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**CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM STRATEGY
FOR
FEDERALLY SENTENCED WOMEN**

Correctional Service of Canada

July 1994

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NB: PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE *HEALING LODGE*. A SEPARATE FRAMEWORK WILL BE DEVELOPED FOR THAT FACILITY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. Creating a Supportive Environment.....	4
3. Responding to the Needs of FSW.....	5
i. Abuse/Trauma Issues.....	6
ii. Education and Employment Skills.....	6
iii. Substance Abuse.....	6
iv. Parenting.....	7
4. The Correctional Program Strategy for FSW	7
A. Elements of Effective Correctional Programs for FSW	8
1. Women Centred Principles.....	8
2. Principles of Adult Education.....	9
3. Diversity.....	10
4. Analytical Approach.....	10
5. Program Structure	11
6. Program Process.....	11
B. Qualities of an Effective Program Provider for FSW	12
C. Assessment Process	13
1. Intake Assessment	13
2. Orientation Program	14
3. Correctional Planning	14
D. Program Availability	14
1. Program Planning Model.....	15
2. Program Assignment Committee.....	15
3. Core Programs	15
i. Living Skills Program	16
ii. Survivors of Abuse/Trauma	17
iii. Literacy and Continuous Learning	17
iv. Substance Abuse.....	17
4. Other Programs and Service	18

1. INTRODUCTION

The Correctional Program Strategy for Federally Sentenced Women was developed in order to provide program consistency in the new regional facilities for Federally Sentenced Women (FSW). It is based on and respects CSC's Correctional Strategy, yet is flexible enough to recognize and incorporate the needs of women offenders. This document is a guide for the development of programs in the new regional facilities and describes the overall correctional program strategy for FSW.

The Corrections and Conditional Release Act states that correctional programs must respect gender, ethnic, cultural, spiritual and linguistic differences among offenders. Programs must also respond to the special needs of FSW, Aboriginal and other groups who have specific requirements.

CSC Corporate Objective #2 mandates CSC to develop and implement research based programs that target the specific needs of offenders to promote their successful reintegration into society. The 1990 Task Force Report on Federally Sentenced Women, *Creating Choices*, also suggests that for increased effectiveness, programs should be "**women-centred**"; this means that **programs must reflect the social realities of women and respond to the individual needs of each woman.**

Creating Choices identified five (5) principles for change in CSC's approach to women offenders. These principles lay the foundation for the development of a programming strategy for FSW. They are:

1. **Empowerment** - the inequities and reduced life choices encountered by women and experienced even more acutely by many FSW, have left them with little self esteem and belief in their power to control their lives. This reduces a woman's ability to cope and increases the self-destructive behaviour that is so prevalent among FSW. Low self-esteem can also contribute to an inability to plan for the future, take responsibility for one's actions and to violence against others. Improving self-esteem increases the ability of each FSW to make choices and gain more control of her life. Empowerment is the process through which women gain insight into their situation, identify their strengths, and are supported and challenged to take positive action to gain control of their lives.
2. **Meaningful and responsible choices** - women need options that allow them to make responsible choices. Dependence on alcohol/drugs, men, and state financial assistance have denied women of the opportunity and ability to make choices. Therefore, choices that relate to women's needs, past experiences, culture, values, spirituality, abilities and skills as well as their future must be provided.
3. **Respect and dignity** - CSC has often been criticized for its tendency to encourage (and therefore perpetuate) dependent and child-like behaviour among women.

Mutual respect is needed among offenders, staff, and between the two. Recognition of the need for respect is entrenched in the Mission of the CSC.

4. **Supportive environment** - the quality of an environment can promote physical and psychological health and personal development; however, the environments in which FSW have lived and been incarcerated in have been inadequate. An environment that is positive and supportive in the following aspects: socio-political environment, physical, emotional/psychological, spiritual and financial can encourage self-esteem, empowerment, dignity and respect for self and others.
5. **Shared responsibility** - all levels of government, corrections, volunteer organizations, businesses, private sector services and the community have a role to play in the development of support systems and continuity of service for FSW. It is this support and continuity that will enable women to take responsibility for their lives. FSW must be integrated into their community network.

The development of a Correctional Program Strategy for FSW will assist CSC as an organization to concentrate and direct its resources towards ensuring that women offenders receive the most effective programs at the appropriate points in their sentences. This will allow them to serve the greatest proportion of their sentence in the community with the lowest risk of recidivism.

CSC must also use the most effective programs in the community (for parolees and FSW that have access to temporary passes) and encourage communities to offer their programs in the facilities. Community involvement will ensure ongoing support and connection to women in the community and will promote the reintegration of FSW.

Finally, CSC must create a supportive environment in which the women will be able to actualize skills learned in various programs. All programs must then provide consistent elements that are women-centred and holistic.

How CSC will go about this is described in the following sections.

2. CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Loss of freedom is the primary consequence of incarceration; however, from the point of incarceration, it is the responsibility of staff to assist women to work towards successful reintegration into society. An environment that is supportive in its physical layout and which promotes personal interaction and exercising responsible choices will help to empower FSW. Therefore, the design of the regional facilities is based on community living. Small cottages that have private space, proper ventilation and natural light will house 6-8 women who will be responsible for their day to day tasks like budgeting, cooking, laundry, cleaning etc.

Staff selection, training, team-building and empowerment are also elements that are crucial to the success of this non-traditional correctional approach. Staff must: develop positive, professional relationships with the women that combine attitudes of mutual respect and caring; act as a positive role model; have a solid understanding of women's lives, their behavioural dynamics and the ongoing issues faced by FSW; and, have thorough knowledge of the programs offered to the women so they can support them in their efforts to improve their lives. Staff must work as a team with the FSW in order to enhance the connection and support that women need to make responsible choices and take control of their lives.

3. RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF FSW

Many different types of programs already exist in CSC; however, they have been developed based on the needs of federally sentenced men (FSM). Therefore, research on the results of these programs does not necessarily generalize to women offenders.

Although the body of literature concerned with women offenders is small in comparison to the wealth of information on FSM, progress has been made in the last decade in assessing the program needs of women offenders. Overall, women have a different range and types of problems that contribute to their criminal behaviour than do men. Environmental, situational, political, cultural and social factors experienced by women offenders, as well as physiological and psychological factors, are not the same as those experienced by men.

Women offenders often present many inter-related problems which need to be addressed (simultaneously or comprehensively) in order to effectively enable them to move forward. Common issues are dependency, low self-esteem, poor educational and vocational achievement, parental death at an early age, foster care placement, constant changes in the location of foster care, residential placement, living on the streets, prostitution, suicide attempts, self-injury, and substance abuse.

There appear to be two common themes running through the literature on women offenders. First, there is an overwhelming consensus that, in most instances, women's criminal behaviour is largely associated with their backgrounds and life circumstances. Secondly, a holistic approach to correctional programming for women should be adopted; programs should not have discrete and exclusive areas of specialization but should be multi-dimensional. A holistic approach within individual programs appears to have positive results.

The needs of long term offenders, women serving sentences of 10 years or more, are especially important. CSC is in the process of revisiting its approach to long term offenders following a recent task force study. This will be critical for the FSW as their needs are somewhat different from those of men serving long sentences. Programs must take this important element into consideration.

Four (4) major and often inter-related areas that are characteristic of most women offenders have been identified. They are:

i. Abuse/Trauma Issues

The high prevalence of violence in the lives of incarcerated women has only very recently been acknowledged. Surveys of federally sentenced women in Canada indicate that the majority of inmates are survivors of abuse and trauma in their families of origin or with their intimate partners. A 1990 study found that 82% of the 102 women surveyed at the Prison for Women and 72% of the 68 women surveyed inside provincial prisons reported being survivors of physical or sexual abuse. Abuse was found to be more wide spread in the lives of Aboriginal women; over all, 90% reported physical abuse and 61% identified sexual abuse.

Approximately two thirds of the federally sentenced women surveyed indicated that they want some type of program or counseling to work through abuse issues.

ii. Education and Employment Skills

Women's offenses are also linked to women's generally inferior socio-economic circumstances which often include poverty, racism and violence. There is considerable agreement on these common characteristics of women offenders: most are poor and lacking in marketable skills; they often demonstrate dependence on welfare, alcohol and men; and, they are often single parents, solely responsible for child-care.

Vocational programs for women offenders must provide an adequate amount, intensity and quality of training in work that is relevant to the job market and should focus on jobs which have the potential to earn the woman a salary that will lead to economic independence.

iii. Substance Abuse

Systematic empirical reviews of the literature on substance abuse treatment outcome for women indicate that if the participants are to gain maximum benefit from substance abuse treatment, it is essential for these programs to target the specific needs of women and reflect the realities of their lives.

Research indicates that women are likely to have a different range and type of problems related to their use of substances than do male offenders. There is accumulating evidence that eating disorders, major affective mood disorders (depression) and a history of abuse, possibly related to post-traumatic stress disorder, are highly prevalent in women with substance abuse disorders. It should be noted that the physical impact of substance abuse is often worse for women than for men; that the serious physiological ailments caused, for example, by alcohol abuse, may occur with a lower level of consumption or after shorter abuse history for women than for men.

iv. Parenting

The 1990 survey found that two-thirds of FSW had children. Many of these women had tremendous concern over lost custody of one or more of their children and reported that contact with their children, regardless of their age, was essential to personal well-being. The majority of the Prison for Women population and 40% of the provincial population indicated an interest in programs about children. Programs addressing issues surrounding coping with parenting in prison and parenting from a distance are required, as well as early childhood development for those women who will participate in the residential programs for children that will be part of the facilities.

4. THE CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM STRATEGY FOR FSW

The previous sections have described the foundation of the CSC strategy for FSW. This strategy ensures that:

- programs respond to the needs of FSW;
- program content and intensity is based on level of risk and need (criminogenic factors);
- programs are based on effective conceptual models; and,
- follow up and support programs upon release are readily accessible in the community.

As the foundation has been laid, there are now more specific building blocks that will ensure that correctional program strategy for FSW is effective and leads to the empowerment of the women. It includes the following:

Elements of effective correctional programs for Federally Sentenced Women - this section provides the common principles and elements for the development and implementation of *all* programs, regardless of their orientation. These elements ensure that all programs meet the needs of the women and that the program components are integrated with one another. This elements described include women-centred principles; principles of adult education; diversity; analytical principles; program structure; and, program process.

Qualities of Effective Program Providers - this is a detailed list outlining the qualities that a program provider working with FSW should possess.

Assessment Process - this process should be completed in a comprehensive and systematic fashion and in partnership with the FSW and should be capable of identifying her program needs that will prepare her for release. This section includes the intake assessment, the orientation program and correctional planning (which are mandatory elements of CSC's correctional strategy).

Program Availability - offender needs should drive programs and service delivery in CSC and programs should primarily focus on successful reintegration. This section includes two of the mandatory elements of CSC's correctional strategy, program planning and the Program Assignment Committee. The section also looks at core programs for FSW and other programs and services.

A. ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS FOR FSW

There are six essential elements that should be included in the design and delivery of *any* type of program for FSW:

1. Woman-Centered Principles
2. Principles of Adult Education
3. Diversity
4. Analytical Principles
5. Program Structure
6. Program Process

These six elements create a process which can potentially empower federally sentenced women. As outlined in the Introduction and in *Creating Choices*, **empowerment** is the process through which women gain insight into their situation, identify their strengths, and are supported and challenged to take positive action gain control of their lives.

This process acknowledges and holds FSW accountable for their actions, but also recognizes that actions occur within a social context. Women's crimes are closely related to their marginalized status (as previously indicated, this often includes poverty, abuse and chemical dependency), so programs and services must be holistic and address the social context of women's lives and target those areas which have contributed to their criminal behaviour. An understanding of the relationship between their actions and the circumstances of their lives allows women to gain control over their lives and make pro-social choices. As the reasons for their criminal activity become clearer, personal accountability grows. With appropriate support and resources, women can reconcile their past histories and make positive, self-determined choices, free from criminal activity. This will reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

Each of the elements is discussed below. It should be noted that they are **not** mutually exclusive, but are depicted as such for ease of conceptualization and organization.

1. Woman-Centred Principles

- a. **Contextual Analysis:** Because women's lives are contextualized within the social, economic and political environment, instead of individualizing their personal problems, it is important to understand them in relation to the surrounding context.

Programs must reflect the social realities of women and respond to the individual needs of each woman.

- b. **Cooperative:** Each participant is respected and valued as an expert on her own life. Hierarchy is not applicable. This reduces the power imbalance between the facilitator and the participants.
- c. **Challenging:** The most effective interaction between women and the facilitator is supportive, encouraging, empathic, accepting, challenging and non-confrontational.
- d. **Connection:** Women are encouraged to learn from one another. Dialogue and sharing and through this, developing trust, are essential to the learning process.
- e. **Agency:** Women are recognized as active agents rather than passive victims. While they are accountable for their actions, including criminal activities, all actions are understood in relation to the context in which they occur. Though many women have been victimized, they have also survived violence, even when their options were very limited. The strength and creativity employed by women demonstrates their potential power to effect change. This strength can be used and refocused towards empowerment.

2. Principles of Women's Education

- a. **Recognize and Value the Unique Learning Styles of Participants:** Women generally learn best through connection and relationships with others, rather than individually. Therefore, program activities should encourage and promote shared learning. Yet within this broad approach, the individual and unique learning styles of women must be recognized, respected and valued. Methods need to be matched to the rhythms of individual women.
- b. **Diversity in Pedagogical Tools:** Programs should be multi-faceted and rely on a variety of different techniques. Program content and delivery methods should reflect the diversity of program participants. Methods could include: drama, journal writing, role playing, videos, and art work.
- c. **Experiential:** Women are supported and encouraged to learn by doing and value their own experiences, rather than learning only from a book or lecture.
- d. **Modeling:** Women will learn self-care, self-respect and gain their own voice from the instructors who model these behaviours. Instructors will be sensitive regarding the appropriateness of self-disclosure.
- e. **Humor and Social Interaction:** Humor is a necessary educational and healing tool. Participants gain many benefits from social interaction, including mutual

support and recognition, as well as, interacting in a safe place using new skills learned through the program.

3. Diversity

- a. **Reflecting Diversity:** All instructors and facilitators should be aware of the diversity of the women's community and foster an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding of racial issues, sexual orientation and other roots of power differentials in society.
- b. **Appropriate to Participant Diversity:** Diversity refers to the richness of difference among participants. As much as possible, programs, and their delivery methods, learning tools and environment should reflect these differences.
- c. **Diversity Recognized and Valued:** Participants' differences are a benefit to a program and where appropriate, they should be recognized. and not ignored.
- d. **Sensitive to Individuals:** Individual needs of participants must be assessed and considered. The experiences of FSW sentenced to long terms are especially unique because of the stress associated with prolonged incarceration.

4. Analytical Approach

NB: These elements should be woven through all programs.

- a. **Problem-Solving:** All programs in their own way, should assist women to strengthen their problem solving skills using processes similar to those listed below:
 - recognize and define problems;
 - generate alternatives;
 - assess the consequences;
 - put a solution into action.
- b. **Values:** Women will examine their own values and the values of others in order to gain awareness of how values are shaped, and an understanding of the interrelationship between values, thoughts and actions within the social environment.
- c. **Creative Thinking:** Women will be challenged to broaden their perceptions to see beyond the obvious; to expand the way women look at situations.
- d. **Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking involves thinking logically, carefully and rationally, enhancing one's ability to evaluate their own and others' ideas, attitudes and actions. Women will learn to critically assess ideas presented to them by others so that they are less likely to be manipulated.

- e. **Social Skills:** Women will learn and practise skills which will enable them to put solutions to problems into effect in the safe environment of the program.

5. Program Structure

- a. **Supportive Environment:** All programs should include a staff training component that provides staff with an awareness and understanding of the program's goals. This will create support and reinforcement of the program that in turn leads to ongoing trust, long term sustainability and success of the program. Staff need to understand the impact the program will have on the FSW and how their response to the women can facilitate empowerment.
- b. **Program Fits Participants' Needs:** Rather than expecting individuals to fit into pre-constructed programs, they must be flexible and adjust to the needs of participants.
- c. **Integrity of Program:** Programs must be based upon the conceptual model described in this document. While participants will contribute to the program and flexibility is valued, program facilitators must deliver the initially agreed upon material.
- d. **Accessibility:** Flexibility and innovation are critical to the scheduling, delivery and location of programs so that they are as accessible as possible.
- e. **Intensity and Duration:** Programs should be of sufficient intensity and duration to effectively address the identified problems.

6. Program Process

NB: Sections c to e relate to the initial establishment of a contract and some of the detail necessary to include in a contract in order to ensure that the program delivered is the program which has been determined to be required and which has been paid for. It is extremely important to detail these and other processes up front and then monitor the implementation to guarantee that the programs fit the women's needs. In this way, the contractor and CSC are fully aware of what is expected of each other. Program integrity can be safeguarded by proper management and monitoring of the contract.

- a. **Screening Process:** Programs must have clear selection criteria to identify potential candidates. Assessment of potential participants ensures that the program and the participants are suited to each other.
- b. **Group Rules:** In the initial stage of the program the group should develop rules that adhere to feminist principles, i.e. agreement on common language, definition of boundaries, group rules and procedures for dealing with breaches of rules.

- c. **Management/Monitoring:** Program implementation must be well supervised by CSC. This will guarantee quality control and program integrity. The monitoring process should be developed at the outset as part of the contract. This will ensure that the facilitator is adhering to the program plan, that the facility is honouring the program objectives, and that the program is meeting participant needs.
- d. **Reporting:** A reporting protocol should be included in the contract between the facilitator and CSC. It should outline both the limits and obligations of confidentiality and information-sharing between the facilitator and CSC staff.

Facilitators must also provide reports about the participants. Information should include: participation, attendance, motivation level, level of participation, behaviour in the group, offender progress, skill acquisition, etc. At the end of the program global measures of final progress should also be recorded. These reports should be done in cooperation with participants.

- e. **Evaluation:** Mechanisms should be included in the contract that allow for program evaluation in terms of process evaluation and outcome evaluation. This will help CSC to determine how well the program is operating and review suggested ways to improve it. Participants can assist in defining, designing and conducting the evaluation.

Points for the process evaluation include: program content and delivery; program strengths and weaknesses; impediments to program effectiveness; barriers to program implementation and program modifications. This can be both quantitative and qualitative.

Where appropriate, outcome data should be collected through such measures as pre- and post-testing. This data can be both quantitative and qualitative.

B. QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM PROVIDER FOR FSW

Programs should be delivered by qualified, well-trained facilitators; the effectiveness of any correctional program is often determined by the quality of the program provider. These individuals should have the following qualities:

- Adheres to the principles of the program model developed for FSW.
- Knowledge of feminist intervention techniques; belief in a woman's right to equality.
- Connection with women's advocacy groups and to other community groups.
- Provides a holistic approach (mind, body, spirit).
- Knowledge of (and preferably experience with) women offenders and criminal behaviour.
- Specifically trained in individual counseling (if hired for one-to-one counseling); specifically trained to facilitate groups (if hired to facilitate groups).

- Successful experience in facilitating groups of high-need/high-risk women.
- Sensitivity to group dynamics, ability to stimulate groups and promote interest and high activity levels while maintaining focus. Enthusiasm.
- Ability to relate positively and with empathy with women, but to do so in a way that does not compromise the rules and regulations of the facility.
- Life experience or personal qualities that provide empathic understanding of program participants.
- Ability to challenge in a supportive manner.
- Sensitive to diversity and reflect the diversity of the group and be able to meet the needs of the different women.
- Knowledge of trauma, recovery, grief and the impact of violence on women and children.
- Above average verbal skills.
- Above average interpersonal skills, and, in particular, the social/cognitive skills she/he wishes the women to acquire:
 - a. social perspective taking (ability to see other peoples' points of view);
 - b. effective problem solving;
 - c. well developed values;
 - d. effective conflict management (sound judgment, objectivity and flexibility);
 - e. openness to new ideas;
 - f. willingness to consider views of participants, the facility and program developers which may not conform with their own.

C. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A thorough and comprehensive assessment is crucial to promoting successful reintegration into the community at the earliest possible time. Early needs identification allows women to begin to work through the issues that led to incarceration.

Five program processes, that are mandatory elements of CSC's correctional strategy, will be consistent across the regional facilities. Three are described here as they address issues of initial assessment and two are outlined in the next section. Though each facility will put their own unique stamp on these programs, the basic principles outlined in this document will be adhered to.

1. Intake Assessment

The Intake Assessment is used upon admission to conduct a comprehensive and systematic assessment of criminogenic factors and program and personal support needs of FSW. It provides staff with an initial "snapshot" of the woman. The Intake Assessment must identify need and risk factors as well as release strategies. In-depth testing and assessment will be done by specific program providers. The women are strongly encouraged to be active participants in this assessment.

Intake assessment also assists in the identification of security classification for offenders. All offenders will be housed in regional facilities, however, a range of activities, privileges, curfews etc. will reflect the differing needs of the women and their ability to function in a community living setting.

2. Orientation Program

Orientation is used to familiarize offenders with specific facility rules, regulations, programs, program schedules, rights, responsibilities, disciplines, etc. It begins immediately upon arrival to the facility and occurs parallel to the Intake Assessment. It is a four (4) phase program and takes about four (4) weeks to complete. It will be mandatory for all newcomers and those who have been out for more than six months.

In light of the projected low intake of FSW to the new facilities, it is anticipated that Orientation will usually be offered individually so as to address the specific needs of the newcomer. Both staff and offenders will participate in the orientation process but trained FSW will have a primary role in the delivery of the program.

3. Correctional Planning

The Correctional Plan details all activities to be undertaken by the offender during incarceration to address the problems which led to imprisonment. Based on the information obtained in the Intake Assessment, the plan must incorporate the full spectrum of individual needs and choices, including cultural and spiritual needs. Efforts should be focused on preparing for release into the community at the earliest possible time. Release strategies (temporary absences, work releases, etc.) are identified during the Intake Assessment phase; steps to achieving them should be outlined early in the correctional planning phase.

The Correctional Plan is developed by the FSW and her case managers with the assistance of other sources of support (both institutional and community). The FSW will be encouraged to take an active role in the planning, development, assessment and implementation of their plans. This process allows the development of a plan that is effective, sequenced, comprehensive, holistic and based on meaningful choices.

Correctional planning is an ongoing activity that includes updated assessments and at times rethinking of the plan. Review and updating of the plan must occur on a regular basis. This will allow the offender to determine her progress and accomplishments as she reaches agreed upon goals and allow for changes to the plan.

D. PROGRAM AVAILABILITY

This section outlines the way in which offender needs will drive programs as well as the programs themselves.

1. Program Planning Model

A computerized planning system, either as part of the CSC Offender Management System or as a stand alone system will ensure that the needs of FSW are met, that scheduling is timely, that planning and resourcing of programs are monitored and that programs are available. CSC's Resource Data Base will also provide useful information for program planning and resourcing. The computerized system will assist in matching programs with offender needs and will ensure that resources are allocated in the most efficient manner possible.

2. Program Assignment Committee

The role of the Program Assignment Committee for the new facilities will vary from that in CSC's institutions for men. The FSW will play an active role in the planning, choice and implementation of their program assignment (than currently expected of the men); and, the involvement of local community representatives on the Committee is being considered. Consideration will be given to the following as participants: warden, deputy warden, staff social worker/community liaison worker, psychologist, team leader, and the primary worker. Where appropriate/relevant: chief health care, community agencies, community worker and a Citizen's Advisory Committee representative.

As to the fundamental role, the Committee will ensure that:

- existing programs meet the needs of the population. If an appropriate program does not exist, the Committee will find the program and employment opportunities that respond to the individual needs of FSW;
- non-traditional employment and vocational programs will be sought;
- information is shared so that FSW are aware of all available opportunities and the timing of programs;
- offenders can plan all program and employment opportunities during their incarceration and that they are active participants in the implementation of their plan. Individual needs should determine the scheduling and type of programming identified in correctional plans;
- involvement of community resources takes place;
- the unique needs of long term offenders are met.

3. Core Programs

Introduction

The consensus in the literature, in Kathleen Kendall's Program Evaluation of Therapeutic Programs for Federally Sentenced Women, and more importantly, the testimony of the FSW themselves, resulted in the decision to develop the following Core Programs for the new facilities. In general, CSC Core Programs are defined as those which attempt to address criminogenic factors (those factors which played a role in criminal behaviour) so that the offender's likelihood of reoffending is reduced. There is

one exception to this definition for FSW Core Programs - the Survivors of Abuse/Trauma Programs. There is no statistical link between surviving violence/abuse/trauma and criminal behaviour; however, the impact of this type of victimization is severe enough to affect many other areas of a person's life. In order to emphasize the importance of the program for FSW, it was decided to include it as a "core" program.

Programs and/or guidelines will be developed nationally to ensure consistency; however, CSC will also make use of existing expertise (i.e. national, regional, local). Each core program will be discussed in detail below. They are:

1. Living Skills Programs
2. Survivors of Abuse/Trauma Programs
3. Literacy and Continuous Learning Programs
4. Substance Abuse Programs

Group size will need to be considered in program delivery. Though most programs are designed for 8 to 12 participants, given the small number of FSW in each facility, it is likely that some of these programs may have only three or four participants. Facilitators may have to demonstrate innovative approaches to delivery in order to facilitate role plays and foster discussions that include several different points of view. On the contrary, a benefit of the small groups will be to allow long term offenders better and more timely access to programs.

i. Living Skills Program

This program is similar in scope to that which CSC developed for male offenders, but will be designed to the needs of women as several of the current components of the men's program have been deemed inappropriate for women.

The *Cognitive Skills* component addresses problem-solving skills and critical reasoning. Some components are suitable for women but certain modifications will need to be made in order to adapt it to the learning styles and the needs of the women.

The *Parenting Program* is very important to the women. The existing program will be reviewed and enhanced so that it also deals with issues specific to FSW. It will be mandatory for those women whose children are in residence and should serve as a type of pre-requisite to more in-depth early childhood development courses.

A program for women who have learned to use violence/dealing with anger and conflict resolution is in the early development stages. As with all programming for FSW, it will take a holistic approach and incorporate the past experiences of women as both survivors and aggressors themselves.

The *Leisure Education Program* and the *Community Integration Program* will be adapted regionally with guidelines to ensure some specific content is addressed. The

Leisure Education program will promote health, wellness and nutrition much more than the current program for men does. Recreational and leisure activities and involvement with and in the community will be important foci for the new facilities.

ii. Survivors of Abuse/Trauma

These programs will assist FSW to deal with and work through the violence that FSW have themselves experienced. This includes among others, childhood sexual abuse, sexual assault, and partner abuse. Use of the term "trauma" allows us to consider the different forms, intensity and duration of victimization that the women may have suffered. Programs will use a variety of delivery methods, different intensity and duration and strong involvement of the local community. Education/awareness programs as well as a more in-depth "therapeutic" programs will be offered.

With the input of community experts, national guidelines will be developed to assist local sites to contract for the expertise in their communities. The guidelines will address program content and issues that should be a part of any programming for those who have survived trauma. Although group work lead by experienced facilitators will be emphasized, individual therapy will be necessary for many women as the issues and experiences are often too difficult to share in a group setting.

iii. Literacy and Continuous Learning

Continuous learning is a concept for adults whereby learning is ongoing, is found in a number of settings (not just the traditional classroom) and is provided based on the employment and personal needs of women. Strong emphasis will be placed on improving literacy and education levels as training in these areas is essential to reintegrating FSW as law-abiding citizens. Guidelines can be developed to assist local facilities in securing innovative and constructive programs. It is important to ensure that community programs respect the women-centred principles for program design and delivery set out in this framework. Educational programs will be governed by the regulations of the province. Overall education, including literacy is covered by internal CSC policy and directives.

iv. Substance Abuse

Substance abuse programs must address the unique needs of women as well as the social context in which women find themselves, which includes, their histories of dependence, abuse and financial difficulties. Programs should assist women to: gain insight into their substance abuse problem; identify their strengths and weaknesses; and also, support and encourage women to make pro-social changes in their lives.

4. Other Programs and Services

A range of other programs and services play an integral role in the program strategy for the new facilities and will play a role in the successful reintegration of FSW. These programs will also respect the elements of effective programming as outlined in this document and will play an important role of this integrated strategy.

The development and implementation of these programs will be, for the most part, the responsibility of the individual facilities and the regions. Though some of the programs already exist elsewhere, they can be transplanted and tailored to the needs of the FSW and the needs of the facility. They include: multi-cultural programs, recreation and leisure programs, vocational and educational programs, peer support team program, etc. Health programs and services, both educational (prevention) and intervention will also be highlighted. Imagination and innovation will assist staff to find programs that are beneficial to the women and will help them connect with the community. Also, a separate program strategy for Federally Sentenced Aboriginal Women is being developed in parallel to this program strategy.