectiveness.

For more information on COVID-19 vaccines, see Frequently asked questions about vaccines for the prevention of COVID-19.

What else can I do to protect my health during the COVID-19 pandemic?

It is important for people living with HIV to stay engaged in healthcare to remain healthy and minimize their risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

Early HIV diagnosis and ongoing treatment are important for everyone living with HIV to improve and maintain their health. People with untreated HIV may experience additional complications with COVID-19. If you are not already on HIV treatment, consider starting treatment as soon as possible. If you are on treatment, ongoing adherence is also important. This means taking your medications regularly as prescribed without missing doses. If you are having trouble sticking to your treatment schedule, be sure to discuss this with your healthcare provider so that together you can find solutions.

It's important to stay engaged with your HIV care team and manage any related health conditions, as these may increase the risk for serious illness from COVID-19. The list of what health conditions increase the risk of more severe illness with COVID-19 may change as we learn more about the disease.

It's also important to stay up to date on vaccinations, including the annual influenza vaccine, as these can help to prevent complications if you become ill with COVID-19.

There are many other ways to look after your physical and mental health during the pandemic. Make sure to try to get fresh air and regular exercise outside your home if you are permitted to. It can also be helpful to establish a routine, whether you are working or not. It's important to regularly connect with others, especially if you live alone; try using video or phone calls to stay in touch with friends or family. If you find yourself feeling depressed or anxious, talk to your healthcare provider.

Consider preparing for the possibility that you may be asked to self-isolate because you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 or because you yourself have become infected with COVID-19. Discuss with your network of family, friends and support workers how you can get food, medications or other support during self-isolation.

Will COVID-19 affect my HIV care? Because of physical distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be some changes to your HIV care. Your regular monitoring appointments with your healthcare provider or lab tests may be less frequent. Video and phone calls may replace face-to-face appointments with your healthcare team. You may notice some healthcare workers wearing

glasses or face shields — they do this to reduce the risk of droplets entering their eyes. Despite these changes, it is very important to stay engaged in HIV care.

There may be some changes to the way your medications are dispensed. It is recommended that people with HIV be given enough medication to last three months or more to avoid unnecessary trips to the pharmacy. Discuss your options with your healthcare provider and your pharmacist to make sure you always have enough medication on hand.

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

Each province and territory has COVID-19 helplines or websites that provide information on what to do if you think you have COVID-19.

If you suspect you have been exposed to COVID-19, you should isolate yourself and follow recommendations from your province or territory. If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, you may be contacted by a public health worker who will ask for details about anyone you may have come into contact with. These people should also be tested for COVID-19 and self-iso-

late until they receive the results.

If you have COVID-19, follow the advice of your local public health authorities regarding how long you should self-isolate. Usually it is recommended that you stay isolated for at least 14 days, or until 7 days after the last day of symptoms. Remember to drink plenty of fluids and rest well. If you have a fever, take painkillers to help bring it down.

Seek immediate medical attention if your symptoms become severe, such as if you have shortness of breath, chest pain or a persistent high fever.

Research has found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, some people are not seeking medical care to address health problems other than COVID-19. To stay on top of these issues during the pandemic, it is important to remain engaged in your healthcare and to discuss all of your symptoms with your healthcare provider.

The information on this page is based on available research related to the transmission and prevention of COVID-19. This resource will be updated as new evidence emerges. Last updated April 14, 2021.

COVID-19 Harm Reduction Tips



Clean your hands

Clean hands frequently with soap and water for at least 15 seconds. If soap and water is not available, clean hands with BZK wipes followed by alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used alone only when hands are not visibly soiled. Do this right before you prep your drugs and after any contact with others, using the TTC, handling cash, and getting your drugs.



Wear a mask or face covering

Masks or face coverings are required in indoor public places. Also, wear a mask when you have to be close to other people (within 2 metres/6 feet). If possible, wear a mask when doing drug exchanges or fixing with a friend.



Don't share gear

Sharing stems, meth pipes, straws, and injecting supplies (including ties, swabs, filters) all increase the risk of spreading the virus and other germs. Avoid sharing cigarettes, bongs, joints and vapes too.



Prep your own drugs

Try not to let others handle your drugs or drug-use supplies and don't let them handle yours. Before you prep, wash your hands and use alcohol swabs or a household cleaning product to clean the surface you are using. If you have to have someone else prep your drugs, make sure they wash their hands or use alcohol based hand sanitizer.



Get extra harm reduction supplies and naloxone

Next time you are at a harm reduction agency, ask for extra supplies. Stocking up for 2-4 weeks will help to limit your contact with others.



Avoid putting drug baggies/wraps in your mouth, anus or vagina

If you have to carry drugs inside your body, clean the bag/wrap thoroughly with alcohol-based sanitizer, alcohol swabs or isopropyl alcohol solution prior to inserting and after you take it out. Use an alcohol-based mouthwash to clean your mouth if that's how you carry. If your dealer carries in their mouth, ask them to consider a different method.



Work with your Methadone/Suboxone/OAT Prescriber

If you are on opioid agonist treatment or prescribed opioids for safer supply reasons, ask your healthcare provider to extend your prescription and reduce the frequency of your in-person appointments. Ask them for telephone or video-chat appointments, carries or to help you get doses delivered to you if possible.



Prepare for unplanned withdrawal

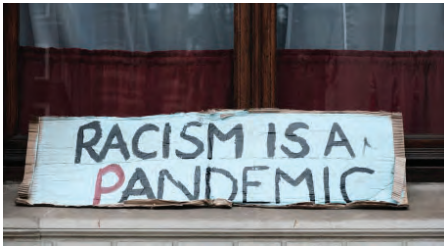
Have a back-up plan in case your dealer gets sick. Ask your healthcare provider to help with getting on OAT or getting the medications you might need for opioid withdrawal. Benzodiazepine and alcohol withdrawal can be very dangerous—team up with someone you trust who will be able to get you medical care if you go into withdrawal.



Respond to overdose

Any time you have to give naloxone or respond to a medical emergency, use the gloves provided in your naloxone kit and try to use a mask or face covering. Always safely dispose of used kits contents after use and clean your hands.

If you ever have difficulty breathing or experience other severe symptoms, call 911.



NEW DATA PROVIDES A RARE GLIMPSE AT 'SUBSTANTIAL' BLACK OVERREPRESENTATION IN ONTARIO'S JAILS

Nearly one out of every 15 young Black men in Ontario experienced jail time, compared to one out of about every 70 young white men, and incarcerated Black people were more likely to live in low-income neighbourhoods.

By Jim Rankin, Staff Reporter, Toronto Star

Using a snapshot of every Ontario inmate released in 2010, self-reported race data, home address data and 2006 census demographics, researchers from the University of Toronto, X (fka Ryerson) University, McMaster University, St. Michael's Hospital and ICES, a non-profit clinical research institute, have provided a rare glimpse at "substantial" Black overrepresentation in jails.

"The key thing here is really just the extent to which young Black men experience incarceration in Ontario," said lead author Akwasi Owusu-Bempah. "It's hugely troubling, especially in light of what we know about the consequences of criminalization, of incarceration for their futures and the futures of their families and their communities. We know what it does. Incarceration derails lives."

The jail data, provided by the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General, held details of 45,956 men and 6,357 women who were released from provincial correctional facilities, which house accused awaiting bail or trial, and offenders sentenced to less than two years.

Overall, 12.8 per cent of men identified as Black and had an incarceration rate of 4,109 per 100,000; 58.3 per cent identified as white, for an incarceration rate of 771 per 100,000, and 28.9 per cent as "other," for a rate of 1,507 per 100,000.

"Other" includes Indigenous, another group vastly overrepresented in jails and federal prisons but not the focus of this study.

For women, the rates were much smaller for all groups but, overall, Black women were incarcerated at a rate of 259 per 100,000, white women had a rate of 96 per 100,000 and the rate for "other" was 248 per 100,000.

Young men between the ages of 18 and 34 had the highest rates of incarceration in all groups, but young Black men had rates ranging around 7,000 per 100,000, compared to about 1,400 per 100,000 for younger white men.

Neighbourhood demographic data gleaned from the forward sortation area of postal codes showed Black men and women were more likely to come from low-income areas of the province. Black men spent more days incarcerated than white men and had higher rates of being transferred to a federal prison.

"This study demonstrates that incarceration is heavily concentrated among young Black men who come from economically marginalized neighbourhoods," concluded Owusu-Bempah, an assistant sociology professor at U of T, and co-authors Maria Jung, an assistant criminology professor at X University, Firdaous Sbaï, a doctoral

sociology student at U of T, Andrew S. Wilton, an ICES researcher, and Fiona Kouyoumdjian, an assistant professor in McMaster's department of family medicine.

At the root of the higher rates are "historical and contemporary social circumstances of Black people in Canada," note the researchers. These include 200-plus years of slavery and anti-Black racism, and disparities in many systems, including education, employment, child protection and justice.

Black people experience higher rates of child apprehensions and school suspensions and expulsions, and are more heavily policed, the authors said in highlighting disparities found in numerous studies, and also groundbreaking reporting done by the Star around Toronto police arrest and charging patterns and carding, when police stop, question and document citizens in non-criminal encounters.

Lower incomes for Black people have resulted in Black families living in areas that are "underserved by transit, libraries, schools and hospitals," and those neighbourhoods tend to have higher levels of crime and crime victims, and concentrated law enforcement, the paper notes, citing academic work done by David Hulchanski on Toronto.

In the United States, the "American experience" with race and incarceration "shows us that concentrated incarceration has negative consequences at the individual, family and community levels, including social problems relating to poverty, mental health, education, employment and civic involvement," the researchers wrote.

That ends up distorting "social norms, leads to the breakdown of informal social control, and undermines the building blocks of social order which are essential for community safety," the paper concludes.

The often claimed but false trope that Canada is better on race and racism than the United States is also examined at the outset of the paper, which is published in the journal *Race and Justice*.

While not directly comparable, the authors later note that 2016 data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics showed Black men were jailed in state and federal institutions each day at a rate of 2,417 per 100,000. In the Ontario study, the annual incarceration rate in 2010 for Black men was 4,109 per 100,000.

That, the authors wrote, helps to "contextualize the extent of Black over-incarceration in Ontario."

Owusu-Bempah, in an interview, said that "when we think about mass incarceration and we think about this kind of concentrated incarceration as an American phenomenon, I think we can see very clearly here that the levels of overrepresentation that we see in the United States is here in Canada."

The age of the Ontario data — now over a decade old — speaks to how rare it is to come across race-based Canadian data, the researchers noted in an emailed response to Star questions.

"While these data are from 10 years ago, our ongoing involvement in the criminal justice system indicates that the overrepresentation of Black people persists today," said the research team. "We think that monitoring and publicly reporting on the overrepresentation of Black people on an ongoing basis is important."

In order to examine Ontario jail demographics, the researchers used gender

and birthdates to link the provincial jail data to health administrative data held by ICES that was used in a 2018 study that looked at use of health care during incarceration and following release from jail. That study found the access rates of all types of health care were significantly higher for incarcerated people.

There is also a huge financial cost involved in jailing people. The Star has twice used inmate postal code data, length of incarceration data and daily cost of housing an inmate to show that in some Toronto city blocks, tens of millions of dollars are being spent to jail their citizens.

Preventing and reducing incarceration could free up money that could be reinvested in those neighbourhoods.

The authors of this report are part of a growing chorus of researchers, academics and advocates calling for more racially disaggregated justice data in Canada, which lags behind the U.S. and U.K.

More data around Canadian incarceration populations in provincial and territorial jails that identifies areas and groups experiencing high levels of incarceration, the paper concludes, "will help inform targeted initiatives to prevent criminal justice involvement" and "mitigate" the impacts on people and communities.

ANTI-BLACK RACISM IN CANADIAN PRISONS REMAINS RAMPANT, DESPITE GOVERNMENT PLEDGES

Systemic racism is built into Canada's prison system, but federal parties have little to offer incarcerated Black Canadians and their families.

By Simon Rolston & Nora Demnati

More than a year on from a supposed reckoning over anti-Black racism in institutions, Black people in Canada's prisons are providing startling examples that underline nothing has changed.

According to testimonials provided to *The Breach*, Black prisoners reported being called "monkeys" or the n-word by correctional officers.

One Black prisoner described how he was called "lazy"—a stereotype levelled at Black people since slavery—and denied prison employment despite clear evidence that he was suitable for the position.

After a Black prisoner submitted a request for a temporary absence to take his family to the zoo, a prison officer asked if he wanted to go because he was from Africa.

When a guard mistook a Black prisoner for another Black prisoner, she said, "all you guys look alike."

Most, if not all, incidents of explicit racism like these remain unacknowledged or go unpunished, and incarcerated Black people are unable to react to these aggressions, no matter how egregious.

If they react, they are the ones blamed. If they file a complaint, they are often pressured to withdraw it, and they have even been threatened if they stand their ground. If a complaint goes through, it is usually denied without a proper investigation resulting in no serious consequences for the officer involved in the racist incident.

As widespread reports surface of verbal and physical abuse and discrimination in Canadian prisons, advocates and prisoners are raising concerns that systemic racism continues to lead to longer incarcerations, harsher punishments and daily degradation for Black prisoners in particular.

Yet no major political party appears ready to meaningfully address the anti-Black racism embedded in one of the country's most secretive and powerful government agencies: Correctional Service of Canada.

While the Liberals presented Bill C-22, which aimed at tackling the overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous people in the criminal justice system, the proposed amendments suggested no changes to the way sentences are managed by Corrections Canada.

Corrections Canada says it will fight racism in its prisons, but it shies away from acknowledging that systemic racism is built into the culture and workings of its institutions.

Black prisoners frequently report that Corrections Canada staff perceive them as hostile, belligerent, and intimidating because of the way they carry and express themselves.

"If we're assertive... [guards say] we're being aggressive," one Black prisoner explained to *The Breach*. "If we disagree, we're being confrontational."

According to another testimony, one correctional manager told a Black man accused of having an intimidating attitude that it was normal for anyone to feel intimidated if they were to enter a room and see three Black men standing together.

The names of prisoners have been kept anonymous to ensure safety from punishment or repercussions.

Following the police murder of George Floyd and the eruption of protests across Canada and the United States in 2020, Corrections Canada Commissioner Anne Kelly wrote an open letter to Canadian federal prisoners and their families saying she recognised the need to learn from Black people and "to do better." Soon after, Corrections Canada created a joint working group with the Parole Board of Canada to look at racism and diversity in the federal corrections and conditional release system.

More recently, Kelly wrote a second open letter to federal prisoners in which she underlined that Corrections Canada was "committed to ensuring our programs, policies and practices are responsive to the unique needs of Black, Indigenous and ethnocultural offenders in our care."

But Black prisoners themselves tell a very different story about this country's prisons. It's a story of ongoing institutional anti-Black racism that has been permitted at every level of the administration, from the direct racism of guards to policies, rules, and procedures that entrench institutionalized discrimination. It raises serious questions about the sincerity of Corrections Canada's efforts to address the racial biases and discrimination that have repeatedly been identified in their prisons.

Visibility matters

More than a year after Floyd's murder, Black prisoners have yet to see Corrections Canada take tangible, sustainable and substantial measures to address systemic racism, let alone recognize it.

The *Breach* heard testimonials from Black prisoners about their experiences in the prison system, and from other lawyers and advocates whose imprisoned Black clients tell similar stories. Imprisoned Black people say that their skin colour matters more than ever before, and they are being reminded of it every day. They tell us that they are suffering.

Consider how the police murder of George Floyd inspired an otherwise apathetic American and international public to acknowledge anti-Black racism in American policing because we could see it: the video of Derek Chauvin pressing his knee into Floyd's throat was instrumental in affecting public opinion and galvanizing resistance to police violence.

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Credible witnesses to police brutality came forward; data about racially motivated police bias accumulated.

Comparatively, a lack of media attention, public awareness, and effective oversight has enabled a culture of anti-Black racism in Canadian penitentiaries. There are no cell phones to record racially motivated attacks, and those who witness institutional or guard mistreatment of prisoners are called unreliable, or are forced to remain silent because they know better than to testify against an officer or challenge the system. Even when video recordings are potentially available, getting access to those recordings can take years (as with the seven-year delay Christophe Lewis endured to access the recording of an abusive use of force incident that he suffered at the hands of guards).

Federal government has long known of anti-Black racism in its prisons

Data about Black prisoners' experiences in Canadian prisons is virtually nonexistent. The Correctional Investigator's report on The Black Inmate Experience in Federal Penitentiaries marked the last time Black prisoners' experience was seriously considered. That was 2013. Despite the report's damning findings, nothing has changed.

A senate report entitled Human Rights of Federally Sentenced Persons, which relates shocking cases of racism, describes Corrections Canada's culture as defensive and characterised by secrecy and intimidation, and expresses serious concern "with the wide range of testimony pointing to ongoing discrimination in federal correctional facilities." The report also highlights the failures of Corrections Canada's complaint system, including the issue of guard intimidation and the rarity that complaints are addressed. Imprisoned people, it explains, often "avoid filing grievances because the process is ineffective and they fear intimidation and retaliation."

Corrections Canada staff's perception of Black people as threatening extends to Black visitors to prisons. Black families visiting loved ones in prison have reported being unfairly criminalized and harassed by Corrections Canada staff. Ultimately, Black people are the ones expected to correct their behaviour. Staff members' perceptions of that behaviour, which are undoubtedly clouded by conscious or unconscious biases about Blackness, are never questioned.

The 2013 correctional investigator's report explains that Black prisoners "are more likely to be charged with misconduct that involves subjective judgement on the part of correctional officers (e.g. disrespect toward staff, disobeying a rule, etc.)." When clear evidence of prisoner misbehaviour is required, Black prisoners are less likely to be charged. In other words, discretionary charges, which are based

on staff perceptions rather than evidence, are marked by staff biases against Black people.

These discretionary charges and biases can result in the denial of parole (which means more time behind bars), less privileges or access to rehabilitative programming, increased surveillance, and even a higher security classification (incarcerated in a maximum rather than a medium security prison, for example).

Superficial changes aren't enough

Correctional staff lack training about the reality of Black people's experiences with the criminal justice system, and in Canada more broadly. The Black Lives Matter movement highlighted how Black people are consistently mistreated by law enforcement. Anyone with lived experience of frequent, racially motivated police search and frisk would distrust police officers, and the justice system in general. Yet there is no recognition of, or systematic effort to account for, the historical marginalization and state surveillance of Black bodies at Corrections Canada. In Canadian prisons, Black people must bury their feelings, as any perceived negative views of authority figures are interpreted as anti-social or marginal values, which can result in higher security or the denial of parole.

Ensuring that Corrections Canada staff receive effective and ongoing anti-racism training—and requiring oversight to ensure that the training occurs and is appropriate—and hiring a more ethnically diverse staff is important. Yet solving an institutional problem through staffing deflects responsibility from the people who hold power, like wardens, regional commissioners, or Commissioner Kelly, who have allowed a strongly embedded culture of impunity to prevail. It also burdens newly hired racialized officers with the responsibility of changing a racist culture, once again asking Black and other racialized people to solve predominantly white racism while disregarding how racism is systemic and part of the bureaucratic structure of the prison system itself.

Anti-racism training and an ethnically diverse staff fall short of being a complete solution since anti-Black racism affects every aspect of the prison experience. Black prisoners present lower rates of re-offending but are more likely to be placed in maximum security institutions where access to programs is limited. They are also less likely to be granted parole or temporary absence. Black people are overrepresented in Corrections Canada's segregated population and in "use of force" incidents, according to a March 2017 letter from the correctional investigator to Senator Jim Munson, chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights. Black prisoners spend longer in "Structured Intervention Units"—a form of isolation that replaced segregation—than other groups,

according to a recent external review of the practice; and risk assessments have repeatedly been found to be biased against Black prisoners, most recently by a 2020 Globe and Mail report.

A spokesperson for Corrections Canada told The Breach the institution is "developing an anti-racism framework, which has three pillars of focus: inmates, employees and stakeholders."

"[Corrections Canada] has already begun engaging with its National Ethnocultural Advisory Committee (NEAC) on this draft framework," and is seeking input from a variety of sources, including from "members of Black communities from across Canada." The spokesperson added that Corrections Canada has launched "the Ethnocultural Action Framework," which is "designed to enhance organizational capacity to respond with agility and inclusivity to the needs of ethnocultural offenders."

But while the institution has had many opportunities to change in the past, it has done very little, if anything, to mitigate the racism inherent in the system. Not only has Corrections Canada failed Black prisoners, it has failed incarcerated Indigenous people and its elderly population; it has failed its own Indigenous and racialized employees, and, as a result, it has been facing an increasing number of lawsuits in recent years. Given this poor record, Black incarcerated individuals say they have little, if any, expectations when it comes to the commissioner's announcement that she wants to "fight against racism and discrimination."

Corrections Canada needs significant changes that can only happen when mandated from outside the organization's power structure and overseen by third-party groups who will make visible Black lives behind bars in Canadian prisons and listen to Black prisoners.

Or perhaps Corrections Canada's history of failed changes suggests that the prison system can't be reformed but should be replaced: by an outdated vision of punishment to a community-based strategy that sees justice in education, mental healthcare, anti-racism, housing, and equal economic opportunities.

With anti-Black racism in Canadian prisons an apparent afterthought among federal parties this election, there is little impetus for Corrections Canada and whichever party governs next to end the systemic racism in Canada's correctional system.

COVID CASES HAVE DOUBLED IN CANADIAN PRISONS AS UPTICK IN VACCINATION ACROSS PRISONERS LULL

By Megan Atkins-Baker, saanichnews.com

Total of 16,111 prisoners contracted COVID-19 during this wave, 11 deaths

COVID-19 cases have doubled in prisons nationwide in recent months and advocates are worried that those behind bars

are being forgotten, especially amid concerns of hesitancy and distrust in vaccines.

According to a study from the University of Ottawa, there were 22,428 cases reported within the span of just three months across both provincial and federal penitentiaries as the Omicron variant swept the country. At the end of November, 10,042 cases had been reported in total – up by 12,385 cases in February.

A total of 16,111 prisoners contracted COVID-19 during this four-month wave, and 11 were reported to have died related to the respiratory illness. Data shows that's a 51 per cent increase from stats in November.

During the same time, 6,250 corrections staff reportedly contracted the disease and one person died.

"A number of imprisoned people have lived with mental health and drug-use issues – they've had poor experiences in healthcare and have faced discrimination in the community," professor and researcher Justin Piche told Black Press Media in a phone interview Wednesday (March 2). "You go to prison and the healthcare and discrimination there is even worse – vaccine hesitancy is going to happen unless you have an educational rollout like the one seen with Correctional Services Canada."

As health officials have been pushing Canadians to get their double vaccination and accompanying booster, data is showing that uptake in getting the jab behind bars has been poor across provincial prisons.

Meanwhile, federal penitentiaries have seen a better rise in vaccine rates, being the first to roll out a vaccination program.

CSC has administered a total of 31,145 vaccines and 87 per cent of inmates are double vaccinated in federal institutions across Canada. So far, 54 per cent have had their third dose.

"What they did from the start was they engaged prisoners, families, and community organizations that they trust to provide information about the benefits and consequences of vaccines," said Piche, emphasizing the importance of education and empathy when addressing concerns around vaccination.

CSC has been vaccinating inmates since January 2021 and all offenders – including new admissions to CSC – are being offered the vaccination, boosters included, said CSC spokesperson Esther Mailhot.

On the federal level, all staff and inmates are equipped with medical masks. Protocols are also in place that includes extensive testing, both rapid and PCR, use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and masks, medical isolation, and follow-ups, said Mailhot.

What do prison vaccination rates look like in B.C.?

According to a factsheet from the public safety ministry, individuals in custody are offered a first, second and booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as early

as reasonably possible following admission.

All public service employees were required to be fully vaccinated as of Nov. 22, 2021, which includes all B.C. Corrections staff working within a correctional centre or community corrections office.

All contractors, volunteers and other support and service providers were required to be fully vaccinated as of Dec. 13, 2021.

The province says that monitoring for COVID-19 is continuous for all individuals in custody and anyone who develops COVID-19 symptoms on a living unit is assessed by staff and medically isolated and tested for COVID-19.

To protect against possible transmission between correctional centres, BC Corrections also says it limits movement between centres.

ALMOST HALF OF PRISONERS HELD IN ISOLATION ARE INDIGENOUS, PANEL SAYS

PATRICK WHITE

PUBLISHED MARCH 10, 2022,

Globe and Mail

Indigenous people make up half of all prisoners subjected to the harshest form of federal detention, an indication that problems persist under the federal government's new model of inmate isolation.

An independent oversight panel formulated the statistic as part of its work reviewing Correctional Service Canada's new prisoner isolation regime, called structured intervention.

The federal Liberals created structured intervention units (SIUs) in November, 2019, calling them a humane replacement for segregation, a prison practice akin to solitary confinement that courts in British Columbia and Ontario had rendered unlawful because it violated constitutional rights. Among the cases was a B.C. Supreme Court finding that segregation discriminated against Indigenous inmates.

The panel found that 48.9 per cent of prisoners in SIUs were Indigenous.

"If the policy intention was to eliminate the evils of segregation, then it doesn't look like that intent has been achieved,"

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said Howard Sapers, chair of the panel, which was created to oversee the implementation of 15 structured intervention units across the country. The report containing the statistic has yet to be made public.

Mr. Sapers said the panel members looked at SIU population data for Aug. 22, 2021. He was struck by the proportion of cells occupied by Indigenous prisoners.

"There is something dramatically out of whack when it comes to the use of structured intervention and Indigenous prisoners," Mr. Sapers said.

In a statement to The Globe and Mail, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) spokesperson Marie Pier Lécuyer confirmed the ratio of Indigenous people in structured intervention remains high. As of March 4, 166 prisoners were in structured intervention, 80 of whom were Indigenous, or about 48 per cent.

"CSC will continue to work with Howard Sapers and the implementation advisory panel, other oversight bodies, and Indigenous communities, as we work to support the rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders and ensure they are provided the tools and services they need to successfully reintegrate the community," the statement reads.

The federal jailer has long held a large proportion of Indigenous prisoners compared with the general population. In the 2016 census, 1.7 million people in Canada identified as Indigenous, accounting for 4.9 per cent of the population. Within the federal penitentiaries, the share jumps to 32 per cent. That's up from 12 per cent in 1999, the year the Supreme Court of Canada's landmark Gladue decision declared that the overrepresentation constituted "a crisis in the Canadian criminal justice system."

The Gladue decision directed judges to consider a person's Indigenous background during sentencing, with the intention of diverting significant numbers away from incarceration. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission took a crack at addressing the problem, calling on federal, provincial and territorial governments to commit to eliminating "the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade."

When the bill calling for the creation of structured intervention units was before the Public Safety Committee in 2018, Jonathan Rudin, program director for Aboriginal Legal Services, warned that it lacked any consideration of the Gladue decision.

He wasn't shocked to hear of

the high proportion of Indigenous prisoners now housed in SIUs.

"I would like to say it's surprising, but it's not, because my experience is that the outcomes for Indigenous people in correctional services are always worse," he said. "When you see numbers like this, it just speaks to the fact that CSC is incapable of addressing humanely and properly the needs of Indigenous offenders."

In 2018, Ottawa allocated \$297.3-million over six years to staff and equip the new isolation units. A prisoner can be transferred to the SIU when they need to be separated from the general prison population for safety reasons.

Under the old segregation model, prisoners were granted two hours a day outside their parking-spot-sized cells. There was no limit on how many consecutive days they could be segregated. Courts in B.C. and Ontario ordered Ottawa to end the practice. Both endorsed a time limit of 15 consecutive days in segregation.

The federal government countered with structured intervention, which doubled the amount of time prisoners could spend outside their cells to four hours, including two hours of meaningful human contact. But it did not institute a 15-day cap on the numbers of days someone could be isolated.

Mr. Sapers said the panel found that 54.7 per cent of prisoners held in SIUs spent more than 15 days there.

A recent report from Correctional Investigator Ivan Zinger concluded that many people refuse to leave SIUs because they tend to be safer than general population units, especially at maximum-security prisons, and offer greater access to health workers and services.

But previous panel studies have found that SIUs rarely live up to that comfy billing. One review of 2020 data concluded that up to 45 per cent of SIU prisoners never received their four-hours outside the cell.

"I've heard from a number of guys who said they were really lucky if they got out of their cell for 15 minutes," said Kim Beaudin, national vice-chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and member of CSC's Aboriginal advisory committee.

Criminologists, judges and lawyers describe a complex set of reasons to explain the overrepresentation. Mr. Beaudin prefers a more streamlined interpretation. "It's all rooted in racism and discrimination, period," he said. "There's just no way around it."

The CSC has developed an anti-racism framework that focuses on creating an inclusive workplace and rethinking tools used to assess prisoners.

For Mr. Rudin, the relentless surge of Indigenous people in CSC's custody has persuaded him to stop using the word "overrepresentation" to describe the problem.

"It actually makes the problem

sound less serious than it is," he explained. "The term I'm using now is 'mass incarceration.' What we have now is the mass incarceration of Indigenous people in Canada. And we don't seem to be coming to grips with it."

REPORT: BLACK AND INDIGENOUS INMATES EXPERIENCE MORE 'USE OF FORCE' INCIDENTS IN PRISON

By Jacob Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter Alberta Native News

Wed., Feb. 16, 2022

(ANNews) – Last week, the Office of the Correctional Investigator presented an annual report to parliament that suggested a racial bias within Canada's prisons.

In the report, the prison watchdog found that Black, Indigenous and other people of colour (BIPOC) were more likely to experience 'use-of-force' while incarcerated in the federal system.

"My investigation of race and involvement in use of force incidents in federal penitentiaries is deeply troubling," says Dr. Ivan Zinger, Correctional Investigator of Canada.

"We found that racial background was uniquely associated with the over-representation of Black, Indigenous, and Peoples of Colour (BIPOC) in use-of-force incidents."

"Regardless of risk level, security level, age, sentence length or gender, identifying as an Indigenous or Black incarcerated person was associated with a greater likelihood of involvement in a use-of-force incident," said Zinger.

The investigation reviewed approximately 10,000 documents detailing use-of-force cases that happened between 2015 and 2020.

They found that despite an overall decline in country's prison population, the amount of incidents increased during the same period.

Furthermore, the report stated that Black, Indigenous and BIPOC inmates made up 60 percent of all use-of-force incidents, despite only representing 44 per cent of the entire federal prison population.

As for Indigenous people specifically, Dr. Zinger said, "Indigenous individuals, who, on average, experienced more uses-of-force per person than any other group, were also more likely to be involved in a use-of-force incident."

"Specifically, Indigenous individuals accounted for nearly 40 percent of all individuals involved in uses-of-force, despite representing, on average, 28 percent of the incarcerated population during this (five-year period)."

The report listed over 40 different types of force used against inmates, with some of the more notable examples being: pepper spray, batons and strip searches.

The report states that pepper spray is the most common, making up 42 per cent of all force used in incidents.

"We've seen incredible increases in use-of-force in the past couple of years," said Zinger.

"We've seen also increases in suicide attempts and self-harm. And that only suggests the frustration and psychological harm that is going on here."

Additionally, the investigation also found that that minority female inmates were subject to more force than other female inmates, with the report claiming that female Black, Indigenous and BIPOC inmates accounted for nearly two-thirds of all women incidents.

Leticia Gutierrez, a lead investigator, said, "These high numbers were largely driven by the increasing proportion of Indigenous women in federal custody."

"Race is significantly and uniquely associated with the application of force in federal prisons."

The Office of the Correctional Investigator is now requesting the federal government to sign onto the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), an international treaty aimed at preventing torture.

The Correction Service of Canada (CSC) has said that they will carefully examine all recommendations made by the investigator and take action to address them.

In response to their reaction, Dr. Zinger stated, "I'm not convinced that Correctional Service Canada has either adequately acknowledged or answered compelling evidence of the unique role that race seems to play in how force is applied, how frequently it is used and against whom."

INMATE'S DEATH COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED, SAYS CLOSE FRIEND

By Nigel Maxwell, paNOW, March 14, 2022

Although not related by blood, Sinclair said he called Vermette "his brother" and news of Vermette's death has hit him very hard. Sinclair went on to explain additions issues go back a long way in the family, adding Vermette's own mother died of an overdose as well. Sinclair claimed social services knew there were problems but did nothing about it.

"You had a seven-year-old cooking for the family, while the mom was locked in the bathroom using all day. The kids didn't know their mother until my brother kicked the door in to talk to her," Sinclair said.

Acknowledging that he has also served jail time, Sinclair recalled one time when it took three months to get an Advil. He said the correctional system needs to do a better job.

"It's meant to correct our behaviour, to deter and denounce delinquency but they don't. It takes you two months to get into a sweat, even if you get that," he said. "And if they do they release us back to the pack of wolves we were with. There's no restorative measures at all."

Another issue, according to Sinclair, is Prince Albert's geographical location, as the gateway to the north. He said people coming to the city from reserves, where housing and living conditions are

poor, struggle, and have issues coping.

"This is why you see so much damage, why you see so much drugs because we all lean on our support and our support as addicts is the use of drugs," he said.

Sinclair noted Vermette leaves behind two young boys, whose mother died five years ago from a Fentanyl overdose. Vermette's brother is also in prison serving time. Explaining that First Nations people suffer from trauma, linked directly to colonialism (residential schools), and need to be tended to as a community through support systems.

"If we can house people for \$150,000 in jail, then why can't we spend \$150,000 on restorative measures and then they would be contributing members of society. They would pay taxes. There would be holistic healing, and there wouldn't be an over-representation of indigenous people in our facilities," he said.

Prisoner advocate Sherril Maier, with Beyond Prison Walls Canada, said she is not surprised to hear Vermette died from an overdose. She explained one of the issues inside the wall is that inmates, dealing with addiction issues, get cut off cold turkey from the medication they are taking until they can be reassessed.

"A lot of guys go and buy them off someone else, so now they are taking meds and they don't know what they are taking," she said. "They might be taking doses that are too high for them to be taking"

Citing similar deaths this past week in other institutions across the country, Maier said drugs have become a big problem.

"Especially now with COVID and guys are sitting in their cells more and more they are not getting out and not able to call home and not getting their visits. You know that's weighing on people," she said.

Citing a program that's currently running at Stony Mountain Institution in Manitoba, Maier said she would like to see it expanded to other federal institutions. The program essentially gets guards more involved with inmates, teaching them breathing exercises and how to cope with stressful situations.

"The guys that I have spoken to wish it was longer than five weeks, saying it legitimately helped them decrease their use of drugs or wanting to do drugs," Maier said.

As indicated earlier this week, the Correctional Services Canada (CSC), as in all cases involving the death of an inmate, confirmed the circumstances surrounding Vermette's death will be reviewed. CSC policy requires that the police and the coroner be notified.

FEDERAL INMATES FACE LONG DELAYS AND SOMETIMES RETRIBUTION IF THEY FILE COMPLAINTS, LAWYER SAYS

By Frédéric-Xavier Duhamel, CBC News, Mar. 15th, 2022

cont'd on page 8

NEWS ON THE BLOCK CONT'D FROM PAGE 7

The process for federal inmates to file complaints and grievances appears to be getting more bogged down, according to a Quebec lawyer and an inmate who are denouncing what they call ridiculous delays.

Worse yet, they say, filing a grievance can often lead to reprisals by correctional officials.

"The complaints and grievances process has really become a joke," said Cynthia Chénier, co-founder and president of the Association of Progressive Prison Lawyers, in an interview with CBC News.

She said some of her clients have had to wait two to three years to get a response.

"It's a bit ridiculous, there are even some who come out of prison without ever getting an answer," she said.

The time frame for a response is supposed to be within 60 or 80 working days upon receipt by the national grievance co-ordinator.

Data from Correctional Service Canada (CSC) shows that the number of grievances that are answered within the prescribed time frame has been declining since at least 2016.

Of 106,940 complaints and grievances processed between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2021, only 67,633 of them, or 63 per cent, were processed within the time frame prescribed by Commissioner's Directive 081, according to data from CSC obtained by CBC News.

A report by the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, tabled in June 2021, noted that "in every federal penitentiary the committee visited, federally sentenced persons told the committee that the grievance system is flawed and does not work."

It also stated "that the grievance system is severely backlogged and as a result, grievances take too long to be resolved if addressed at all."

According to CSC, the delays can be explained by, among other things, "the need for more time to gather information and analyze the problems of the complainant, the volume of complaints and grievances ... and recently, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic."

However, even though the number of complaints has decreased in each of the last five years, the number of complaints answered on time has fallen even more, so that an increasing proportion of them are resolved late. And this trend has been going on since long before the start of the pandemic.

Asked to further explain the reasons for the increase in delays, CSC said by email that it had "nothing more to add."

Delays are "getting worse and worse," said Christopher Lill, an inmate at the me-

dium-security Cowansville Institution in Quebec. He has been behind bars for nearly 16 years.

Lill, who is Indigenous, has filed grievances about compensation for his work as an inmate, discrimination in access to certain programs, and harassment by staff at various institutions over the years.

He is still awaiting a final decision on a grievance he submitted in 2020 over access to confidential phone calls, he said in an interview this week. The delays represent "a recurring problem and it's not just me, it's all the inmates," he said.

Most inmate complaints are about "staff performance, inmate belongings, and food and diet," CSC said by email.

But Chénier says there are serious concerns being raised.

"I see a lot of discrimination, I can see harassment, I can see at the medical level, people who have asked for care" and filed grievances when faced with a lack of response, said Chénier. "It's not for nonsensical things."

And although there is a directive that says offenders cannot face "negative consequences" for filing a grievance, inmates say they do sometimes face reprisals.

One of Chénier's clients, who had decided to hold onto his complaint despite pressure from the institution's staff to abandon it, "was penalized on many other aspects of his sentence," she said, including "somewhat wacky" disciplinary reports, administrative meetings, and a change to his security clearance level.

He therefore filed another grievance for what he considered to be retaliation. "So it's grievance on top of grievance, but we never have an answer," said Chénier.

Her comments echo the Senate committee's report, which indicates that most of the witnesses they met had given up filing grievances "because of lengthy wait times and they fear potential retaliation from staff," such as destruction of property or loss of privileges and visits.

In addition to long delays and the risk of retaliation, the decisions, when they are rendered and even when CSC agrees with the inmates, are rarely satisfactory, according to Chénier.

The corrective measures requested are often to inform the institution's staff or raise awareness, and "there is never anything for the inmates" who have sometimes waited more than two years for an answer.

Sanctions against staff at fault are also very rare, if not non-existent, following a grievance, according to Chénier.

Christopher Lill agrees. "I have never seen a single inmate win his grievance and corrective action being taken to protect him or to sanction the staff at fault," he said.



CATCHPAW COVER STORY CONT'D

entered the jail and stayed road problems, worst case scenario a one-on-one fight where both men shook hands afterward and no more was said or done while incarcerated. Nowadays, its common to see guys get jumped by a whole group of guys with weapons involved and the issue in which the beating was over remains a problem for prolonged periods of time, following the guy to any range he ends up on or even to the new jail he is transferred to. No one likes a rat and I'm not defending them, but back in the day if someone tried to label someone a rat, he best have the paperwork to prove it or he was likely to eat a knuckle sandwich for spreading lies or unprovable information. Today, all it takes is for the accuser to have safety in numbers and more backup than the accused and anything can be said about someone with no more proof than the accuser's "word". Has anyone else noticed how PC ranges are starting to outnumber GP ranges? This is in direct correlation to what I mentioned above, a problem now follows a guy wherever he goes, and is left with 2 options to either segregate oneself indefinitely or check into PC. My home bucket used to have one PC range where only sexual offenders and proven rats ended up. The jail has 6 medium security dorms, 4 maximum security ranges with cells and 2 segregation areas, the upper and the lower segs. As of the day I left provincial for federal there were 3 GP dorms, 3 PC dorms, 3 PC max ranges, and only 1 GP max range with the top brass considering making the work range PC only since they far outnumber general population now. What is wrong with this picture? It's a standing joke now in my bucket that as long as you have enough buddies on a GP range you can check out of PC with no issues, and it happens all the time now. While the guy was in PC, he would be called all the usual insults but 2 weeks later he is now GP and breaking bread with the guys who would yell insults at him and now joining in the harassment of his former fellow PC inmates. Another growing problem I now see is the bullying of fellow inmates on the same ranges. Every single one of us are going through a stressful and low point in our lives by being incarcerated and now guys

are being brought even lower by constant unending harassment by their fellow inmates. I have seen guys finally say enough is enough and attack their bully only to get jumped by the bully and his friends, bounced off the range and a kite sent off to follow the guy to his new range so he can be beaten again. Guys have their canteen taken from them for no other reason than the fact that they are perceived as weak and have no "buddies" to back them up. There is so much more I can talk about, but the letter would be a mile long, so I bring back to the point of all this, there is no more unity and respect for the fellow inmate, it is closer to a dog-eat-dog world inside the provincial jails. Federal, I will admit, is far more mature and civilized but you definitely see remnants of the now provincial mindset seeping into the federal mentality as well. With all the funding cuts and privileges being taken away from us we will never be able to stand together and fight for them back the way things are going now. If I, an inmate, can see these things you can bet your ass the correctional staff see it too and their answer will always be to take away privileges from us. How can we expect to get more rights and privileges if we as a group are divided and becoming increasingly uncivilized towards each other? We can't and shouldn't expect a thing. All that being said, the correctional staff are now increasingly treating us worse and worse and in turn violating our rights, yet they have the excuse that we are acting worse and worse. In their minds it's justified but in reality, it's wrong. Everything the inmates of the past fought for is becoming undone!

The whole coronavirus pandemic has been tough for all of us, and every inmate has suffered during the lockdowns with loss of visits, rec time, out of cell time, etc. When I got arrested and sent to the bucket, I was coming off dope, so I was in withdrawal and in turn had a fever. Because of all this, I was put on "Droplet Protocol" and put into segregation for 14 days. During the 14 days my toilet got clogged to the point even a plunger could not clear it, so I told the COs to contact maintenance. Being on "Droplet" they refused to let me use another toilet, so I had to continue to use the clogged one. Two days after it was initially clogged, maintenance finally

shows up only to refuse to fix my toilet since he refused to wear the PPE required to interact with an inmate on "Droplet". So, two more days pass with that waste coming out of a withdrawing inmate packed into that toilet, it got unbearable, and I wouldn't stop yelling until they fixed my toilet. On the fourth day they offered me my second shower in 14 days and said as I showered maintenance would fix my toilet, so I was ecstatic for both my toilet getting fixed and finally being allowed to shower again. When I went back to my cell the maintenance guy fixed my toilet but got feces EVERYWHERE, the walls, the floor my mattress and bedding, everything had poop on it, I refused to go into that cell but the CO's pushed me in there and locked the door behind me. I was given ONLY a spray bottle and had to use my clothes and bedding to clean the mess he made then sit naked for about an hour before laundry gave me new clothes and sheets. Also, I never got another shower for the rest of my time in droplet and didn't wash again until I hit a regular range, and yes, I was negative on my COVID test. This is but only one example of the horrendous treatment of inmates during the pandemic which I truly believe is fuelled by the declining attitude of inmates towards each other and the attitude of correctional staff in response to that decline of inmate's attitudes. There is no excuse for breaking our basic human rights but let's show them we are human beings who are capable of carrying a respectful and civilized attitude towards each other. This way we give them no reason to justify in their minds the horrendous and frankly illegal treatment of inmates by correctional staff. I know for a fact every single one of us is capable of so much better, some of the smartest, friendliest and most compassionate people I've ever met were inmates. People tend to remember the worst of someone opposed to the best, we need to give less of the worst of us and more of the best of us, then unite as fellow inmates and make this correctional system what it should be: A CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM, not just a catch and release holding system like it's becoming more and more each day. God bless all of you and stay strong, we will get back to some normalcy eventually, this pandemic cannot last forever.

THE ARABIAN NIGHT: THE NIHILIST

By Zakaria Amara

Previously on the Arabian Night: Operation Camel Jockey

10:15 P.M.-CELL # 128 It was Saturday night and that could only mean one thing: camel racing! I was reclining on my bed waiting for the race to begin on ESPN Desert Sports, while my friend Sami was standing beside my bed. Prison cells are tiny by design; imagine a steel bed, a steel desk, a T.V stand, a steel toilet, and a steel sink, all crammed up in a room just a little bigger than your walk-in closet. Then add two people to it.

The most popular camel race announcer on the planet, "Lightning Larabie", appeared on screen as the crowd in the stands began to cheer his name. He once claimed that one of his ancestors was half man/half camel. Everyone believed him. However, official documents later surfaced revealing that he was just a French farm boy from Quebec. "Ladies and gents, it looks like the moment of truth is upon us..." DING! DING! DING! DING! DING! DING! DING! DING! Oh, and the race begins!

Donaldhump gets the jump
Then Whatsmells Smoothsand is close in third

They're making the turn
Donaldhump keeps the lead
Oh, Whatsmells is making his move! Just look at those humps!
Smoothsand is falling behind
Whatsmells is neck and neck with Donaldhump
It's a close race

Look at that sand fly! Holy camel hoof!

Whatsmells pushes ahead
Oh my goodness! He's taken the lead

He's going! going! GONE!
UNBELIEVABLE! UNBELIEVABLE!
HISTORY HAS JUST BEEN MADE!
WHATSMELLS HAS JUST WON THE SAHARA DERBY TO CAPTURE THE TRIPLE HUMP FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER! THE CROWD IS GOING WILD IN THE SAND! IT'S PANDEMONIUM! Oh,Uh!

The A.K's are coming out! I'm taking cover
TA! TA! TA! TATATAT! TATTAT!

Meanwhile, I was going nuts:
Jumping on my bed, yelling at the top of my voice, shooting my imaginary pistol directly upwards

(like a typical Arab, so the bullets could come back down and hit me), and following it all up with the most ridiculous Arab dance I could pull off. I couldn't believe what I just witnessed! I've been watching camel racing since I was 26 days old, and it never crossed my mind that I would ever live to see this moment!

My friend Sami on the other hand just stood there like a statue, staring despondently at the screen without a trace of emotion. He's been depressed like this ever since I met him; I tried putting him on anti-depressants but his condition hasn't improved. (By the way, Sami was a donkey.) "Sami man, cheer up! It's not that bad. Sure we're in prison, but things can always be worse" "My name is not Sami" he somberly said using a deep baritone voice as he spoke for the first time. Having been used to his silence, it took me a few seconds to register what he said. "So what's your name then?" "My name is Friedrich Nietzsche" "That is the name of a famous German philosopher!" "Yes. My father admired him greatly so he named me after him. I personally prefer Nihilist philosophers"

"I had no idea that donkeys were into philosophy, but like I said, you can't just be depressed all the time. I mean, I get it, it happens to all of us, but you have to find a way to come out of it. You can't just surrender to it!" I was becoming used to his delayed responses by now; he appeared to be pondering. "What is the point of being alive?" he suddenly started to speak again. "Suffering stamps us with its ugly mark from the moment we are born. Do we not enter this world crying? As children, our innocence is stripped away, as youth, our idealism is smashed to bits, and as adults, we're forced to bury our dreams in the cemetery of our future graves. Innocence lost, ideals abandoned, and the curse of living while one's dreams are dead. Everything we know will disappear and everyone we love will die. Meaningless... It's all meaningless." He somberly said. I was still standing on my bed when he spoke those words, so I slowly stepped down and sat on its edge like a boy

dangling his feet down a well. I sat there for a moment with my head bowed, silently taking in the full weight of his words, with all their truth, pain, and sadness. "I get what you mean." I began to answer him. "Everything you said makes sense, but only when you view life through a selfish lens."

The truth is that life is not just about you, in fact, it never was. There are countless of other beings that share this world with you. A man could suffer much in life, yet still go on to relieve someone else of their suffering; He could have no reason to smile or laugh for years, yet still go on to be the reason for someone else's joy and laughter. You're right; life will always be meaningless...until we learn to look beyond ourselves

I noticed the somber expression on his face begin to dissipate. "What you said..." He began to slowly say, "was profound..." An awkward silence followed; the kind we experience after having a deep exchange with someone else...

Trying to break the ice, he said: "Umm...Whatsmells... Whatsmells was magnificent tonight," so I smiled and said: "Yes...yes he was, wasn't he?" "So what do you want to watch tonight?" I asked "I love Animal Cops: Philadelphia" he answered "Alright!" I said with a chuckle, "Animal Cops it'll be."

We spent the rest of the night watching T.V, joking around, talking about our previous lives, and eating stale Uncle Ray's Hot Chips. It was fantastic!
OFFICER FINKLESTEIN' S REPORT
"At the 10:30 night count, Mr. Amara and his donkey were observed braying back and forth. Their conversation was completely meaningless. I recommend that Mr. Amara be transferred to the Regional Treatment Center for a psychiatric evaluation."

Warden's Comment:
Recommendation approved



THE SYSTEM IS IN CRISIS

By A Lifer

I have seen two reports now in the last little while and talk to five different parole officers. I've asked them about the two reports and they all said the same thing. One parole officer even said when she was meeting with an inmate about 45 minutes into the meeting, she realized she had the wrong inmates file up on her computer and had been writing information about this inmate on another inmate's file! She said this kind of thing happens more than people may think. Then she went on to say when that report was written, they only talk with about 150 parole officers even though they said they talk with 1600 parole officers, and there were a lot of details left out. Like heavy workloads to many inmates assigned to each parole officer and most of the inmates all have some kind of learning disability/mental health issue/drug addiction/all of the above. Many times it is missed or overlooked, why? Because parole officers themselves are suffering anxiety, depression and burnout so they may be taking a little something on the side to help them deal with things, because they're worried they can't do their jobs properly to protect the public from certain inmates, and same even victims.

On the other hand, they are keeping some inmates incarcerated longer than they need to be. You see, parole officers are responsible for developing correctional plans for each inmate on their case load, which is how decisions are made about what levels of security inmates need, and what kind of rehabilitation programs will help them the most.

Decisions made by parole officers determine when and how inmates are released, as well as what transitional facilities to put them in. So you can see what could happen if the wrong information is put on their file. Lastly, a federal auditor general's report found that the Correctional Service of Canada didn't have enough spots in halfway houses for prisoners who were ready to begin reintegrating back into the

community. So they were left in medium and minimum facilities longer than they should be and then overlooked and had fallen through the cracks, and that should be a crime but it's not. It's just the way things are.

A follow-up assessment two years later found little to no progress had been made on several important recommendations made by the office of public safety, why? It comes down to the cost being too high. So one more time it comes down to the almighty dollar, I was once told that you can't put a price on the cost of someone's life, I guess that was a lie?

IS THERE LIFE AFTER PRISON?

By A Lifer

For over 27 years I have called prison my home, a 6x8 cell my house, being told what to do, when to do it, what I can or can't do and even what to wear. I have done what I needed to do just to get by. Stayed to myself, always looked the other way and trusted no one. What a way to live.

I have thought about the outside world for many years now and seen it change a lot. The people, the laws, technology, it's so crazy and now COVID-19 for the last 3 years. I wonder now what the hell I'm going back to? But I have dreamt about the outside world for years now. Eating a nice, home-cooked meal, going skiing with buddies, jumping on my bike and going for a cruise, seeing the countryside again, sitting outside around a campfire, watching the stars and enjoying the sound of cricks. And not having to listen to loud music, see stabbings and fights, guys yelling all day and night for no reason at all. I will not miss any of that I tell you.

I'll be getting a service dog to help me deal with my C-PTSD and then we will see where we go from there, start working again, but I need to do things at my own pace. Until you yourself have spent a number of years in prison, you really don't know what it does to a person or what they have to go through, and it affects everyone differently. Some people will never understand.



GEORGE STREET

By Mark Zammit

The tears come first and with them a constant flow of terror-filled thoughts of loneliness under a blood-filled sky. The terror of knowing that the rest of your existence as well as your death, wake and cremation will be spent alone. If the word sinister could describe a colour, that colour would be the lonely shade of your soul.

The glass stem shatters obscenely full and stuffed with the one joy you have left and relied upon your entire life. The one melting food that on both levels have given and taken all joy from your being. As the wind whips the clouds, it douses the only flame available to you and viciously removes the stem you have relied on for decades from your grasp.

Under the bridge, along the shore, upon the bench, over the grate, on the sidewalk and at the dead end of forest on a wind-washed ghetto street that bares life, death, soul and the soulless. This, that, and the other thing is where, what and why you sleep. It is cold, it is hard, and the loneliness surrounds the upcoming storm that society violates unto the homeless and addicted.

Sheets of sorrow awash on the grey ghosts that call your home, their home. Tricking, trapping, living, dying and pimping, coping from a hustle that you and your street family created as children on the very same obvious death trap of an existence. Unrelenting sorrow, forced upon you by the vampires of life as they suck not only your blood, but all the joy and hope attached as well.

Welcome home, welcome back to the boulevard of broken dreams. Welcome to George Street.



MY REVELATION

By Brian G. Kerr

I write this now in attempts and hope that should PASAN choose to publish it, a message of what I truly believe to be of divine intervention will be shared with the readers of this paper.

We all know what's going on in Ukraine right now as Russia continues to advance into Ukrainian territory. Not many people of simplistic understanding may fully comprehend the extent of this friction should it progress much further. Particularly should Ukraine come to the point of feeling the need to defend itself.

Yes, great economical impacts will indeed transpire and with this the cost of all petroleum products and dependencies severely increased. If you think you're paying dearly for a simple litre of gas now, wait until an all-out invasion of Ukraine truly comes to pass.

This means food costs will severely increase as well, cosmetics, daily necessities, maintenance fees and service expenses, housing rates, mortgage payments and the entire cost of living will push to all time levels of practical instability.

I'm not sure how primed you are in "cause and effect" issues, the purpose for war, etc... but the only cure for the replenishing of deficit so deplorably depleted, as such an invasion could possibly incur, but history has taught us that the revolutionary go to solution is inevitably war.

Historic record supports this theory, as does it keep in the backdrop of our minds the time cycle in which such global events have taken place. On average it is estimated that a global full-scale war will likely break out or transpire within an 87 year time span at a high end estimation and approximately 68 years being the low. That makes us just about due for another one.

Now, I'm sure if you're a believer in divine, or spiritual inspiration, the power of divinity or God inspired revelation. But I would like to share a very peaceful feeling visionary dream or inspiration I have been entrusted to have.

As I mentioned it was an immense feeling of peace. Yet the images were of the exact opposite nature. In my vision Russia was gearing up for war. China was causing all kinds of contention and Great Britain - England was being heavily bombarded.

What does this actually mean? Well one can only assume, but I leave this inspirational vision with you and whoever else cares to take this writing into any type of meaningful consideration. However, I felt it worth letting the public know to interpret it however one shall wish.

With this I leave it at precisely that.

It should be interesting to see how things in these respects truly play out.

With sincerest thanks.

*For the record this vision came to me approximately December 2020.

AHMED MIAN

"Jail Thoughts"

Living with people is alright
 Going to bed with terrors every night
 Problems bloom in the light
 Maybe sometimes a fight
 Live life at ease
 Only going to yard just feeling a decent breeze
 The guards come and go as they please
 Always hearing their keys
 First Christmas in jail
 Many days to come next year without thinking of bail
 When I am out I won't fail
 Not leaving anything to trail
 Anger turning to assault
 Not much input to my thought
 The impulse took control, that was my fault
 And to jail I was brought
 I'm learning from my lessons
 Doing programs and finding gods blessings
 Writing is my passion
 And also my love for fashion
 Need to control my anger soon
 Continue behind bars without a glimpse of the moon

"Writing My Pain Keeps Me Sane"

Got arrested and left my friends at ghost
 Along way from Toronto missing the east court
 Talking about jail lifestyles not here to gloat or boast
 Thinking about life on the outside
 Possible going for a car ride
 I know I got god on my side
 I don't have to hide
 Getting stronger everyday
 Trying to keep my problems at bay
 I always got so much to say
 Taking prescription meds to make my anxiety go away
 I can never get along
 Smoke to much out of the bong
 Working out every other day feeling like king kong
 Many someone can appreciate my song
 Now I have been sober
 No longer do I get hungover
 When the sentence is done
 All this weight is off my shoulder

PHOENIX POISSON

CSC - Not Up to Par, Not in the Least

Hello! I'm here. I ain't going anywhere. You can check upon me all day.
 That is quite okay. For here is where I stay. Don't get my wrong, I'd love to leave this place behind. But in the right way, so I don't have a warrant on my mind. Give me all the programming and help that I need.
 So that I can be successfully released and freed! I don't know where I'm at if this is too much to ask. For Corrections Canada is built, or so it's said,
 For this one specific task.

Hate and Race, Wars

Love is what binds.
 Hate one always finds.

Look inwards for clarity.
 Racists get no charity.
 A child cries to sleep,
 One doesn't choose their skin.
 I always fight for the suppressed and hated.
 Prisoners' Rights is there, too.
 Haters will always feel jaded.
 I've been around, so this evil ain't new.
 Seek me out and I'll do what I can.
 Life Line Hurts Always Losing Shirts

ROB SURRIDGE

No rear-view mirrors, checking over the shoulder in corners, a walking human pharmacy store.
 Hours spent sweating again on comfort in stillness sitting, my very own personal store.
 Seconds of temptation is quick, rewarding, attached risk of losing freedom galore.
 Knocking opportunity, honestly providing clear conscience, time reserve at my front door.
 Opposed lap of luxury, small fast fortune sales investing false hope, the creation of poor.
 A preferred point having riches in faith, living a struggling working-class survivor.
 Neglected ambition striving the less fortunate, fallen nickels, homeless population increasing more.
 Pensions in demand, exchange bags of decreased brain activity, "MP" solutions rise just like before.
 Some last, others sink, vanish in news print noticed in the archives, another bottom hero folklore.
 While existing in hibernation users sleep inside and on road in the cold, never enough near flatline, living lower.
 Wasted intuition breathing, additions rise, supplies grow, doses up, coming down, movement becoming slower.
 Life in a turbine propels weak through revolving system, steady as a blizzard condition snow blower.

MUSTAFA EL-KAAKI

My initials are in ENGLISH, but name is Arabic/All in JIBARISH unless you stare at it.

The real m.e is back, so don't use the spell- (check) when you be cursing, use words like "heck"

Don't use the spell (check) call it "majic".
 Trust/Throw it in the garbage or (check) it off your list

These worlds you can't explain
 So, explain this to your kids
 You thought you just hit me, but you just shot and missed

Read it all backwards it all in reverse, mix it all up
 Which one will come first

ZAKARIA AMARA

They say, I say, You say...

The past,
 The present,
 The future.

"Be in the present," they say.
 But how can that be?
 When the past often haunts us like a ghost,
 And the future looms over us with its menacing shadow.

"There is no before," the mad man said,
 As he tried to escape his past.
 "And there is no after," the mad woman said,
 As she tried to ignore her future.
 Yet the past, the present, and the future are the most intimate of friends;
 The trinity of trinities.

So here is what I say:
 But who am I to say anything?
 Regardless, I say,
 I say even if only to hear myself,
 I say because I can,
 I say because I will,
 I say this:
 The past is a friend waiting to be accepted,
 The present is a wrestler waiting to be challenged,
 And the future is a dream waiting to be dreamed.

There! I said it,
 So what will you say?

The Land of Silence

Escape into the vast wilderness of silence,
 Near the burning bush,
 Where you might hear the voice of God.
 Tiring thoughts,
 And fears,
 And worries,
 Rambling on inside my mind have pushed me here,
 Where snowflakes fall with grace,
 One by one,
 Upon the silent mount of Sinai.

Don't you think it's funny?
 All this running around,
 All this hustle and bustle,
 All this frantic madness for more.

For what?
 For who?
 And for when?

We've done well.
 Our house of cards is finally built.
 But wind is on its way.

This is not the time to build,
 But to run, while walking slowly,
 Towards the land of God,
 Where the only language spo-

ken,
 Or heard,
 Is silence.

BILLY WHITEDEER

I WANT TO SHOW MY FEELINGS
 I want to show my feelings by smiling;
 Even though I am not happy.
 I want to show you my fears, but I am scared; Because I might be laughed at!
 I made mistakes that hurt me,
 When I tell you, you might reject me,
 There are things that happened to me.
 This causes my heart to ache.
 My life is empty
 I want to tell you my pain ...
 My anger
 My frustration ...
 When my tears fall down,
 Help me get up;
 When I see only darkness,
 Help me to see the light.
 There are many voices,
 In many directions,
 That affect me still,
 I am torn apart.
 There is a fork in the trail
 I have a choice to make;
 So I need you to stand by me, To choose the right path.

THE LEGAL NETWORK, ON POINT & PAS-AN IS RECRUITING PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN RELEASED FOR A

entitled "Former prisoners' experiences with the PNEP: Advancing knowledge and practice on prison harm reduction in Canada."

The goal is to learn more about how the "Prison Needle Exchange Program" (PNEP) has been working in federal prisons.

We are looking for people who are **18 years or older, speak English,** and **have been incarcerated in a federal prison with a PNEP:**

- Grand Valley Institution**
- Atlantic Institution**
- Fraser Valley Institution**
- Edmonton Institution for Women**
- Nova Institution**
- Joliette Institution**
- Joyceville Institution (minimum security)**
- Mission Institution (medium security)**
- Dorchester Penitentiary**
- Bowden Institution**
- Warkworth Institution**

If eligible, you will need access to a phone or computer (this could be made available at a local community agency) for a 1-hour phone, Zoom, or Skype interview held in fall 2021.

\$50 honorarium will be provided
 (plus a \$10 transit subsidy if needed)

OnPoint@ryerson.ca or 1-800-399-1923

The study is led by Emily van der Meulen (Ryerson University) and Sandra Ka Hon Chu (HIV Legal Network), in collaboration with PASAN. It has been reviewed and approved by Ryerson's Research Ethics Board (#2021-260).

DAVID "THE JOKER" CIOFFI

Only in Prison

Treated like a 2nd class citizen
Was trapped, but first hunted
Someone yell, "CUT, and cue the stuntman"
Sleepless tossing and turning
even grunted
Correctional Officers only teach
hatred and disrespect
So what have they truly correct-
ed?
Not a damn thing man, cause
1/3 of us are addicts
1/3 of us are dyslexic
And 1/3 of us are smart
Yet, neglected
And they still learn from us
Now ain't that just one of the
three dimensions?
I am in custody, but I'm still free,
you must believe
Ain't here to lie, cheat or deceive
Doing time to pay my debt to
society
Only in prison
That's where I was born again!
Started to see my Vision!
I started to have faith
Don't doubt, cause that's a mis-
take
Saying, it should be heard, said
and read
Before it's too late!
Soon it will be just like the Walk-
ing Dead!
That's a promise my friend
Not a threat
It's in the Bible...Near the end
Only in Prison
Still having these visions!
At least now I know my mission!

This poem is dedicated to every
inmate. Yes 1/3 of us are addicts,
yes 1/3 of us are dyslexic, yes 1/3
of us neglected.
But we are all smart!
That is the 2nd of the 3 dimen-
sions. Staying out of jail = 3
dimensions!

The Joker
288 Days!
#Don'tGiveIn!
#GodLovesYou!

Soldier

1. Living in prison
Or on an army base
It's still the same vision
Government programming
It's like the Holocaust
Only our brains they're scram-
bling
Taking everyone in to be brain-
washed
Artists, musicians and poets, all
rambling
Their lives to cover the truth, at
what cost?
How many more lives must be
lost?
Truth found free from the gov-
ernment's grip?
Want proof? Look at marijuana!
Yep, now ain't that a trip!
Man-made or God-made
I'll choose the second always!
The first will lead to an arrest
and a raid!
Living in prison
Or on an army base
It is still the same vision
The governments wants are
fucked up!
Super soldiers
Always keeping composure
Man this ain't Marvel comics

We ain't Captain Canuk
Here is reality. He was an actual
character
Don't let that lack of knowledge
embarrass you.
As a lyricist and a poet my shit is
golden
Not a single line stolen!
Better yet or even borrowed!
False accusations leaving your
life filled with sorrow
And like little Orphan Annie,
you're gonna sing
"Tomorrow, tomorrow"
Okay, so one line borrowed! It
was worth it
I see ya face red and how you're
all pissed
I am satisfied, I don't need a spliff
Shit I don't need no dope
Just God to say "I hold ya"
That'll make me more than a king
It makes me a real soldier!

2. My brains so far gone

Everyone believed it was too late!
I proved them wrong!
A W*P from North America!
Yours truly, from Toronto, Ont.
Canada
Fuck with me, I dare ya!
Your best day, you couldn't
compete!
Not against my cerebral cortex
Making you shake n' get vexed!
You thought "We the North" was
American
Shit son take a look at Drake
again!
I do this shit on da fly, watch
addicts smoke Boulders
I ain't get a 3rd verse yet. Yep, like
Drake, I'm Canadian
If I told ya once that I'm a real
soldier

Believe that cause my years of
addiction
Those are my battle scars and
war wounds
More often than not my track
marks were too much
Believing that my end was com-
ing to soon
But I just did what real soldiers
do
Look death in the face
Pulled a Paul Walker
And said "Come on Bitch, Let's
Race!"
Now, here is a shocker
Death said fuck no!
Cause in me he saw God's grace
So I know I'm proper
To my peep's on road in orange
Have faith, heart and keep cour-
age
You've beaten addiction, man it's
done!
Believe God, He is wiser than
King Solomon.
I'm proof it don't matter where
you come from
Have courage until HIS kingdom
comes!
In da Devils face keep your com-
posure
N' just like me
N' you too can be a real soldier!
If not, it will be like a game of
Poker
I'm calling your bluff
Believe this, me and God will fold
ya!

3. Living in prison

Or on an army base
Still the same vision
'Cept now it's a race
I know I have to finish first
And with God by my side I no

longer thirst
So what if I fall, so long as I save
face
So many times I felt alone
Felt like I was abandoned
Packed the pipe with another
stone
To myself, always thinking damn
man
How could this have happened
Thinking did I get so distracted
While I was sitting alone
Now I can see all reactions
These of man, woman, of angels
and demons
Feels like I'm in a fable
Times before Christ, Moses leads
them
Feel like one of the wise men in
the stable
Now back to today's Day and Age
'cept I see all the games Satan's
playing
In my head "man, God's got to be
disgraced!"
I'll fight Satan alone if need be!
Can any statement be bolder?
I guess that's me being God's
soldier!

Kingdoms have rulers and they
have armies
People who stand and who wan-
na harm me
No one can beat me
Long as God's beside me
He is my General
Christ is my weapon
The Holy Spirit is my sights
The Bible my holster
Everyone knows I am God's
soldier!

This is dedicated to you Father
God and My Self in my times of
doubt! Your love and grace, may
it always flow freely through me
to help all!

#DontGiveIn!
#GodLovesYou!

I am going to Heaven

Where will you go when you die?
Who has your heart?
Do you believe truth or lies?
Why do we never have the
chance to say goodbye to those
who depart?
Why do people think Death is
an option?
Don't they know like that it is
Satan to whom you report?
All you need is the truth to be
born again!
Listening to a deceiver is use-
less, the truth only distorts!
Why do you feel like I am
trapped?
No way out, no escape!
So tired, no energy, I am col-
lapsed!
Everything closing in, it's too
late!
Only prayer is left as my world
slips away!
In the name of the Father, the
Son and the Holy Spirit, I say
then I wait
My last option, should have
been my first! But still I'm
saved!
Where will you go when you
die?
Who has your heart?
Do you believe truth or lies?
Why do we never have the
chance to say goodbye to
those who depart?
I WILL GO TO HEAVEN!

MY HEART BELONGS TO GOD
NOW AND FOREVER MORE!
I HAVE FAITH SO I BELIEVE
TRUTH!
BECAUSE THEY WAIT IN HEAVEN
FOR US JUST TO SAY HI!

This poem is dedicated to all
those we have lost
Before their time and to all those
I personally know
Please, please be in heaven
To greet me and say hi because
I pray to God now to save your
souls.

#DontGiveIn
#GodLovesYou

David 'The Joker' Cioffi
288 Days!

You Already Know

Lord I have to ask
He says, "What is your question
my son?"
When will it be my turn?
He says, "That is not for you to
know!"
Lord I have to ask
He says, "What is your question,
my son?"
Why is it all my friends are gone?
He says, "Some I have called back
to me!"
What about the others?
He says, "They swim in a lake of
fire and brimstone!"

Lord I have to ask
He says, "What is your question
my son?"
Where will I go?
He says, "My son I have to ask"
What is your question Father?
He says, "Is Christ you brother?"
Yes of course he is!
He says, "Do you believe he paid
for ALL sins?"
Yes, of course he did!
He says, "So you believe he saved
your soul?"
Yes, of course I believe
He says, "My son I have to ask"
What is your question Father?

He says, "Why do you ask where
you will go, when you already
know!"

#DontGiveIn
#GodLovesYou

How to be free in prison!

Many inmates ask, "How can I be
free inside?"
I say, "easy man, just open up to
God and see."
They say, "Oh great, another Jail
house Preacher!"
"My friend, I was that a long time
ago. Now I am a teacher!"
They reply, "Ok so start teach-
ing!"
I say, "well at first, put your faith
in Christ and the Holy Spirit
teaches from within."
"Easy as that?" they say with
laughter, yet at the back there is
one that's last.
"How is it done?" I hear a voice
that's meek.
A big strong man, and yet his
soul, yes it's truly weak.
Finally, another believer, one
who can be saved!
I told him, "friend, it is through
the power of God's gift of unde-
serving Grace!"
"But that's only the first lesson!"
I see his face worrying and he is
stressing
To comfort him I say, "Relax my
friend"
"I will guide you through it!"
"Never lose hope and faith, be
Christlike and follow the Holy
Spirit!"
He says, "How do I know if it's
truly him?"
"Because you see it is not from
outward, instead you'll feel God
from within!"
He turns his head to look and
sees nothing
But a reflection of himself
He begins to start smiling
I know every line of this is real
because my friend, you see
Because that once meek voice
was me!

Want to spend around an hour talking
about what prison was like and get paid?

My name is Mark and I'm a grad
student at SFU in Vancouver. I'm
hoping to talk to people about
working while incarcerated in Canada
and the US. Interviews can be online,
over the phone, or in person if
you're near Vancouver, BC.

That's it! Email me at mdunn@sfu.ca
if you're interested or if you have
any questions. I'll send out \$20 by
etransfer for anyone who participates.



CHRIS J ROBINSON
OCTOBER 2021



CHRIS ROBINSON

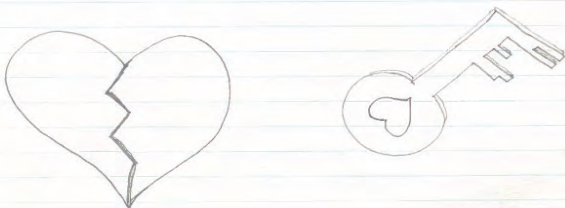


JANUARY 18 2021 CHRIS ROBINSON

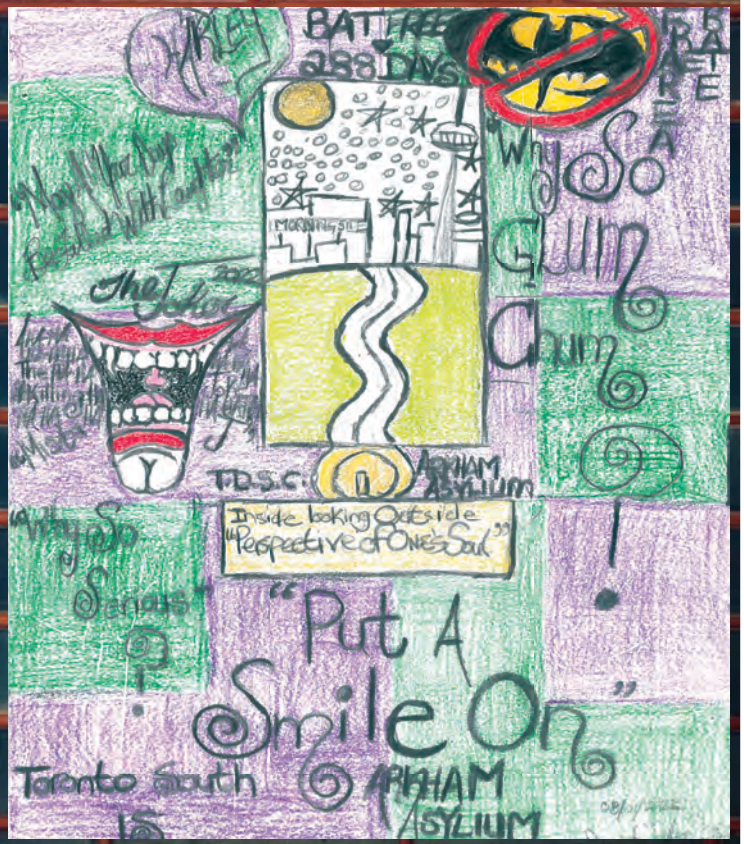
Poetry Submissions by: Naitxox

Why do you have to be my first thought?
 Why do you have to be my last thought?
 Why do you always have to scare?
 Why do you have to be my nightmare?

I miss you like I'm crazed
 Most of the time I feel dazed
 From the bottom of my heart
 This is tearing me apart
 I'm going to miss your smile
 that anyone could see from a mile
 Life without you is unbearable
 tho I learned to be adaptable
 it's very lamentable



DAVID GIOFFI



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 x222
Federal In-Reach Community Development Coordinator
Aniqa Mazumder x222
Office Manager

Arpa Azmila x235
Harm Reduction Program Manager
Cherisa Shivcharran x233
Provincial Community Development Coordinator

Chris McNab x230
Federal In-Reach Community Dev Coordinator
Claudia Medina x227
Program Manager
Eveline Allen x238
Regional Prison In-Reach Coordinator
Hajjarah Nagadya x239
POWER Project Coordinator

Janet Rowe x225
Executive Director
Jennifer Porter x223
Harm Reduction Program Coordinator

Olivia Gemma x236
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 peaceably 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 fastest-growing

prisoner population in Canada, but often their experiences are marginalized in conversations about the prison system. We want to hear your take on prison, life, family, or anything else you're interested in writing about. We can guarantee confidentiality, and can publish your pieces under a pseudonym if you want! Please submit your articles, poetry, art, or letters to the Cell Count editor at 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON M5A 1R3.

WHEN SUBSCRIBING TO CELL COUNT

We have been notified by a few different institutions that if you'd like your subscription of Cell Count to make it into your hands, you have to register at the library to receive it first. Please do this before requesting a subscription from us just to make sure! Also, if you are interested in subscribing

please contact: Cell Count, 526 Richmond St E, Toronto, ON, M5A 1R3 or call Sena at: 1-866-224-9978 ext 228

CONTACT NUMBERS

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

HOW PASAN AND CELL COUNT ARE OPERATING DURING COVID-19

During the COVID-19 outbreak, PASAN is still open, and are back in the office 5 days a week. Our staff are in the office Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm EST, which is when we can read and reply to mail we receive from inside, and answer calls. Currently, we are wearing masks, asking people to fill out COVID screening forms and social distancing to help limit the potential spread of the virus, and are offering services to our clients in office again.

Cell Count is still running and accepting submissions. We are currently low on submissions and need more sent from you inside to produce Cell Count. If you are interested in submitting but are experiencing issues trying to get your work to us, please give Sena a call at ext 228. Thank you for your patience during this difficult time!

NEW 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**

NEW 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 moved, encouraging people to submit their work, helping with evaluations, and answering general questions. Call Sena if you're interested! 1-866-224-9978x228



Cell Count Deadline: May 15th, 2022

The theme of Issue #97 is *Staying Healthy*. Share your stories and art with this theme in mind or about any other topic! If you need someone to bounce ideas off of, call Sena at 1-866-224-9978 x234 from Mon - Thurs 10am - 5pm EST.

16 // RESOURCES & ABOUT PASAN

EAST COAST

ALLY CENTRE
Take collect calls
150 Bentinck St, Sydney, NS, B1P
1G6 902-567-1766

AIDS COALITION of NOVA SCOTIA
Accept collect calls
1675 Bedford Row, Halifax, NS, B3J
1T11-800-566-2437, 902-425-4882

AIDS COMMITTEE of NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR
Take collect calls
47 Janeway Place, St. John's, NL, A1A
1R7 1-800-563-1575

AIDS NEW BRUNSWICK
65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB, E3B
1G51-800-561-4009, 506-459-7518

AIDS PEI
Take collect calls
2-375 University Ave, Charlottetown,
PE, C1A 4N4 902-566-2437

AIDS SAINT JOHN
Don't accept collect calls
115 Hazen St, NB, E2L 3L3 506-652-2437

BOOKS BEYOND BARS
P.O. Box 33129
Halifax, NS
B3L 4T6

HEALING OUR NATIONS:
1-800 565 4255
3-15 Alderney Dr, Dartmouth, NS,
B2Y 2N21-800-565-4255, 902-492-4255

MAINLINE NEEDLE EXCHANGE
Calls from within Nova Scotia are free
Don't accept collect calls
5511 Cornwallis St, Halifax, NS, B3K
1B3 902-423-9991

SHARP ADVICE NEEDLE EXCHANGE
Accept collect calls
150 Bentinck St, Sydney, NS, B1P
6H1 902-539-5556 (Collect)

SIDA/AIDS MONCTON
Accept collect calls as long as they're
HIV related
80 Weldon St, Moncton, NB, E1C
5V8 506-859-9616

QUEBEC

CACTUS
Accept collect calls
1300 rue Sanguinet, Montreal, H2X
3E7 514-847-0067

CENTRE for AIDS SERVICES MONTREAL (Women)
Accept collect calls
1750 Rue Saint-Andre, 3rd Flr, Montreal, H2L 3T81-877-847-3636, 514-495-0990

COALITION des ORGANISMES COMMUNAUTAIRES QUEBECOIS de LUTTECONTRE le SIDA (COCSIDA)
Accept collect calls
1 est, rue Sherbrooke, Montréal, H2X
3V8 514-844-2477

COMITE des PERSONNES ATTEINTES du VIH du QUEBEC (CPAIVH)
1-800-927-2844
2075 rue Plessis bureau 310, Montreal, H2L 2Y4 1-800-927-2844

ONTARIO

2-SPIRITED PEOPLE of the 1ST NATIONS
Accept collect calls
145 Front Street East Suite 105
Toronto, Ontario M5A 1E3 416-944-

9300

AFRICANS in PARTNERSHIP AGAINST AIDS
No collect calls, call PASAN
526 Richmond St E, Toronto, M5A
1R3 416-924-5256

AIDS COMMITTEE of CAMBRIDGE, KITCHENER, WATERLOO & AREA
Accept collect calls
Have a toll-free number
28-625 King St E, Kitchener, N2G
4V4 519-570-3687 (Collect), 1-877-770-3687

AIDS COMMITTEE of GUELPH
Accept collect calls, prefer that people use their
89 Dawson Rd, Unit 113, Guelph, N1H 3X2 1-800-282-4505; 519-763-2255 (Collect)

AIDS COMMITTEE of NORTH BAY and AREA
Accept collect calls
201-269 Main St W, North Bay, P1B
2T8 705-497-3560 (Collect)

AIDS COMMITTEE of OTTAWA
700-251 Bank St, Ottawa, K2P
1X3 613-238-5014 (Collect) or Toll Free (ON & QC only) 1-800-461-2182

AIDS COMMITTEE of THUNDER BAY
574 Memorial Ave, Thunder Bay, P7B 3Z2 1-800-488-5840, 807-345-1516 (Collect)

POSITIVE LIVING NIAGARA
Accept collect calls from registered clients
(Recommend that you get a case manager to get registered with them)
111 Church St, St Catharines, L2R
3C9 905-984-8684 or toll free 1-800-773-9843

ANISHNAWBE HEALTH AIDS PROGRAM
No collect calls
255 Queen St E, Toronto, M5A
1S4 416-360-0486

ASIAN COMMUNITY AIDS SERVICE
When prisoners call, they offer them small bursaries to cover their calling fees
107-33 Isabella St, Toronto, M4Y
2P7 416-963-4300 (Collect)

BLACK COALITION for AIDS PREVENTION
Accept collect calls
20 Victoria St, 4th Flr, Toronto, M5C
2N8 416-977-9955 (Collect)

CANADIAN HIV/AIDS LEGAL NETWORK
Accept collect calls
1240 Bay St #600, Toronto, M5R 2A7 416-595-1666 (Collect)

FIFE HOUSE
Accepts collect calls
490 Sherbourne St, 2nd Flr, Toronto, M4X 1K9
416-205-9888

HIV & AIDS LEGAL CLINIC of ON. (HALCO)
Accept collect calls
55 University Avenue, Suite 1400
Toronto, ON, M5J 2H7 1-888-705-8889

HIV/AIDS REGIONAL SERVICES (HARS)
Accept collect calls
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L
1G5 613-545-3698 (Collect)

ONTARIO ABORIGINAL HIV/AIDS

STRATEGY

Accept collect calls
844-A Princess St, Kingston, K7L
1G5 613-549-7540 (Collect)

PEEL HIV/AIDS NETWORK
Accept collect calls
160 Traders Blvd, Unit 1, Mississauga, L4Z 3K7
1-866-896-8700, 905-361-0523 (Collect)

PETERBOROUGH AIDS RESOURCE NETWORK (PARN)
Accept collect calls
302-159 King St, Peterborough, K9J 2R81-800-361-2895, 705-932-9110 (Collect)

STREET HEALTH CENTRE
Accept collect calls
Hepatitis C Treatment Program 235
Wellington St, Kingston, K7K 0B5 613-549-1440 (Collect)

THE AIDS NETWORK (TAN)
Don't accept collect calls
101-140 King St E, Hamilton, L8N
1B2 905-528-0854 toll free 1-866-563-0563

THE WORKS
Accept collect calls
277 Victoria St, Toronto, 416-392-0520 (Collect)

TORONTO PWA FOUNDATION
Accept collect calls from clients
200 Gerrard St E, 2nd Flr, Toronto, M5A 2E6 416-506-1400

Toronto Community Hep C Program
Accept collect calls
955 Queen Street East, Toronto, M4M
3P3
416-461-1925 (Collect only on Tuesday & Friday, 11am-5pm)
Once out, please call 416-417-6135
John Howard Society of Toronto
1-866-265-4434

Black Legal Action
720 Spadina Ave. #221, Toronto, ON
M5S 2T9 (416) 597-5831

PRAIRIES

HIV COMMUNITY LINK
Accept collect calls
110-1603 10th Ave SW, Calgary, AB,
T3C 0J7 403-508-2500

AIDS SASKATOON
1143 Ave F, N, Saskatoon, SK, S7L 1X1306-242-5005 1-800-667-6876

CENTRAL ALBERTA AIDS NETWORK SOCIETY
No collect calls
4611 50th Ave, Red Deer, AB, T4N
329 403-346-8858

HIV EDMONTON
9702 111 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB,
T5G 0B1 1-877-388-5742

KIMAMOW ATOSKANOW FOUNDATION
Accept collect calls
RR 1, Site 1, Box 133, Onoway, AB,
T0E 1V01-866-971-7233, 780-913-9036

NINE CIRCLES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE
705 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB, R3G
0X2 1-888-305-8647

PLWA NETWORK of SASKATCHEWAN
No collect calls
Box 7123, Saskatoon, SK, S7K
411 306-373-7766

OUT SASKATOON
213 Avenue C S, Saskatoon, SK S7M
1N3
306-665-1224

PRINCE ALBERT METIS WOMEN'S ASSOC.
No collect calls
54 10th St E, Prince Albert, SK, S6V
0Y5 306-763-5356

RED RIBBON PLACE (ALL NATIONS HOPE AIDS NETWORK)
2735 5th Ave, Regina, SK, S4T
0L2 1-877-210-7622

STREET CONNECTIONS

No collect calls
705 Broadway Ave, Winnipeg, MB,
R3G 0X2 204-940-2504 WOMEN: 50
Argyle, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0H6 204-943-6379

WEST COAST

AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND
Accepts collect calls. 713 Johnson
St, 3rd Flr, Victoria, V8W 1M8 250-384-2366 or 1-800-665-2437

LINC
33270 14th Ave, Mission, BC, V2V 4Z7
1-877-424-4242 (BC only)

CAAN
6520 Salish Dr, Vancouver, BC V6N
2C7 (604) 266-7616

NATIONAL

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION of ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETIES (Women)
701-151 Slater St.
Ottawa, ON
K1P 5H3
(613) 238-2422

BRAIN INJURY ASSOC OF CANADA
440 Laurier Ave. West, Suite 200
Ottawa, ON K1R 7X6 Toll-free: 1-866-977-2492

CATIE
1-800-263-1638
555 Richmond St W #505, Toronto,
ON M5V 3B1

NEW LIFE PRISON MINISTRIES
P.O. Box 123
Arva, ON
NOM 1C0
Aftercare support: 1-888-842-6898

PRISONER-SPECIFIC

TORONTO PRISONERS' RIGHTS PROJECT (Runs the Prisoner Emergency Support Fund)
PO Box 291 Toronto P Toronto, ON
M5S 2S8

PRISONERS UNITED ORGANIZATION
PO Box 30009, Greenbank North PO,
Ottawa, ON, K2H 1A3

BLACK INMATES & FRIENDS ASSEMBLY
2518 Eglinton Avenue W, Toronto,
ON, M6M 1T1 ph (416) 652-3131

SMAAC.org
The Saskatchewan-Manitoba-Alberta Abolition Coalition is an alliance of groups from across the prairie provinces who collaborate and organize together on issues of prison and police abolition.

EAST COAST PRISON JUSTICE SOCIETY
6061 University Ave, PO Box 15000
Halifax, NS, B3H 4R2
www.eastcoastprisonjustice.ca

West Coast Prison Justice Society/ Prisoners' Legal Services
302-7818 6th Street
Burnaby, BC
604-636-0470

OTHER SUBSCRIPTIONS

OUT OF BOUNDS MAGAZINE
6000 William Head Rd, Victoria, BC
V9C 0B5

JOURNAL OF PRISONERS ON PRISONS
c/o Justin Piché, PhD, Dept of Criminology
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON,
K1N 6N5

PRISON FREE PRESS
POBox 39 Stn P Toronto ON M5S 2S6

HOMINUM (newsletter for gay, bisexual & questioning men)
#7—11438 Best Street
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 0V1
Art - 604-477-9553

PRISON BOOK PROGRAMS

Books To Prisoners OPIRG-Carleton
326 UniCenter
Carleton
University
Ottawa, ON.
K1S 5B6
(613) 520-2757

Books 2 Prisoners
PO Box
78005, 1755
East Broadway
Vancouver,
BC
V5N 5W1
604-682-3269
x3019

Books Beyond Bars
PO Box
33129
Halifax NS
B3L 4T6
902-446-1788

Open Door Books (ODD)
c/o QPIRG
Concordia
Concordia
University
1455 de Maisonneuve O
Montreal,
Quebec
H3G 1M8
514-848-7585

Write ON!
Supporting prisoners through correspondence

INCARCERATED IN CANADA? NEED INFORMATION?

WRITE ON! is an all-volunteer group whose goal is to help and support prisoners in Canada, through correspondence.

WE CAN:
Research general information you need, such as:
• general legal information
• info on prison rules and policies
• info on resources, programs and services
• and possibly other kinds of information you need.

WE CANNOT:
• Give any kind of professional advice, legal or otherwise.
• be a pen-pal service (though we could refer you to one)
• promise to adequately respond to all requests for information.

CONTACT US:
Write ON!
Suite # 234
110 Cumberland Street
Toronto, ON M5R 3V5

TPRP JAIL HOTLINE
(416) 775-9239

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY
9-11 AM - 2-4 PM

NOW TAKING CALLS FROM:
TORONTO SOUTH DETENTION CTR.
VANIER CENTRE FOR WOMEN
MAPLEHURST CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX

THE JAIL HOTLINE IS FREE FOR PRISONERS SEEKING ADVOCACY, REFERRALS, INFORMATION + SUPPORT!

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.

(((PENN2PAPER)))

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

Pacific & Prairie Region
Penn2Paper
104-1016 Columbia St.
Box 873
New Westminster, BC
V3M 6V3

Ontario & Atlantic Region
Penn2Paper
455 Danforth Ave
Box 429
Toronto, ON
M4K 1P1