

**2019
2020**



CAEFS

Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies

Annual Report



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Who We Are



An Overview

“A major challenge of [the prison abolition] movement is to do the work that will create more humane, habitable environments for people in prison without bolstering the permanence of the prison system. **How, then, do we accomplish this balancing act of passionately attending to the needs of prisoners** -calling for less violent conditions, an end to state sexual assault, improved physical and mental health care, greater access to drug programs, better educational work opportunities, unionization of prison labor, more connections with families and communities, shorter or alternative sentencing **and at the same time call for alternatives to sentencing altogether, no more prison construction, and abolitionist strategies that question the place of the prison in our future?”**

- Angela Y. Davis



This question and balancing act are at the heart of the work of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, and the 23 local Elizabeth Fry societies located across the country

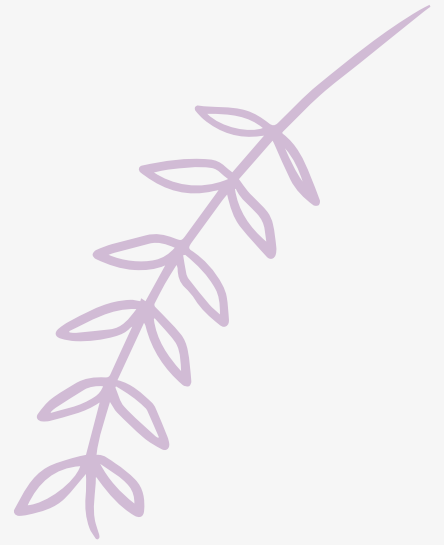
Each of our locals is their own self-governing entity, with their own board of directors, executive director, and staff. While we operate individually, we also know that we are stronger together. Our network comes together to share resources and knowledge, build partnerships, and convene on key issues – all in service of offering the best support possible to criminalized women and gender-diverse people in Canada.

At the CAEFS office, we don't provide services like the local Elizabeth Fry societies do. Instead, we take on the key issues that impact criminalized women and gender-diverse people in Canada. CAEFS' advocacy be broken down into three categories:

- Defending Prisoners' Rights,
- Building Capacity
- Raising Awareness.

You can learn more about our work in these three areas later on in our report.

From our Board President



2019-2020 was a year of change, growth, and renewal for CAEFS. This annual report contains the stories, facts, statistics and celebrations of an organization that continues to evolve to respond to the realities of the most marginalized and criminalized people in society. The dedication and resilience of this network is evident in these pages, but more importantly, in the communities where all of the work is carried out.

We ended last year at a very full AGM that saw a united membership pass a unifying resolution on acknowledging and naming our work with trans and non-binary folks. The resolution was submitted and friendly amendments from the floor enhanced the language of that resolution; this was a new and informative process for us as a network as we continue to evolve in our language and our practice. We came out of that AGM with an increased commitment from across this Country to work together.

It must also be acknowledged that our post AGM Conference was used by some as a platform to voice their disapproval of the motion to become a deliberately trans-inclusive organization, causing harm to many. It was evident then that this year had to prioritize healing those harms and moving us forward, together, united in our goals of protecting human rights and inclusion for all.

The past year was busy with many people to thank for their role in ensuring that CAEFS continued to fulfill its mission and mandate throughout this past fiscal year. The first part of the year saw the resignation of Executive Director, Kassandra Churcher. We are grateful to Kassandra for so skillfully leading the organization in her time with CAEFS and are grateful for her continued work with us as we transitioned to new leadership. We are also indebted to Kelly Potvin of Elizabeth Fry Society Toronto, who was hired to be the interim Acting ED during the summer and fall, for her hard work. In addition to her full-time duties with her local Elizabeth Fry society, she worked many additional hours from mid-June until we were able to have our new Executive Director start in January of this year, supported on the ground by the team at Elizabeth Fry Ottawa.

Continued on next page



From our Executive Director & Board President

As a board we moved away from the previous model of three board meetings per year to having monthly board meetings. This has allowed the board to work together more regularly to assist with the operations of the organization while it was in transition.

In the fall of 2019 we contracted and worked with Beth Jordan of Adobe Consulting to help the board come together to create a plan for moving us forward. A full three day session was held where we recommitted to our dedication to advocating on the elimination of the use of segregation, reporting on conditions of confinement, holding all levels of government accountable, all the while working with and strengthening our local societies and our membership. We also committed to working on a strategic plan that will include our membership and in order to guide us in that work, we identified the working values of CAEFS to guide us. We are proud to report that our interim core values are:

- Human Rights – equity and access
- Accountability – transparency, predictability, integrity, and reliability
- Respect – kindness, compassion, ‘nothing about us without us’
- Collaboration – within our organization and external to our organization

In the new year, Emilie Coyle joined the organization as the new Executive Director. Within a few months, the rumours of the possibility of a global COVID-19 pandemic became a reality and like every other organization we had to pivot the way we did our work. While the pandemic has changed how we were able to operate, it also brought opportunities for novel ways to do our critical work. We look forward to continuing our new reality and we will continue to find new ways to support our membership.

With warmth and solidarity,

Dawn Ferris

From our Executive Director

For a few years I have had a quote on my Facebook page by the writer Arundhati Roy. The quote says the following: “[a]nother world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing”.

The 2019-2020 fiscal year ended with a global pandemic. This meant that all of a sudden we all had to drastically change the way we operated. It was scary and it was overwhelming. However, it also brought the very essence of the work of CAEFS into the public eye, and this has the potential to be a real catalyst for change.

This network has long recognized that the communities we live in must be strengthened and transformed in order to evolve to protect those among us who are most oppressed. This has never been easy but hope fuels the essential building work that is necessary for prison abolition to become a reality. Now that hope is intensified as we seize this timely opportunity to join with others, who are also committed to this change, in deliberate and innovative ways.

Together we will continue over the next year and the years to come to listen, reflect, act, imagine, and create the supportive future we collectively envision. In doing so we create the world that has always been possible. The world that was clearly already on her way.

In solidarity and love,

Emilie Coyle



Our Team

Staff & Consultants

Current

- **Emilie Coyle**, Executive Director
- **Jackie Omstead**, National Coordinator
- **Jaya Bordeleau- Cass**, Legal Researcher & Policy Analyst
- **Patti Tait**, Special Projects Advisor
- **Darlene MacEachern**, Regional Coordinator
- **Michelle Gushue**, Expert Consultant
- **Janet Foyle**, Regional Coordinator
- **Wendy Bariteau**, Expert Consultant
- **Yoriko Susanj**, Regional Coordinator
- **Renee Acoby**, Expert Consultant

Outgoing

- **Kassandra Churcher**, Executive Director
- **Kelly Potvin**, Interim Executive Director
- **Savannah Gentile**, Director of Advocacy and Legal Issues

Board of Directors

Current

- **Dawn Ferris**, President
- **Toni Sinclair**, Vice President & Regional Advocate (Prairie Region)
- **Cathy Harrison**, Treasurer & Board Presentative (Pacific Region)
- **Erin Bellavance**, Secretary & Board Representative (Ontario Region)
- **Patti Tait**, Indigenous Women's Presentative
- **Axelle Francois**, Board Representative (Quebec Region)
- **Diane Bergeron**, Board Representative (Quebec Region)
- **Ruth Gangnon**, Staff Representative & Regional Advocate (Quebec Region)
- **Denise Durette**, Board Representative & Regional Advocate (Atlantic Region)
- **Jillian Barrington**, Board Representative (Atlantic Region)
- **Judy Murphy**, Staff Representative & Regional Advocate (Atlantic Region)
- **Cory Roslyn**, Staff Representative (Ontario Region)
- **Venus Sayed**, Board Representative (Ontario Region)
- **Jennifer Murphy**, Board Representative (Pacific Region)
- **Micki Materi**, Staff Representative (Pacific Region)

Outgoing

- **Diana Majury**, President
- **Candice Pilgrim**, Vice President & Board Representative (Ontario Region)
- **Marta Jacewska**, Secretary & Board Representative (Prairie Region)
- **Darlene MacEachern**, Staff Representative & Regional Advocate (Atlantic Region)
- **Pamela Marche**, Board Representative (Atlantic Region)
- **Nan Lee**, Secretary & Board Representative (Prairie Region)

Local Member Society Listings

From coast to Coast, local member societies are there to support criminalized women and gender diverse people.

Click on a local society to learn more.

ATLANTIC

Elizabeth Fry Saint John
Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton
Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia

QUEBEC

Société Elizabeth Fry Quebec

ONTARIO

Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa	Elizabeth Fry Simcoe Muskoka
Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough	Elizabeth Fry Peel Halton
Elizabeth Fry Toronto	Elizabeth Fry Society of North Eastern Ontario
Elizabeth Fry Kingston	Elizabeth Fry North Western Ontario
	Elizabeth Fry Southern Ontario

PRAIRIES

Elizabeth Fry Manitoba
Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan
Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary
Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton

PACIFIC

Kamloops District Elizabeth Fry Society	Elizabeth Fry Society - South Caribou
Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society	Archway Society
central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society	
Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver	

Our Regional Updates



Updates from our local member societies and regional advocacy teams

Atlantic

The Atlantic Region grew by one new society this year. They are also working together to provide regional advocacy, programs, and services. Here are some highlights from their members:

Mainland Nova Scotia had an exciting year for legal and advocacy work. We argued and won a judicial review, assisted many women at parole hearings and disciplinary court and successfully advocated for many medical temporary absences for women at high risk of complications from COVID-19.

EFry Saint John chose to focus on capacity building which included Board Development, Revenue Development Planning and creating a Marketing and Communications plan to be in a stronger position to offer sound and effective programs and services for those receiving support in our EFry community. We have implemented a transitional housing model, My Place Apartments, innovative programs using the arts, broadened our provincial partner base with universities, government, correctional and community agencies, and addressed record suspension issues.

Quebec

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Quebec accompanies women throughout their social reintegration process by offering programs that are specific to the realities of women's lives. Their programs target three essential dimensions for a successful return to community: organizational, occupational, and relational.

In 2019/2020 the Quebec Regional advocacy team made regular visits to the Joliette Institution for Women and the Pinel Institute, meeting with management to address the concerns most frequently raised by the prisoners. It was a challenging year with two deaths in custody – one from suicide and another from what appears to be misdiagnosed health problems.

EF of Mainland NL For Women's Outreach was officially incorporated in July 2020, with our office located in St. John's. We are looking forward to acceptance of membership, as well as working with our amazing sisters Canada.

Efry Cape Breton has completed a full year of our Bail Verification and Supervision Program, and it was a success. We have worked with our Indigenous partners at MLSN to provide the bail program Island wide. We have also been working with Wellness and Gladue Courts to provide alternatives to incarceration, referrals, housing, and programs.

The Atlantic Regional Advocacy Team staff met with over 400 women at Nova Institution to discuss release planning, institutional grievances, policy, charges, health care, segregation, conditions of confinement, mental health and Parole Board preparation. They assisted 6 women on the Parole Board of Canada. Our Prison Law Lawyer, Jessica Rose, assisted 12 women with disciplinary court hearings and she was successful with one woman's judicial review hearing. They also provided an opportunity for people at Nova to attend a federal election debate. Candidates were cleared and brought into the institution to discuss their party's positions, to answer questions and listen to the population's concerns.

The team also supported a number of Indigenous women who had been involuntarily transferred from institutions in the West, and who faced a number of specific challenges while in Quebec, including:

- no family visits to the Institution
- the high financial costs of maintaining contact with the family (telephone, mail, personal belongings, etc.)
- the impossibility of organizing escorted temporary absences due to lack of personnel
- the complexities of sentence appeals due to
- interprovincial barriers such as legal differences, time zone differences, requests and transfers of documents, etc.
- a lack of access to English language programs and education in Quebec

There were also three women who gave birth, all of whom benefitted from Elizabeth Fry Quebec's halfway house upon their release.

Ontario

The nine Societies in the Ontario Region continued to work towards abolition through programming, services and advocacy. Provincial Advocates through the Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario conducted advocacy visits at 10 institutions in 2019, halted by restrictions due to COVID-19 in 2020. The Regional Advocate Team had turn over, leaving only one Federal Advocate, Habon Muse-Gayad. With support from the Atlantic team we were able to give four new advocates hands on training at GVI. This year we have added Jackie Omstead, Kelly Potvin, Michelle Smith, Venus Sayed, Chelsey McGowan and Cory Roslyn as Regional Advocates.

Across the province, local Societies rose to the challenge of meeting urgent needs of criminalized and at risk individuals when other organizations shut their doors during COVID-19. Local societies provided food, hygiene supplies, physically distanced counselling and emotional support, as well as emergency shelter and residential programs for at risk, provincially and federally sentenced women.

The **Elizabeth Fry Society of Northeastern Ontario** refocused its lens on prison abolition through all its programs and services; the Society continues to work at expansion of services in the North Bay area. With the opioid epidemic and lack of adequate mental health services in our area, the Society also secured funding to provide additional outreach and supports.

Elizabeth Fry Peterborough began its first housing project as well as focused on making significant movement on protocols for including individuals with lived experience in our organization including training with industry leaders on peer work, compensation guidelines, training manuals, and policy and procedures for creating and maintaining peer programs through a Health Canada grant.

Elizabeth Fry Society Northwestern Ontario has worked to better support our clients and grow our agency. Through community partnerships, new/expanded programming, and increased organizational capacity an additional 150 women received support. Our research focusing on linkages between Justice System Involvement in the Context of Homelessness and Housing Insecurity Among Women in Thunder Bay Region, completed in partnership with Lakehead University was released. This research can be found on our website.

Elizabeth Fry Toronto continued to experience growth, though their Executive Director was the Interim Director for CAEFS From July 2019 – January 2020. They restructured the organization, adding two Director positions. Please welcome Director of Programs Vibhuti Mehra and Director of Finance and Administration, Sheila Baroro. EFry Toronto continues to work with their Partner, Thunder Woman Healing Lodge to build Ontario's first Healing Lodge for Indigenous women; raising over half of the money needed to build the lodge so far.

The **Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe-Muskoka** (EFSSM) formally rebranded to reflect the work the organization has been doing in the District Municipality of Muskoka for several years. In March 2020, EFSSM relocated Joyce Kope House operations and program participants into a temporary hotel location in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This move put the safety and wellbeing of staff and women at the forefront, preparing for an outbreak in a setting that would be more manageable.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa continued to deliver on their mission through two residences and a diverse array of community programs and services. They added some exciting new programs to their roster, including Diana's Place Child and Family Space. They continued to pursue the directions set out in their Strategic Plan, with action at the staff, management and board level. Their board reviewed directions and reset intentions for direction that will support clients and staff teams. They devoted considerable effort to building and strengthening their partnerships and staff team, and expanding their grant applications, as a way of meeting their clients' diverse needs.



Prairies

2019 through to 2020 has been very busy for the Prairie regional advocacy team and locals. Until the pandemic hit, Regional Advocates were able to visit Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge (OOHL), the Regional Psychiatric Centre (RPC), and the Edmonton Institution for Women (EIFW) regularly. Throughout the year the prairie region has provided ongoing training and support for institutional advocacy workers. This has proved invaluable considering the pandemic which has limited our access to institutions.

In November the Alberta Saskatchewan Manitoba Elizabeth Frys (ASMEF) met in Edmonton to monitor the roll out of the Structured Intervention Unit at EIFW, which they continue to monitor. This meeting was followed in February, where ASMEF representatives met in Winnipeg for a tour of the Eagle Women's Lodge which include information about programming.

We were also invited to and attended a Ghost Dance and a Horse Dance on Neekaneet First Nation, along with women from OOHL. Our entire regional team was able to be present for these ceremonies and we took the time to again meet together as a region.

Here are some highlights from our locals:

Elizabeth Fry Saskatchewan entered into a funding agreement with the Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections and Policing to offer supports for women in community on Reintegration Leaves. Staff at EFry Saskatchewan received Citizen Escort Training, so that they are now able to provide transportation and programming for people at RPC. This has allowed women to both attend E. Fry office, but to be escorted and supervised by EFry staff.

Elizabeth Fry Edmonton focused on the development and strengthening of their work to support folks who have experienced trauma and violence. They continued to train and support lawyers to provide legal advice for folks who have experienced sexual violence. They also cultivated counselling and individualized supports to address interpersonal violence and trauma. In addition, their team received training on anti-oppression to better understand and unpack their privilege as we strive to be a more equitable and accessible organization.

In last fiscal year **Elizabeth Fry Manitoba's** offerings increased, and their rates of retention and graduation improved significantly since the hiring of their Program and Volunteer Coordinator, Tasha. They were able to complete some much-needed renovations in the office and Quinn Saretsky was brought on as the new ED in December 2019.

This year the **Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary** implemented the Sohksipaitapiisin (The Good Life) Community Case Management Table in 2019 to support alternative options to incarceration and harsh sentencing for Indigenous people.

This program was implemented with the consultation and guidance of Elders, supports the cultural healing plans for the Calgary Indigenous Court, and reflects the goals of section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code and the Gladue principles. Healing plans reflect Indigenous diversity and a focus on culture, ceremony and addressing intergenerational trauma. Indigenous court is conducted through CCTV in the healing room KyahpiiKoyiis(Happy Lodge) at EFry Calgary where an Elder presides. This gives those attending court the option to attend in the healing room at EFry, rather than at the courthouse. This allows us to ensure culture is considered at every step of the process.



Pacific

During the 2019/2020 fiscal year the Pacific Region had, like many, highlights and lowlights...

The **Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society** received a grant from the Law Foundation of BC, which was a \$2 million commitment by the provincial government to support 8 advocacy clinics in BC with Kamloops being one of the recipients of \$250,000 to establish a new legal clinic.

The **Prince George** housing project - long time in the making. The project has 38 units consisting of an 18-bed transition house, 16 second stage housing units with a mix of one, two, and three-bedrooms, and 21-unit townhouses with women-led tenancy. Breaking ground in July 2020 and completion date of Fall 2021.

Archways Society had started moving forward with their Second Stage Housing Project but has stalled again. March 2020 was spent responding and implementing protocols with impacts of COVID19. Struggles with having enough staff to work at the Transition House in the early days. Hotel rooms supplied to them so self-isolation could occur prior to bringing them into the Transition House. Counselling and outreach services were provided remotely.

At **South Cariboo EFry**, new ED Trish came on in May 2019. Her first year getting familiar with local issues as well as helping the rural communities in her catchment with COVID19 in March.

SCEFS team worked in collaboration with community partners and established a local 24-hour volunteer run COVID Hotline.

The **Central Okanagan** team worked to address needs and risks for those isolated in unsafe homes throughout COVID19 in March. Partnered with Kelowna Women's Shelter on "Safe Spaces" campaign for awareness of services and unique risks amidst COVID19. Local support was overwhelming with donations of cell phones, PPE gear and laptops as well as financial contributions such as Dragon's Den Lane Merrifield, who came forward with a personal \$10,000 donation.

Also, 2019/2020, we see back into our network, Shawn Bayes and her team at **Greater Vancouver Elizabeth Fry Society**! Vancouver opened 2 women only modular supportive housing programs and together they provide low barrier apartments with 24/7 double staffing for 81 women. A housing project in partnership with Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Assn is under construction providing 57 apartments with projected opening of January 2022. Another update is the hiring of a new COO who will oversee nearly 200 staff, 300 volunteers serving 11,000 clients.

This years was one of rebuilding for the **Pacific Region Regional Advocacy**. They have ended the last quarter with 3 representatives and continue to grow in order to provide sustainable and consistent support to prisoners at the Fraser Valley Institution.

What We Do



Defending Prisoners' Rights

Regional Advocacy

CAEFS monitors the conditions of confinement in all six federal institutions designated for women and operated by the Correctional Service of Canada. Federally sentenced people are those who are served a sentence that is 2 years or longer.

The monitoring of conditions of confinement are primarily done by our 5 regional advocacy teams: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies and Pacific. Our advocates work to identify and address any systemic human rights abuses against prisoners.

This work is done through regular advocacy visits to the prison(s) for women in that team's region.

When issues arise, the teams work with our peer advocates - people who are currently incarcerated - to guide and support prisoners through internal remedies, and make external referrals to local societies, lawyers, and other supports when needed.

These issues are then brought forward to the warden and prison's upper management. These meetings, and the concerns raised, are documented in formal letters that are sent to the warden, the CSC commissioner for women, the Office of the Correctional Investigator, and the Canadian Senate.

Regional Advocates also provide, or help to facilitate, trainings and special projects for federally incarcerated people. This year, we focused on Reproductive Justice.

Special Project: Reproductive Justice Workshops

In late 2019 and early 2020, CAEFS partnered with Martha Paynter to deliver reproductive justice workshops to individuals in all 5 English-language federal institutions designated for women in Canada. This project was funded by Senator Yvonne Boyer, who conducted the External Review of Tubal Ligation in the Saskatoon Health Region, along with Dr. Judith Bartlett. The review was prompted by media reports in 2015 of forced sterilization of Indigenous women in the Saskatoon Health region. Senator Boyer and Dr. Bartlett used a community engagement approach to welcome women to be interviewed about their experiences of forced or coerced sterilization. Boyer and Bartlett interviewed seven women who bravely came forward for their review. At the time of writing, at least 100 women have joined in class action lawsuits for damages stemming from the experience across several provinces.

CAEFS reproductive justice workshops stemmed from an understanding that people who are incarcerated may not have known how, or had access to communication pathways, to contribute their stories to Boyer and Bartlett's review or to join the class. In fact, incarcerated women may not even have known of either process or of the issue of forced sterilization itself. These workshops sought to remedy this. Martha facilitated these workshops to over 200 incarcerated individuals, with the support of our Regional Advocates and the elders at each institution.

By bringing education about reproductive rights, CAEFS Reproductive Justice workshops sought to empower incarcerated women to bring forward concerns to CAEFS advocates. Martha's final report is forthcoming and will be posted here.

Advocacy Letters

Below is a summary of the most common areas of concerns documented in 27 of our 2019/2020 regional advocacy letters.

AREA OF CONCERN	FREQUENCY	REPORTED INJUSTICE	ANALYSIS
CSC Culture	<p>raised 18 times</p> <p>66% of letters spoke to this area of concern</p>	<p>Advocacy letters detail a negative staff culture and attitude towards prisoners, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying • harassment • assault, including sexual assault perpetrated by CSC staff • failure to intervene in assaults • lack of staff sensitivity to the specific needs of women and gender-diverse people 	<p>Advocates stress that a prisoner's conditions of confinement must not be impacted by their index offence, appeal status, race, frequency of requests and grievances, or general "attitude". This issue is pervasive and ongoing. Advocates stress that real change will require a long-term, deep-rooted and ongoing culture shift at CSC.</p> <p>Legal Grounding: The prison is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of prisoners. By law, staff of a prison are not authorized to administer punishment to prisoners above and beyond that which the court has imposed.</p> <p>Prisoners have a right to grieve unprofessional conduct and interactions with staff that are in contravention to Commissioner's Directive 1.</p>
Health and Dental Care	<p>raised 18 times</p> <p>66% of letters spoke to this area of concern</p>	<p>Many of the concerns raised focused on a lack of access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal health records • medication, or unexpected changed to medication • menstrual products • personal hygiene products • testing, specifically Hepatitis C testing • dental and health appointments, including long wait times. <p>When medication, menstrual products, or personal hygiene products were accessible, our documentation shows that they were usually rationed.</p> <p>Prisoners also reported a general lack of access to adequate dental services.</p> <p>When health or dental appointments were scheduled, prisoners would sometimes only be notified 5 or 10 minutes prior to their departure, leaving them with insufficient time to prepare.</p> <p>When care was accessed, prisoners raise concerns about the quality of care – especially dental care where reports include negligence and unprofessional conduct.</p>	<p>Advocates stress that adequate access to health and dental care services is crucial to prisoners' rights. They also stress that they have noticed a reduction in dental service provisions since a policy change in April 2014.</p> <p>Legal Grounding As is required under section 86(1) of the CCRA, prisoners must be provided with both essential health care as well as "reasonable access to non-essential mental health care that will contribute to [their] rehabilitation and successful reintegration into the community".</p> <p>Denial of adequate health and dental care is not only a breach of prisoners' rights under the CCRA, but also a breach of treaty rights for Indigenous prisoners.</p>

AREA OF CONCERN

TIMES RAISED

REPORTED INJUSTICE

ANALYSIS

Mental Health Care

raised
13
times

48%
of letters
spoke
to this
area of
concern

Alongside issues related to health and dental care, concerns regarding a lack of mental health services were raised several times by prisoners. This includes:

- several instances where prisoners report that their mental health is deteriorating, but are not taken seriously or receiving the support needed;
- Individuals being repeatedly placed in segregation because the conditions in maximum security exacerbate their documented mental health issues;
- the use of force and/or security escorts in certain situations

CAEFS highlighted the need for effective trauma-informed communication strategies among CSC staff, as well as better infrastructure to respond to incidents of self-harm and support serious mental health issues. Mental health issues require support, rather than more restriction, and we encourage institutions to strengthen partnerships with community-based and community-led mental health facilities.

CAEFS teams have stressed that segregation should never be used for individuals with mental health struggles, and that all underlying causes of behaviour should be addressed prior to increasing a prisoner's security level.

Legal Grounding

As is required under section 86(1) of the CCRA, prisoners must be provided with both essential health care as well as "reasonable access to non-essential mental health care that will contribute to [their] rehabilitation and successful reintegration into the community". Delays and infrequent mental health services are inconsistent with the CCRA, which specifies that a guiding principle of correctional policies is to be responsive to the special needs of women, and persons requiring mental health care.

Reports received by CAEFS are not consistent with the Legislated requirement individuals be imprisoned according to the least restrictive measures.

Secure Unit

raised
11
times

40%
of letters
spoke
to this
area of
concern

Prisoners reported a number of injustices related to the secure units (otherwise known as maximum security units). These included:

- Double-bunking
- Delays in applications for private family visits
- Frequent lockdowns
- Limited access to programming
- Unable to contact legal counsel in a timely manner
- Inhumane conditions, such as very high or low temperatures
- Inconsistent access to hot water, or showers altogether

Prisoners also raised concerns about the secure units being used as a means of behavioural control and punishment, including:

- as a response to mental health crises
- as punishment for public displays of affection between couples, or to separate couples.
- Index offense, regardless of custody



Prisoners and advocates both note the vast over-representation of Indigenous prisoners in maximum security units.

Advocates frequently urged CSC to consider whether cultural interventions or restorative options were available when assessing security classification.

Legal Grounding

Living in inhumane conditions in the secure units is inconsistent with CSC's mandate to exercise "reasonable, safe, secure and humane control". The CCRA and Commissioner's Directives also require that prisoners have access to procedural safeguards while in secure units.

CSC has an obligation, by way of relevant case law and Commissioner's Directive (CD) 705-7, to take into consideration the Gladue principles as mitigating factors when assessing the security classification and placement of Indigenous prisoners. Specifically, staff must consider whether cultural interventions or restorative options can be used, and if not, why. The over-incarceration of Indigenous women in maximum security restricts their access to programming, employment, education, conditional releases including through s. 84 of the CSC, and alternatives to imprisonment such as s. 81.

AREA OF CONCERN	TIMES RAISED	REPORTED INJUSTICE	ANALYSIS
Case Management	<p>raised 13 times</p>  <p>48% of letters spoke to this area of concern</p>	<p>Prisoners reported a number of issues with case management, particularly related to communication from their institutional parole officer.</p> <p>As a result, prisoners reported waiving or adjourning their parole due to missing documentation.</p> <p>Furthermore, many prisoners reported feeling ill-prepared for being released into the community and lacking support to build successful reintegration plans.</p>	<p>CAEFS Advocates stress that CSC has a responsibility to work towards prisoners' reintegration into the community, and that delays in parole applications affect a prisoner's ability to do so.</p> <p>Advocates also reaffirmed the responsibility of CSC staff to work towards prisoners' reintegration into the community, and that delays in parole applications were affecting prisoner's ability to do so.</p> <p>Legal Grounding</p> <p>Section 140(7) of the CCRA entitles prisoners to an assistant at a parole hearing and in order to fulfill this right, CSC must provide prisoners with adequate notice of schedule changes.</p> <p>Section 100 of the CCRA stipulates that, "The purpose of conditional release is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by means of decisions on the timing and conditions of release that will best facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens." In light of this, working towards reintegration remains part of the institutional management's fiduciary responsibility.</p>
Restricting Prisoners	<p>raised 10 times</p>  <p>37% of letters spoke to this area of concern</p>	<p>Prisoners reported issues in connection to the restriction of their movement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate outdoor recreation time and space, especially in minimum security units • modified movement measures that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ adversely affect access to programs and achievement goals set in correctional plans ◦ limit interactions with primary workers, case management teams; ◦ have negative impacts on mental health 	<p>Advocates continuously stress the importance of ensuring that trauma-informed practices are a standard for staff in all prisons. As part of this, interactions with CSC staff must be grounded in dignity and respect.</p> <p>Legal Grounding</p> <p>Commissioner's Directive 560 4.a specifically states that all staff will, "consider factors that affect offender behaviours and interactions (e.g. communication styles, learning deficits, mental health) and, where appropriate, the needs of women, other groups, and offender's Aboriginal social history." CAEFS Advocates called for greater emphasis on effective dynamic security and meaningful interactions to contribute to safety for all.</p> <p>The arbitrary imposition of Modified Movement on prisoners who pose no security risk can be a break of their liberty rights under section 7 of the Canadian Charter.</p>

Legal and Legislative Initiatives

Bill C-83, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another Act

In May 2019, then board president Diana Majury presented to The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on CAEFS' concerns regarding the Bill's introduction of the "structured intervention units". Majury used this time to reiterate CAEFS long standing opposition to the use of prison segregation for women in any form. CAEFS asserts that segregation is not about the name or necessarily about the specific space. It is about the practice of segregating — that is, isolating a prisoner from the rest of the prison population, whatever and however that is done. Majury also drew attention to other needed amendments to the bill: strengthening community-based options, such as clause 81; incorporating the Honourable Louise Arbour's 1996 recommendation for judicial oversight; giving health care staff full clinical and professional independence; and eliminating the practice of routine strip searching in women's prisons.

Human Rights Case

In 2010 CAEFS filed a Human Rights Case on behalf of all federally sentenced women in 2010 before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Information from our years of advocacy and monitoring conditions of confinement will be used as evidence in this case. For instance, we have created a comprehensive database that tracks the issues raised in our regular advocacy letters to wardens. This will allow CAEFS to document past human rights concerns, as well as any that may arise in the future. CAEFS continues to work on this case today.

Public Inquest

CAEFS is working to support the inquest into the death of Terry Baker, found unresponsive in 2016 at the Grand Valley Institution. This death affirms that prisons are no place for individuals with mental health issues. As an organization with a substantial interest in the Inquest, CAEFS has requested standing to take an active part in the Inquest proceedings and to call an expert witness.

Building Capacity

We are working to build the capacity of the non-profit and legal sector to better serve criminalized and incarcerated women and gender-diverse people.

At CAEFS, we work with our local member societies to coordinate the sharing of resources and knowledge, build partnerships, and bring our network together to convene on key advocacy issues. We also consult with organizations and stakeholders outside of local societies to help reduce barriers to accessing services for criminalized women and gender diverse people and raise awareness about the issues impacting criminalized and incarcerated people.

Essential to our work is also building the capacity of currently and formerly incarcerated women and gender-diverse people to advocate for themselves and attain their goals. We offer regular trainings inside the federal prisons designated for women, and facilitate an annual bursary program.



Breaking the Cycle (Year One)

Launched in late 2019, Breaking the Cycle (BTC) is a four-year project rooted in the decarceration of women and gender-diverse people in Canada. BTC aims to both facilitate the long term reintegration of women and gender-diverse people exiting incarceration and curb the number of people sentenced to prison in the first place. This work centers on helping to build the capacity of our communities to offer the resources that criminalized women need, and ensure that women are aware of and can access these supports.

This project will result in two key deliverables:

- a National Legal Resource Network of firms, lawyers, and clinics willing to provide pro bono legal services, and;
- a companion handbook to our 'Human Rights in Action' guide, specifically designed to federally sentenced women and gender-diverse people prepare for release and access / advocate for services once they are no longer incarcerated. It will be full of practical tools, and will also feature testimonials and advice from women and gender diverse people with lived experience of incarceration.

This work is led by four part-time regional coordinator, who were onboarded in the Fall of 2019, and three expert consultants who have lived experience of incarceration. This team works closely with local member societies, criminalized women and gender-diverse people, and other stakeholders to strengthen our network and advocacy efforts.

Highlights from Year One



- **Hired and onboarded our Regional Coordinators and Expert Consultants**
- **Conducted extensive research and documented local supports across the country**
- **Designed needs and asset assessment tool for local community services and legal supports**
- **Strengthened internal communication, including: an internal newsletter, and bi-weekly network-wide Executive Directors and Regional Advocacy meetings.**
- **Consulted with community stakeholders**
- **Traveled across the country to engage with our local network and foster connection**

Memorial Bursaries

The Memorial Bursary is an annual bursary distributed by CAEFS that seeks to help criminalized women and gender-diverse people in reaching their educational and employment goals.

For education the bursary can go towards: tuition / course fees, required books, and required materials.

For employment to bursary can go towards: start-up costs for a small business, certification courses, required clothing, or required equipment/ materials.

The bursary is open to women who are currently incarcerated (provincially or federally), or who have been incarcerated in the past.

CAEFS awards up to three bursaries of \$500.00 each to each of the five regions in Canada (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, Pacific).

Scholarships

We provide scholarships to reduce the barriers for women with lived experience of incarceration or criminalization who are interested in attending our annual conference.

Scholarships include:

- airport transportation,
- airfare (or appropriate alternative)
- hotel accommodation for up to 2 nights •
- conference registration and a small per diem •
- financial support for childcare at home while attending the conference is available on a case by case basis.

We are excited to share our 10 2019 Scholarship winners **cumulatively received \$10,000!**

"In 2019 I was fortunate enough to be awarded the CAEFS Memorial Bursary. I am an incarcerated woman determined to use my time wisely, so I used this money to go towards my education and training to become a Practical Herbalist. In following my path towards natural living and in an effort to support my family at home, I decided to start a business while serving my sentence. After several months of difficult meetings with upper management at my institution, I finally received approval from the Warden to start my business. I am the first woman at my institution to have done this. In December 2019, with the help of my wife, we launched Hookin' Sheep.

At Hookin' Sheep we produce all natural crocheted blankets using no chemicals or dyes. I crochet the blankets within the institution and when they are completed, I release them to my wife who then manages our website, sales and delivery of our products.

Getting to this point was difficult and frustrating. There were so many times I wanted to give up, but with the support and motivation from various members of CAEFS I continued to pursue my goal and I am so thankful for all they have done and how far I have come. Feel free to check out our website: hookinsheep.ca"

- Melissa, 2019 Bursary Winner



Raising Awareness

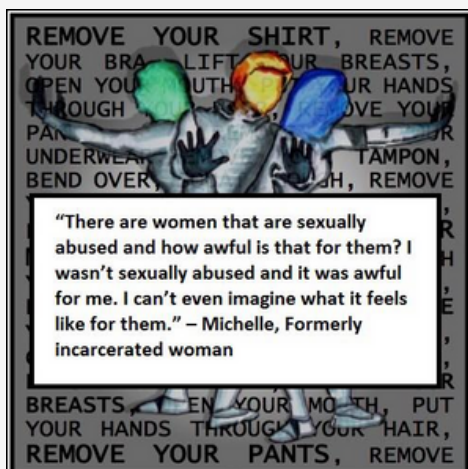
We use our platform to raise awareness about the issues that impact criminalized women and gender-diverse people in Canada by elevating their voices and bringing key advocacy issues to the forefront of the public's mind.

Campaign to End Strip Searching

Every day in prisons across Canada prisoners are forced to strip naked after they visit with their children, after they have gone to work, or to a drumming circle. As a woman at the Grand Valley Prison for women, in Kitchener, Ontario, describes the situation:

"Prior to their incarceration, most women in prison have suffered maliciously at the hands of their past abusers be it physically, mentally, emotionally, and most scarring of all sexual abuse. To say the least, strip searches are traumatizing, and degrading as we are requested to bend over and cough while completely naked in the presence of two officers."

The Correctional Service of Canada would have us believe that strip searches are necessary for the safety and security of prisons and yet they regularly uncover little if any 'contraband'; the benefits to security are minimal, but the harms to women are substantial.



In the wake of the #MeToo movement, we are hard-pressed to understand how forcing women to remove their clothes and perform humiliating actions with intimate parts of their bodies is not understood as sexual assault. Outside of state power, this behaviour would be considered and treated as such.

On May 10th, 2019, Elizabeth Fry Societies and partner organizations across Canada brought together women with lived experience in a National Day of Action to raise awareness, amplify women's voices and demand that the government #HearMeToo and #EndStripSearching in women's prisons.

This campaign was part of National Elizabeth Fry Week, which happens annually during the week leading up to Mother's Day. The goal is to enhance public awareness and education around criminalized and vulnerable women and gender diverse people in Canada. We continue to mark this week as Elizabeth Fry Week because most women in prison are mothers, and many of these women were the sole supporters of their families at the time they were incarcerated. When mothers are sentenced to prison, their children are sentenced to separation. We draw attention to this reality by ending Elizabeth Fry Week on Mother's Day each year.



2019 Conference: "No Woman Left Behind"

Every year, CAEFS hosts a conference that brings together our network and communities to raise awareness about the issues facing criminalized women. Every other year, the conference is co-hosted by a local society in their region. On the alternating years, CAEFS hosts the conference in Ottawa, Ontario.

In 2019, CAEFS welcomed attendees from across the country and from as far away as Australia to Ottawa. Together, we engaged in practical conversations examining the totality of the victimization and criminalization cycle for women in Canada.

We heard from our keynotes speakers - Debbie Kilroy, Sharon McIvor, and Senator Kim Pate on The History of a Movement: Prison Abolition and on Feminist Strategies for Decarceration.

Our breakout group topics included:

- Healthcare
- Prison Culture
- Colonialism
- Abolitionist Feminist
- Centring Lived Experience
- Barriers to Re-entry
- Advocacy and Activism

This conference was organized by CAEFS leadership and a committee of women with lived experience of incarceration.



Remembering Mollie Both

It is with sincere regret that we share the news that Mollie Both passed away in June 2020, after being hospitalized with cancer.

Mollie was connected to Elizabeth Fry Kamloops for the better part of 30 years. Over the years Mollie sat on the Board of CAEFS, was the Pacific regional advocacy representative, a dedicated member of PREFS (Pacific Region Elizabeth Fry Societies) and a regional advocate for the women at Fraser Valley Institution. She also travels as a regional advocate and was dedicated to supporting incarcerated women. She loved to attend the CAEFS conferences and AGM's. A proud supporter of CAEFS work, she made sure everyone contributed to the silent auction and the bursary fund.

Mollie was 84 years young and will be greatly missed.

