‘KO TŪ KOE? KO RONGO KOE?’

UNDERSTANDING PRISON VIOLENCE IN AOTEAROA V

SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

25 NOVEMBER 2024

EDITOR: ARMON TAMATEA

NGA TŪMANAKOTANGA
Turning the tide on prison violence

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Edited by Armon Tamatea

ISBN: 978-0-473-75350-4 (paperback)

ISBN: 978-0-473-75351-1 (PDF)

Published by Nga Tūmanakotanga

The University of Waikato, New Zealand

August 2025

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INTRODUCTION

ARMON TAMATEA

Ki te kotahi te kākaho ka whati ki te kāpuia e kore e whati (If there is but one reed it will break, but if it is bunched together it will not)[1]

Prison violence exacts a toll on those who are held within these spaces, those who work there, as well as the broader community. How problems are defined and conceptualised largely influences how solutions are devised and delivered. Indeed, violence in prisons is a complicated affair (a 'wicked problem') that does not permit easy answers or solutions. As our world becomes more complex and dynamic, so do the realities in our carceral spaces. If we lean-in to the varied perspectives that are concerned with prison safety, it opens up conceptual doors for us to walk through. Choosing an appropriate point of entry is necessary as we develop long-range responses and preventative measures to ensure safer prisons in our country.

Nga Tūmanakotanga is an MBIE-funded project that seeks to understand and reduce prison violence in Aotearoa and has the expressed aim to (1) understand violence in the contexts in which it occurs, and to (2) develop localised, place-based interventions to reduce violence and improve safety for prisoners and staff in these settings. Nga Tūmanakotanga is the guiding principle of the research programme. Together with the logo, this *tohu*[2] reflects tidal movements and energies as an analogy of the nature of violence in New Zealand prisons – Periods of relative calm interspersed with volatility. The nature of this research journey recognises the ebb and flow of people who

[1] Attributed to King Tāwhiao Te Wherowhero, the second Māori King (c.1822-1894).
[2] Kindly gifted to the project by Mr Mate Webb.

live and work in prisons, examines the practices – visible and hidden – that contribute to the causes, the control, and the prevention of violence within these environments, and works in harmony with these elements – these ecosystems – to facilitate optimal conditions for the safety and wellbeing of mauhere and kaimahi.

These proceedings capture korero that comprised an online symposium held in late November 2024. *'Ko Tū koe? Ko Rongo koe?'* is the fifth public symposium hosted by Nga Tūmanakotanga. The theme for this event involved presentations and discussions that focused on how we navigate 'currents', influences that are internal to the system as well as those from without. From these cross-currents and inter-sections comes the establishment and synthesis of new knowledge. Our task, therefore, is to pull the 'streams' together.

As is now the tradition with Nga Tūmanakotanga, the symposium was an opportunity to continue to create a space to bring together voices that speak from different positions across the *prison ecology*, to share their māramatanga – their insights and reflections – with us, and to inform and provoke our collective meaning-making about the issue of prison violence in Aotearoa.

The growing public, academic and industrial interest in these symposia reinforces my conviction of the need for a critical public conversation about the important issue of real world violence in our carceral spaces.

This year we had the privilege of the Minister for Corrections, Hon **Mark Mitchell**, open the event and lay out his priorities for safer prisons: ensuring prison capacity, improving staffing levels, increasing staff safety, and reducing re-offending through effective rehabilitation.

Reflecting on issues for Indigenous peoples in Canadian prisons, **Alicia Clifford** and

Chantel Huel presented a combination of critical research and lived experience. They highlighted the human rights violations and the importance of culturally-appropriate ways of working with incarcerated peoples, whose experienced oppression occurs at the intersect of ethnicity and gender in a colonial-settler system.

Following on from our previous symposium (*Te Pakari*), Professor **Nancy Rodriguez** described her research programme in the US justice system and shared some insights on understanding the drivers for violence across multiple States.

Over the day we heard from Ara Poutama leadership about two national developments: The *Violence and Aggression strategy*, presented by the strategy chair, **Scott Walker**.

Later, **Kim Smith**, **Kym Grierson**, **Jacky Howcutt**, and **Renee Clarkson** discussed the special issues for women in our prisons by outlining *Wāhine: E rere ana ki te pae hou*, the Department's strategy for women.

After the break, we were joined by Dr **Katherine McLachlan**, whose trauma-informed perspective foregrounds the lived realities of many who come to the attention of correctional services and the role that our institutions have to play in supporting our whānau in these spaces… or exacerbating the harms further. Speaking to the heart of our theme, 'Ko Tū koe? Ko Rongo koe?' Katherine's work recognises the destructive – and constructive – forces that act on people in the care of the department and examines how a trauma-informed perspective can inform prison ecologies.

Lastly, **Paula Ormsby** concluded the day with her whakāro about the experiences, insights, and priorities of gang communities and why these perspectives are important to understand some of the contextual drivers for violence and victimisation in prison

spaces and ultimately inform ways to reduce harm.

As the whakataukī reminds us, if we work together, something good will come out of it. The task of improving safety in our prisons cannot solely be the preserve of prison services themselves – culture, community and creative approaches are important and often under-stated. As with our prior symposia, these proceedings are not the final word on the issue of prison violence and are offered as an invitation for kōrero/dialogue in your space – whether with stakeholders in the criminal justice sector, academic colleagues, mauhere and their whānau (past and current), or even on the street. Prison violence is everyone's business, and it is the mission of Nga Tūmanakotanga to listen and be advised of the issues, concerns, priorities, and possibilities that are offered.

Mauri ora.

OPENING ADDRESS

HON MARK MITCHELL

Good morning. Thank you, Armon, for inviting me to open this fifth online symposium on Understanding Prison Violence in New Zealand. Thank you also to all of you who are attending today. It's great to see such a large number of people with an interest in reducing prison violence. I'm delighted that there are many from Corrections attending, and also presenting on some of the work underway to make our prisons safer.

I'm tremendously proud to be the Minister of Corrections. It's a portfolio I wanted – and a year into the role – a portfolio I remain happy to hold. That is because of the important responsibility Corrections has around public safety. In the context of today's symposium, I would particularly like to acknowledge the around 4,330 corrections officers who work at Corrections. Every day they show up to work in our prisons to keep New Zealanders safe and support prisoners so that when they come back into our communities, they're safe, productive, contributing members of society. They do a difficult job that very few of us would be willing to do. For those attending from Corrections - thank you for the work you do every day in what can be a very challenging environment.

As Corrections Minister, I'm committed to making sure our frontline staff have the resources they need to do their jobs well – and safely. Corrections identified $442 million in savings over four years through the Government's cost-savings programme. We've re-invested this money back into strengthening Corrections frontline safety and capability. In the May Budget we were able to invest $1.9 billion into Corrections. That money is to

ensure Corrections has the number of frontline staff needed to ensure they can do their job safely and well; there is sufficient prison capacity to safely accommodate the prison population; and there is funding to extend rehabilitation programmes to remand prisoners, who currently make up 45% of the prison population.

In January I set my four priorities for Corrections. These are ensuring prison capacity; improving staffing levels; increasing staff safety; and reducing re-offending through effective rehabilitation. Over the past eleven months, Corrections has made significant progress against these priorities. I believe that delivering against these priorities will make our prisons safer for all - staff and prisoners.

I am proud that as a Government we have committed to strengthen law and order to improve the safety of our communities. The commitments we have made are expected to increase the number of people going through the justice system and being managed by Corrections. The prison population today is around 10,000, and projections forecast that over the next five years that number will continue to increase. These prisoners will need to be accommodated in a safe, secure and effective prison network.

The first of my four priorities is ensuring that Corrections has sufficient and fit-for-purpose prison capacity to accommodate the increasing prison population and replace poor quality prison infrastructure. It's important that Corrections can provide the appropriate environments that support rehabilitation. There's a huge amount of work underway to ensure that Corrections has enough beds, and that these beds are in the right locations. Some of this has included increasing the number of beds in use in the three women's prisons so that the number of transfers can be reduced and women in prison are able to be kept closer to

their families and support networks. A new modular unit has also opened at Rimutaka Prison. Since September 2023, Corrections has opened around 1,400 beds, with plans to open another 420 beds by the end of March next year.

The Waikeria Prison development will be operational in the middle of next year – adding a further 600 beds[3] [4] to the Corrections network. And tomorrow I will be visiting Waikeria Prison to mark the start of earthworks for the Waikeria Prison expansion which will see another 810 beds added to the network.

Of course, with the growing prisoner population, Corrections continues to focus on increasing frontline staffing levels. This will ensure that prisons can be safely managed. From late 2021 through to much of 2023, Corrections experienced high turnover of corrections officers. Like many organisations, it grappled with critical staffing shortages. But I am pleased to say that with a significant focus on recruitment – and further investment in Budget 2024, Corrections is making good headway in recruiting and retaining frontline staff.

The dial has positively shifted, and Corrections has come a long way from December 2022 when the number of corrections officers was at its lowest – at 3,454. Since then, more than 870 new corrections officers have been employed on top of turnover. At the end of September 2024, Corrections had 4,327 corrections officers working across its network. Frontline turnover is at the lowest it has been for three years. As Corrections continues to keep the foot on the pedal with frontline recruitment, the safety of staff is absolutely paramount to me, as I know it is for Corrections. I will be clear that no assault on any staff member is acceptable or will be tolerated. However, people in prison can sometimes be

[3] Inclusive of 96 mental health beds.

[4] Statistics and estimates may be outdated at time of reading.

extremely violent and volatile individuals – it's often the reason why they're there. And so, the threat of violence must be actively managed to ensure the safety of staff.

Through working closely with their unions, Corrections has many initiatives in place to support staff safety in prisons. I've seen many of these in action as I have visited prisons and the Corrections Tactical Training Facility.

Most recently, I was delighted to hear that the Safer Prisons Plan has been launched and is now being implemented at our prisons. The plan was developed jointly with unions and takes the foundation of what has been successful so far and builds on this. I know that Scott Walker from Spring Hill Corrections Facility is speaking later today, and he is likely to speak about this in more detail. The plan has four main focus areas aimed at making our prisons safer. One of these is looking at prison operations and ensuring site consistency across things such as cell standards. Often an issue can arise with prisoner transfers if one prison has different standards than another. The plan also focuses on understanding each prison's profile. While all our prisons have some similarities, there are important differences, and a prison such as Tongariro is managing very different people than a prison such as Auckland. There is also a focus on managing gangs and relationship dynamics.

The fourth focus is something that I feel very strongly about – supporting staff so that they have the tools, resources, and support to keep safe and well. And sitting alongside the Safer Prisons Plan is a package for new custodial officers who have just graduated. The package has been developed because there was a realisation that continued ongoing site support was needed post the initial training provided. As I continue to visit prisons, I'm going to be taking a keen interest as to how the safer prisons plans are going and the difference they are making. The

prison system works to keep our communities safe. However, I want people to spend their time in prison engaged in meaningful activities, so that when they come back into our communities, they're safe, productive, contributing members of society who live crime-free. My fourth priority area is how we can reduce reoffending through rehabilitation.

We know that a high proportion of the prison population are on remand, and that's why through Budget 24 we invested $78 million to extend rehabilitation programmes to people on remand, so they don't have to wait until their sentenced to start their rehabilitation pathway. In September 2024, the Corrections Amendment Act passed its third reading. This legislation will enable limited mixing of remand accused and convicted prisoners for non-offence-based programmes. It means remand prisoners will not be waiting until they are sentenced to start their rehabilitation pathway. They will have access to the rehabilitation and reintegration support they need to turn their lives around. So, a lot of great work is happening, and I have strong confidence that Corrections will deliver on my priorities. I am also confident that delivering against these four priorities will play an important role in keeping our communities – and our prisons – safer. I understand that prison violence is complex and will require an ongoing focus. I am, however, heartened at the commitment and passion I see from the Corrections staff I have met who are committed to making a positive difference. Again, I would like to thank the over 4,000 dedicated and hard-working prison staff who are working hard to make our prisons safer and support those they manage onto a better path.

Thank you once again for inviting me here today.

REDUCING VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION IN PRISONS: CREATING A 'ONE TEAM' APPROACH

SCOTT WALKER

Kia ora. My name is Scott Walker, and I am the General Manager of Spring Hill Corrections Facility (Spring Hill) based in the North Waikato. I have been in the General Manager role at Spring Hill since early October 2020. Thank you to Armon and the team for inviting me to talk to you today about our One Team Approach to Reducing Violence and Aggression, including discussing what we have achieved over the last few years, through to the development of our latest Safer Prison work.

Spring Hill is currently a 986-bed prison and is primarily a remand focused prison currently covering the Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Rotorua, Tokoroa and Taupo districts. From when I took over the Prison Director role at Spring Hill (now General Manager), through to now, like the rest of Corrections, we have been through some challenges and change over the last few years. Throughout this time, myself, my team and the site have remained 100% focused on the safety, security and wellbeing of our Spring Hill community.

Very early in my time at Spring Hill, it was clear to me that there was a need to take a proactive and consistent approach to addressing the level of violence and aggression at the site and in particular against my staff. This motivated me to take a lead as a Prison Director in the *Reducing Violence and Aggression Programme* and in particular working alongside unions, both the Corrections Association of New Zealand (CANZ) and the Public Service Association (PSA), in the development and implementation of this work.

This work has led to my current role as *Violence and Aggression Lead*, alongside my General Manager position, which has driven the development and roll out of our new *Safer Prison Plan*, which I will be speaking of later in my presentation.

We are all aware of the impact that Violence and Aggression has in a prison environment and in particular on our staff and those in our care. Our Chief Executive, Jeremy Lightfoot, has made it very clear that the reduction of violence and aggression and making our prisons safer is one of his top priorities[1] and one shared by our Minister, the Honourable Mark Mitchell[2]. Reducing violence and aggression in our prisons is also a top priority for all prison General Managers and over the last 4 years we have been working collectively with both unions, CANZ and PSA, with a collective focus on making our prison communities safer.

Today, I will be covering the following areas:

- Overview of the current Ara Poutama, Department of Corrections (Ara Poutama) operational data
- What impacts violence in our prisons?
- How we have worked as a collective – Ara Poutama, CANZ and PSA to reduce violence and aggression
- Our *Violence and Aggression Work Programme* 2021–2024
- Our *Safer Prison Plan* 2024–2026

Behind every incident of violence and aggression against our staff, there are individuals, teams, families and communities that all share in the impact of these incidents. It is an unfortunate fact that since 2015, there has been an increase in the level of violent incidents against our staff.

A Snapshot of Ara Poutama, Department of Corrections

Currently we have 4,390 frontline custodial staff (3,150 Male; 1,240 Female). Over the last two years, we have had a focus on the recruitment of

new staff, due to staffing shortages, along with the retention of our existing staff at majority of prisons. We know the impact the experienced staff have in our prisons. Those who have served from 0-2 years make up 40% (1,768) of our staff, and those who have served from 2-5 years make up 14% (635). Ara Poutama is like most other government organisations, with a very diverse work force.
For instance, 47% (2,084) identify as Pākeha/NZ-European, 17% (763) are Māori, and collective Pasifika peoples make up 22% (996).

Prisoner Demographics
We have seen a continued increase in our prison muster over the last few years and in particular the number of prisoners that we are managing on remand.

As of November, this year, the overall prisoner population was 10,107, with an operational capacity of 10,786. This was made up of 5,735 sentenced prisoners and 4,247 remand

Figure 1
Utilisation of Operational Capacity

prisoners. Included in this population, there are 691 Female prisoners with a total of 318 sentenced and 373 remand.

Gang Information

The number of prisoners with gang affiliations current sits with 4,064 male and 143 female across all prisons. Table 1 displays the largest gangs represented in the prison population.

Factors that Contribute to Violence and Aggression in Our Prisons

When discussing the factors that lead to prison violence and aggression, it's important to recognise that the dynamics within Corrections facilities are complex and at times unpredictable. Prison violence and aggression can stem from combination of environmental, psychological, social, and systemic factors. At their core, prisons are highly controlled environments where power struggles, social hierarchies, and limited resources can create a volatile atmosphere. Understanding these contributing factors is crucial for developing strategies to reduce violence, improve safety, and enhance rehabilitation efforts. It's also vital to consider how prison violence can affect not just those directly involved, but also the broader society, through cycles of recidivism and the long-term impacts on individuals' mental health.

Some of the key factors contributing to violence and

Table 1

National Distribution of Gang-Affiliated Prisoners

Row Labels	Sum of Gang Connection Count	%
Mongrel Mob	1,956	28
Black Power	1,053	15
Crips	689	10
Killer Beez	645	9
Head Hunters MC	405	6
Nomads	383	5
Tribesmen MC	288	4
Bloods	275	4
King Cobra	167	2
Mongols MC	133	2

aggression in prisons include pressures to support appropriate prisoner placement, based on classification and gang status, reduced mental health care, inadequate training for Corrections Officers, gang activity, and the impact of long-term imprisonment. All these factors, if not addressed, will increase violence and aggression between prisoners and staff.

Inconsistent Operations

Prisons can be environments of uncertainty and frustration for our prisoners. This uncertainty and at times inconsistent operations, will increase tension and violence against our staff and more so in a remand prison environment where the prisoner cohort is less settled and more unpredictable. We know that facilities with erratic operations—where rules are inconsistently enforced, and staff interactions vary significantly—tend to have higher rates of aggression and conflict.

Our prisons need be consistent – structured schedules, clear policies and processes and consistent staff engagement and communication is vital to create a safe prison environment. If we can get these factors right, it not only builds trust among prisoners but also equips staff with the skills to de-escalate potential conflicts and improve engagement with the prisoners in our care.

Prisoner Tension

Prisoner tension can be influenced by various factors, including limited resources, isolation leading to at times unpredictable environments (which we certainly have had over the last few years). Inconsistent rules, unpredictable schedules and staff inconsistency, through poor communication and behaviour from prison staff, can lead to mistrust and tension. Addressing these factors can help mitigate tension within our prison environments.

Gangs

Gangs in prisons can have a complex influence on violence and aggression. Understanding their role is crucial for developing strategies to reduce violence. Some examples of how gangs can impact violence in prison settings could be through the promotion of violence against staff or other prisoners, intimidation and control, disruption of rehabilitation, manipulation and deception of staff. The impact of gangs in prisons has also been impacted with the arrival and increase in Trans-National Organised Crime (TNOC) groups as well as the returning 501's from Australia.

Mental Health

Mental health issues in prisons can significantly contribute to violence and aggression. The prison environment itself often increases underlying mental health conditions, a combination of the pressure faced by our mental health teams and the lack of support systems creates a vicious cycle of escalating aggression and behavioural problems.

A high percentage of our prisoners have some form of mental illness. Up to 60% of our prisoners have a diagnosable mental health condition, including mood disorders, anxiety, psychotic disorders, and personality disorders. A high number of our prisoners also suffer from substance use disorders, which can impact mental health symptoms. Most prisoners have also experienced significant trauma in their lives, such as childhood abuse, neglect, or violence. This pre-incarceration trauma can lead to mental health conditions that manifest as aggression or violent behaviour. Additionally, the trauma of prison life itself—along with the systemic violence within the facilities—can compound existing mental health problems, creating a cycle of violence and mental illness that is difficult to break.

Working in Collaboration to Reduce Violence and Aggression

Our journey working with CANZ and PSA to reduce violence and aggression in our Prisons

started in May 2021, when the *Violence and Aggression Joint Action Plan* was agreed on by Corrections, CANZ and PSA. This was then expanded into the *Reducing Violence and Aggression Work Programme*. Working collectively with both CANZ and PSA has been a shared effort, focused on reducing violence against our staff and their members. Achieving meaningful results has required fostering a collaborative relationship between our frontline staff and both site and national Union Delegates. How have we made this possible?

- **Focusing on staff safety:** The safety and security of our prisons and our staff comes first. This is a priority shared by Ara Poutama and both CANZ and PSA.
- **Building trust:** For collective action to be successful, there needs to be trust between union leaders, our frontline staff, and management. Open communication and transparency about the issues at hand helped us in fostering this trust.
- **Regular dialogue:** By engaging in regular meetings or forums, we have been able to discuss concerns, negotiate solutions, and offer feedback. This has helped in identifying potential points of contention early on and can prevent conflicts from escalating.
- **Clear and honest negotiations:** Throughout the collaborative relationship, we have ensured that all parties have been clear about their expectations and the limitations each party face. Transparent negotiations have been more likely to result in mutually beneficial agreements.
- **Sustainable agreements:** Short-term fixes might provide immediate impact and support staff safety, but they don't necessarily solve the underlying issues. The goal of working collectively has been to create long-term, sustainable solutions.
- **Involving our frontline in the process:** Our frontline teams have needed to be

engaged and actively participate in the process. This has involved, surveys, site meetings and engagement with our frontline teams, giving them the chance to voice their concerns and priorities, always asking them the question “what will keep you safe?”

- **Problem-solving approach:** Encouraging a culture of self-directed problem-solving instead of confrontation can help maintain good relations. This means approaching disagreements as challenges to overcome together, rather than as battles to win.
- **Building on successes:** Use our successes as a springboard for further improvements. Once one set of issues is resolved, it can open up space for addressing other concerns.

As part of this collaborative work, site specific *Union Engagement Plans* were also developed and agreed to. A *Union Engagement Plan* outlines the commitment by PSA, CANZ and the Prison sites Senior Leadership Teams on how they would engage and commit to our *Reducing Violence and Aggression Plan*. Common themes of the *Union Engagement Plans* are (1) to ensure the terms of the Frontline Collective Agreement are met; (2) to ensure the voice of the frontline is heard; and (3) to enable and support early escalation and resolution of issues. This has enabled a more engaged workforce at each site.

Working collectively with both CANZ and PSA has been complex but also a necessary process that has built respect, trust, and improved collaboration. By fostering an environment of open communication, mutual respect, and shared goals we have been able to work together to create a fairer, more productive workplace while avoiding unnecessary conflict.

Our Violence and Aggression Work Programme

The *Violence and Aggression*

Work Programme was intended to develop, align, and sequence the joint work being undertaken by Corrections, CANZ and PSA to reduce the impacts of violence and aggression on our frontline staff. The programme consisted of four work streams:

1. *Violence and Aggression Capability Uplift Training*
2. Joint Action Plan
3. Prison site specific *Violence and Aggression Plans*
4. Wellness days

Work Stream 1: Violence and Aggression Capability Uplift Training

The *Violence and Aggression Capability Uplift Training* package was developed to ensure frontline staff were getting the training required to support our response in tackling the climbing incidents of violence and aggression in prisons. The content of the training was developed by *CERT Systems*, an external organisation that specialises in situational safety and tactical communications. *CERT Systems* have worked with New Zealand Police and other agencies to develop a suite of tactical training that was suitable and that would resonate with our frontline teams. The training sessions were delivered to all frontline Corrections staff with very positive feedback from both the staff attending as well as both PSA and CANZ. As of 31 March 2024, over 3,000 frontline Corrections staff completed the *Violence and Aggression Capability Uplift Training*, this is 90% of the eligible cohort. During this time, *CERT Systems* delivered a total of 313 sessions. The programme received 90% positive feedback from attendees, with an overall commentary that meaningful training was delivered in a manner that was impactful on staff safety.

Work Stream 2: Joint Action Plan

The Joint Action Plan focused on the following five key areas to respond to the current operational pressures across prison sites:

1. Looking at our internal disciplinary process to ensure

prisoners are held to account for their actions. The initial Violence and Aggression Action Plan detailed that our internal disciplinary process was not effective at holding prisoners to account for their actions, which was acting as an insufficient deterrent to prevent assaults on frontline staff. The purpose of this workstream was to enhance our Corrections Prosecutions capability by continuing to improve oversight and support, development of training material and improve site-based capability and assurance. The outcome of this work stream was to give increased confidence that people that commit violence and aggression incidents against our staff are held more accountable for their actions. One of the most positive outcomes from the action plan was the establishment and roll out of the *105 Online Reporting Tool,* a tool Corrections has worked alongside New Zealand Police to establish. The tool enables us to directly report all staff assaults and allows New Zealand Police to take action in a consistent and transparent way which ultimately ensures that prisoners are held accountable for all staff assaults.

2. Ensuring that training for staff is delivered in a way that is appropriate and engaging. At the beginning of the Violence and Aggression Action Plan, we were aware that the current method of training our staff was too online focused. We wanted our staff to be better equipped to respond to various challenges that arise day to day to keep them safe. This led to the development of a Future of Learning Program, focused on the development and delivery of a new national training delivery plan. As part of this work there was a national focus for site delivery of hostage and suicide training that, although was delivered at a time of staffing shortages, has been a success and lead to further development of this Program and the way we deliver training.

3. Review of the current range of personal protective

equipment (PPE) for staff to ensure it is fit for purpose. At the start of the Violence and Aggression Action Plan, we agreed that it was time for a review of the PPE that is provided to our staff, while also acknowledging that specialist teams have different requirements for their equipment. We identified that a refresh of the maintenance program needed to be implemented including improved communication to staff on how they can maintain their PPE.

4. Ensure that sites are appropriately staffed, and non-value-added activities were minimised. We heard that frontline staff don't feel they have sufficient time to undertake the many transactional tasks they were required to complete each day. We reviewed current activities to free up time, allowing staff more opportunities to engage with our prisoners and help create a safer working environment. This review helped identify the staffing requirements that best support staff safety in reducing violence and aggression. It also highlighted non-essential and occasionally duplicated activities. To further support this effort, site profiling was undertaken to guide future decisions on unit openings, closings, and other planning.

5. Ensuring that staff wellbeing is appropriately supported to enable our workforce to be physically and mentally healthy. Our Frontline prison staff work in a very challenging environment and face incidents and conflict that can be very difficult to manage. We need to have a workforce that is well and supported, particularly those that have been involved in an incident. Through this work stream we delivered an enhancement to our Post Incident Response Teams (PIRT), including training that further embedded monitoring, assurance and post incident psychological support for staff.

Work Stream 3: Site Violence and Aggression Plans

Prison site specific *Violence and Aggression Plans* were

developed through collaboration and engagement with union delegates and our frontline teams. Common themes from the site plans identified the following areas of priority:

- Leadership at all levels that is visible and engaged with their frontline teams
- Consistent on-boarding and support for new frontline staff
- Driving core custodial capability and rebuilding custodial skills
- Increased wellbeing support for staff and in particular post incident welfare.

These plans required General Managers and site-based union delegates discussing and developing their site-specific *Violence and Aggression Plans*. This included identifying what good engagement looks like, the structure and timing of meetings, escalation processes and what site delegates and General Managers were wanting to achieve by this engagement.

We also held two Violence and Aggression summits led by General Manager Leads, CANZ and PSA. The summits focused on the delivery of violence and aggression across all sites, sharing of ideas and successes across our prisons and agreement on how we will support our sites in reducing violent and aggressive incidents. A positive outcome from these summits has been the development and implementation of an onsite, visible, Tactical Options Team's (TOT). The aim of TOT is to improve staff capability through peer learning and peers promoting safety and best practice across our sites. TOT members regularly visit units and site morning briefings to run bite sized TOT training sessions with our teams. We have also introduced reflective practice sessions which focus on key safety messages and issues that are specific to each site.

Work Stream 4: Wellness Day Two

In 2017, as part of the introduction of the Physical Readiness Assessment (PRA) for our frontline custodial staff, we

agreed with CANZ to add an additional *Wellness Day* for each frontline custodial staff member per year. *Wellness Day One* is currently used to undertake the PRA every two years. The purpose of *Wellness Day Two* was to provide a more holistic approach to our frontline custodial staff, with a broader focus on their physical health, mental health and overall wellbeing. As part of this work stream, we wanted to ensure that *Wellness Day Two* was able to be tailored to meet the needs of what our staff wanted to achieve to support and improve their wellbeing. General Managers consulted with their sites to identify what and how our staff wanted these days to be run. There was a very strong response from all sites on a preference on team building activities to build connectiveness and team cohesion. A chance to get away from their everyday work environment and have some fun.

Our collective focus across all prisons, in partnership with CANZ and PSA, has had a positive impact on our staff and the safety and wellbeing of our prison sites. Through consistency of effort, sharing of good practice, positive engagement and visible and consistent leadership we have been able to reduce the number of violent incidents against our staff, improve staff retention, improve the wellbeing of our teams and hold prisoners more accountable for their actions.

Results show that from a spike in 2021, there has been a downward trend in reported assaults against our staff despite an increase in our total prisoner population. This is through commitment, consistency and support to our frontline teams with a clear focus on reducing violence and aggression. It has also had an impact on improved retention of staff, training delivery and improvement in the communication, visibility and engagement with our frontline teams – ultimately, creating a safer prison environment for both staff and prisoners.

But there is still a lot of work to be done. The Government's focus on the safety of our prisons, holding prisoners accountable for their actions, and the disruption of gangs has led to the development of the next iteration of our response to addressing violence and aggression.

Our Safer Prison Plan

The *National Safer Prison Plan* has been developed, again in partnership with CANZ and PSA, to take the foundation for what has been successful from the initial *Violence and Aggression Joint Action Plan* and *Violence and Aggression Work Programme,* to create a focused plan that will ensure a further commitment and collective drive to improve the safety and wellbeing of our prison sites. As of last month, the *National Safer Prison Plan* has now been launched across all prison sites. The plan has measures that will provide assurance and consistency such as prisoner inductions, visit applications, property claims, prisoner complaints, and enforcement of national cell standards.

As a department, we recognise that a one size fits all approach does not work for all prisons, each site has different needs depending on prisoner demographics, staffing experience levels, available facilities, location etc. Each prison will therefore develop their own individually tailored response to the *National Safer Prison Plan*. All General Managers will be working alongside site union representatives and staff to develop this response.

The *National Safer Prison Plan* is focused on 4 work stream areas:

- Improving Prison Operations
- Understanding Prison Profiles
- Supporting Our People
- Managing Gangs and Relationship Dynamics.

Improved prison operations will be focused on a consistent delivery of good practice of prison operations that will exceed the requirements for

minimum entitlement delivery. When prisoners feel uncertain about their daily routines, processes within the prison for example, getting telephone numbers approved, and the expectations placed upon them, it creates a breeding ground for frustration and hostility. The lack of stability can manifest in various ways, from minor disputes escalating to serious violent incidents. Therefore, understanding how to create a more consistent operational framework is essential.

Regular cross network collaboration and site-specific safety initiatives will also be key in the success of improving our prison operations. The aim of this will be to support a consistent approach and application of safety initiatives across all prison sites. We will also continue to hold all prisoners accountable for their actions through a focus on improved site prosecutions and continuation of the use of *105 Online Reporting Tool* as part of the initial *Violence and Aggression Work Programme*. We know that holding prisoners accountable through this reporting tool has had benefits and the support from both New Zealand Police and the wider New Zealand Justice Sector has been vital in holding prisoners accountable for their actions.

Understanding of prison profiles will help us to achieve a safer, more engaged and supported prison network. We will continue to focus on training delivery and upskilling of all frontline staff to ensure consistent daily taskings of all custodial roles. We will achieve this through the development of site *Functional Plans*, individually tailored site-specific *Safer Prison Plans*, clear and consistent role taskings and capability development of Corrections Officers, Senior Corrections Officers and Principal Corrections Officers. The use of personal development conversations, referred to as Korero Whakawhanake, as well as support and action from our bi-yearly Shaping Corrections Survey (completed by all Ara

Poutama staff), Health and Safety engagement and the ongoing growth of a *Just Culture* at all prisons sites. We know that to be successful, we need to have the voices of our frontline staff heard and actioned.

The wellbeing and safety of our staff is paramount, and we will continue to ***support our frontline staff*** by ensuring they have the tools, visible leadership and resources for them to keep safe and well. This will be achieved through the continuation of site *Wellness Days*, an ongoing drive for the recruitment and retention of our staff, training, and resilience and mental wellbeing support and capability.

The final aspect will be the consistent and focused ***management of gangs*** and understanding the risk and ***relationship dynamic*** impact they have on our prison operations. This work stream is focused on reviewing the Departments response to organised crime and gangs with the development of a *National Gang Plan* that will ensure there is information available to support decision making at each prison site and that work is being done in a consistent and proactive way to disrupt gang activity. This visible *National Gang Plan* will help support a proactive approach to gang management while at the same time providing a visible plan to our staff that will support their safety. Implementation of site *Gang Placement Meetings (Safer Placement Meetings)* will enable and support the disruption that gangs can have on site through planned prisoner placement. These meetings have been trialed at a number of prison sites and have led to improved education and engagement with frontline staff on gang placements. Additionally, through improved collaboration with our internal teams such as our Intelligence and Integrity Teams, we have been able to share knowledge, support decision making and keep our frontline staff safe. Having regular conversations about risks, sharing new

information in a timely manner and just overall visibility of these internal teams on the frontline improves the knowledge our teams have and enables our staff to make more informed decisions. Corrections also introduced an online tool called *Link* where our staff can pass on intelligence information quickly and confidentially to our Intelligence Team, once again enhancing the visibility and lines of communications with our internal teams who help to support the frontline staff and keep them safe.

By utilising an information led approach to long term gang disruption across the prison network, we are working together to develop a network response to disrupt key prisoners of influence and reduce their impact and ability to impact our staff. Included in this will be an updated learning pathway to reflect changing landscape, aimed to improve staff knowledge about gangs, gang dynamics in the context of their site, and ongoing development around the impact of gangs and their behaviours. We will support our staff to develop their knowledge and increase understanding on how to manage and support prisoners with diverse relationships and group dynamics.

In conclusion, addressing violence and aggression within prisons requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that goes beyond mere containment or punishment. The root causes of violence are deeply intertwined with cultures that often reward violent and aggressive behaviours. By understanding these factors, we can begin to develop more effective strategies to reduce violence and create safer, more rehabilitative environments. Prison should not merely be a place of punishment, but a space for transformation, rehabilitation, and human dignity. By fostering a culture of respect, communication, and support—both among prisoners and between staff and prisoners—we can mitigate many of the factors that

contribute to violence and aggression.

Ultimately, reducing violence and aggression in prisons is not just about making facilities safer; it's about providing prisoners and staff with the knowledge and confidence that will ensure that our prison system works to reintegrate rather than to isolate. By working toward systemic change and building a culture of rehabilitation and respect, we can create a criminal justice system that is both humane and effective, ultimately benefiting society as a whole.

The journey we have been on to make our prisons safer is a long one that will require a continued focus and commitment from all involved to ensure we succeed.

SECURITY TRUMPS HEALING: INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH CEREMONY AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING IN FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS ON THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES

ALICIA CLIFFORD & CHANTEL HUEL

Alicia: Welcome everybody.

The presentation today will be split into two; I will preface.

I'll give a brief outline of the Canadian context by the numbers to give you some kind of background information on what's happening in the carceral system, then we're going to redefine violence specifically when we start looking at ceremony and ceremonial contexts for Indigenous women, and then the realities on the inside.

To give you some context, there's snow… shoveling… more snow… and more shoveling. I'm in Alberta on the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi and Métis Nation Region 3. Saskatoon is where Chantel is located. Our temperatures are pretty relative; It's -14°C and -13°C.

The number of Indigenous women being incarcerated on the prairies is extremely high, where in some institutions they comprise up to 95% of the individuals behind bars. In Saskatchewan, there are nine carceral institutions for women. It's the highest of any province or territory across all of Canada. This includes the regional psychiatric facility, provincial facilities, federal facilities, and healing lodges as well.

The carceral system historically has been used as a tool to remove Indigenous peoples from the land. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police came into the prairies to escort Indigenous peoples off of the

land; so, the national police force was essentially used to enforce state policies of dispossession, assimilation, and erasure.[5] Settler colonialism is a process, not merely a 'dark chapter' – not unlike in New Zealand and Australia – to move on from.

It's really embedded and woven throughout Canadian institutions and the carceral system is one of those. Essentially, "Canada was built to colonize"[6] Indigenous peoples. Like I mentioned, the roots of the system are directly tied to formal efforts to dispossess and clear the land of Indigenous bodies. I'm very much a visual person, so I really like using Andrew Woolford's[7] reference to the colonial mesh. It lets me envision what that may look like today. So, the mesh that he talks about, the 'settler colonial mesh', has three distinct layers from the macro systems level, through to the micro individual workers that function in that system. These layers all work simultaneously and they cannot necessarily be disentangled from one another. You have to think of it like a funnel, but they all work together, and for Indigenous peoples in particular, the colonial mesh continues to entrap and snare and contract around them. Andrew Woolford describes it as one part of the mesh will loosen, another will tighten, and often that tightening takes place around Indigenous peoples or Indigenous bodies. So, it expands and contracts across time and differentially across space and geography, which makes it self-perpetuating. This raises the question of who is perpetuating the violence then and who is the target of that violence?

[5] Chartrand, V. & Rougier, N. (2021). Carceral other and severing of people, place and land: Redefining the politics of abolition through an anti-colonial framework. In M. J. Coyle & M. Nagel (Eds.), *Contesting Carceral Logic: Toward Abolitionist Futures* (pp. 22-35). New York: Routledge.

[6] Pasternak, S. (2022). Canada is a bad company: Police as colonial mercenaries for state and capital. In S. Pasternak, K. Walby, & A. Stadnyk (Eds.), *Disarm, Defund, Dismantle: Police abolition in Canada* (pp. 66-73). Toronto: Between the Lines.

[7] Woolford, A. (2014). *Discipline, territory, and the colonial mesh: Indigenous boarding schools in the United States and Canada.* Durham: Duke University Press.

By the Numbers

For the past two decades, Canada's crime rate has been declining – it declined by 36.3%.[8] Reporter Nancy Macdonald stated that, "Canada's crime rate had actually reached a 45-year low"[9] It's only been in the past few years that we see some of the numbers beginning to increase. Though overall, crime rates, rates of crime, are significantly lower than they were 25 years ago.

The number of persons being charged also continues to decline. Since 2009, it declined by almost 16%,[10] and then the number of individuals being incarcerated in Canada's federal prison system. So, we're only talking about the federal system, which in the federal system is for people who are sentenced to two years or more. The number of people moving into that system is simultaneously declining broadly. But if you tease apart those demographics, the white population has gone down by 28.26%, and yet the Indigenous population has increased by 52.1%.[11] So these timelines include shifts in our criminal legal system that included the addition of mandatory minimums, but also decriminalization for marijuana and some of those mandatory minimums have since been repealed. So, these trends align with Robert Nichols[12] assertion that carceral expansion is not a function of increased crime because it is targeting very specific demographics as well.

Focusing on Correctional Service Canada (CSC), Indigenous Peoples only make up 5% of the Canadian population, whereas 32% of Indigenous peoples make up

[8] Public Safety Canada. (2019). *2018 Annual Report: Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview*. Public Works and Government Services Canada.

[9] MacDonald, N. (2016, 18 February). Canada's prisons are the 'new residential schools'. *Macleans*. www.macleans.ca/news

[10] Statistics Canada. (2024). *Police-report crime in Canada, 2023.* Public Works and Government Services Canada.

[11] Office of the Correctional Investigator. (2019). *Office of the correctional investigator annual report 2018-2019*. Ministry of Public Safety. https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/pdf/annrpt/annrpt2018 2019-eng.pdf

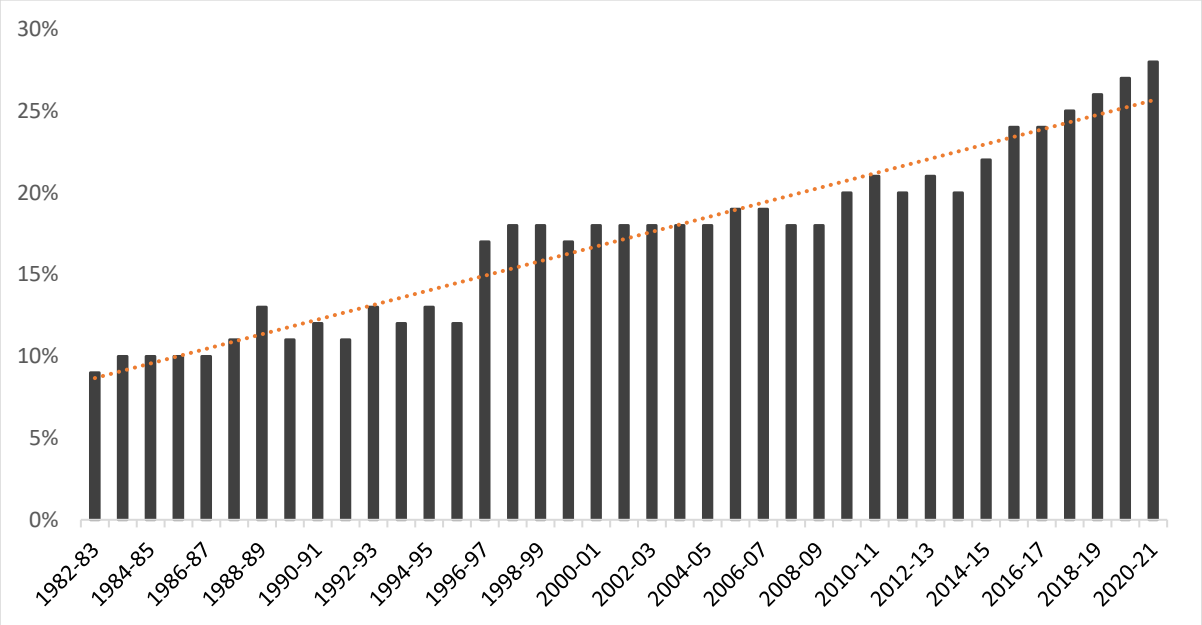
[12] Nichols, R. (2014). The colonialism of incarceration. *Radical Philosophy Review, 17*(2)*,* 435-455*.*

the federal corrections population.[13] So you can see the numbers continue to go up. Figure 1[14] shows Indigenous Peoples coming into the system, it does not include Indigenous people already there. So those are people coming in on new warrants of committal essentially.
When you break it down a little bit further by gender, Indigenous women are technically the fastest growing population moving into and through the federal prison system.

Indigenous women 18 years and over make up roughly 4.16% of Canada's female population, but they make up 50% of the women in federal institutions.[15] You can see in Figure 2, that it's continuously climbing. There is that dip

Figure 1

Percentage of Indigenous People Coming into Canadian Prisons 1982-2021



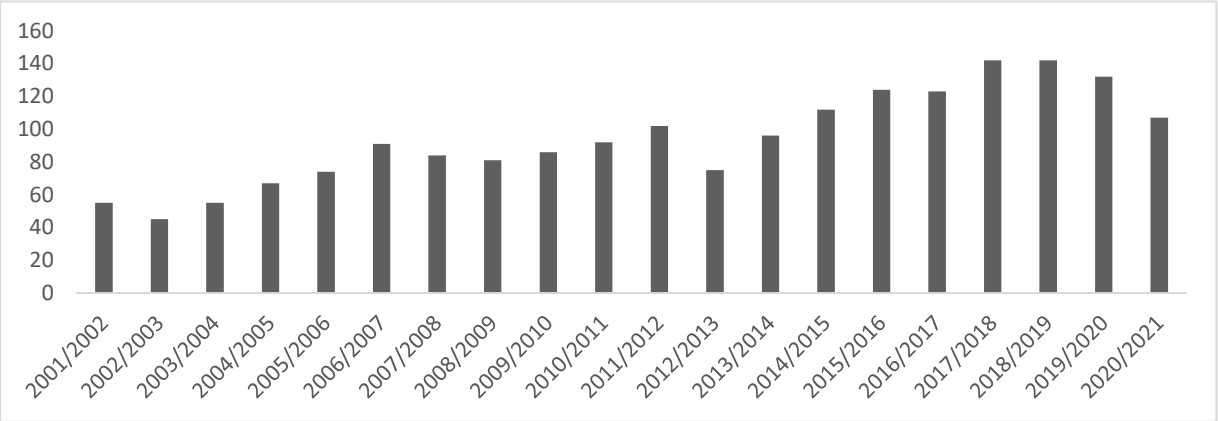
[13] Correctional Service Canada. (2023). *Indigenous Corrections Accountability Framework: Annual report 2022 to 2023.* https://www.canada.ca/en/correctional-service/corporate/library/offenders/indigenous/accountability-report-2022-2023.html

[14] Based on data from Admissions to federal facilities, by type of admission, sex and Indigenous identity, 2001/2002 to 2020/21, by Statistics Canada, 2022; Table 35-10-0022-01 Adult admissions to federal correctional services, Statistics Canada, 2023, https://doi.org/10.25318/3510002201-eng

[15] Office of the Correctional Investigator. (2022). *Annual Report 2021-2022*. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada.

Figure 2

Number of Indigenous Women in Canadian Prisons 2001-2021[15]



that's around COVID, same with the previous graph.

Institutionalized Culture: Indigenization within Corrections Services Canada

The Indigenization happening within the correction system is happening in two ways: the building of cultural prisons and Indigenous specific programs, as well as by those numbers that we talked about previously. The number of Indigenous people moving into the system is drastically increasing. For the past 30 years, carceral institutions across Canada have introduced measures like cultural specific programming to address the escalating over-representation of Indigenous peoples. These approaches were implemented with the intent to close the revolving door and lower the number of Indigenous peoples coming in Canada's federal system. Cultural programs and prisons are touted as sites where Indigenous women can begin their healing journey by being immersed in a cultural environment, guided and supported by elders, rooted in traditional Indigenous knowledges, values, and beliefs.[16] Figure 3 shows the Women's Healing Lodge in Southern Saskatchewan, Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge (OOHL).

[16] Correctional Service Canada. (1990). *Creating Choices: The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women*. https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/women/092/002002-0001-en.pdf

Figure 3

Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge

There are four healing lodges that were built on First Nations land, but they're run through Correctional Service Canada. Three are for men and one is for women. Again, this one is in Southern Saskatchewan at lower section of the middle part of the prairies on Nekaneet First Nation. In addition, there's six section 81[17] Healing Lodges. These Healing Lodges are facilities run by Indigenous communities through a service agreement with Correctional Service Canada. There's three for men and three for women and

[17] *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (S.C. 1992, c. 20)*. s81(1): "The Minister, or a person authorized by the Minister, may enter into an agreement with an Indigenous governing body or any Indigenous organization for the provision of correctional services to Indigenous offenders and for payment by the Minister, or by a person authorized by the Minister, in respect of the provision of those services."

they're spread across the country. Something that's interesting to note though is that section 81 facilities actually receive less than 50% of the funding that state-run facilities get. So, they're severely underfunded, yet they do the same things. There were 12 different communities trying to establish section 81s, and they were in negotiations with the federal government. All of these were terminated unilaterally at once in favour of an internal expansion within corrections. Part of that expansion included Indigenous-specific program modules such as modules that are for minimum, moderate, or high-risk program modules, and then units called Pathways. Some Indigenous individuals who are incarcerated have challenged the program modules by stating that Corrections simply put some dream catchers and feathers on the cover and called it Indigenous programming.[18] However, the content itself remains the same as much of the regular programming that takes place. Whereas Pathways are units or day programs within regular Correctional Service Canada institutions to provide healing and they're based on medicine wheel teachings.[19]

Often before you can transfer to a healing lodge, Indigenous individuals must take Indigenous specific programming or have been a part of Pathways in order to kind of filter down. Some researchers say that Indigenous specific programming is a positive and for this reason, it shouldn't be challenged at all.[20] It should be about what works for the individual. However, it's a very narrow, almost short-sighted perspective that ignores all of those intersecting factors that are rooted in settler colonialism that may play a significant role in

[18] Ewert, J. (2022). Taming the moose: The colonialism of Canada's subordinated Indigenous prisoner population in the 21st century. *Journal of Prisoners on Prison, 32*(2), 54-63.

[19] Correctional Service Canada. (2017). *The National Indigenous Plan*. https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/002/003/002003-0007-en.shtml

[20] Tetrault, J. E. C. (2023). Decolonizing prisons: Indigenized programming and a critique of critical prison studies. *Incarceration*, *4*.

someone's healing journey and pathway forward.

While cultural programming is broadly viewed by many as positive[21] – tensions remain, and there's an increased need to examine these programs using an ecological perspective. So, stepping back and looking at those intersecting factors grounded through settler colonial theory to allow us to reveal all of the things that might be impacting someone's journey while they're inside, but also when they get out. Regardless of whether Indigenous programming is a positive for individuals, there's still a need to analyze, critique, and challenge, because the institution itself is really rooted in settler colonialism. And as Dr. Caroline Tait once said, "Culture is not some program space or service that Indigenous peoples have to earn. It is an inherent right."[22]

Redefining Violence

We look at violence from a lens that shifts from violence within to the violence that the institution perpetuates onto Indigenous women in particular. While positive outcomes may occur, there's still the need to explore more deeply the implications of colonial programs on Indigenous women's successful rehabilitation and reintegration, but more importantly, healing.

In her piece, *Corporate Colonialism*, Elizabeth Comack[23] tells the story of the institutionalization of Indigenous peoples and it's backed by the lawful authority of the state. These institutions share in common the criminal offense of forcible confinement. Vicki Chartrand states that, through its policies, the institution essentially “erase[s] what would often be considered violence in any

[21] Tetrault, J.E.C. (2022). Indigenizing Prisons: A Canadian case study. *Crime & Justice, 51*(1), 187-236.
[22] C. Tait, personal communication, May 12, 2023.
[23] Comack, E. (2018). Corporate colonialism and the “crimes of the powerful” committed against the Indigenous peoples of Canada. *Critical Criminology*, *26*(4), 455-471.

other context"[24]. So, we become a little bit more curious about what this means for someone trying to heal inside the walls of the institution, but also again, that question of what is violence and who is perpetuating it onto whom?

Forms of Violence: Targeting Indigenous Women

In Canadian prisons, cultural programming is used as a tool to continue to control Indigenous life worlds – these make up cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization. Currently, Indigenous life worlds have been co-opted by CSC, where Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing get used as tools to punish or reward the individual. The institution is becoming increasingly punitive, including in cultural places and spaces and at the healing lodges. So, they are no exception. This is done because they deem cultural activities as risky. For example, at the Women's Healing Lodge, some of the ceremonies have been removed off of the direct site of the institution into community. This means to attend a sweat lodge in the community, you have to go through the approval process to be granted an absence depending on your risk rating. The process is kind of onerous, sometimes you don't know until right before ceremony is supposed to take place if you're allowed to go. In the meantime, you're trying to gather offerings and do all of this to prepare yourself, and you literally are left sitting in limbo. They have to prove why they should attend, however they transfer to the healing lodge, in part to engage in these types of ceremonies. In the process, we argue that that individual gets constructed as violent and problematic instead of the institution taking a moment to look inward to see the ways in which they're targeting Indigenous peoples and Indigenous women in particular. Cultural programming starts to get used as leverage to regulate behavior which, we argue,

[24] Chartrand, V. (2015). Landscapes of violence. Women and Canadian prisons. *Champ Pénal/Penal Field*, *12*.

again perpetuates and secures settler colonial futurities through a predominantly white middle-class workforce.

When ceremony is off-site, individuals, if they are granted a pass and allowed to attend, they're subjected to enhanced security screening measures such as strip searches upon their return. For Indigenous women who are incarcerated at the lodge in Southern Saskatchewan, this has become standard practice. The enhanced security measures reinforce the stereotypical tropes that Indigenous women are savages, even upon return from cultural ceremony. While saying they encourage healing, CSC undoes any good work through security screening measures. There's also tensions in that workers are considered above the law, particularly ceremonial law, while simultaneously being enforcers of state rules and regulations that violate those sacred laws.

In addition, CSC's rules push the responsibility to enact colonial violence onto the First Nations community itself because more than 25% of the workforce at OOHL is from the local community. So, these tensions make us reflect a little bit on Shiri Pasternak's[25] question, what is the difference between being above the law or an enforcer of the law if your role is to uphold a colonial legal order invented to justify dispossession? This could actually be interpreted as an escalation of violence perpetrated onto Indigenous women, in particular when you think of these spaces, this ceremonial space. So as a community-based researcher who stands in solidarity with Indigenous women who are, or have been, incarcerated, I feel it is absolutely essential that everyone hears directly from someone who has been there, because these are not my stories to tell.

[25] Pasternak, S. (2022). Canada is a bad company: Police as colonial mercenaries for state and capital. In S. Pasternak, K. Walby, & A. Stadnyk (Eds.), *Disarm, Defund, Dismantle: Police abolition in Canada* (pp.66-73). Toronto: Between the Lines.

I now hand this over to my dear friend, Chantel.

Realities on the Inside

Chantel: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Chantel. I'm 48-years old, and for the past 20 years I've been serving life on the installment plan. The perspective that I bring to this is one of lived experience, and so when they opened the first healing lodge here in Canada, it was for women who were minimum security to transfer over from P4W (Prison for Women). Saskatchewan Penitentiary was opened at that time. They had a woman's unit there and it was to transfer the women who really wanted transformation. So, we talk about rehabilitation – a lot of people talk about rehabilitation – but I like to talk about transformation, because rehabilitation is something that the institutions want from the women. Transformation is something that comes from within and I am living proof that you can transform in a federal penitentiary.

If we go back to the beginning of Alicia's presentation, she talked about Indigenous programming within the institution, and when I first started doing time and I started taking Indigenous-based programming, one thing that never changed within that programming was the programs. As the world evolved and changed, the programming within correctional services of Canada stayed the same.

I think the only thing that's different between the regular CSC programming and Indigenous programming is that you have the opportunity to attend ceremonies. There is an Elder sitting in those rooms within the institution who smudges and prays in the morning. If you have a breakdown or a breakthrough, it's somebody for you to speak to in a safe space. But let's not forget, when we go to these ceremonies, your behavior goes against you, your actions go against you. So, you're wanting transformation and you're being vulnerable in spaces that are of institutions – you go to

these ceremonies then when leaving you have to remove your clothes. Just imagine coming from a provincial institution to a federal penitentiary – and this is the way I always talk about strip searches – how many women coming to our systems, Indigenous women that have been raped, have experienced domestic violence, have been stripped of absolutely everything, especially their dignity and now we're entering an institution where strangers, once again, who we don't know, are removing our clothes from us and they're perpetuating the traumas. When we're sentenced over here in Canada, we're sentenced away from community? It's supposed to be a sentence away from community - not losing your human dignity.

You go through these levels of incarceration, whether you're in max or you are in the structured intervention units (SIU) or you're in general population, or you make your way over to the minimum security annex, there's always something dangling over you. You take part in these programs, and you take part in these ceremonies that are supposed to help you on this journey of transformation, and the correctional officers have this power over you to perpetuate trauma and perpetuate violence onto you.

Can you imagine leaving all excited, knowing that you get to go to a sweat lodge, or you get to go to a round dance out in community while you're incarcerated in a federal penitentiary, and you come back and you're lined up against the wall. Right after you put so much self-reflection and self-awareness into this healing journey and this transform-ation, and you're lined up against the wall and the dogs come up against you? Then, automatically, it's supposedly random searches which are generated through a computer. So, right after you've put mass amounts of healing into yourself, and you're stripped naked and you're supposed to be okay with that.

Over the years, I've spent time at the healing lodge for the women, and I've also spent time in other institutions within Canada where they've gone from focusing on transformation and healing and now it's a complete lockdown.

You have women in Canada who are saying they're Indigenous just to get that programming because if you go to the pathways units, you're offered programming that no other woman is offered in that institution. You can only get into pathways if you meet certain requirements, if you're at a certain security level and if you don't have breaches or you don't have write-ups against you in the offender management system. So, it's really hard from what used to be to what is now, to access these services within a federal penitentiary to get the help that you need to be on a transformative journey.

When I share, I talk about the last few months of my own incarceration this last time and I made it to the minimum security annex out in Edmonton Institute for Women. Within seven days, I could leave the institution. I was allowed to go out on my own, and I was also allowed to go out on escorted absences. But within those seven days, I had to come back. I had 13 strip searches. So, I'm at a point on my journey within federal penitentiaries and a healing journey, and it's supposed to be a safe space.

In Canada, if you identify as a female, there's males doing time in the female correctional facilities and federal penitentiaries. In the last sentence I served, the violence that I witnessed inside of those institutions, between the rapes, not feeling safe, and being strip-searched by correctional officers, all while I am trying to heal were perpetuated, repeatedly, repeatedly, repeatedly… When I got released back into the community, I wanted to be a voice for the other women who are still in there.

I'm now a community researcher for the Elizabeth Fry

Society in Saskatchewan[26] and I'm also a program manager for STR8 UP: 10,000 Little Steps to Healing[27] and I've been a member of that program for the past 10 years. So, my lived experience of where I'm at and what I've gone through allows me to go back into these institutions and work with the women if they haven't found their voice yet, because somewhere in there they do have a voice, to hold space for them to help them find that voice and find that healing.

When you're on the outside here, there's nothing dangling over you if you want to go to a round dance, or you want to go to a sweat lodge, or you want to partake in a letting go ceremony, or you want to sit in a talking circle and heal with other women, there's nothing being held over your head. But if I'm not following the ways that CSC wants me to act, and CSC wants me to speak, then I'm not allowed to participate in what is rightfully my way of life to participate in – it's taken away from us. It is the way that corrections over here in Canada just keeps taking and taking and taking and taking…

Now it's a reward. If you get to go to a sweat lodge, it's a reward for your behavior or your choices or your actions within that facility. I had to serve many years in prison; I had to go through all of this stuff, when I shouldn't have had to have found healing within the walls of a correctional facility or a federal penitentiary. I should have been sentenced to healing and community. I should have been sentenced to parenting classes. I should have been sentenced to a home. I should have been sentenced to spending time with elders. I should have been sentenced to everything I was sentenced to inside that institution, but I shouldn't have done it in a cage.
How do we over here find different ways to find healing for our women? Women are life-givers. Women are powerful. Without women, we

[26] www.elizabethfrysask.org
[27] www.str8-up.ca

have nothing. So, I believe that here in Canada, we need to look at different ways to find what women need to become successful in community. When we come together, we're more powerful and we have a stronger voice, and it takes somebody to speak out towards these injustices, and not in a negative way, but there's a way to advocate for women in institutions in a positive way that can make changes.

Unfortunately, I believe that I'll be long gone before any of these changes happen. I believe that it's only going to get worse based on the work that I'm doing within the federal system here in Canada. It's actually very, very sad. So that's all I got.

Discussion

Armon: Firstly, thank you both for characteristically rich and insightful korero, and particularly your words, Chantel, very confronting, obviously, to talk about these issues in that way that you talk about them. If we talk about violence differently, then maybe the response to violence needs to be similarly responded to in a different way. One of the things you talked about was the tensions between rehabilitation and transformation, which is another way of rethinking 'correction' to *liberation*. It's moving away from conformity to something more aspirational. A question from me… there's culture-as-lived, there's culture-as-reality and there's culture-as-relevant to people in the system, but then there's culture-as-*applied*, which I guess is the programming, the interventions, and those things that go on to become evaluated and so forth. How do we find that happy middle ground between what's valid from a community point of view and what's valid from an institutional point of view?

Chantel: I like to dream big, and I like to dream outside of the box. And so, I've approached a few people at national headquarters also within the facilities that I've done time

with, and you have people facilitating programs, which, as I said, have never changed over the years since I've been there. From what I hear from the women, the programming hasn't changed – I can recite you word-for-word the programming – you have the mainstream programming and you have the Indigenous-based programming. Every woman who comes in gets an intake. I'm not sure how it's done over there, but we get an intake after 90 days and we go through this massive process that takes five hours. From there, they determine your risk factors, what kind of programming you need to be in and what's mandatory before you can get released.
My programming has never changed. I've repeatedly taken it over and over and over, and by repetition you start to know it by heart. But what I think would be different, which I proposed to the institutions, is what if you had somebody facilitating that programming who actually lived through that, who actually took the program, who actually made it out of the institution, and who is being successful in life? Rather than somebody who trained to teach this programming, why not bring into facilities in Canada women who have lived the programming and are successful and are living proof that hard work, dedication, determination, and wanting to do that transformation from within. Have them teach that, whether it's a mentor paired with an elder and a facilitator programmer within the institutions.

I feel like over here, we have a lot of people making decisions who have never been in those cages. STR8 UP is the only program for gang members and street criminal lifestyle addicts wanting to leave the life in Canada, and we assist them in leaving that lifestyle. That program has worked for me. But then you have CSC coming in and saying, "Well, why don't we do this and why don't we do that?" And so, I finally said, "Hey, how many of you here sitting in this room have been in an iron cage?" And the room went silent. And I said, "Yeah,

exactly." I said, "Why don't you have somebody like me sitting at your tables while you're making decisions about my life?" – and when I say 'me', I mean the women that you're making decisions for. You have no idea what it's like to be in that institution. You get to go home every night. We have to stay there. That is our home, that is our community, that is our culture, and we make it what we need it to be to survive in there. So why not bring in the lived experience voices, and the people who have lived through it, survived it and are doing good to help the others out of those institutions?

But no, I'm a bad person – that label's placed upon me because I made bad choices. Meanwhile, what the women and the men bring to the table is so powerful because once you transform and you can transfer and flip that switch of how you think, our skills are phenomenal, top-notch. I might not be the greatest with technology or whatever, but those are the hard skills that one can learn. Why not bring in people who have lived and survived institutions? You're going to build relationality in those spaces with somebody who has made it *out* of those spaces. Let's give them a hand and lift them up. But CSC always seems to be pushing us down – but that's how it was meant to be, right? Just like the Child Family Services out here, corrections out here were made to oppress people. It's not a broken system. Our systems are set up to be exactly what they were meant to be – to keep oppressing us, to make us reliant on them, to keep us in there.

Alicia: Besides bringing lived experience in, I think there are tensions overall, like I mentioned with corrections hiring practices because the knowledge keepers or elders who are in the facility may not necessarily be ones in their own communities, right? It's because they met the checkboxes and filled out the application and went through the process that they have become a knowledge keeper

elder. I remember speaking with a CSC worker from Grand Valley Institute for Women. She was like, "but we can't keep elders. We don't know what's going on." And I said, "Have you actually even gone to the local community and had a conversation and built a relationship? What's your application process?" And she said, "Well, they have to go to the website, do this, do that." I was shocked that they hadn't even considered the fact of going to build the relationship with community. Something that I know I would love to explore, and others would love to explore, is what is the impact of having these institutions within communities? What is the impact on community? What is the impact on the workers? Because there's actual workplace violence then too; You then have community perpetuating these policies and enacting violence on sometimes their own people. So, I think there are definite tensions. But anytime I've talked to a worker about hiring practices, the way (or if) they even foster relationships, it's like I'm speaking a totally different language.

Chantel: If you think about a lot of the elders that I've worked with on my journey within institution, they're gone. They left because CSC tried to pin them down and hold them down and conform them to those check boxes of CSC. And if you think outside the box, then the elders are getting…

Alicia: … They're punished.

Chantel: There you go perpetuating the same traumas, the same violence, the same everything that was happening to us within community when we were using [substances] or in the gang life. How is that transformative? How is that anything close to rehabilitation? It's just a different community and the same thing's happening.

THE SOURCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON VIOLENCE

NANCY RODRIGUEZ

The study of violence is part of our larger understanding of the mass incarceration here in the US. There are over a million people who are incarcerated in over 1,000 prisons throughout the US. Estimates tell us that violence is overwhelmingly touching a significant portion of them. Now, this, of course, is important because over 90% will leave prison and enter our communities, and we know that violence or engaging in persistent violence can certainly impede and challenge that reentry process as well as impact the health and behavioural outcomes of both incarcerated persons and staff.

We all know that there are many challenges associated with studying violence. Here in the US, there are many. Let me begin by noting that the prevalence of violence here in the US is unknown. We don't have a national measure. We don't have a uniform definition of violence across our state and federal systems, which makes it challenging to even begin to get a sense of the scope of the problem. We know that access for researchers is often limited and not easy to navigate. We refer to this as a kind of black box within corrections. There are discrepancies between official records and self-report studies that try to tap into violence, so again, leaving researchers and policymakers often in the dark.

The Prison Violence Consortium

After serving under the Obama administration, I was motivated to do something that I felt could advance this work. I reached out to seven state

correctional systems[28] and I asked the directors, or commissioners, or superintendents of those systems if they would be willing to embark in a pretty unprecedented deep dive into the drivers and the consequences of violence. I was, quite frankly, expecting maybe one or two of these officials to say yes. When all seven agreed, we knew that we were going to do something that would allow us to look at the variations of violence across very different jurisdictions and give us what we thought would be extensive insight into how best to reduce and prevent violence.

The objectives were simple: We wanted to identify what drives, or what are the sources and what are the impacts of violence both for the incarcerated population and staff. We relied on multiple strategies to conduct this work across our seven states. There were five different strategies (see Table 1).

We wanted to rely on administrative data. Most often researchers rely on disciplinary records or infractions referred to as misconduct tickets. We also wanted to rely on incident reports that could maybe provide situational context, those circumstances under which violence takes place. We knew we needed to interview those directly engaged and involved in violence. We set out to interview random samples of

Table 1

Prison Violence Consortium Research Strategies

Strategy	Approaches
1	Administrative Data: Guilty Violent Infractions (i.e., Misconduct)
2	Administrative Data: Incident Reports
3a	Self-Reported Data: Interviews with Men Involved in Violence
3b	Self-Reported Data: Interviews with Staff Involved in Violence
4	Interviews with Institutional Professionals
5	Systematic Reviews of (1) Definitions and (2) De-Escalation Training

[28] Arizona, Colorado, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

men involved in violence who were perpetrating violence among incarcerated populations as well as staff who had been targeted for violence. We wanted to tap into the leadership and management of these institutions, those responsible for responding and preventing violence. This also included behavioural health specialists, which we felt was going to give us an important insight. Last but not least, we wanted to review the definitions and the classifications of violence along with the training that staff are afforded in their responses to violence.

Defining *Violence*

Let me begin by conveying the complexity, shall I say, in defining violence. I just wanted to share with you that spectrum of how states vary in how they define violence and what it means for those of us trying to get an indicator of prevalence. As seen in Table 2, some of our states have very general categories.

Table 2

Assault Definitions (Physical Altercation, Biohazards, Fights) Comparison in OR, PA and TX

Oregon	1. Staff Assault I 2. Staff Assault II 3. Inmate Assault I 4. Inmate Assault II 5. Inmate Assault III
Pennsylvania	1. Assault 2. Aggravated assault 3. Fighting
Texas	1. Assault with a weapon (serious injury)
	2. Assault without a weapon (serious injury)
	3. Assault with a weapon (non-serious injury)
	4. Assault without a weapon (non-serious injury) [victim is clearly identified as a non-participant]
	5. Fighting without a weapon (non-serious injury) [no distinction regarding victim role] 6. Assault of non-offender without a weapon (serious injury)
	7. Assault of non-offender with a weapon (non-serious injury)
	8. Assault of non-offender without a weapon (non-serious injury)
	9. Assault of non-offender with a weapon (non-serious injury)
	10. Exposure to bodily fluids

In Pennsylvania, you'll see that there are three classifications of violence: assaults, aggravated assaults, and fights, not even a distinction on who that target is, whether it's staff or incarcerated populations. In Oregon, maybe degrees of classification, right? There is differentiation between staff and incarcerated population assaults, but no mention of fights. Then we have Texas that has more particular classifications for that violence. I wanted to provide this context for you because it gives us a deeper appreciation for the need for a uniform definition or classification of violence, which we currently do not have in the US.

Key Findings: Prisoners

What I want to do is highlight a few of the findings from each of our different strategies. We have an array of findings and data, but for this audience, I thought it would be good to just present to you some of those key findings that I think are noteworthy. So here, I'm going to share some findings that come from our administrative guilty violent infractions or those misconduct records across six of our states. One of our states, the data did not lend itself for a thorough review of the guilty infraction data. So, this is from six of our states, and over 1.4 million records of people in these six states.

First, I would argue that the majority of violence committed in these institutions is committed by a small proportion of individuals. In fact, we found that among about 10% of the population in these states, they were responsible for more than half (52%) of these guilty violent infractions. It's important to know these are guilty violent infractions, not necessarily incidences of violence. But again, when we look at how systems are responding, it is a small proportion of people who appear to be perpetrators of violence.

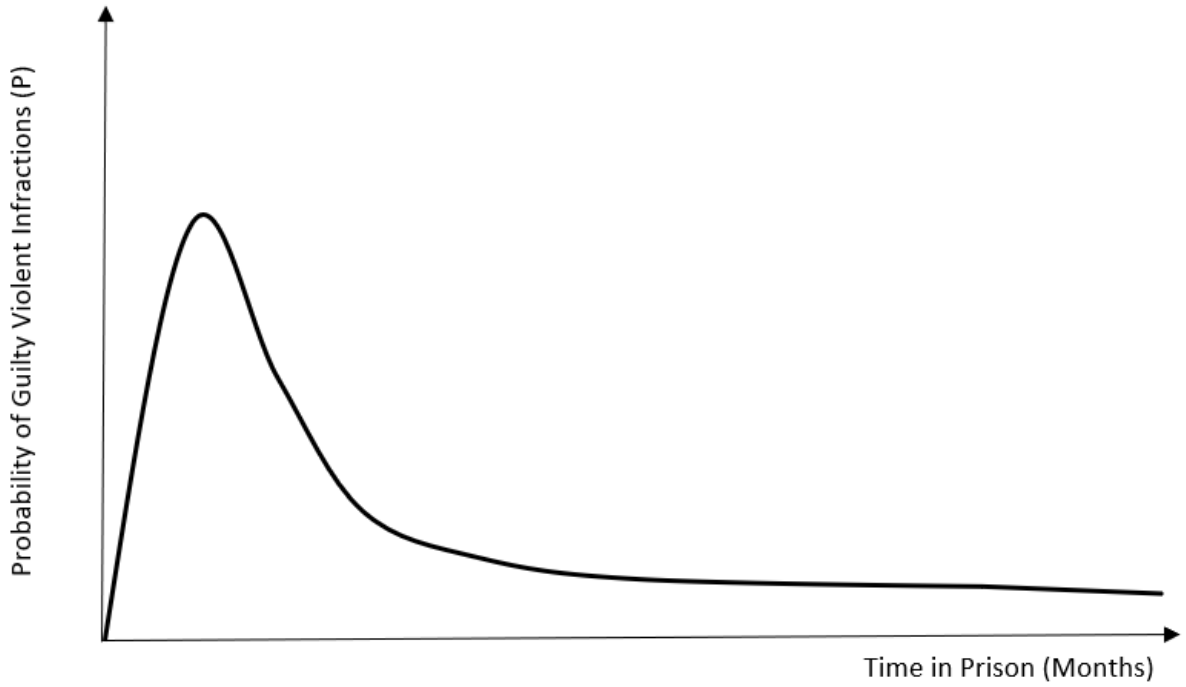
What we also found is that the timing of violence actually happens very early in

someone's admission into prison (see Figure 1). The vast majority of incidences of violence happened between six to twelve months of someone's admission. There's some variation across our states. But again, for us, we felt that this was also important in allowing us to maybe hone in on when prevention of violence can happen.

In terms of some of the characteristics that are associated with guilty violent infractions, we found that people with serious mental health needs, lower educational attainments, those involved in gangs, violent criminal histories, and those serving longer sentences as well as young people entering prison had the higher propensity for these guilty violent infractions once we looked at the data from these records themselves. We also found, and we were able to obviously look at this, people who are repeatedly engaged in violence, and those individuals, we found, had experienced a significant number of movements in housing. They

Figure 1

Timing of Guilty Violent Infractions

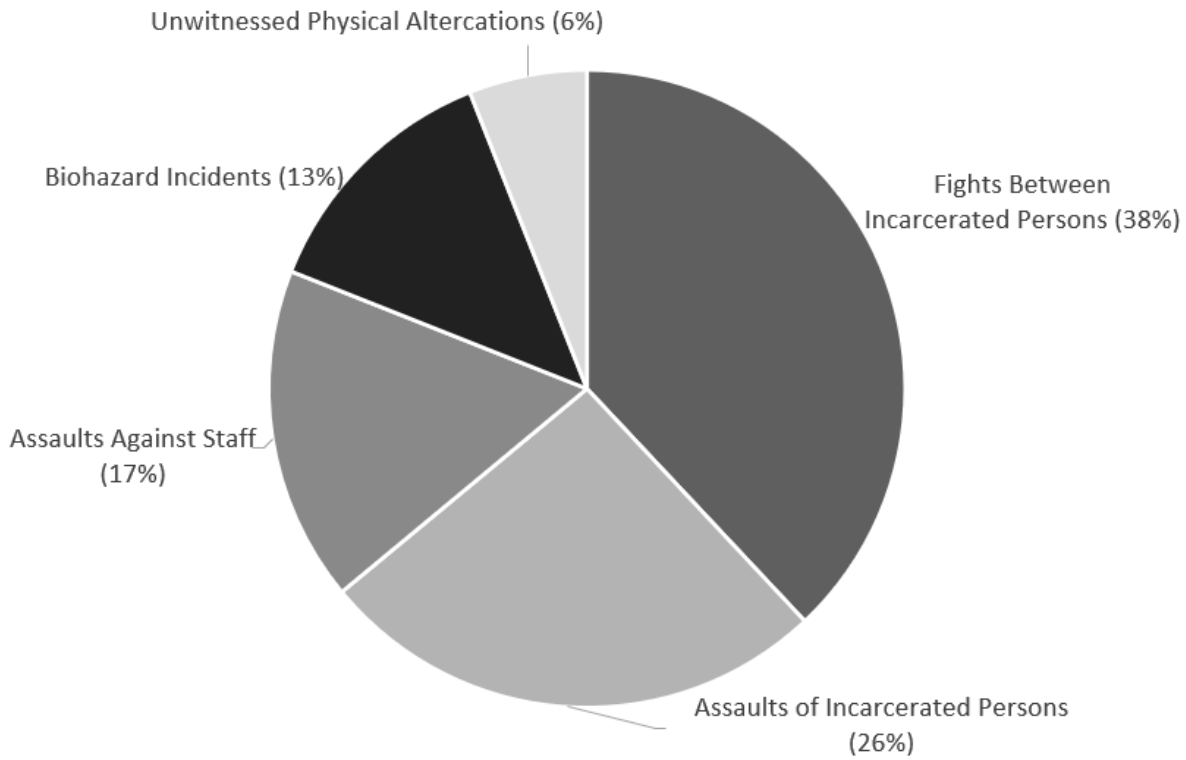


were also involved in more critical incidences that required staff resources and time. They were certainly involved in far more treatment programs, which we thought was interesting, maybe an attempt by these systems to provide interventions and provide particular forms of programming. We also found that people who had these multiple violent guilty infractions had experienced both short and long-term stints in restrictive housing or solitary confinement.

Now, as I noted, we had the opportunity to also review incident reports. We felt that this would nicely complement our guilty violent infraction information because here, we would be able to actually see what officials are documenting about those circumstances surrounding the violence, information that is often not available in our administrative guilty infraction data. Within each of our states, we were able to review a random sample of incident reports. We ended up taking a random

Figure 2

Nature of Prison Violence in Incident Reports



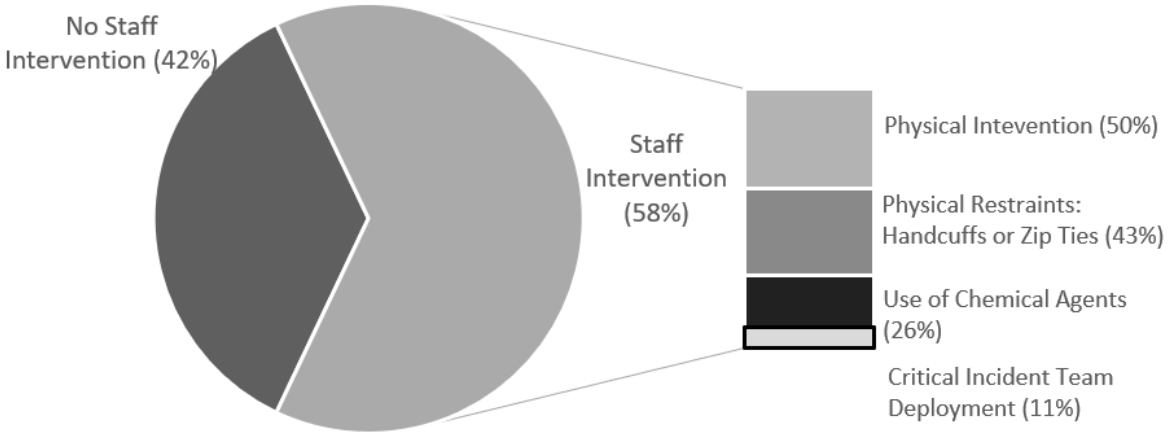
sample of 25% of incident reports in 2019 (in AZ, CO, MA, PA, and TX; full sample in OR and OH) and conducted extensive uniform coding scheme across our states. This resulted in nearly 2,500 incident reports that we reviewed (see figure 2). What we found were several characteristics that are similar to our guilty violent infraction data metrics and some that are different. We found that about two-thirds of the violence reported in these incident reports involved incarcerated persons, whether it be fights or assaults, and about 30% involved staff.

The overwhelming majority of biohazard incidences were certainly directed towards staff, but not all of them. Interestingly, we did have incident reports where there was no mention of who were the perpetrators or victims: There was only a mention of a person who had injuries. And so, it was unclear, again, what actually transpired in those particular incidences. Most of the fights and assaults in our incident report data were committed by men. A larger proportion actually took place in medium-level custody facilities, but certainly, over a third were in maximum or close custody. About 39% took place in housing areas or within cells specifically identified within our incident reports. A significant number, 75%, actually led to a medical evaluation, and about 16% actually received on-site medical services (i.e., an evaluation, very different from actually receiving services). About 13% actually were taken off-site, given the severity of those incidences.

When we looked at the responses, again, noted within the incident reports, we found that in nearly 60%, there was some noted staff intervention (Figure 3). So here, a physical intervention or physical restraints were used maybe OC spray or a critical incident team deployed to intervene in this particular incident. As you see here, in 42% of these incident reports, there was no staff intervention whatsoever. The violence had ceased. There was

Figure 3

Staff Intervention in Prison Violence



no need to actually intervene physically within those.

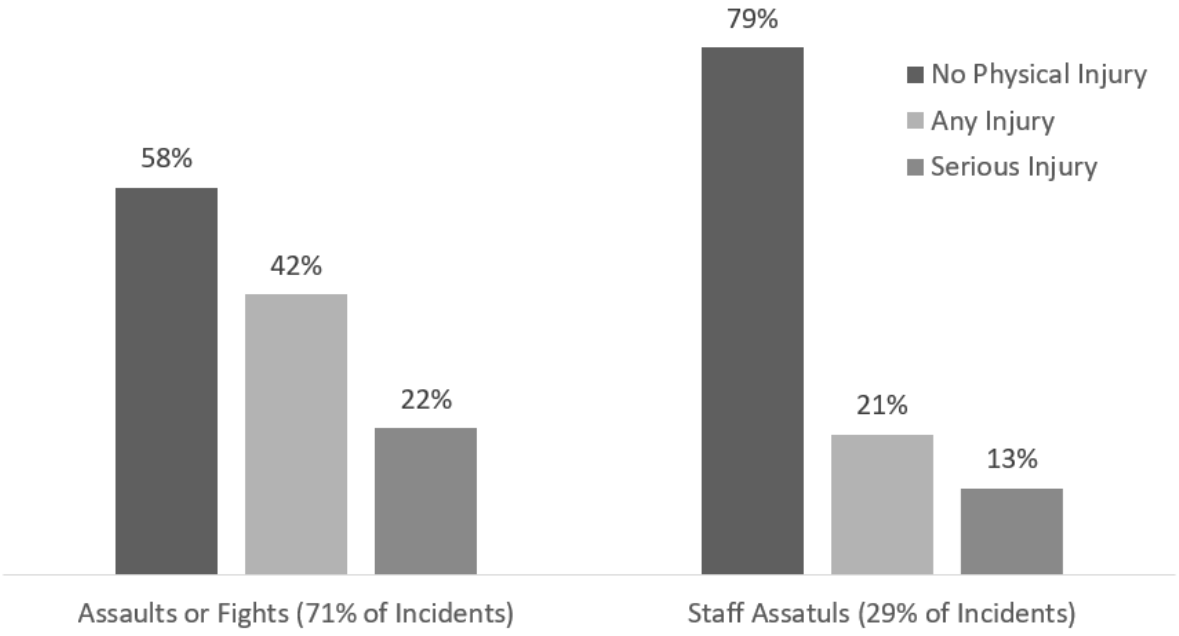
We captured other system responses to the incidences of violence. For example, we found that in about 50% of the incident reports, there's some mention of a disciplinary action following the incident reports. We also found that in about 60% of these incident reports, the staff intervention involved some kind of movement of the person and actually noted that the individuals were moved either to a different unit, different area, including solitary confinement.

We were able to capture the physical injuries as documented in these incident reports. What

we found is that about 36% of these incidences noted physical injuries (see Figure 4). You see those separated among those staff assaults and those that involve assaults or fights among incarcerated people, with 20% resulted on average in some sort of serious physical injuries (e.g., lacerations, head or bodily injuries).

Figure 4

Violence Resulting in Injury



Now, we were able to run multi-level analyses to try to identify those correlates of serious injuries. And what we found is that interestingly, assaults led to more serious injuries than fights. So was violence among men. Violence in cells more often led to serious injuries. Not surprisingly, so were those that involved a weapon. Interestingly, those where there was only one person identified or listed in the incident reports, indicating those incidents that were not seen and there was no other information available, tends to result in serious injuries.

Although I can certainly say that the incident report data offer additional supplemental information that is not provided in our disciplinary guilty infraction data, it is important to note that the reporting across our states was, at times, inconsistent. Incident reports had missing information. For example, documenting those individuals who were targeted was important because those would be the individuals we would classify as victims of violence.

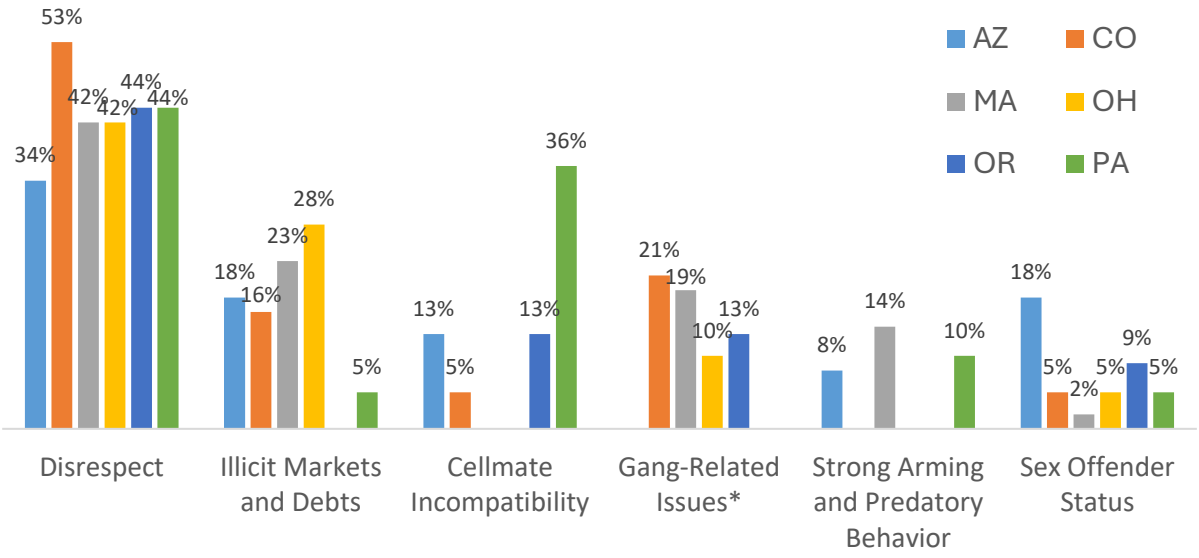
Though someone specifically being targeted was mentioned in about 60% of the reports, weapons were mentioned in about 10%. Less than 3% of our incident reports had some noted information on contraband. The reason or the circumstances that led to the violence were only reported in 25% of the incident reports. We can't convey, given our information, whether this is because at the time that the report was written, this was all the information that states had or whether this was a lack of reporting by those officials documenting this information or maybe both.

So let me now move to the other strategy that we were able to utilize: hearing from those who are directly engaged in violence could provide additional insight. Here, we decided we wanted to take a random sample of incarcerated men who had experienced an incident of violence. We wanted to cover the multiple states and do so in ways that would afford us the opportunity to better understand why violence takes place. These are the findings from six of our states (Figure 5).

In one of our states, we are still collecting data and analyzing

Figure 5

Primary Reasons for Violence



that state. So, each of the bars represents a state. When we asked individuals about the primary reason why violence unfolded, six primary reasons emerged. The first one, disrespect. Individuals conveyed to us that it was disrespect due to perceived violations of subcultural or group norms, personal disputes, maybe feeling like they were slighted, slight during work or recreation, as well as feeling that maybe someone was being disrespected, an encounter with someone maybe who was having a mental health episode and they were frustrated in that interaction, as well as feeling disrespected and engaging with someone who's maybe intoxicated or under the influence. And that conduct by that individual under the influence was a reason that maybe they were targeted.

Illicit markets and drug debts were another primary drive. Disputes or disruptions in the functioning of markets were reasons for violence, and, of course, unpaid debts by individuals. And violence was used as a form of punishment for those who were failing to pay their debts. Cellmate incompatibility was also noted as a reason here. Conflicts over the refusal just to live with someone the minute that they are being brought into the cell, or growing tensions over space and resources as well as conflicts in social statuses. Gang-related issues: Both inter and intra gang disputes were noted as reasons. Strong-arming and predatory behaviour by some individuals was a drive for violence. And lastly, the targeting of people who are sex offenders was also noted as a reason.

Role in incident. There is quite a variation in the primary reasons for violence across our states, and we're certainly sensitive to just noting an average for particular measures. I've just presented the ranges of some of these metrics that we collected during our interviews. We asked individuals their role in the incident. We avoided using terms like ‘perpetrator’ and

'victim'. We asked them who made the first move and how did that come about. There was quite a difference in whether people themselves made the first move, or the first move was made against them (33% – 70%).

Location. Some incidents occurred in cells (13% – 46%). That seemed to be the primary location of violence. Individuals indicated certainly planning and trying to avoid detection to varying degrees. Interestingly, they know that these incidents, at the time, were witnessed by cameras, including staff. The need for medical intervention also varied, both for the person who was interviewed and the other individual who was engaged in this particular focal incident of violence.

Involvement. We asked them about their involvement in other incidents of violence. A surprisingly significant number (83%) reported being involved in at least one incident that was unknown or unreported to staff. On average, 47% noted that there was an incident that was actually known and reported but never written-up by staff. This was pretty consistent across these six states.

***Impact*.** Between 38% and 65% of the men we interviewed indicated that the focal incident that we interviewed them about changed how they do time. This meant that either they had become completely withdrawn and socially isolated and were avoiding programming or recreational areas, as well as these hypervigilant feelings and behaviour and feeling they could not necessarily trust other people. For those who indicated it had no impact in how they do their time, they talked extensively about the highly normalized nature of violence, and at times, even struggled in describing that physical violent act as violence. They didn't see it as such. They saw it as just part of doing time, and prisons were, inherently dangerous spaces.

We tapped into the mental health impacts immediately

following the focal incident. As you can see in Figure 6, across our states, high levels of depression after the incident, trouble sleeping, anxiety, panic attacks as well as self-harm and suicide ideation.

Key Findings: Staff

We were also interested in hearing from staff. We set out to conduct interviews with a random sample of correctional officers who had been involved in a staff assault here in 2021. That was the year that we randomly identified these incidents – this was probably one of the most challenging aspects just because of the significant staff shortages that we are experiencing in the US. Staff would agree to participate in our interview, but then were completely unavailable, given the work demands. Ultimately, we were able to interview 50 correction officers and conduct in-depth interviews with them about their particular form of this focal incident of violence. We used a scale reflecting how often violence happens (often, sometimes, rarely, never). Figure 7 shows the 'often' responses.

Figure 6

Mental Health Challenges after Violence

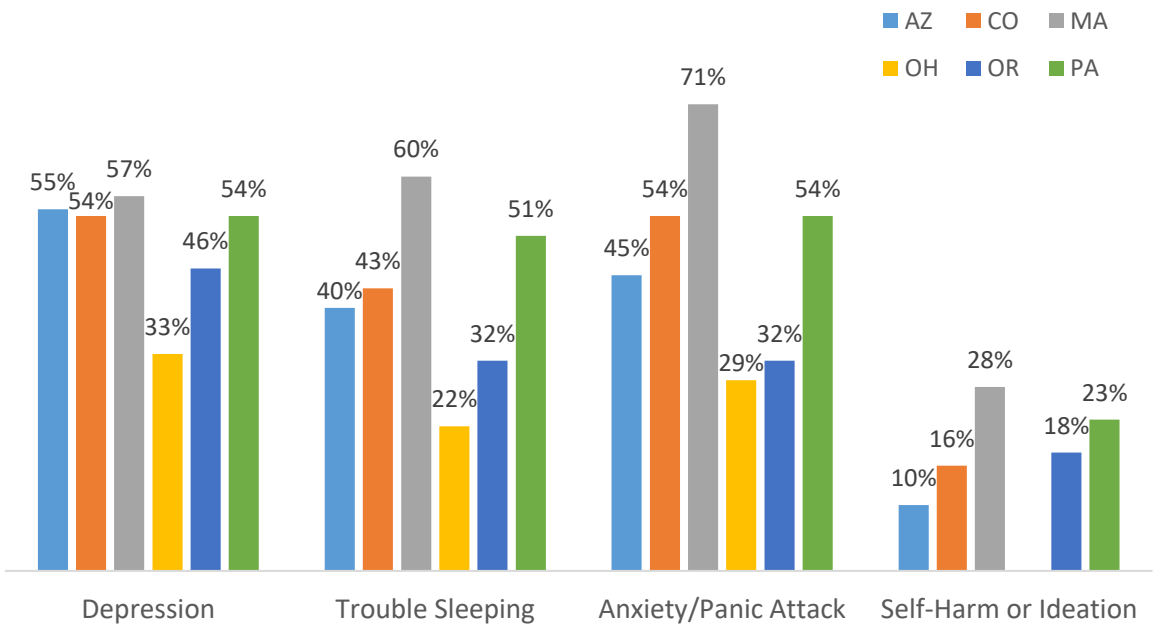
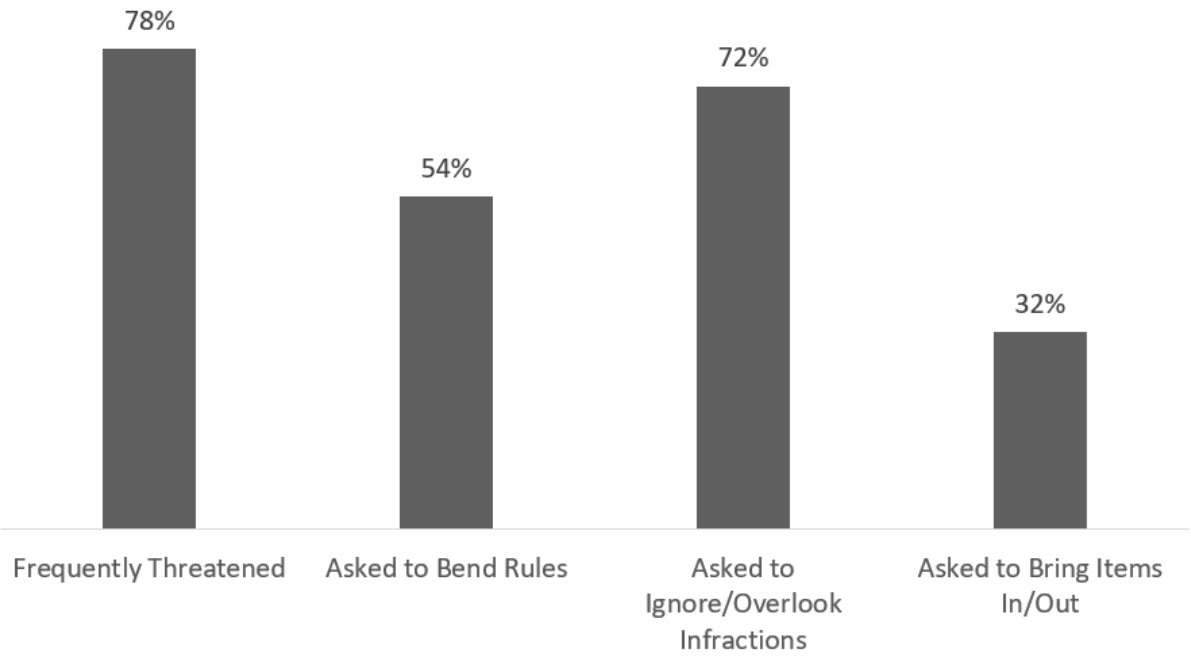


Figure 7

Threats of Violence and Attempts to Compromise Institutional Professionals

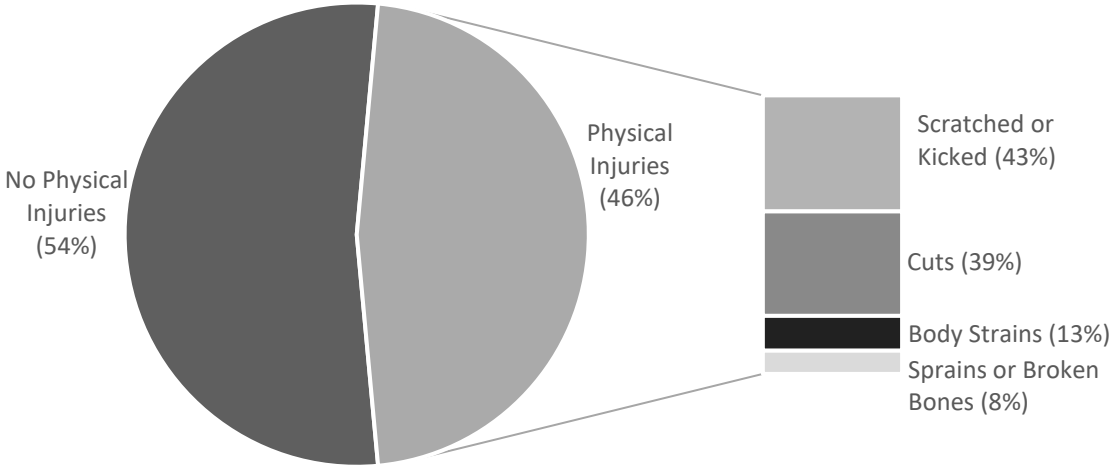


78% of these interviewed staff indicated that violence happens often. They were often asked by incarcerated people to bend the rules. They were asked to ignore or overlook infractions. And a third of these staff also reported being asked by the incarcerated population to bring items in or outside of the prison facility.

Impact. We asked about the extent of physical injuries that they sustained in these assaults, and 46% of these staff indicated experiencing an injury, and here, to varying degrees of severity (see Figure 8). The majority of these staff indicated that there was no physical injury. Like the incarcerated population, many of them did not perceive even the injuries themselves as violence. Tapping into the nature of the injuries was, at times, difficult because they didn't see it as such. Even though we had an incident report that described some kind of injury, they would say, "Yeah, if you think about it, and I guess that is violence."

Figure 8

Staff Injuries Resulting from Physical Assaults



Directed violence. We asked the staff what led to the violent assault towards them, and staff reported either being direct targets of violence or non-direct targets. When they were direct targets, this was often due to communication escalating. So, for example, incarcerated people either refused particular orders or directives by staff and that escalated. Incarcerated people would ask staff for something like, "May I go use the telephone," or "I'm waiting for mail or correspondence. Can you check in?" And maybe staff are not being responsive to them, those incidences escalated into violence. Some staff indicated that they were assaulted because incarcerated people were looking to gain or increase their status within prison. Certainly, assaulting a staff member would be perceived as someone of higher status. The last direct target circumstance involved food tray incidents where incarcerated people would push their food trays or project bodily fluids outside of the slots.

Non-directed violence. The non-direct targets actually align with the primary reasons that the incarcerated people tell us

the reasons violence unfolds. People were intoxicated and there had to be a separation, individuals having mental health episodes and there was some kind of combative incident, cellmate conflicts, or the particularly targeting of sex offenders when they were housed in general population areas.

Staff themselves also indicated that violence happens often: 82% indicated that they had experienced another assault. More than half had experienced five or more incidences of violence, and nearly all of them indicated that they had seen a fellow colleague be assaulted within the past two years. They described significant mental health impacts as well, like the incarcerated population. Interestingly, the staff reported feeling like they had support from their peers, given, again, these incidences, far more than the administration.

Key Findings: Institutional Leaders

Policies/Processes. We had the opportunity to interview correctional leaders as well as behavioral health specialists in our facilities to tap into what is working, what is not, what are some of those gaps. We learned a lot from these individuals, given, again, their position and their experience working in these prisons. For the most part, these officials believe that the classification and disciplinary policies and procedures and even use of force policies were actually effective in reducing violence. However, there were mixed perspectives on how effective protective custody and the use of incentives in prisons really were. Protective custody was seen as a concern, given the fact that it requires a lot of staff movement, which makes staff unavailable. Given shortages, it's difficult to certainly navigate where staff need to be, but also the concern that maybe some individuals are using violence as a way to remove themselves from the general population and looking

maybe for single cell housing or maybe looking to just avoid debt. Incentives were seen as one way to reduce violence overall, but they indicated that there often isn't enough incentives for the incarcerated population.

Specialized Populations. The management of specialized population here also received varied responses on their effectiveness. Whether it's gang populations, sex offenders, and those with mental health needs, these officials spoke at length about the challenges in managing them and how, again, these are certainly drivers of violence. Significant challenges conveyed in how security operations engages with behavioral health staff across all of our states, very different sectors with very different disciplinary perspectives, and often at odds in whether violence is a behavioral problem or a mental health problem.

Technology. Our institutional professionals also had varied perspectives on the use of technology. Many of our states are implementing body-worn cameras and some felt that it could certainly be a tool to reduce use of force, for example, among staff, but not necessarily sure they would be able to reduce violence among the incarcerated population. Many of the correctional systems are also implementing tablets as a way to provide more cost-effective communication strategies for the incarcerated population with loved ones as well as the infusion of programming and educational resources for incarcerated people within tablets. Again, they felt that there was just simply often not enough programming to make that difference.

Training. Overwhelmingly, our professionals indicated that staff need far more training in the handling of violence. This was really coupled with a multi-generational workforce which means that we have new people coming in with very different skill sets from tenured staff, which can create tension

and confusion around the priorities and the implementation of policies.

Wellbeing. Our professionals also indicated that certainly violence can impact the well-being of staff. They noted that there's often a lack of work-life balance, that there was insufficient mental health resources to help staff, the increase in stress and paranoia, and they were often desensitized to violence and had feelings of powerlessness, given the lack of support.

From our extensive content analyses of the training material, we were really interested in getting a sense of how staff are trained and what they are provided to reduce violence. What we found is that on average, staff receive about 260 hours of training, and that about 14% of that time is actually dedicated towards de-escalation. I should note that doesn't mean that communication and effective communication is not covered in these other modes of training. But to us, it certainly signals an opportunity to really think about how to better engage staff for the incarcerated population.

Conclusion

So ultimately, our work, we feel, provides insight into several policy and practice recommendations across all of our states. We certainly had specific recommendations for specific states, but the utilization of dynamic risk assessments to really identify that high-risk individual who's likely to engage in violence repeatedly and over time created different trajectory analyses to be able to help the states identify this. We feel that that is really a resource. We feel that there's certainly room to enhance how housing decisions are made, given the importance of cellmate compatibility. Of course, there is a need for de-escalation and more effective training for all staff. Increasing the interface and synergies between operations and behavioural health specialists can lead to more responsive ways to reduce violence. There is a

need for improving the data collection of violence across our states (and how to handle missing information). We ultimately hope that we can shift the culture in how violence is viewed and addressed within these states[29].

[29] For further information, the reader is directed to the following policy briefs: *The Dark Figure of Prison Violence: A Multi-Strategy Approach to Uncovering the Prevalence of Prison Violence* (Butler et al, December 2024) and *Sources and Consequences of Prison Violence: Key Findings and Recommendations from the Prison Violence Consortium* (Rodriguez et al, December 2024); Both are available at the School of Social Ecology, UC Irvine (https://socialecology.uci.edu/news/policy-briefs-present-approach-understanding-prison-violence).

VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION IN WOMEN'S PRISONS

KIM SMITH, KYM GRIERSON, JACKY HOWCUTT & RENEE CLARKSON

The Women's Prison Network is relatively new to the Department of Corrections and has only been in effect since April 2024. We are a new network, and we are learning and growing along the way. We are excited to be able to present here today and talk through the differences of working as a Women's Network, the learnings that we can take across the broader male and female network, and to talk through what violence and aggression looks like in this space. The team's role really is to consider policy and practice in our organisation, and make sure that we have a gender lens across everything, which includes our environment, our services, and our policies. It's quite a big area that we're across.

Before we begin, we will assume that people do not know what the make-up is of women's prisons in New Zealand. We're going to be running through some stats and then we are going to focus more heavily on what we are doing in response to violence and aggression within the Women's Prison network.

For people's general awareness, we have 17 (+1) custodial sites within New Zealand. The '+1' is Auckland South Correctional Facility, which is privately run, and we have three women's prisons: Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility, Arohata (in Wellington), and Christchurch Women's Prison.

Starting with some statistics (Table 1). We're mindful that

Table 1

Women in Prison Statistics

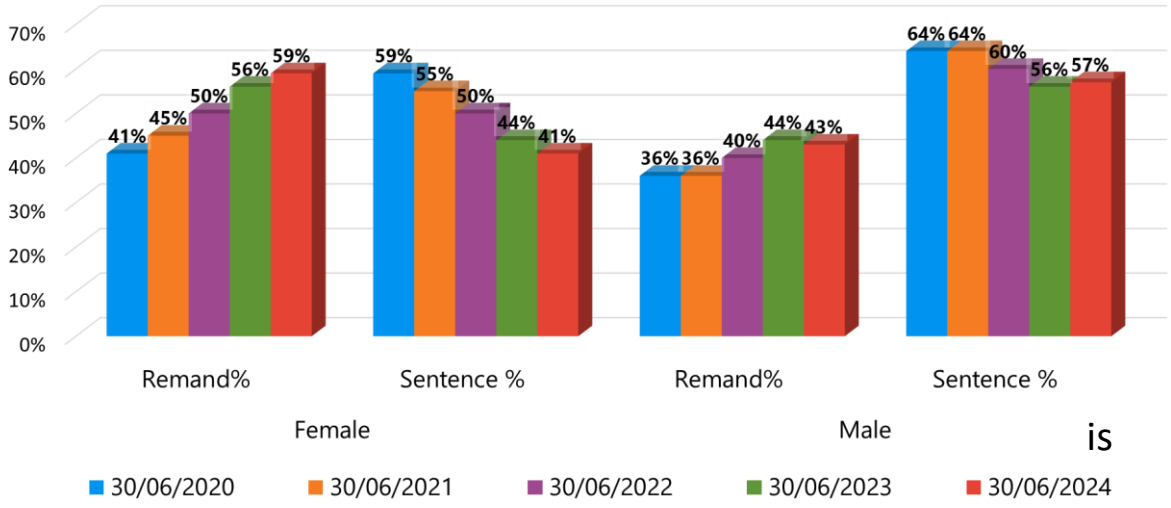
75% of women in prison have had a diagnosed mental health problem in the last 12 months.
46% of women in prison have lifetime alcohol dependence
52% of women in prison have suffered PTSD across their lifetime
44% of women in prison have experienced drug dependence disorders across their lifetime.
68% of women in prison have been the victim of family violence.
62% of women in prison have had both (co-morbid) mental health and substance disorders across their lifetime

these are from 2016 and are using these because they are in our current iteration of the Women's strategy. Since 2016 things have changed a little bit and so these may not be all accurate, but it does give you a good idea of what the women in our system have been through, or experienced.

Currently within our prison network there are approximately 9,277 men – and I say that "approximately" because that can change daily, depending upon if people are going out for court appearances or they might be in other facilities off site from the prison network. In comparison, we have 693 women within the prison network, as of today. There are a couple of interesting points to note that you'll see that these graphs represent. In Figure 1, you will be able to see that the remand population for women is

Figure 1

Remanded and Sentenced (by Gender); 2020-2024



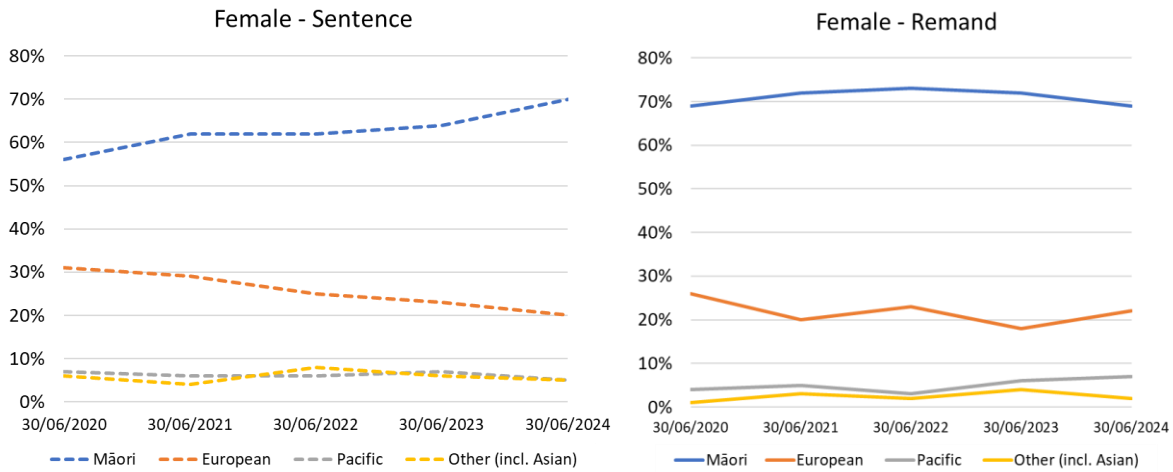
much higher than the sentenced population, and this has been the case for at least the past five years. You will also see that the remand population is much higher than what it is for the men's network.

Because of that high remand population, a number of those women who are released from custody will be released time served, because of the time spent within the prison. So key points to note here is the higher remand population in the women's compared to the male network, and the higher remand status compared to the sentenced status in the women's network.

In Figure 2, you will see the sentencing trends over the last four years. This shows that the number of remand women is where it was five years ago, but we now have more women on remand than we do on sentence. While the curve suggests it's going down, it tends to be a bit of an up and down trajectory across time. Of interest is the uncertainty that comes for women in the remand space, and what that can lead to regarding mental health, anxiety and depression. So, addressing the needs of our remand population requires a focused effort to provide screening of their needs, access to health and mental health care, substance abuse

Figure 2

Sentencing Trends; 2020-2024



treatment, and other immediate reintegration support services that can help with the pressures and the uncertainties that the women face.

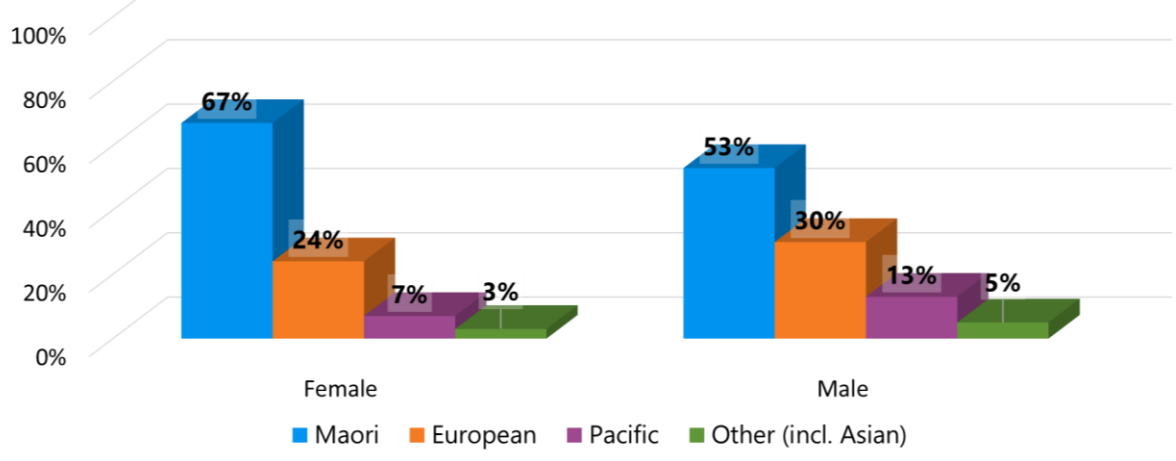
Recently at Christchurch Women's Prison, we completed Te Mana Wāhine Pathway pilot, which involved a number of interventions with a cultural lens. We're now exploring learnings from that pathway and across the wider Māori pathways so that we can continue to understand how we can address the over-representation of Māori, which is evident within our wider system.

As shown in Figure 3, 67% of women in prison are Māori, whereas 53% of men in prison are Māori. It is quite a big difference and that is quite worrying. It is also one of the reasons why the Women's Strategy was created in the first place to see how we can address the over represent-ation of wāhine Māori.

The Women's Strategy was designed to ensure that there is a gender-informed, culturally responsive and trauma informed approach to the work that the Department does in how we support women. And as I said before, this includes our environments, our policies, processes, services, and programs, and it recognises the

Figure 3

Prisoners: Ethnicity by Gender



high representation of Māori women in our system and aims to reduce this.

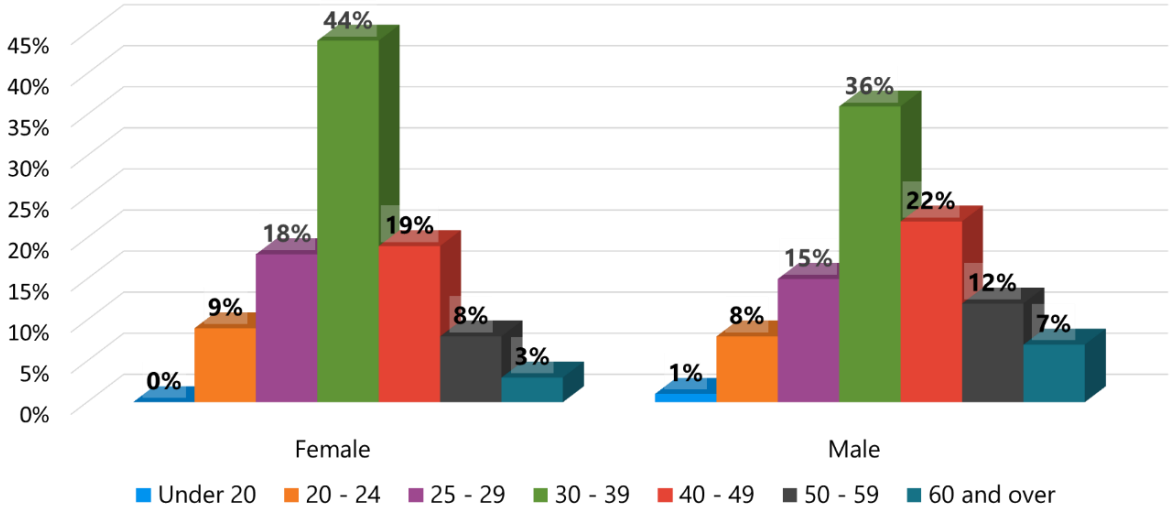
The Women's Strategy is in line with other international trends, and our team is in charge of researching that and keeping abreast of what's happening around the world, and making sure that we don't apply a one-size-fits-all approach to our work. The other strategy that you would have perhaps heard quite a bit about is our *Hōkai Rangi* strategy, which is our overarching strategy for the organisation. At its heart is well-being, which expresses our commitment to delivering outcomes for and with Māori, so that we can begin to address this over-representation of Māori in the corrections system.

You'll notice in Figure 4 that there are zero women in prison under 20 years old. When we do get somebody under 20, our youth team look at what the best way to support them is. It is probably also important to note that it is a bit like comparing apples with oranges when you've got a percentage so different between men and women.

Figure 5 shows index offenses by gender. As you can see, there are similarities with the male network. But please note

Figure 4

Prisoners: Age Group by Gender



the differences in population sizes. (693 female vs. 9277 male).

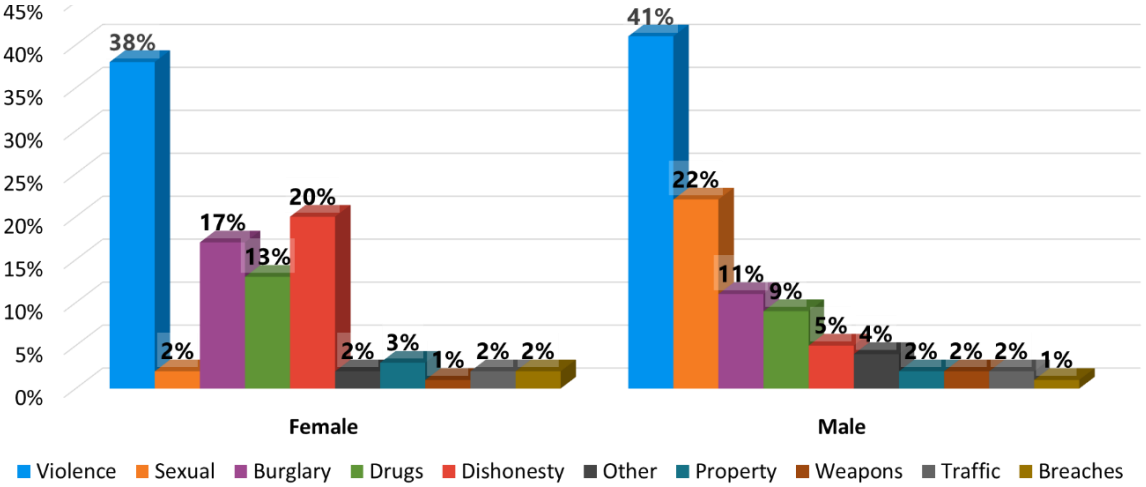
Violence and Aggression: What's Different?

From a female lens, if we look at ***gangs*** for example, we don't tend to find that gangs have as great an influence in the women's prison network as they do in the men's network. We generally tend to find that it's about ***relationships***, or the issues around relationships (between women in prison). That has been a big focus for us is to dig into what those relationships look like. Within the prisons you can see breakups between couples having an effect on the violence within the prison. It may mean that they are trying to manipulate their placement to get to where their partner is within a prison site and using violence to do that. There are the general unhealthy relationships both within the prison and external as well. Some people in prison get into relationships just for the ***protection***, so protection from others. Staff are also having to manage any potential ***indecent behaviour*** that's occurring in the public areas of the prison.

The nature of assaults for the Women's network, assaults are more ***verbal and psychological***. There is more physical violence in the male network. The key drivers of violent behavior in the Women's Prison Network

Figure 5

Prisoners: Index Offence by Gender



are unhealthy relationships and some external factors out of the women's control, including the loss of their children through custody battles.

Some of our Approaches

Safer Prison Plans. The focus areas are the same as what Scott Walker alluded to this morning[30]. Working closely with our union partners on improving prison operations, understanding prison rules, supporting our people and managing gang and relationship dynamics. The key difference in the Women's Prison Network being relationships, this is our focus.

Use of Force panels. These are made up of custodial systems manager, a residential manager, and a technical expert. We review each use of force to discuss and share learnings across the Women's Prison Network. The "use of force", for those that are not used to our language, may involve moving somebody between cells, between units. It may be that we are having to respond to a violent outburst and that's when a use of force would occur.

Healthy Relationships program. This was created in response to some of the relationship difficulties that have been mentioned. We have been piloting it for the last couple of years. It is a bicultural program that is really designed to work for Māori women to help them learn new skills – starting off with getting to know each other and understanding what a healthy relationship can look like. When we think about family violence, for example, there is plenty of evidence out there that women that come to prison who have been subject to family violence in the community are more likely to be subject to family violence in the prison or be perpetrators. So, while they are in the prison we really need to do some work to help them understand, "What does a healthy relationship look like? How to set some boundaries? What is a

[30] See chapter, this volume.

way that they can manage their emotions when they are upset and angry? That can be triggered simply by phone calls from partners while they're in prison, or from lawyers, or with the courts. When things don't go their way and they don't know how to deal with the feelings they may react in an aggressive or in a violent way. Unfortunately, our staff may be the people that they take that out on. So, we need to teach women these skills.

It also includes assertive communication, and looking at the different ways that you can communicate to be heard and understood and also identifying their own values and strengths. A little bit of that is helping them to understand what is good in them, what they bring, what they are good at, what their strengths are, and how they may be able to work with other people on the site to help them and form a bit more of a collective understanding about how to get on.
As alluded to throughout this whole forum, violence, and aggression in our custodial environment is unacceptable, both for our women and for our men, and for our staff working with them. Picking up on Nancy's[31] point from her earlier presentation just prior to us, the importance of how we support our staff with that.

Learning and Development pathway. This is a pilot that we have the privilege of enacting within the Women's Prison Network. It looks at how we can support our custodial workforce, when working with women. We currently have increased practice leadership at a site level to work alongside our staff on a day-to-day basis, provide feedback, reflect on how things have worked well, and areas for improvement. We have also made an investment in the leadership side of things within that custodial network, as a foundational approach before we roll out the broader learning and development pathway, which is made up of various modules. The learning and development pathway has three areas. The first of those

[31] See chapter, this volume.

areas is a *foundational approach* that looks at what gender and culture awareness looks like. It also recognises stress and wellbeing awareness for our workforce when they go to work every day.

The second group of learnings is what we call *practice essentials*. So that's understanding the relationship needs of women in prison, being able to work in a motivational way, understanding what trauma is, understanding what the health needs are of women in prison, and recognising the importance of escalating those health needs to the appropriate areas within our correction system. We are not expecting our custodial workforce to be all things to everyone. They play a very important role in keeping women and men safe and keeping the environment in a calm manner. So, it's important that they are able to rely upon those support teams when and as needed.

The final area of learning is *continuous improvement*, and that recognises that working in a women's prison is different at times to working in a male prison. For example, we have mothers and babies' units. Our maximum security has a slightly different make-up and number of women going through it than what we see in the men's network. What it means to be in an intensive supervision unit and what receiving office protocols and processes might look like. We look forward to seeing the learnings from that and then sharing those across the broader custodial network, as and when we learn the outcomes of them.

Trauma-informed and relational approaches. Again, you've heard across this panel the importance of the role that relationships play, and the importance of having healthy relationships. So that includes understanding that women are relational, as are men, and the importance of having good communication between everyone.

Access to complaints process.
The other approach that we have looked at doing organisationally is what we term the 'No Wrong Door' approach. So, we know that when complaints aren't addressed, or responded to in a timely manner, it does and can increase conflict. The Department is really committed to looking at making sure that complaints are addressed at the lowest possible level, and they are responded to in a timely manner.

There are various ways that complaints can be reported. It can be as simple as actually talking to the officer on the floor and making sure that those complaints are being addressed in that way. If a person doesn't feel safe to be able to do that, they are able to do that on an electronic kiosk device within the units, to be able to put the complaint in (and that's addressed externally to the unit). They're also able to contact the Ombudsman and the Office of the Inspectorate. There is a system for women to be able to raise complaints internally as well. So, there are a number of ways to make sure that those complaints are addressed.

Wāhine panels at each site.
The panel at our sites are made up of women representatives from each of the units. It includes Principal Corrections Officers, a manager will attend as well, and a Prison General Manager, on occasion, will turn up and just listen to the conversation. The women will bring to the group any kind of concerns, or thoughts, or initiatives, or ideas, things that they want to raise for the wider site. Often that can be really sensible ideas, good things that will actually make a huge difference right across the site and make life easier for both staff and the women. We get the women to minute the meetings and then it is the women's responsibility to take back any action points, any ideas back to their wider group, as well as for the Principal Corrections Officers. It's up to them to take away any action points for things that they can fix in their units, things that we

might be able to improve, or anything that might not be working so well, such as property, which is always something that causes a lot of tension across the sites.

Property is one that we're working on now across all three sites, just to try and get some consistency across things so that we can make sure that a woman experiences the same thing no matter which site they go to. We find that being able to do that will reduce the risk to our staff, and the aggression towards our staff, if things are not consistent across all three.

Body scanners. It is never pleasant to have to undress in front of people. So, for us to be able to keep the safety and security of our prisons, whilst maintaining some of that dignity for women, has gone a really lo

ng way to reducing some of the tension as women come into custody, or as they're going into the likes of our intervention support units. It helps to also not retraumatise people, particularly with how many women have suffered sexual violence in the past. We find that it is a much nicer way for us to be able to keep our safety and security.

The 'Three Cs'

The first of the three C's that we often see come up time and again, both from the women and from our staff, is the importance of ***consistency***. So as a network, we're really focused on when a woman moves from one site to another site, making sure there is consistency of practice, and of process, so that it's not inconsistent for the women, causing unnecessary tension.

A second C is the importance of ***communication***. This is where the wāhine panels have played a pivotal role in making sure that there is good engagement with our staff, women are able to raise what is sitting on top for them, and some suggestions of how that can be managed and dealt with, with the staff that are engaged with those

panels and then that communication goes back to the units.

The final C is ***clarity –*** making sure that everyone understands what is expected of them (e.g., at unit induction), when women are moving between our networks or within the prison environment, making sure that they understand what the unit setup is, what is expected of them, what will happen as a consequence if things start to wobble, and then making sure that that communication is timely. And so that the women can feel clear on what is expected.

Discussion

Q: A number of wāhine in prison are subject to the Victim Notification Register (VNR) regarding men that are also in prison. What is the process to ensure that those wāhine listed are not subject to any further trauma, should the men try and make contact, given custodial, case management, and other staff are not generally privy to who and where the victims are located?

A: Sometimes there can be a real tension because of the victim notification register. We try hard to not have communication between prisons when somebody does not wish to communicate, or there is that VNR in place. However, sometimes people can get communications out, whether it be through somebody else's mail or a phone call. These things will happen, but we do our best. The victim space is definitely a space that we want to focus on and try and cut down on re-traumatising people who have been victims.

Q: What has been the most challenging aspect in bringing this initiative to life?

A: Having a ***small network*** is an advantage… and it is also a disadvantage. So, one of the advantages that we have is we are a small network. So, for us to be able to pilot things, for example the learning and development pathway, it's a lot easier for us to do. We are dealing with three sites and not a whole lot more. So, we are able to have a quick feedback

loop on what is working and what is not working well. Obviously, one of the disadvantages of having a smaller network is we only have three physical sites, which of course causes displacement for our women when they come into our custodial care.

As part of the Women's Strategy, one of our action points was to look at how we could target our recruitment and our selection of staff. So, it's important that we have staff working in an environment that they would like to work in, particularly in a women's network. We are interested in staff that want to work there. You need to make sure that you keep the right ratio of male-to-female staff as well. Mainly because obviously men can't do rubdowns on women, men can't do the strip searching of women. There's a lot of tasks that are associated with the role that men just can't do. So, you do need to be conscious of that ratio. I think the other thing is making sure that you know the women as they're coming through, and having a good receiving office process that asks the right questions of the women to understand a little bit about how they got in there, what their background is, and picking up on any trauma that they may have suffered.

TRAUMA-INFORMED CORRECTIONAL CARE: PROMOTING SAFETY IN PRISONS

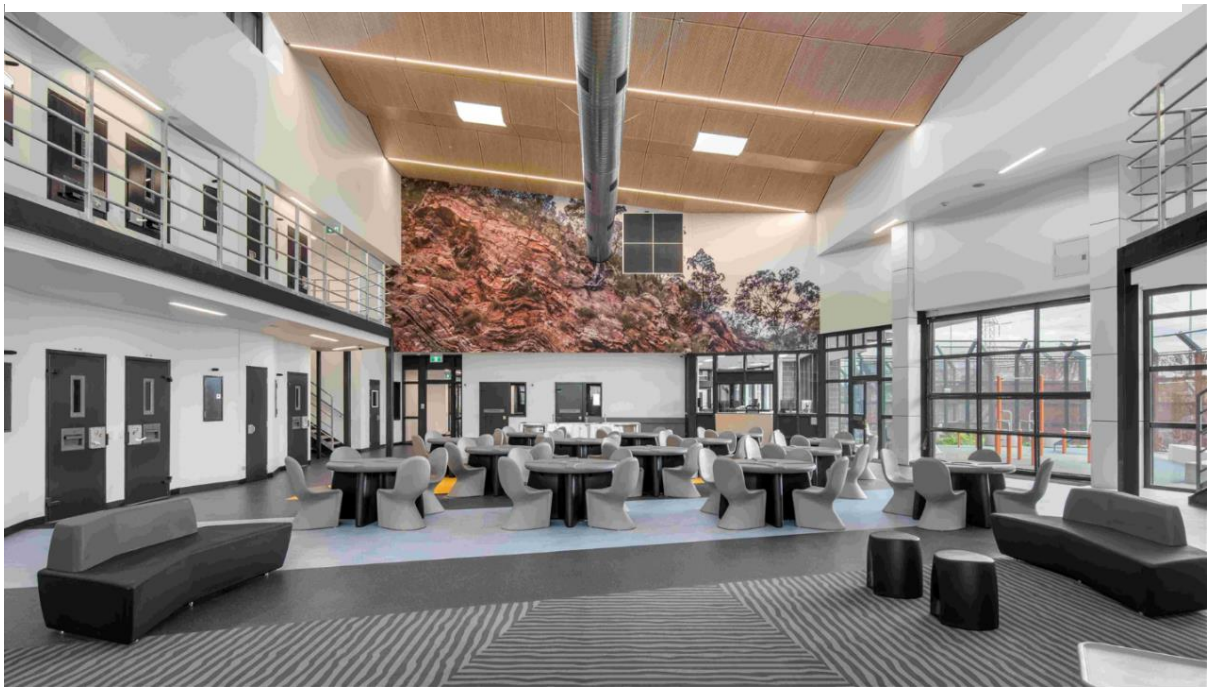
KATHERINE MCLACHLAN

Marni naa pudni. I present, work, and live on Kaurna land, and I would like to acknowledge the ongoing relationships that living Kaurna people have with the earth, skies, and waters of the Adelaide Plains. I would also like to acknowledge the mana whenua of the many regions across New Zealand. Today, I will focus on how to apply Trauma-informed Correctional Care and how it may assist in promoting safety in prisons.

I approach this as an expert in trauma-informed practice in the criminal justice sector and as someone who's spoken to thousands of people who've been incarcerated as a member of the Parole Board of South Australia. But I don't work in prisons, and I'm very keen to leave some space and time at

Figure 1

Yatala Labour Prison, South Australia



the end of the presentation for us to discuss your views about the practicality of some of the ideas I shall raise.

Figure 1 is an image of a recent upgrade at Yatala Labour Prison in South Australia, which has undergone a multi-million-dollar upgrade "to increase the safety of staff based at the prison… as well as provide opportunities to reduce the likelihood of prisoner re-offending."[32] Yatala Labour Prison was opened in 1854, so understandably, this wing does not look like every wing in the prison. The prison houses 850 men in low, medium, and high security environments.

What is Trauma?

Let's start with the basics. To discuss trauma-informed practice, we first need to be clear about what we mean when we talk about the concept of trauma. Trauma can have many meanings. To my mind, it is the impact of adversity, i.e., potentially traumatic events and experiences. These potentially traumatic events and experiences (which we will unpack a little later) can be long-lasting and influence an individual's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Neurophysiological and cognitive trauma (i.e., trauma to the actual brain, brain development and brain structure) can lead to impulsive, unpredictable, and violent behaviour, due to changes in volume and functioning in areas of the brain associated with emotional regulation and problem solving. Many people who offend have experienced chronic adversity and have a poor tolerance for psychological and physiological arousal, a limited ability to regulate their anger, and the tendency to respond to triggers or provocation in either a withdrawn or aggressive manner. Trauma can also impact a person's social functioning and personal

[32] We are SA (2024, June 9). *Multi-million dollar upgrade opens at Yatala.* Government of South Australia. https://www.weare.sa.gov.au/news/2023/q2/$180-million-revelopment-opens-at-sas-largest-metro-prison

relationships, physical health, and emotional and psychological well-being.

Adversity in the Lives of People who Offend

If trauma is the impact of adversity, what is adversity? Adverse events or circumstances include acute "overwhelming and uncontrollable"[33] experiences or "traumatic or stressful events… [such as] actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence,"[34] as well as chronic traumatic experiences – things that happen repeatedly over time or over an extended time.

Table 1 shows the kinds of adverse experiences that judges identified in their sentencing remarks in a sample of 233 defendants in South Australia.[35] As you can see, judges often focus on what had happened to the individual in childhood, such as child maltreatment, child abuse and neglect, parental absence, incarceration, parental death, parental dysfunction, mental health issues or substance abuse issues. It can also include

Table 1

Adverse Experiences Identified in Judges' Sentencing Remarks

Childhood	Child maltreatment Parental absence or incarceration Parental dysfunction (e.g., mental health or AOD issues) Family dysfunction/hardships (e.g., poverty, homelessness) Removal from birth family
Adulthood	Breakdown and/or end of an intimate-partner relationship Loss of contact with children
Any time in the lifecourse	Death/suicide of a significant other (parent, grandparent, child, partner) Vehicle accident or workplace accident, resulting in physical injuries, an ABI or chronic pain One-off assault or sexual assault Exposure to domestic abuse Exposure to war and displacement

[33] van der Kolk, B. A. (Ed.). (1987). *Psychological Trauma.* American Psychiatric Press, p. 2.

[34] American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed., Text Revised [DSM-5-TR®]).* Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Publishing.

[35] McLachlan, K. (2021). *'I Cannot Dismiss from My Mind Your Traumatic and Tragic Upbringing': Judges' Use of Defendant Trauma in Sentencing.* [PhD thesis], University of South Australia.

family hardships, such as poverty and homelessness, and removal from the birth family. Adversity can also occur in adulthood, and typically that might be characterised as a breakdown or the end of an intimate partner relationship, or the loss of contact with children.

Equally, adversity can happen anytime across the life course. An adverse event that may occur, regardless of age, might be the death of a significant person in someone's life. It can be a vehicle collision for adults, or a workplace accident that results in physical injuries, acquired brain injury, or chronic pain. An adverse event may be a one-off assault or one-off sexual assault, exposure to domestic abuse (as a child and/or an adult), and exposure to war and displacement. You can see some of these are single events, and some of them are chronic, ongoing traumatic experiences.

In my research, the judges did not acknowledge inter-generational trauma, so for the substantial proportion of Aboriginal defendants they were looking at, they did not recognise the impact of colonisation. We know that is relevant and important, especially for First Nations defendants.

We also know that adversity does not always equate to or result in trauma. All of us have experienced at least one form of adversity, and this has not resulted in us being traumatised or necessarily incarcerated. It is the severity of the trauma and the ability of the individual to cope and recover. And that depends on several different factors, such as the characteristics of the adversity, the trauma load, the number of types of trauma, how long each type of trauma lasted, how severe the trauma was, and how often it happened across their life course. People who have access to more money, more resources, and a more stable familial background, are more

likely to be able to access the finances required to potentially access formal supports as well as the informal supports required through a pro-social functional family environment.

Trauma in Prisons

If we think about trauma in prisons, we know people enter prisons with trauma. We know prisons cause trauma and exacerbate trauma—and that's not just for the residents.[36] We also know prisons are traumatic for people who work in them as well. People in prison who have trauma often exhibit symptoms such as hypervigilance, aggression, difficulty trusting others and challenges in regulating their emotions. These symptoms can lead to violent outbursts and conflicts within that prison setting. Understanding the connection is crucial for developing effective strategies to reduce prison violence.

While trauma is not a diagnostic label per se, it's not in the DSM or the the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD), we do know there are labels such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and complex post-traumatic stress disorder (cPTSD), which are used often as an indicator of the presence of trauma. If we consider the prevalence of PTSD in prisons:

- A meta-analysis of 56 studies across 20 countries found men and women in prison were five times and eight times, respectively. So, women exhibited more symptoms of PTSD than men, and they were more likely to be diagnosed with PTSD than non-incarcerated people.[37]
- Additionally, a systematic review found PTSD, depression, and anxiety were considerably higher in the correctional workforce than in the general population and

[36] I choose to use the word “residents” more often than “people who've been incarcerated.” It's shorter and easier, and I'm uncomfortable using the word “prisoner.”

[37] Baranyi, G., Cassidy, M., Fazel, S., Priebe, S., & Mundt, A. P. (2018). Prevalence of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Prisoners. *Epidemiologic Reviews, 40*(1)*,* 134-145.

personal injury and exposure to violence were closely associated with diagnoses of PTSD.[38]

At a recent Corrective Services New South Wales conference, workers asked, "Why would we be showing sympathy to some of the people who live in prison when we are struggling and dealing with really challenging emotions and challenging reactions to the prison environment that can be quite traumatic?"[39] It is a good question. It is reasonable to believe that anyone who has worked in a prison or in community corrections knows clients often have extensive histories of adversity. There is a logical association between how the resulting trauma has impacted their functioning and well-being and their antisocial and criminal behaviour. But we know, too, that correctional service staff can also struggle with adversity and trauma.[40]

Preventing Violence in Prison

How might trauma be relevant if we are thinking about preventing violence in prison environments? The causes of prison violence are complex, with much of the published research focusing on the personal characteristics of men who are violent in prison, such as:

- the "central eight" criminogenic risks,[41] such as antisocial personality, antisocial behaviour, antisocial associates, substance abuse, those kinds of things. We know that neurophysiological

[38] Regehr, C., Carey, M., Wagner, S., Alden, L. E., Buys, N., Corneil, W., Fyfe, T., Fraess-Phillips, A., Krutop, E., Matthews, L., Randall, C., White, M., & White, N. (2021). Prevalence of PTSD, Depression and Anxiety Disorders in Correctional Officers: A Systematic Review. *Corrections,* 6(3), 229-241.

[39] McLachlan, K. (2024, October 3). *Trauma-informed Correctional Care: What this means for you. [Invited Keynote].* Corrective Services NSW Academy Trauma Conference, Sydney.

[40] Day, A., & McLachlan, K. (2024). *A Trauma-informed Approach to Supporting New Professionals in the Criminal Justice System: A Literature Review.* Prepared for SafeWork SA as part of an Augusta Zadow Award. The Magnolia Project.

[41] Fritzon, K., Miller, S., Bargh, D., Hollows, K., Osborne, A., & Howlett, A. (2021). Understanding the Relationships between Trauma and Criminogenic Risk Using the Risk-Need Responsivity Model. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 30*(3), 294-323. See also McLachlan (2024), above n 6.

and psychological trauma manifest as criminogenic risk factors associated with antisocial attitudes and behaviour, poor emotional regulation, impulsivity, hypervigilance, and inability to read social cues accurately.

- membership in gangs.
- untreated and complex trauma symptoms. So, Nancy mentioned this morning,[42] that the disrespect people felt in prison led to them acting out violently. That can be directly related to the ways that trauma manifests, and people's poor ability to read social cues. They'll read someone acting aggressively towards them when, in fact, it might have been a very neutral type of situation. Other trauma symptoms include low self-control when they see something that is triggering, and they are unable to bring themselves back to a place where they are not going to react to that.

As you know from Armon's amazing work with his team, the prison environment also plays a considerable role in violence and re-traumatisation. So, the ecological model can be associated with poor conditions and overcrowding. However, we know some of those factors can be mediated through staff and prison interactions, the availability of staff and their skills, and controlling inconsistent or unfair regimes.

Violence can be reduced when prisoners are engaged in purposeful activities that they consider valuable. Arguably, violence is also reduced when the residents feel they have meaningful influence over their day-to-day lives. My mission today is to provide a brief overview of how trauma-informed policies, procedures, and practices can assist in avoiding or responding to violence in prisons.

[42] See chapter, this volume.

What is Trauma-informed Care and Practice?

Trauma-informed practice was developed about 20 years ago and is emerging as an important way of working with people in police, corrections, and courts, as well as in broader contexts such as health and education services. Trauma-informed care emerged in 2001 in the work of Maxine Harris and Roger Fallot.[43] Trauma-informed practice requires service providers at all organisational levels to understand the potentially traumatic effects of adversity on an individual's ability to function and interact with the world, promote service environments conducive to recovery, and avoid further traumatisation.[44]

Just to be clear, trauma-informed practice is not about *treating* trauma; that is sometimes described as 'trauma-focused practice' and is not just for people with trauma. I find it useful to use SAMHSA's[45] model of the "4Rs" of trauma-informed practice.[46]

To be trauma-informed, a service or sector must first ***realise***, so that first R, what trauma is and the potential impact of adversity. Secondly, ***recognise*** trauma symptoms experienced by an individual accessing the service. So, the individualised responses that people have had to the lives up to that point and the way they interact with the world around them now, because of the trauma symptoms or the trauma manifestations that they're dealing with. Thirdly, ***respond*** appropriately to the individual's unique trauma; and finally, to ***resist re-traumatisation*** by avoiding, for example, insensitive or inappropriate responses when providing services.

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[43] Harris, M., & Fallot, R. D. (2001). Envisioning a trauma-informed service system: A vital paradigm shift. *New Directions for Mental Health Services*, *2001*(89), 3-22.

[44] Kezelman, C., & Stavropoulos, P. (2016). Trauma and the Law: Applying Trauma-informed Practice to Legal and Judicial Contexts. Blue Knot Foundation.

[45] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

[46] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-informed Approach.* US Department of Health and Human Services.

So, the idea around strip searches in prison, mentioned in the previous presentation,[47] for women who are in custody who have had potentially quite traumatic sexual abuse or physical abuse experiences that make searches very, very traumatic for them. The approach has been articulated as the four steps or the "4Rs".

A trauma-informed response -- the third R – requires the application of specific principles of practice. What are these trauma-informed principles of practice? These are the things that characterise a trauma-informed response, whether you are dealing with one person or an organisation dealing with a whole community of people. ***Safety***: when discussing safety, it relates to effective and consistent physical and emotional safety. I think of safety as an umbrella term for the others. If we can achieve safety, we often implement other principles, such as building trust, to achieve this idea of safety for an individual. ***Trust*** within us refers to establishing mutually understood, clear, consistent expectations and boundaries for workers and service users. ***Empowerment*** aims to promote the service user's skills through a strengths-based approach. Voice and choice involve giving control to users based on their service preferences through information or options and an awareness of their rights and responsibilities. ***Collaboration*** involves users in the planning and shared decision-making around activities and settings relating to service provision. ***Peer support*** can be indirect or direct. ***Gender culture and historical factors*** – the recognition of the importance of culture, both when we're talking about First Nations and Māori people, and other cultures associated with race, gangs, or identity. A whole lot of different things. These principles provide a framework for taking a trauma-informed approach in your day-to-day work, and I will draw from

[47] See Smith et al chapter, this volume.

these when I talk about trauma-informed correctional care.

Because the phrase “trauma-informed” gets thrown around a lot, sometimes people think that if I’m nice, I’m doing it. That has come out in some of the conversations I've had with policing agencies, for example. But is trauma-informed practice just being sweet, nice, and kind? We can safely say that no, that is not the case.

Karen Treisman and Mandy Davis challenge the idea that trauma-informed practice is just being sweet, nice, and kind. They argue:[48]

> *"When we talk about trauma-informed, the clue is in the word ‘trauma’. We're using theories, models, concepts, ideas of dissociation, of dysregulation, of brain development, of neurobiology, of sensory integration and processing. We're using that evidence base and theoretical background to apply that lens to the work that we do. When we use the word sweet, nice and kind, it kind of dilutes it and takes away from the knowledge base and the values.”*[49]

So, trauma-informed practice draws from the evidence we have around how trauma impacts behaviour, and how, through this knowledge, we can influence positive behaviour change. Labelling it as sweet, nice and kind dilutes the concept of trauma-informed practice.

It can be very harmful for the people we are working with if we think it is just enough to be this very sickly sweet, possibly disingenuous, approach we might take to our work. Here’s a quote from someone with lived experience of incarceration who has said:

> *"When I first arrived in prison, I was afraid of everyone, especially those*

[48] Treisman, K. (2022, 28 May). “*Is Trauma-informed Just About Being Sweet, Nice, & Kind”—Karen Treisman & Mandy Davis Discuss.* [Video]. YouTube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFR1MyznXW4

[49] Ibid, at 1.35–2.19 mins.

who seem too kind. How could I fear kindness? I knew from TV shows fake news and articles that in prison kindness comes at a cost. I feared what I would have to do to repay that kindness."[50]

You can see that regardless of the person's intention to be kind, if they are not clearly communicating, they may be treated with a great degree of suspicion. If you think about that through a trauma lens, you can see that when workers realise and recognise trauma and the impact of adversity, they can often identify the inappropriateness of false kindness, for example, when working with people who have been groomed as victims/survivors of sexual violence, or who have experienced coercive control as victims/survivors of domestic abuse. Many women in custody have extensive histories of child sexual abuse and domestic abuse. In fact, many men in custody are also survivors of child sexual abuse. So, to dismiss trauma-informed correctional care as just this idea of being sweet, nice, and kind, it does not do anyone any favours, and it does not go to the heart of the purpose of trauma-informed practice.

Trauma-informed Practice is Universal

Trauma-informed practice involves treating people who reside in prison through a trauma-informed lens. It also involves thinking about the vicarious trauma that workers experience in their day-to-day roles. Further, it applies to people who are victims of crime, who are often also people who offend. We know that there is a crossover of people who are both "victims" and "offenders"—many of the people we work with daily.

Trauma-informed practice has a broad application. It is designed to benefit everyone involved. People in organisations sometimes take a narrow lens when they talk about trauma-

[50] Birungi, B. (2020). Kindness, Hope and Compassion: A Matter of Life and Death for Those in Prison. In L. Rowles & I. Haji (Eds.), *Humane Justice: What Role Do Kindness, Hope and Compassion Play in the Criminal Justice System?* (pp. 26–28). The Monument Fellowship.

informed practice. Sometimes, stereotypes about people, such as offenders not being deserving of our care, or workers needing to tough it out and be more resilient and just deal with the true nature of the job, can impact workers' and organisations' ideas of how trauma is relevant in their work.

We often recognise the prevalence of trauma in the lives of children and women who offend, which you just heard about. Still, we are less likely to consider how non-Indigenous men, for example, may benefit from a criminal justice system that realises and recognises their histories of adversity and trauma. Realising and recognising the relevance of trauma in your work is not about choosing who is worthy and deserving of special consideration. It is about genuinely committing to a workplace that prioritises safety for all and ultimately reducing re-offending and prison violence.

Trauma-informed Correctional Care

Levenson and Wallis have stated that:

> *"[t]he overarching goal of [trauma-informed correctional care] is to incorporate knowledge about neurobiological, social and psychological effects of trauma into policies, procedures, and practices that guide a safe, compassionate, respectful service delivery environment."*[51]

Trauma-informed correctional care has emerged as a therapeutic approach in prisons and the community, a behaviour management strategy, and a safety strategy for correctional staff and clients.[52] At a minimum,

[51] Levenson, J. S., & Willis, G. M. (2019). Implementing Trauma-Informed Care in Correctional Treatment and Supervision. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *28*(4), 481-501, p. 482.

[52] Miller, N. A., & Najavits, L. M. (2012). Creating Trauma-Informed Correctional Care: A Balance of Goals and Environment. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, *3*, 1-8; Jones, L. (2018). Trauma-Informed Care And 'Good Lives' In Confinement: Acknowledging and Offsetting Adverse Impacts of

trauma-informed correctional care requires employees to recognise that engagement with correctional services need not be fundamentally traumatic.

Trauma-informed correctional care requires that staff apply trauma-informed principles of practice to their daily work. Programs and interventions delivered by, or on behalf of, corrections are designed explicitly to be trauma-informed, particularly for women[53] and children,[54] with "male correctional populations… among the last frontier for [trauma-informed care] implementation."[55] For us in Australia, these should not be too hard to implement as the *Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia* endorse continuous improvement, staff education, respectful searches and emphasise that "[i]ndividual prisoners and offenders are managed and supervised in a manner that responds to their particular risks and needs, including the impacts of victimisation and trauma."[56]

At its heart, trauma-informed correctional care is about systems and organisational change, rather than clinical treatment or individual worker responses. So, developing a trauma-informed approach requires change at multiple levels of an organisation. Becoming a trauma-informed organisation is not a one-off activity, but an organisational

Chronic Trauma and Loss of Liberty. In G. Akerman, A. Needs, & C. Bainbridge (Eds.), *Transforming Environments and Rehabilitation: A Guide for Practitioners in Forensic Settings and Criminal Justice* (pp. 92-114). Routledge.

[53] Miller & Najavits (2012) as above; Benedict, A. (2014). *Using Trauma-Informed Practices to Enhance Safety and Security in Women's Correctional Facilities*. National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women. https://www.bja.gov/Publications/NRCJIW-UsingTraumaInformed Practices.pdf

[54] Webb, T. (2016). Children Exposed to Violence: A Developmental Trauma Informed Response for the Criminal Justice System. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, *9*(3), 183-189.

[55] Levenson & Willis (2019), as above, n. 23, p. 482.

[56] Government of Australia. (2018). *Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia*. Government of Australia (www.corrections.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge_cache/emshare/original/public/2019/04/7f/88fc42ada/guiding_principles_correctionsaustrevised2018.pdf)

transformational process,[57] and trauma-informed practice needs to be embedded across an organisation to be sustainable. These 10 domains are not necessarily a checklist, but they are key focal areas for committed organisational change. To become a trauma-informed organisation:

- the ***leadership and governance*** of the organisation must prioritise the implementation and maintenance of a trauma-informed approach.
- ***Written policies and procedures*** establish a trauma-informed approach as central to the organisation's mission.
- The ***physical environment*** promotes safety and collaboration.
- Clients and their families have significant ***engagement, voice and meaningful choice*** (where possible) in how the organisation functions.
- ***Cross-sector collaboration*** is built on a shared understanding of trauma and trauma-informed care and practice.
- Practitioners use and are trained in ***interventions*** based on the best available empirical evidence and science, culturally appropriate and reflecting trauma-informed principles of practice (i.e., safety, choice, voice, collaboration, empowerment, all those principles).
- ***Training and workforce development*** are ongoing, focused on those 4Rs.
- There is ***ongoing monitoring*** of the operationalization of trauma-informed practice and effective use of evidence-based trauma-specific ***screening,***

[57] Lewis, N.V., Bierce, A., Feder, G.S., Macleod, J., Turner, K.M., Zammit, S., Dawson, S., (2023) Trauma-Informed Approaches in Primary Healthcare and Community Mental Healthcare: A Mixed Methods Systematic Review of Organisational Change Interventions, *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 4475114.

assessments and treatment.

- There is ***sufficient funding*** available. This is the giant stumbling block for so many different jurisdictions to support all of this.
- Staff training on trauma, development of safe facilities, evidence-informed trauma screening, assessment, treatment, recovery supports and trauma-informed cross-agency collaborations, and services and programs are regularly ***evaluated***.[58]

While it is vitally important for individual workers to contextualise people's behaviour, which can be achieved through engagement (#4) and training (#7), trauma-informed practice is more than just you and me. Policies and practices (#2) that reflect trauma-informed responses and aim to resist re-traumatisation can and should exist as organisational and sector priorities.[59] Trauma-informed approaches are not just about individuals and their actions; they relate to the environmental and organisational context. So, when we think about establishing trauma-informed correctional care to promote greater safety in prisons for everyone, we must consider how to implement the 4Rs in our day-to-day work, particularly the third one around offering trauma-informed responses.

Let's revisit the 4Rs as they apply to trauma-informed correctional care, and then we will consider some real-world examples.

R1 + R2 = Realising and Recognising Trauma in Prisons

If we realise and recognise the presence of trauma in prisons,

[58] SAMHSA (2014), above n. 17.

[59] Senker, S., Eason, A., Pawson, C., & McCartan, K. (2023). *Issues, challenges and opportunities for trauma-informed practice*. HM Inspectorate of Probation.

we need to consider the people and their environment holistically. If we better understand trauma, we can then recognise that residents and staff may have reactive responses to triggers. They may be impulsive with poor emotional regulation when faced with stressors in prison. They may have limited strategies to deal with grief, loss and other challenges, such as relationship breakups that are happening in their personal lives and may be impacted by intergenerational trauma. We know people bring their histories into their daily lives, and much of that is invisible. If we realise and recognise the relevance of trauma in the day-to-day lives of people in prison, we can provide a supportive and understanding environment, help people process their traumatic experience and develop healthier coping mechanisms, thereby reducing incidents of violence. Additionally, staff working in trauma-informed environments are better equipped to manage their stress and prevent burnout.

Understanding the root cause of resident behaviour can reduce frustration and improve job satisfaction among correctional officers and other prison staff.

R3 + R4 = Trauma-informed Responses and Resisting Re-traumatisation

At an individual and organisational level, how can you work to achieve trauma-informed response (the third R in the 4Rs model)? The principles of trauma-informed practice can be applied in a custodial environment as follows.

- ***Safety***: ensuring residents' and staff's physical and emotional safety by creating an environment where individuals feel secure and are less likely to engage in violent behaviour.
- ***Building trust***: through transparency, consistent practices and clear expectations. Trust can mitigate feelings of paranoia and aggression among the residents.

- ***Voice and choice***: providing residents with a sense of control and agency over their lives, wherever possible, can reduce feelings of helplessness and frustration that may lead to violence.
- ***Collaboration***: encouraging cooperation and mutual respect between staff and residents. Collaborative relationships can de-escalate tensions and foster a more harmonious prison environment.
- Finally, ***empowerment*** involves supporting residents in developing skills and resources to manage their emotions and behaviours. Empowered individuals are less likely to resort to violence.

Bastøy Prison, Norway

Where would we be without a trip to Scandinavia when talking about trauma-informed correctional care? Norway has a population of 5.4 million. New Zealand has a population of 5.2 million. Norway had about 3,050 prisoners in 2024. New Zealand had a couple more at just under 10,000 in 2024. Norwegian recidivism rate after five years is 25%, which is one of the lowest in the world. New Zealand has a higher recidivism rate, with over 56% of people with prior convictions being reconvicted within two years. I say this with no judgment because Australia is much closer to New Zealand than we are to Norway. So, none of this is news, but we can learn some good practices from Norway that reflect trauma-informed correctional care.

Bastøy is an island prison. It is a step-down prison with no walls or fences. It's for people in the last five years of their sentence, so they have committed quite significant offences. The prison has a mandate of "no violence, no alcohol, no drugs."[60]

[60] James, E. (2013, February 25). The Norwegian prison where inmates are treated like people. *The Guardian.* www.theguardian.com/society/2013/feb/25/norwegian-prison-inmates-treated-like-people

Norwegian correctional officers undergo extensive training to create strong personal relationships with people in prison, dining with them, allowing prisoners to be unaccompanied by guards, but watched by significant surveillance options. This quote is from a resident, Petter who has said:

> *"Here they give us trust and responsibility. They treat us like grownups... It's like living in a village, a community, everyone has to work, but we have free time so we can do some fishing or in summer we can swim off the beach. We know we're prisoners, but here we feel like people."*[61]

Arne Nielsen, then-governor in 2013, said:

> *"Here, I give prisoners respect this way. We teach them to respect others. We're watching them all the time. It's important that when they're released, they're less likely to commit more crimes. That is justice for society."*[62]

Let us now consider trauma-informed principles of practice and elements of a trauma-informed organisation as they might apply to Bastøy Prison. From the quotes above, Bastøy strives to promote ***empowerment, choice and voice***. The 115 residents of Bastøy are guided to make their own decisions regarding how they carry out their sentences. They choose which job they're going to undertake. They can work with animals, they can tend to horses, they can work as farmers, chefs, grocery store managers, but they have a shop on the island as well, carpenters, mechanics, and ferry operators. You can see that ***safety*** is a key priority on the island. Residents are aware

[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

Figure 2

Cell, Bastøy Prison, Norway

of their freedoms and the surveillance they are experiencing and the policies and procedures they must abide by. Regarding ***trustworthiness***, half the staff are security staff, but the other half have a range of different roles. For example, residents must wake up and get to work on time. There are no staff to do that for them. There is a sense of treating people like they are adults in this environment.

If we then think about the elements of a trauma-informed organisation, there is clear ***governance and leadership*** (#1). There is a vision in this prison for the residents to take responsibility for themselves to become better people, to become adults and future citizens within society more broadly. There are clear ***policies and procedures*** (#2). The ***physical environment*** (#3) is pleasant and normalised. Figure 2 shows an example of one of the cell spaces.

If I use another quote from Nielsen, the former governor, he said,

> *"The most important thing for me was to teach the staff to change their attitude towards inmates. You should treat the inmates by the same respect as you treat the governor or your fellow wardens, with the same decency, showing interest listening, working together as colleagues, not focusing on the crime, but focusing on the fact that this person in front of you is as much a human being as you are."*[63]

Now, I recognise that it would require significant political courage and social confidence to apply a Scandinavian penal example like Bastøy back here in New Zealand or Australia. So, let us use an example closer to home.

Totara Unit, Waikeria Prison, New Zealand

I know that the Waikeria Prison is about to be replaced with a new prison, possibly nearing construction. Regarding the current prison, as noted by the Office of the Inspectorate:[64]

> *"Waikeria Prison faces challenging conditions due to the continued use of facilities more than 100 years old. The high security units continue to be an environment not conducive for the humane treatment of prisoners.*
>
> *However, I was pleased to note the positive staff engagement with prisoners."*[65]

I've been lucky enough to go to the Totara unit myself. I met there with the Runanga,[66] and some of the staff. It is a brilliant example of trauma-informed correctional care facilitated in one of the units in a larger prison that is fundamentally

[63] James (2013), above, n. 32.

[64] Office of the Inspectorate. Te Tari Tirohia (2020). Waikeria Prison: Unannounced Follow-Up Inspection. August 2019. Department of Corrections Ara Poutama Aotearoa.

[65] Ibid, p. 3.

[66] In this context: An elected prisoner council.

perceived as a non-ideal prison that's soon to be replaced.

Having spoken to the men on the Runanga—two Māori men, two non-Māori men—they talked about their roles in terms of ***empowerment, choice and voice***. So, in taking leadership roles within the wing, the other men would come and speak to them about issues, and they would be the liaison with the staff around what might be concerning some of the residents within the area. They also took on roles related to the induction of new residents. So, they helped achieve ***safety***, and it was a model that also promoted ***peer support***. There was clear ***trust*** between the staff and the Runanga members, and trust between the Runanga members and the other residents within the unit, too. It was a model that ***empowered*** key residents to help make some big decisions, which was very successful from what I could see.

A family day was approaching, so the Runanga had conversations with some of the men coming in who were being inducted to flag that having the family day was a great privilege. They basically said that none of the other residents would be pleased if the new inmates' behaviour did not reflect the standard that everyone required for the family visits to go ahead.

In terms of elements of a trauma-informed organisation, there was clear, brave ***leadership*** (#1) with shared oversight with the Runanga and the staff within the unit. In terms of ***engagement and involvement*** (#4), the men also had the power to influence decisions within the unit. I think it's an excellent example. It is also culturally appropriate, and much thought has been put into ensuring that that was the case. It is just a wonderful example of trauma-informed correctional care within a larger facility and department. And congratulations to New Zealand for having the bravery to run something like this.

HMP Grendon, United Kingdom

My final example of trauma-informed correctional care is HMP Grendon in the UK. Charlie Taylor, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, was quite glowing about Grendon. Taylor said:

> *"Under the leadership of the excellent governor, Grendon, a therapeutic community in Buckinghamshire, continued to be a unique pioneering jail. Prisoners, many of whom were serving indeterminate or life sentences and who had extremely troubled pasts, made remarkable progress in an environment in which therapy ran through every aspect of the prison. The levels of expertise and skill among the staff were much higher than other prisons, with the well-trained and supported officers critical to its success."*[67]

HMP Grendon is a high-security (Category B) prison that functions as a democratic therapeutic community. It has up to six therapeutic communities with 40 residents, each with its own constitution.[68] The men who reside in Grendon made the constitution, setting out expected behaviour, outlining consequences for transgression. Inappropriate behaviour and disputes were dealt with by referring those individuals to a group meeting. So again, the residents on the wing decided how that person would be managed. Repeated or more serious breaches of the constitution may lead to a committee vote by other prisoners determining whether the individual can remain part of the community or be moved to a different prison.

Figure 3 shows that the residents can decorate the cells and bring in personal items.

[67] HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2023). *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Grendon, 2-19 May 2023.* HM Inspectorate of Prisons, p. 3.

[68] Ibid.

Figure 3
Cells, HMP Grendon

When I visited Grendon, I spoke with one of the men; his floor had been painted with glitter. I am not sure if he'd chosen that or perhaps the resident before him had. But personalising spaces is a real strength in terms of ***voice and choice***.

The downside to these cells is that there's no visible bathroom, because all the toilets and the showers are down the corridor. In demonstrating the elements of a trauma-informed prison, I've quoted again from the inspector. Talking about ***governance and leadership*** (#1) Taylor said:

> *"The well-respected governor was seen as approachable and supportive by both staff and prisoners and given continuity of leadership for more than four years."*[69]

The ***physical environment*** (#2) was awful—a very old building. In the middle of the night, the men either had to use buckets to go to the toilet or be released from the cells to go down the corridor. So, HMP Grendon functions as a trauma-informed correctional environment despite the physical space within which the men reside and the people work.

[69] HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2023). Above n. 40, p. 11.

In terms of ***engagement and involvement*** (#4), consultation and communication with both staff and prisoners were seen as strengths. ***Training and workforce development*** (#7) was a priority. As noted by Taylor,

> *"Arrangements for clinical supervision and peer support were excellent, including careful managerial oversight and access to independent counselling for staff."*[70]

Finally, regarding ***progress monitoring and quality assurance*** (#8), the prison was partly safe because of the excellent relationships between staff and residents.

If we consider trauma-informed practice principles, Grendon is perceived as one of the ***safest*** prisons in the UK, with 90% of respondents saying staff treated them respectfully.[71] In terms of ***trust***, when communities established trust and a sense of belonging, 91% said they had a member of staff they could turn to if they had a problem.[72] They had a ***peer-led*** induction like Totara, there was community group meetings to manage behaviour and safety on the wing. Regarding ***collaboration***, the wing communities managed poor behaviour and decided the fate of their peers. Regarding ***empowerment, voice and choice***, there were voluntary roles and responsibilities supported and approved by peers and staff. The cells were personalised, and the men had 8 to 11 hours of unlock time daily, which I think is notable.

The model demonstrates that empowering people in prison and offering trust and choice results in safer spaces for residents and workers with low levels of violence and self-harm and the potential for greater behaviour change and a

[70] Ibid, p. 10.
[71] Ibid, p. 18.
[72] Ibid, p. 18.

reduction in recidivism.[73] I've given you three examples: a remand unit, a step-down unit, and a Cat B long-term prison. I started with that image of a schmick[74] new build in South Australia's high-security Yatala Labour Prison. But as I've indicated here in Grendon, it is not all about the physical environment; it is fundamentally about the people, in terms of how to create a safe environment within prisons.

Where to from here? Can an individual make a difference?

So, what does this mean for you, as an individual, if we have focused on trauma-informed correctional care as an organisational strategy?

A key challenge is that it can be demotivating to feel that what you are doing is not being recognised by or reflected in the organisation's work. There is value in small gestures we can all do in our everyday work. The key principle we try to embed in Flinders Criminology for our students who are likely to be community corrections officers, prison officers, police officers, or work in other roles in the criminal justice system, is to model this idea of compassion. The key question here is, can one person make a difference?

Thomas Ugelvik, a Norwegian Criminologist, argued that while prisons are often described as places of pain, despair and hopelessness, studies show that some prisoners, under certain conditions, report positive life changes happening in prison.[75] He explored the connection between **trust**, a trauma-informed practice principle, and the desistance processes, specifically between the experience of being trusted and

[73] Beaudry, G., Yu, R., Perry, A. E., & Fazel, S. (2021). Effectiveness of psychological interventions in prison to reduce recidivism: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *Lancet Psychiatry*, *8*, 759-773; Jones, L. (2015). The Peaks unit: from a pilot for 'untreatable' psychopaths to trauma informed milieu therapy. *Prison Service Journal* (218), 17-23.

[74] Australian slang: excellent, elegant, or stylish

[75] Ugelvik, T. (2022). The Transformative Power of Trust: Exploring Tertiary Desistance in Reinventive Prisons, *The British Journal of Criminology*, 62(3), 623–638.

a sense of belonging. He argues that trust between prison officers and people in prison can help achieve positive change in prison. The experience of being **trusted** might acquire additional value from the low-trust and risk-sensitive environment that most prisons normally offer residents.

A recent and comprehensive review of trauma-informed approaches undertaken in Northern Ireland (which does not focus on corrections per se, but did involve justice workers and corrections workers) concluded that:

> *"There are some really excellent pockets of practice we can see across different departments and agencies, but this hasn't necessarily translated into some sort of overall strategic commitment."*[76]

Conclusion

Let me leave you with five key takeaway messages from today. First, that trauma-informed practice is not simply about treating or responding to trauma, it is about promoting safety for everybody. Secondly, safety is achieved through trust, empowerment, collaboration, and all those principles of practice, as well as leveraging the strengths of the people inside, the workers and the residents. Third, there are examples where trauma-informed correctional care has reduced or avoided prison violence. Fourth, practice does not need to be perfect, but there is a need for a critical mass. You do need your organisation's buy-in for this top-down, bottom-up kind of model. Finally, one person can make a difference sometimes, but organisational commitment is required for long-term systemic change.

Thank you for your time.

[76] Mooney, et al., (2024). *'We are on a journey'. Implementing trauma informed approaches in Northern Ireland.* Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland, p. 84.

THE DISENFRANCHISED WARRIOR

PAULA ORMSBY

I'm going to give you a little insight into my world and what that looks like, because when you come into my world, then you come into my hapu, you come into my Iwi, you come into the greater community. With all of the politics at the moment around gangs, this is probably going to be a little bit of a counternarrative to what you may know, what you may think. All I ask is that you have an open heart to my korero.

The Significance of the Patch

When I call you my brother, it is because you have earned my respect. I recognise you as my brother, as the wearer with pride of our coat of arms, our patch. The patch known as our Korowai[77] has its own sense of identity. Its tangible presence carries its symbolic, physical, and spiritual protection. It has its own whakapapa, its own genealogy, and its origins are rooted deep within the injustices to Māori by way of imperialism, colonisation, assimilation, racism, economic deprivation, along with the commodification of our resources and our people.

It is symbolic of the atrocities that were inflicted upon us and the atrocities that were then inflicted back at society. These were dark times with lost and hurt people, the direct effect of the urban drift. The impact of colonisation was now having intergenerational effects, which tore many whānau, family, hapu, subtribe, and Iwi, tribes apart.

Many stumbled into the wilderness, the cities, a world they didn't know, a world they weren't prepared for, a world they didn't fit into, a cruel world that decimated Māori and other ethnic minorities. They faced discrimination, cultural exclusion, and cultural

[77] Traditionally, a Korowai is a traditional cloak that was usually given to people of high rank. In this instance, it is manifested as a gang patch.

alienation. They were lost in this wilderness with a lack of identity. They had left their Turangawaewae and had no place to stand. They found shelter in the gang. It was a brotherhood, a whānau. It had its own tikanga, but most importantly, it provided a much-needed sense of unity, identity, and belonging.

The gang became the whāngai whānau, the adopted family. They embraced the young warriors and gave them back their safety and comfort zones. Not only were they provided with physiological needs of shelter, food, and warmth, they were given security and most importantly, a whānau, a family within the heart's deepest place, that's what our men and women were really yearning for. The gang took a strong stance towards society and rebelled. Mongrelism then became the ruling power in their life. Not only did they fight against the norms of society, they fought amongst the other gangs. The 1980s straight to the early 1990s was a time of war. The wars for Waikato were particularly bad with the black power and the local MCs. These were ultimately about territory and respect. If someone within your mob whānau was hurt by an opposition gang, then often the retaliation began.

Many of these opposition gangs had cousins, sometimes brothers in them. It was hard for those who didn't understand the brotherhood code and saw whānau fighting whānau, families fighting families. The gang had become their family, and their loyalty was to that. Brotherhood was a precious possession, and your korowai reflected that. As time went on and the walls came to amends, changes happened within the mob. There was a shift in paradigm, that old fighting dog that was represented on the korowai, was put to rest but never forgotten. The new korowai for Waikato was born. It was given life out of the ashes of that era. Its legacy was dosed in violence with a path that left no room for repetition, a path that was paved from the blood of

enemies so that peace could prevail.

Paito, the president, gifted the front on bulldog to his sons as a turn of the tides. His vision of the front on nation was about transparency, facing things directly, and living a life that wasn't hidden behind closed doors. Far too many of our men had been incarcerated, it was a time of healing in a time of change. It was no longer about dying for the cause. It was about living for it, which was the spoils of war. All the dirty work now meant something. It meant being productive within the whānau and becoming self-sufficient, providing for families, which meant employment, education, trade, and enterprise.

The Mongrel Mob was given the title by the government of being a gang. The denotation of a 'gang' is an organised group of criminals. The Waikato Mongrel Mob Kingdom is reforming this view imposed upon us and will no longer let others dictate who they think we are.

As we have reformed ourselves, we have reformed our title. We are not a gang, we're a brotherhood, a sisterhood. We view ourselves as a confederation. A confederation is an organisation that consists of a number of parties or groups united in alliance or league. This is precisely what the Waikato Mongrel Mob Kingdom is, with each chapter representing its own identity. We wear our korowai with pride. It is our taonga, it is our treasure.

We face institutional discrimination that reaches even as far as our own marae. This is evident when our korowai is asked to be removed before entering onto the marae atea[78].

The contemporary ideology of our korowai is often misunderstood, and the real hurt comes from not being discriminated against by the

[78] The open area or courtyard in front of a wharenui (meeting house) on a marae.

Other, but by our own. There has been some shift in paradigm, and a number of marae from around the Motu have come to understand the significance of our korowai. They recognise the place that our korowai has in modern day society. We are kaitiaki, we are guardians of our korowai. Our korowai are culturally bound, and each of our korowai are blessed by our priest, signifying the spiritual element of them (and by the way, our priest wears his patch).

They are objects of significance that can only be earned by dedication and hard work. The different adornments on the side patches reflect a part of our journey. They are our tohu, our merits. They are worn with honour, and not only do they signify the past, the present, and the future, they emulate their Ariki. As one gains achievements in leadership their korowai will be added to. It is forever changing and evolving. It signifies life's journey viewed as a living thing. It grows with the wearer, such as the whatu Pokeka[79] does with a young child.

There has been a slow shift in public perception of the korowai and its symbolic meaning. We are hopeful that there will be a societal change or perception, but we need to lead that change. As hope is a heavenly spring that bounces back the favours that you have done in a lifetime, we just need to keep reclaiming, redefining, reforming. In essence, the Waikato Mongrel Mob Kingdom is about whakawhanaungatanga, connectedness.

We are healing ourselves from the intergenerational and historical trauma and yet are still seen as public enemy number one. As you see by the ploy of the government from the recent happenings, white supremacists kills over 50 people[80], but the focus is on ethnic gangs, not white supremacy. We continue to be used as a scapegoat,

[79] A baby blanket made of muka (fibre) from the harakeke (flax) plant.
[80] See https://christchurchattack.royalcommission.nz/

discriminated against by a gang action plan that directly invokes the human rights of our people.

In order to share another perspective of gangs, I'm going to show you a video[81], recorded in 2019, so it's a little bit old, but you'll get the gist of the trauma and what we're trying to do, in order to change that.

Quotes from the video:

- *"The Mongrel Mob is the longest operating gang within New Zealand. Most are Māori in Pacific Island. We're tribal people. We were pushed off our lands, and we had nowhere to go, so we found our place in the gangs."*

- *"So many of these men and women have been raised by the state. The state has been their parent and the state is a terrible parent. The atrocities that the Mongrel Mob has inflicted upon society is reflective of the atrocities that society inflicted upon our people."*

- *"When you look back to my grandmother's era in Mongrel Mob, they were sold for cars. They were assets, property."*

- *"We have been to hell and back in this hyper-masculine world. Our men have tried to break us and all they did was make us stronger."*

- *"I'm a victim of a lifetime of abuse. I choose to stay single now. It's safer. Both my partners have been murderers. One convicted, one got away with it… I wouldn't have been able to get out any other way without sisters."*

- *"We deserve to have our voice. We can take our place, we can be heard within our kingdom."*

- *"There has never been a woman's chapter before in the Mongrel Mob. We*

[81] Hunziker, C. (Director). (2019). *The Kingdom Wahine* [Film]. Notable Pictures.

are changing that here in the Waikato Kingdom."

- *"Life is not easy. It's not, and don't try and make it that way. Life is not fair, it never was, it isn't now, and it won't ever be. So, the question we've got to ask ourselves is what success is to us and what success is to you? Maybe it's a healthy family, maybe it's a happy marriage."*

- *"So, the basis of the Mongrel Mob Kingdom, it's all about breaking the cycle. Stop feeding the system. It is a lot easier to build strong children than it is to repair broken men. This is all part of helping our brothers and sisters with whatever traumas that they're facing. Women, they too carry trauma, and they too need to be able to come together as wāhine finding their place and their voice within the red society."*

- *"This is why I cling to you fellas in Mongrel Mob so much, you have been the most consistent thing in my life."*

- *"Everything else falls off. Mongrel Mob is forever."*

What it's like to be a Gang Member

I'm going to touch on some of the socio-political factors, as those that have the privilege to know, have the duty to act. I'm often asked, coming from spending 16 years lecturing at Auckland University, seen as an upstanding person within my community, why is it that I became involved within the Mongrel Mob? And the reason being is that my own people had left our people behind.

Discrimination. You face discrimination wherever you go. Discrimination comes from basically every government sector and often the public as well. Ironically, it is our community that loves us, we keep the balance and look after our community. Our children aren't excluded from this

discrimination; they were being booted out of schools at a high rate and if they weren't being excluded, they were being told by their teachers to just go and sit in the back of the class.

Trauma. You can't look at gangs without looking at *state abuse* from being in state care. We've just had an apology by the government from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into State Abuse, our culture was stripped from us, the state became the parent, and the state was a terrible parent.

***Unemployment*.** It's almost impossible for gang members to get employed, however some of our members have gained employment through having employers who personally know them. For many the only way to gain employment was to start their own businesses, but then the police swoop in saying that they are money laundering, going to the banks, telling the banks to shut down their bank accounts, et cetera. So, as much as we try to go forward, we keep on getting pushed back, it's almost impossible to escape poverty.

Racism. The media portrays how the gangs are depicted, it is always black power, Mongrel Mob, Indigenous Tangata Whenua, people of New Zealand – Māori gangs are the face of this. They don't mention other gangs, you don't see that. For me, an attack on gangs is actually an attack on *Māori*. Politicians are pushing campaigns about getting tough on gangs so they can continue to target Māori.

Health. The life expectancy for a male gang member is 55 years. So that tells me that they don't engage in healthcare and looking after themselves. Often, the only time that they present is when an ambulance is rung and they're taken to hospital.

***Housing*.** If you are a gang member, you're flagged straight away. If you are wanting Kāinga Ora housing or social housing, often you are put into areas that other gangs are in – and so straight away,

there's a threat there for your own safety. Social inclusion is a myth. Even for myself – It doesn't matter that I am a teacher. It doesn't matter that I have worked in prisons, worked with AOD, worked in suicide prevention, worked in all of these other spaces. I'm only seen as a gang member, and that's the only hat that a lot of people can see.

Social support. When I first started my involvement with the Mongrel Mob, which was well over a decade ago now, the gangs themselves were reaching out for assistance, but no one was reaching back. I soon became a bridge to hard places and a voice in this space. We challenged this exclusion as Government Services have a responsibility to work with everybody within this country, particularly Tangata whenua.

***Political conflicts*.** We are always in political conflicts; the Gang Legislation Amendment Bill has been implemented so it's now a crime for us to represent who we identify as. We are and will continue to be the political football that gets kicked around. What's ironic is the Attorney General Judith Collins wrote in her report to Parliament that the Gang Legislation Amendment Bill, in consideration with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 that the proposed prohibition on the display of gang insignia in public places is inconsistent with the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, in the bill of rights. Further she concludes that the proposed power to issue dispersal notices is inconsistent to the rights of peaceful assembly in the bill of rights. Inconsistent means they cannot coexist harmoniously. That's this Government's agenda; they do not want our people to exist harmoniously.

Last Word: The Role Gang Whānau have in Improving Safety within the Prisons

We've got Whānau incarcerated in prison right now that are addressing trauma with each other within their units, using traditional healing practices like the Poutama, finding the healer within. We

know that the mainstream programmes like STURP don't work for our Tāne. In order to combat prison violence, then you need a Rangatira in each unit who brings balance to the units and keeps the peace. This concept may be conflicting to what previous people have shared, that a gang leader/Rangatira can stop or minimise prison violence. This practice, although unorthodox, has been happening in individual units for years, with PCO's working with the leaders not against.

If Corrections were implementing the principles of *Hōkai Rangi*, like it was intended, as a living document, then prison violence, in my opinion would naturally reduce.

CONTRIBUTORS

HON. MARK MITCHELL

Mark Mitchell is the Minister of Corrections, Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery, and Minister of Police. He is the MP for Whangaparaoa.

In 1989, Mark joined the New Zealand Police and was a member of the Dog Section and Armed Offender's Squad.

After leaving the police, Mark relocated overseas and launched an international business career, including the start-up of his own security company.

Mark entered Parliament in 2011 when he was elected as the Member of Parliament for the Rodney electorate. In 2016, he was appointed as the Minister of Statistics, Minister for Land Information, and Associate Minister of Justice. In 2017, he was promoted to Cabinet and appointed as the Minister of Defence.

SCOTT WALKER

After starting out with Ara Poutama, Department of Corrections as a Building Instructor eleven years ago, Scott is the now General Manager at Spring Hill Corrections Facility.

Spring Hill Corrections Facility is a large prison site, with a maximum bed capacity of 986. A site that was once designed as an end destination prison focusing on reintegration, has since evolved to a complex high security remand prison covering the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Rotorua/Taupo Regions in New Zealand.

ALICIA CLIFFORD

Alicia Clifford is a white settler Ph.D. Candidate at McMaster University and is an arts-based researcher who stands in solidarity with Indigenous women forced to manoeuvre Canada's prison systems. Their research focuses on how the state targets Indigenous Peoples via the criminal legal system to perpetuate settler colonial policies of assimilation.

Alicia works alongside the community using strengths and arts-based approaches to ensure Indigenous women's perspectives become a force for change. They are also the board chair for the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan, a non-profit organization that serves

women and gender-diverse adults who are criminalized or at risk of criminalization by tearing down barriers to justice and equity through advocacy, cultural teachings, and practical support.

Alicia uses their privilege to advocate for systemic change and create healing opportunities for Indigenous women targeted by the legal system.

CHANTEL HUEL

Chantel Huel is a fierce and passionate advocate for Indigenous Peoples seeking recovery, having five years of experience in recovery and 20+ years in addiction-related fields, including her current role as Str8-Up's Program Manager.

Chantel lives each day committed to helping others on their transformative healing journeys with addiction by using her highly developed skills as a mentor, mediator, negotiator, and system navigator. She creates safe spaces by consistently employing trauma-informed and harm-reduction approaches.

Chantel's personal experiences are an asset that allows her to forge relationships with people from all walks of life. These skills enable her to change people's lives and influence the policies and systems they are forced to navigate. Her experience with addiction and powerful voice makes her an influential and essential change-maker in the community.

NANCY RODRIGUEZ

Nancy Rodriguez is a Professor in the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at the University of California, Irvine. Her research interests include inequality (race/ethnicity, class, crime and justice) and the collateral consequences of mass incarceration.

She is the author of several books, whose work has appeared in numerous peer-reviewed journals. In October 2014, Dr. Rodriguez was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve as the Director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the scientific research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice. During her tenure at NIJ, she worked with federal partners to address gaps in crime and justice research. Dr. Rodriguez served on the National Academy of Sciences committee that produced the 2022 consensus report, Reducing Racial Inequality in the Criminal Justice System.

Currently, Dr. Rodriguez is Principal Investigator of a study on the racial and ethnic disparities experienced by Latinos in local justice systems (support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation). She is also Principal Investigator of two multi-state projects addressing the causes and consequences of prison violence and the nature and impact of family engagement among incarcerated persons (support from Arnold Ventures).

KIM SMITH

Kim Smith currently serves as the Acting Manager for the Women's Strategy at the Department of Corrections. Since joining the department in 2010 as a probation officer, Kim has brought extensive experience to various leadership roles, including Principal Advisor Employment Development, Manager of Interventions, Programmes and Employment, and Principal Advisor for the Women's Strategy.

In her current position, Kim oversees the Women's Strategy team, which plays a key role as kaitiaki of *Wāhine*: *E rere ana ki te pae hou*, the department's women's strategy. Her role involves providing specialist practice advice and promoting gender-responsive, culturally responsive, holistic, and trauma-informed approaches to working with women in the Corrections system.

Kim works closely with both internal teams and external partners to advocate for programmes and services designed to reduce reoffending, supporting better and brighter futures for women in the Corrections system.

KYM GRIERSON

Kym Grierson is the Deputy Commissioner Women's Prisons, a role established in April 2024. Kym joined the Department of Corrections in 2010 as a Programme Facilitator. Other roles she has held throughout the course of her career with Corrections include Principal Facilitator, Assistant Prison Director, General Manager Integrated Practice, and Workstream Co-lead – Women's Strategy.

Kym oversees the safe, fair, and humane management of women in New Zealand's prisons. This includes direct line management of the General Managers for our three women's prisons – Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility, Arohata Prison (in Wellington), and Christchurch Women's Prison.

Kym helps to strengthen the connection between frontline operations and stewardship of the Women's Prison Network as well as the strategic direction of Wāhine: E Rere Ana Ki te Pae Hou - our gendered response to Hokai Rangi.

A key focus for Kym is the continued development and delivery of policy, process, practice, programmes, and services designed to respond to the unique needs of women in prison and community.

JACKY HOWCUTT

Jacky has a whakapapa to Lancashire, Northwest of England, in the UK. She is the middle child of five siblings, who had a strong desire to emigrate. This opportunity became a reality for Jacky in February 2017 when she and her husband were selected, through an international recruitment drive by Ara Poutama Aotearoa. Prior to moving to New Zealand, Jacky worked for Her Majesty's Prison Service for 23 years, primarily within the custodial environment, with two secondments in the community sector.

Upon arriving in New Zealand in 2017, Jacky worked at both Spring Hill and Waikeria prisons and in July 2024, Jacky graciously accepted the offer to be the kaitiaki for Arohata prison as Acting General manager, a role she now holds permanently. Jacky is known to operate with courage, humility, and an openness to learning from others.

RENEE CLARKSON

Renee grew up in the Waikato and began her career with NZ Police in Wellington. She later worked for NZ Immigration in London before volunteering in Thailand with Burmese refugee children—an experience that deepened her appreciation for resilience and compassion.

Returning to New Zealand in 2009, Renee joined Ara Poutama Aotearoa/Department of Corrections, progressing through roles from Senior Community Work Supervisor to Probation Officer, Service Manager, and various advisory roles in both Wellington and Christchurch. She spent five years as Assistant Prison Director at Otago Corrections Facility before becoming General Manager at Christchurch Women's Prison in 2024.

Renee has led the successful launch of Aotearoa's first therapeutic community in a women's prison and a dedicated first-night unit. She values Manaaki, inspired by Maya Angelou's words: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

KATHERINE MCLACHLAN

Dr Katherine McLachlan has more than 20 years of experience working in the criminal justice sector in roles related to policing and intelligence, child protection, youth justice, victim support, and justice policy.

She is currently the Teaching Program Director and a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Flinders University (SA) and has been the victim representative on the Parole Board of SA since 2015.

She has established a social justice enterprise, The Magnolia Project (https://magnoliaproject.com.au/), with Dr Andrew Day, supporting children of prisoners and early-career CJS professionals. Her first book, “Trauma-informed Criminal Justice,” was published in 2024.

PAULA ORMSBY

Paula Ormsby has a vast background in education from E.C.E., Primary, Māori, and Tertiary. She has delivered programmes to men in prison and wānanga for tane on probation.

Paula is a trustee for The Serve, feeding and advocating for rough sleepers and the wider community. She also facilitates healing wānanga, suicide prevention and is the rangatira of Mongrel Mob Wahine Toa.

CHAIR

ARMON TAMATEA

Armon (*Rongowhakāta; Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki*) is a clinical psychologist who served as a clinician and senior research advisor for Ara Poutama/Dept of Corrections (New Zealand) before joining the dark side of academia, where he is an Associate Professor in Psychology at the University of Waikato.

He has worked extensively in the assessment and treatment of violent and sexual offenders and contributed to the design and implementation of an experimental prison-based violence prevention programme for high-risk offenders diagnosed with psychopathy.

Armon is the research lead for Nga Tūmanakotanga and is the Director of the post-graduate clinical psychology programme in the School of Psychology. His research interests include institutional violence, psychopathy, New Zealand gang communities, and exploring culturally-informed approaches to offender management. Armon currently divides his professional time between research, teaching, supervision, and clinical practice in the criminal justice arena.

ABOUT NGA TŪMANAKOTANGA

Nga Tūmanakotanga is a multi-year applied research project funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE) and led by Armon Tamatea. The aims of Nga Tūmanakotanga are to develop a holistic and integrated approach to understanding and addressing the causes and control of violence in carceral spaces.

A central assumption of Nga Tūmanakotanga is that prisons are *ecologies* – spaces where people, resources, and the built environment are interrelated – and that violence is a *product* of a complex of interpersonal and environmental factors that increase the likelihood of assault – but also suggest opportunities for possible solutions.

The project draws together a range of perspectives from across the 'prison ecology' and includes viewpoints from within these sites as well as those who interact from outside.

Please visit us at www.waikato.ac.nz/turning-the-tide

ABOUT "KO TŪ KOE? KO RONGO KOE?"

Tidal imagery is central to Nga Tūmanakotanga and reflects how we navigate currents, heavy seas, and even tranquil waters. The question: 'Ko Tū koe? Ko Rongo koe?' ('Are you in the state of Tūmatauenga (God of war) or Rongomātane (God of peace)?') refers to the Atua, Tūmatauenga (Tū of the angry face), and Rongo-mā-Tāne (the God of peace - reflecting stability and growth), that recognises the complex relationship between destructive and creative forces that the questions of this research project raise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This symposium is the result of the collected efforts of dedicated people. Thanks go to:

Firstly, our opening address and fantastic presenters: Mark, Scott, Nancy, Chantel, Alicia, Kim, Kym, Jacky, Renee, Katherine, and Paula.

The Nga Tūmanakotanga governance committee:

- Neil Campbell (General Manager Cultural Capability, Ara Poutama Aotearoa)
- Ben Clark (Director of Operations Pae Ora (Healthy Futures), Ara Poutama Aotearoa)
- Linda Nikora (Professor of Indigenous Studies, Auckland University)
- Harry Tam (Director, H2R Research and Consulting)
- Mate Webb (Principal Advisor Kaupapa Maori Practice (STU's), Ara Poutama Aotearoa)

The research team:

- Assoc. Prof. Lars Brabyn (School of Social Sciences, University of Waikato)
- David Cooke (Former (retired) Professor Glasgow Caledonian University; Consultant Forensic Clinical Psychology)
- Prof. Michael Daffern (School of Health Sciences, Swinburne University)
- Prof. Andrew Day (School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne)
- Prof. Randy Grace (School of Psychology, Speech & Hearing, University of Canterbury)
- Assoc. Prof. Robert Henry (Department of Indigenous Studies, University of Saskatchewan)
- Prof. Devon Polaschek (Director of the New Zealand Institute of Security & Crime Science, University of Waikato)

As always, we acknowledge the tāne, wahine and Takatāpui – past and present – who have served time in the New Zealand prison system, many of whom have generously and selflessly contributed to our understanding of their realities of prison violence and the contexts in which it occurs, as well as their whanau who in their own way are also serving their sentences with them.

We also thank the many practitioners, researchers, and supporters who supported this work from the earliest days.

Nga Tūmanakotanga gratefully acknowledges the support of our funder, the Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment.

We would like to express our gratitude to the University of Waikato for supporting and promoting this event.

Last and not least, we appreciate YOU… those who attended the symposium and the readers of these proceedings. We hope that these insights and provocations have stimulated thought and helped to mobilise some constructive action in your space to address the issue of safer prisons and safer communities.

Ngā mihi,

Armon Tamatea & Sade Lomas
Project Lead Project Manager