

Chapter 2:

Understanding Corrections in Canada

Chapter Overview

This chapter explains how corrections is defined and provides an overview of its purpose in Canada. It encompasses governing legislation and the framework which guides corrections. Building on chapter 1, this chapter explores the mandate of public safety with opposing correctional ideologies including a “get tough” approach versus a treatment focused approach. The structure of Canada’s correctional system is examined and compares the federal system to the provincial and territorial system, including specific legislation which guides each system.

Learning Objectives

- Define “corrections.”
- Describe the tension that exists in corrections.
- List the pieces of legislation that govern Canadian corrections.
- Describe the difference between federal and provincial corrections in Canada in terms of their mandates, supervision, and prisoner populations.
- Describe the role of the correctional investigator of Canada.
- Discuss alternatives to incarceration.

Discussion Questions

- Correctional ideology includes opposing approaches on upholding the mandate of public safety. In your opinion, is it more effective to adopt a “get tough” approach or to focus on the treatment needs of the offender when promoting public safety? (See pages 24-26; entire chapter).
- Correctional Service Canada (CSC) operates the federal correctional system in Canada and operates Aboriginal healing lodges for federally sentenced men and women. What do you think are some of the benefits of these healing lodges? Would you change anything about their operation? (See pages 26-29).
- There are several different security classifications inherent within federal institutions in Canada. Outline some of the characteristics associated with maximum, medium, and minimum security institutions. (See page 27).

- Both federal and provincial corrections have a community corrections sector. What is meant by community corrections? What are some of the unique benefits and challenges of community corrections as opposed to custodial corrections? (See pages 29-30).
- Alternatives to incarceration help to facilitate offender rehabilitation. What are some of these alternatives and how can the demands of both public safety and rehabilitation be met through the use of prison alternatives? (See pages 30; entire chapter).
- Legislation guides the federal and provincial correctional systems in Canada. What are some of the key pieces of legislation and how do they protect the rights of offenders in Canada? (See pages 30-32).

Class Activities

1. Role play! Develop a CORCAN program for inmates

Objective:

For students to develop a deeper understanding of effective rehabilitation programs for inmates and to develop their innovative abilities and effective communication skills.

Materials needed:

Access to the Internet, access to the textbook.

Description of activity:

Pretend you are a manager at Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and develop a CORCAN program proposal for your instructor/seminar leader. Include within your proposal a rationale as to how your program would facilitate effective rehabilitation for the federal inmate population. See pages 26-27 of chapter 2 for an example of a CORCAN program. How will your program benefit reintegration upon release from custody? Would you partner with any other organizations for this program's development? Present your proposal to your instructor/seminar leader as if you were a CSC manager and discuss whether your program would be a viable option for Canada's federal correctional system.

2. Case study research activity

Objective:

To identify differences between federal and provincial correctional institutions in Canada.

Materials needed:

Access to the Internet.

Description of activity:

Search the Internet for federal and provincial correctional institutions in Canada. Identify at least 1 federal institution and at least 1 provincial institution. In 250 words or less, outline at least 5 characteristics of each institution which may include the following: inmate capacity, security level, programs/services offered, and the jurisdiction of the institution. Are there many similarities between the institutions? Are there many differences between the institutions?

3. One-minute paper

Objective:

To gauge comprehension of alternatives to incarceration and how these approaches to criminality can instill offender rehabilitation.

Materials needed:

Pen and paper.

Description of activity:

At the end of a lecture on chapter 2 contents, have students write a one-minute paper on what some alternatives to incarceration in Canada are, whether they may be for federal or provincial inmates, and how these alternatives can foster offender rehabilitation. Before beginning the one-minute paper, allow students 2 minutes to consider the paper topic.

Teaching Aids (Recommended Video Web Links)

BC Public Service Corrections - Nanaimo Correctional Centre (B.C. Public Service, 2013).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2IQZot9Jas>

This video is a recruitment video for the Nanaimo Correctional Centre in the Ministry of Justice, Adult Custody, Corrections Branch in the BC Public Service. It highlights areas of the Nanaimo Correctional Centre and shows several aspects of daily operations. Several correctional officers are interviewed for this video and examine their choice of obtaining a career in corrections and the

benefits of this line of work, especially as it relates to working in the Nanaimo Correctional Centre. This video will allow students to gain an understanding of provincial corrections and the impact that correctional officers can have.

1. A correctional officer in the video states that the prison's community is therapeutic. How important is the therapeutic element in prison communities?
2. This video showed many areas on the grounds of the correctional center. What were your main thoughts in viewing these grounds? Do you think it is a typical layout? What stood out the most to you?
3. This video highlighted work and other rehabilitative programs in this institution. How important are rehabilitative programs in provincial institutions?

Correctional Services of Canada Opens Training Facility in Regina (The Leader-Post, 2018).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TGUIskvV4k>

This short video provides insight into the training required to enter a career in federal corrections with the Correctional Service Canada. The video shows the training facility in Regina and how it has incorporated minimum-medium and maximum security simulation areas, including cells and a mock recreational yard.

1. Do you think the simulation areas of the training facility will effectively prepare correctional officers for the uncertainties of working in a prison?
2. The video explains that new correctional officers go to the training facility for 12 weeks. What pieces of governing legislation would you include into their training modules if you were to develop training for this facility?
3. Do you think that training should be the same for both federal and provincial correctional officers? Why or why not?

Crisis in Ontario's Corrections System (TVOntario, 2019).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRM02PPnNzo>

This video gives an overview of the current state of corrections in Ontario. It highlights several challenges of Ontario's system of corrections, including escalating levels of institutional violence, recurring institutional lockdowns, and major job actions such as work stoppages. The video provides examples from the Toronto South Detention Center. It provides perspectives from Lee Chapelle, former inmate and President of Canadian Prison Consulting. It will allow students to obtain an understanding of provincial corrections.

1. The video examines job actions such as work stoppages as a way to highlight safety challenges in prison. Do you think this is an effective mechanism to foster positive change?

2. The video portrays the prevalence of lockdowns in prison. What are lockdowns and how would frequent lockdowns impact an inmate's mental health? In your opinion, are lockdowns necessary for staff and inmate safety?
3. This video explains how items not permitted by prison officials, such as cell phones, enter some correctional facilities. Do you think this is more common in federal or provincial prisons? Why?

Inside Canada's Corrections System (TVOntario, 2016).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8aKRcUlOyI>

This video explores the Canadian prison system, focusing on Ontario's prison system. It features 4 panel members (from the John Howard Society of Canada, MUNK School of Global Affairs, The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and Canadian Prison Consulting). Several aspects of Canadian corrections are examined, including federal inmate demographics, solitary confinement, legislative changes to sentencing guidelines, and the importance of a treatment focused approach to incarceration. This video will allow students to obtain an understanding of several important aspects of both federal and provincial corrections.

1. It is mentioned in this video that about half of female federal inmates have a mental health need. How can these needs be effectively identified and addressed throughout incarceration?
2. A panel member in this video states that current prison infrastructure has resulted in worsening conditions for inmates. What are some examples of this perspective?
3. A panel member in this video argues that sentencing guidelines in Canada have changed and have resulted in less conditional sentences. How could this impact effective rehabilitation?
4. This video describes segregation as "a jail within a jail". Provide some context to support this description.

Myths and Facts About Prison (TVOntario, 2016).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjzW1oO3Y-M>

This video features Lee Chapelle, a former inmate who is now an advocate for Canadian inmates and president of Canadian Prison Consulting in Ontario. It examined the realities of being incarcerated in Canada noting that fictional television leads to fallacy surrounding incarceration. The video examines several nuances of prison life for inmates.

1. It is mentioned in the video that much of the violence that occurs in prison stems from domestic issues within living units. How can this issue be rectified?
2. Lee Chapelle states that he was sent to an adult correctional facility at the age of 16 (prior to the enactment of the *Young Offender Act*). Do you agree or disagree with a separate system of corrections for youth?
3. The video highlights Lee Chapelle's advice for prison survival. He acknowledges the importance of accountability. What are your thoughts on this? How can accountability prepare someone for incarceration?