

# REVEALING RESEARCH & EVALUATION (RREV)

A PUBLICATION OF THE BC CORRECTIONS BRANCH  
PERFORMANCE, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION (PREV) UNIT  
Strategic Operations Division

Issue #13 — Spring 2018

*In this issue we describe some of the recent evidence-based changes made to some of our cognitive-behavioural programs*

## SAM Evaluation — Fall 2016: Results and Recommendations

### SAM Evaluation

The PREv team completed an evaluation of the Substance Abuse Management Program (SAM) in the Spring of 2016.

- For men and women under community supervision and women in custody, successful completion of SAM was associated with a significant decrease in reoffending over two years.
- For men in custody, successful completion of SAM was not associated with decreased reoffending over two years.

A qualitative analysis (surveys, etc.) was carried out over the summer of 2016 to explore these contrasting findings.

### What We Did

Surveys were provided and on-site interviews were carried out with Corrections staff working with male offenders in the Custody and Community Divisions to gather data about SAM facilitation and administration. Further, the SAM facilitator manual was reviewed.

The goal of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of how SAM was being delivered in both divisions and to identify differences that might help explain why recidivism rates for those completing SAM in custody were higher relative to those completing SAM in the community.

### Results & Recommendations

#### *Pre-and Post-Program Questionnaires*

It was determined that the responsivity principle should be given more weight when directing offenders to SAM. To address this and to better assess program integrity, pre- and post-program questionnaires, as well as facilitator and participant surveys have been embedded into the program.

#### *Core Program Scheduling — Custody*

Challenges were evident regarding scheduling of CORE programming in a custody setting when taking into account various operational needs. As a result, a more flexible approach to the session outline was developed, including recommendations on where to schedule breaks in sessions.

#### *Cultural Considerations*

As SAM delivered in custody was not effective at reducing recidivism for Indigenous men, it was suggested that program content be reviewed to ensure cultural relevancy. In revising the program, the facilitator script and exercises were tailored to integrate language and concepts that are more culturally relevant and consistent with other aspects of our work with Indigenous clients.

#### *Stronger Cognitive Behavioural Approach*

Research indicates that cognitive behavioural programs are most successful in reducing recidivism and therefore cognitive behavioural concepts (e.g., thought-stopping techniques) were further integrated throughout the SAM program.



Katherine Regan (A/ Senior Researcher, left) and Carrie McCulley (Director, Programs and Interventions, right) were among those who worked on the SAM evaluation and program revisions.



#### What Happened to the Violence Prevention Program (VPP)?

The VPP evaluation carried out in 2012 found that although participation in the VPP program successfully reduces recidivism, improvements could be made to respond to our evolving understanding of effective programming and to incorporate feedback from facilitators and participants.

#### Revisions to VPP

While retaining many of the VPP concepts, the program has gone through a name change to become more **action oriented**. The program will now be referred to as **Living Without Violence (LWV)**. Revisions include:

- **Participant and facilitator manuals were updated** to incorporate input from Corrections Staff, Indigenous Justice Strategy partners, and Coordinators.
- **Short videos were added** to complement concepts introduced throughout the course.
- Participant manuals and course DVDs are now available for ordering through BC Corrections' print shop.
- Additional **collaborative language** has been added to the facilitator script to improve **cultural relevance** and consistency with other aspects of our work with clients such as STICS.
- Pre- and post-program questionnaires have been embedded into the program, along with a facilitator survey and course evaluation form, in an effort to assist with our **program evaluation**. These documents are posted on the LWV CorrPoint site.
- New Facilitator manuals were made available to previously trained VPP facilitators during booster sessions offered in Oct/Nov 2017.
- Learn more about **Living Without Violence** on the CorrPoint site, <https://corrpoint.ag.gov.bc.ca>, or contact the PREv Unit directly.

#### CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- ◆ Substance Abuse Management
- ◆ Living Without Violence (formerly Violence Prevention Program)
- ◆ Thinking Leads 2 Change Program for Women
- ◆ Relationship Violence Prevention Program
- ◆ Sex Offender Maintenance Program

#### *LWV Going Forward...*

The PREv Unit will use the data collected from the pre- and post-program questionnaires, as well as the participant and facilitator feedback forms, to evaluate the effectiveness of the LWV program in reducing recidivism.

Do you have any questions or feedback to share? Contact the PREv Unit at [SGCorrectionsResearch@gov.bc.ca](mailto:SGCorrectionsResearch@gov.bc.ca)

*“What works” is using programs that are proven to lower reoffending.*

#### LWV: Goals and Objectives

After successfully completing LWV, participants should be able to:

- Identify the precursors to violent behaviour, including historical, cultural, and sociological factors that contribute to violent and aggressive behaviour.
- Explain the impact of violent behaviour on self and others.
- Recognize attitudes and thinking patterns that lead to violent behaviour and reframe or counter them into thinking patterns that lead to non-violent, self-managed behaviour.
- Explain how emotions contribute to aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Explain how stress and tension can lead to violent behaviour.
- Identify risk factors, high-risk situations and choice points.
- Design and use self-management plans.

### THINKING LEADS 2 CHANGE (TLC) - A PROGRAM FOR WOMEN: UPDATE

#### *Did You Know...*

- **TLC** is a gender-specific, trauma informed program designed for medium and high risk justice-involved women.
- BC Corrections has offered over 50 sessions of TLC since its rollout in May 2016.
- As of July 2017, there have been over 400 participants in TLC programs throughout the province.
- 286 participants have provided materials for the formative evaluation of the TLC program — well done facilitators!
- 49% of participants successfully completed the program (completed at least 10 of 12 sessions).

#### **TIPS for Questionnaires:**

- Facilitators can scan all materials and email them directly to the PREv Unit.  
**SGCorrectionsResearch@gov.bc.ca**
- All materials can be found on BC Corrections' CorrPoint site under CORE Programs-TLC-All Documents.
- Pre-program questionnaires should be completed each time a participant starts the program.
- Completed materials can also continue to be mailed to **PO Box 9278 STN PROV GOVT, V8W 9J7.**

## A Word From Participants

*"This program is a miracle program. I think it should be mandatory for everyone to take this program whether in here or on the outs."*

*"I really enjoyed the program and the facilitators made it fun and easy to be a part of the group. She was great. Thank you!"*

*"I loved the program and gained a lot from it. Totally positive outcome!"*

### The TLC Program will be evaluated...

The TLC evaluation will examine **if** the program "works," in addition to **why** the program works or does not work. This will take place in two stages:

-A **formative evaluation** will monitor program implementation and determine whether the program should be modified for improvement. The formative evaluation will be carried out approximately one year after the program began to ensure the program is on track for success. This process began in Summer 2017!

-A **summative evaluation** will assess whether the program is meeting its objectives, including reducing re-offending. The summative evaluation examining program outcomes will be carried out approximately 3 years after the program began.

#### Formative Evaluation

- **Start Date:** Fall 2017
- **Cohort:** Participants who completed program between its inception and August 31, 2017.
- **Follow-up:** N/A
- **Report available:** Summer 2018

#### Summative Evaluation

- **Start Date:** Fall 2020
- **Cohort:** Participants who completed program between September 1, 2016 and August 31, 2018.
- **Follow-up:** 2 years (to August 31, 2020)
- **Report available:** Fall 2021



The BC Corrections PREv Unit uses the information provided by Core program facilitators to inform evaluations and assess program integrity and effectiveness.

As a result, it is important that accurate information is entered into the Core program outcome screen in the CORNET system.

There are five main components that contribute to “good data.” Good data is **accurate, complete, retrievable, verifiable, and truthful.**

## Discussing Data Integrity



### *What Can Data Do?*

- ⇒ Support decision making
- ⇒ Challenge assumptions
- ⇒ Identify areas in need of change
- ⇒ Help identify program successes
- ⇒ Predict outcomes
- ⇒ Support accountability to the public

## MEET ONE OF THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE PREv UNIT!



### **Daniel Morris**

Daniel has a Masters of Education in Measurement, Evaluation, and Research Methods, and a Masters of Applied Science in Educational and Organizational Psychology. He also has a Credentialed Evaluator (CE) designation from the Canadian Evaluation Society and over 15 years experience conducting research and carrying out evaluations in both the public and private sectors. Outside of work Daniel enjoys exploring, singing, and debating the relative merits of current events.

*Research Based and Evidence Driven  
Supporting Best Practices to Protect BC Communities and Reduce Crime*

### **The Performance, Research and Evaluation (PREv) Unit**

**Contact us!** If you have comments, questions, or ideas about this publication, please contact:



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