

Fisher, 2014; Rose, 2017; Siegal, 1999). Progenitors (Baily, 2016), glial cells have a complex role in the growth, development and function of neurons (Fields, D., 2014; Fields, R., 2011) and this affects behaviour and may skew the impact of ‘traditional’ medications. As Brynes pointed out as far back as 2001, we need to **rethink** by way of theory, science and research—and thus (for us, treatment and rehabilitation)—the interrelationships between different disciplines, such as neurology, psychiatry, pharmacology, education, psychology, penology, sociology and/or criminology.

To answer Foucault (1988), Buzsaki (2006), Koob (2009), and Fisher (2014) then, we do not know that much about the complexity of the brain/mind—and this calls for **professional caution** in our work practices regarding treatment and rehabilitation programs, whether in residential child and adolescent care, or in our federal and provincial prisons. ■

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RÉSUMÉ

The Second Brain: Understanding the Behaviour-Criminality Nexus

JON FRIEL, R.Psych, Alberta

Le rapport entre le cerveau/l'esprit et le comportement et l'utilisation acceptée de médicaments pour traiter les maladies mentales fait en sorte que la neuroscience est pertinente dans le domaine de la criminologie. La recherche sur les cellules gliales, qui constituent 90 % du cerveau, est prometteuse en ce qui a trait à une nouvelle compréhension de l'esprit, mais celle-ci ne fait que débiter. Cela appelle à la **prudence professionnelle** dans les pratiques de notre travail en ce qui a trait aux programmes de traitement et de réadaptation.

CHANGING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM CHANGER LE SYSTÈME DE JUSTICE

Innovative Interventions at Williams Lake, British Columbia

SARAH JACKMAN

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This article informs on a creative response to socio-historic and economic factors that foster the adoption of a criminal lifestyle by youth—a program called Innovative Interventions, conceived and administered by the Punky Lake Wilderness Camp and Society (PLWCS) in partnership with Toosey First Nations Band, RCMP Community Policing, Youth for Christ and the Williams Lake Community Council for Restorative Justice (WLCCRJ) to benefit the Cariboo Chilcotin (Williams Lake) region of British Columbia. The program is held at the Old School Training and Recreation Centre and offers innovative and flexible employment- and life-skill mentorship programming for certain offenders and short camps stays for at-risk youth of all ages. Staff members include an Auxiliary Police Officer (also Project Manager and Economic Development worker for the Toosey First Nation), an Administrative and Program Support Worker, a local Elder, and a Youth Pastor from a local church who also works as the contractor and serves as both supervisor and mentor along with support from both the community and PLWCS staff. Funded through the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch, Innovative Interventions delivers employment skills and develops self-esteem for youth through sanctioned hours spent at an abandoned elementary school in ‘Chilcotin Country’. Not all youth at Old School are on probation or fulfilling community service hours, some clients come from Restorative Justice forums and from community referrals or self-referrals. Proactive camps for all ages of high-risk youth are also available.

Several factors converge at Williams Lake (BC) to foster a population of young people at risk of engaging in a criminal lifestyle. In response, the Punky Lake Wilderness Camp Society (PLWCS) has established the Innovative Interventions program at the “Old School Training and Recreation Complex” in partnership with Toosey First Nations Band, RCMP Community Policing, Youth for Christ and the Williams Lake Community Council for Restorative Justice (WLCCRJ). Funded through the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch, Innovative Interventions delivers employment skills and develops self-esteem for youth through sanctioned hours spent at an abandoned elementary school in ‘Chilcotin Country’. Not all youth at Old School are on probation or fulfilling community service hours, some clients come from Restorative Justice forums and from community referrals or self-referrals. Proactive camps for all ages of high-risk youth are also available.

Some Facts about Williams Lake, B.C.

- ▶ One of the most impoverished areas of British Columbia.
- ▶ Consistently ranked between one and three on the StatsCan National Crime Severity Index.
- ▶ Levels of both violent crime and property crime are much higher than national averages.
- ▶ Unemployment rates are very high among Aboriginal residents, and education levels are very low.
- ▶ High rates of drug/alcohol abuse and suicide for the Aboriginal population are largely believed to be related to the history of inter-generational trauma resulting from the former Williams Lake (aka Cariboo or St. Joseph’s) Indian Residential School, which operated from approximately 1860 to 1981.
- ▶ Three Aboriginal gangs are very active in the area, reaching beyond the borders of Williams Lake into surrounding First Nations communities.

These factors collide in a perfect storm that fosters a population of young people at risk of engaging in a criminal lifestyle and desperately in need of acceptance and protection, making the gang lifestyle seem appealing. A gang will recruit those who have no friends or family support by making them feel included, important, and less alone. Such youth are already at risk of living a criminal lifestyle.

Williams Lake is a relatively small city, and there is some degree of racism towards/fear of First Nations people. In some cases, a familiar or ‘notorious’ last name can be enough for a young person to have their job application not considered—due to public perception of their family, and this adds to the temptation of gang involvement in order to make money selling drugs and for the reasons mentioned above.

Innovative interventions program at the Old School Training and Recreation Complex

PLWCS conceived the project after hearing about renovation work being done at an abandoned primary school 40 minutes away from its Williams Lake office. Quickly recognizing the potential for a program offering restorative justice options, PLWCS got the support of the Old School project manager and held meetings with Youth Probation, the RCMP, the Toosey First Nation, and local restorative justice facilitators. All agreed the idea of being able to fill sanctioned RJ and probation community service hours and provide meaningful mentorship and skill development to youth at risk would be an invaluable contribution to social justice for the young people that we serve and their communities.

Old School for sanctioned hours

A work-mentoring program entitled Innovative Interventions delivers employment skills and develops self-esteem for youth through sanctioned hours spent at Old School in ‘Chilcotin Country’, which has been developed into a training centre by the Toosey First Nation.

Not all youth at Old School are on probation or fulfilling community service hours

Some youth come to Old School merely at the suggestion of their probation officer that it is something that may be good for them, to help further them along. Other clients come from Restorative Justice forums and have received sanctions that do require them to fulfill community service hours in order to complete their file. Others can even be community referrals or self-referrals. On the Punky Lake staff, we have two youth workers and a probation support service worker that can stay in contact after they leave the program to make sure that their needs are being met, or to see if they want to re-join the program or attend any of the other programs that we provide, such as our camps.

Camps for all ages of youth

We provide a variety of camps through the year, for all ages of youth. Most of the youth that we work with can be considered high-risk, so our goal has become to expose them to as many positive experiential activities as we can, in hopes they find something that sparks an interest or awakens a passion in them. The camps range from wilderness camps, youth and Elder culture camps, hockey and soccer camps and horsemanship camps. In most of these situations, the youth camp out with Punky Lake staff for 3-5 days. All programs also include an element of culture and life skills. By focussing on the younger children, before crime has become a part of their lives, we can hope to circumvent the urge to drift to that lifestyle. And by targeting the older youth, we can expose them to a variety of experiences that may help them to discover

something that was missing from their lives (culture), or a talent they didn't know they had.

We are seeing an increase in attendance at these camps and also an increase of use of the other services we provide such as restorative justice and peacemaking circles.

Old School partnership & funding

The Innovative Interventions program now in place at the Old School Training and Recreation Complex is the result of partnership between the Punky Lake Wilderness Camp Society (PLWCS), Toosey First Nations Band, RCMP Community Policing, Youth for Christ and the Williams Lake Community Council for Restorative Justice (WLCCRJ). It is funded through the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch.

Staff members at the facility include an Auxiliary Police Officer (also the project manager and Economic Development worker for the Toosey First Nation), an Administrative and Program Support Worker, a local Elder, and a Youth Pastor from a local church, who also works as the contractor renovating the building and serves as both supervisor and mentor to the youth involved, with added support from both the community and Punky Lake Wilderness Camp Society staff.

Immediately following the conception of the Old School project, we started receiving requests and referrals by youth workers, community leaders, youth probation, and RJ facilitators and began sending youth out to the facility. At this point, we had no funding, so a proposal was made by PLWCS to the Province of British Columbia Civil Forfeiture Office, Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division, Ministry of Justice. In 2015, we were awarded a grant for \$10,000. The following year, after seeing the success of the project, we were successful in applying for and receiving \$20,000 from the same Ministry. Some additional funds have also been supplied by the First Nations Health Authority. There is no permanent funding for Innovative Interventions, but we have maintained sustainability so far.

Old School Programming for At-Risk Youth and Offenders

By targeting at-risk youth through short camp stays and those already entering into the criminal justice system through sanctioned work periods, we can start to prevent the urge to turn to crime as a way of life by making better, more self-fulfilling options available and accessible. The sanctioning of young offenders to attend programs at the Old School not only lets them give back and repair some harm for what has occurred through service hours spent renovating and expanding the facility but sees them gain employable skills (carpentry, painting,



drywall, janitorial experience, landscaping, gardening, painting). Most recently, the purchase of a sawmill offers opportunities for learning how to mill raw lumber. Safety equipment is provided and mandatory for these well-supervised groups.



Positive outcomes at Punky Lake Wilderness Camp Society Old School Project in B.C.

One outcome we did not expect was participants wanting to continue on with the facility even though their sanctioned time had been fulfilled. As one youth at Old School said to me, "I don't want to quit. I've been working on some really cool projects and I want to finish them. Can I keep coming?" He was allowed to continue and eventually was hired by the Old School as a labourer. He is pictured above receiving his first-ever paycheque. He has since left the program, re-enrolled in the alternative school in Williams Lake, and is working towards graduation.

Punky Lake has added bunk beds to the facility, so that if transportation becomes an issue, the youth are able to stay on site. Sanctioned hours at Old School are well-spent, affording participants with professional work references and a sense of self-worth that fosters their pursuit of employment and self-betterment. Part of their learning also includes such daily life skills as meal preparation and general housekeeping. Once we realized that many of the youth had next to no basic life skills, the program and budget were adjusted.

The youth are given strict instructions on when they will be expected to be at the facility and make arrangements to drive out with the contractor/mentor. This gives them a chance to get to know each other and do some bonding before the work begins. These discussions help inform his decisions on what tasks are most appropriate for the youth.

The programming is adjusted on a client-by-client basis. Some of the youth come out three times a week while others only come for one or two. Various other factors also come into play as regards this personalization of services. With some, we've found the need to start slow, to build up trust and to let them see that it isn't a scary place to be. Also, some of the youth



"I would still be living on the streets if it wasn't for the Old School."

Interview with The Williams Lake Tribune, June 9, 2016

are not mentally able to commit to a regular schedule and are still dealing with addictions and other issues. The clients remain living at their current residence and are picked up by facility staff in the morning to ensure attendance. They are then driven out to the "Old School" to learn

what activities or renovations they will be taking part in that day.

The Elder on site will occasionally offer a sweat lodge to the participants as well, if that is something that they are interested in taking part in. Elders are important to the project, building a culture of accountability and providing mentoring where needed. There are no structured therapy sessions, if the youth wants to talk about some of the issues they are facing- they know that staff is always willing to listen and advise. Mentorship is also a by-product of simply working side-by-side with the staff and being in a healthy environment. These aspects really seem to make the difference in improving self-worth and attitudes. The youth are in charge of making their own lunch and for clean up. At the end of the day, they are taken back home with instructions on when they will be attending again. Follow-up calls are made to remind them, as many of the youth we deal with have FASD or other developmental disabilities that make it difficult to retain information.

In the Cariboo Chilcotin region of British Columbia, there are 3 active Aboriginal gangs. The **712** (based mostly out of the Anaham Reserve and named after the first 3 numbers of their status cards), The IO (Indian Outlaws, based mostly out of Soda Creek Reserve), and the CRW (Chilcotin Rebel Warriors, is a bit of a hybrid of the two, made up of individuals that didn't quite "fit in" with the other two). The conflicts began with territorial and familial arguments, but soon moved into drug dealing, human trafficking, and violence—eventually leading to the deaths of several members from the two larger gangs. For a relatively small city such as Williams Lake, this caused a great deal of fear for local residents and continues to do so

to this day. Crimes and gang issues like this fuel the fire to existing racism and other social repercussions.

Many of these gang members are on the list of the Prolific Offender Management team. The POM meets monthly to discuss which offenders are at the highest risk of offending, and also of becoming a victim at the hands of another. Discussions are also had about where they are currently residing, if its known, what their current actions and offenses have been recently, and whether or not we can identify anyone that may be at risk by being in contact with this person. Each offender is assigned a police officer that remains in close contact with them, not necessarily for supervision, although that is often needed, but also to offer supports and services. The POM team is made up of police officers and commanders, probation management and staff, mental health, social assistance, and service providers, such as PLWCS.

The Innovative Interventions program is accepting of individuals who are willing to participate. Most are so absorbed into the gang lifestyle, they are not looking for any other support, but it does happen. Explicit care must be taken to ensure that we have "compatible" individuals participating in the program at the same time.

We also must ensure against opposing gang members working at the same time and that any young women are safe as regards the other participants, etc. So far, we haven't had any issues with conflict between youth employees at Old School; they tend to get along quite well. For participants deemed either a prolific offender or extremely high-risk, PLWCS has a community meeting with the Toosey Chief and Council and Old School staff to discuss whether or not they are willing to take such high-risk people into their community. The offender is included in that meeting and must express why he/she wants to be a part of the program and personally ensure that he/she will participate with honesty and good intentions.

Self-Referral: A Case in Point

One individual contacted me at my office a few months ago and expressed how his lack of education, inability to read, and negative peer groups had influenced his behaviours. This young man had been involved in several offences and was very well known to police. He self-referred, calling my office looking for options. A close friend of his and fellow gang member had been killed in a shooting not long before and he was scared that he was going to end up with the same fate. So, we agreed to meet at my office and we had a long talk which concluded with him telling me, "I'm not a bad person. I just do stupid stuff. And I have stupid friends." He needed a way out, so we began sending

him out and getting him engaged with some positive adult role models and teaching him some skills. It wasn't a smooth road for him, but he put in as much effort as he was able. At the conclusion of his time there, he continues to keep in contact with PLWCS staff and request help when its needed. He has also recently completed a forest fire fighting training course and is hoping to find employment with the forest service this summer. ■

YOUTH STATS

It costs, on average, \$95,826.37 to imprison a young person for a year. That money could be used to fund a full year's worth of recreational activities and equipment for over 50 youth. Recreation provides opportunities for youth to form positive relationships, build self-esteem and develop valuable skills; all benefits that help reduce their risk of becoming involved in crime ("The Cost to Incarcerate Youth" – October 2006, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association).

"The Cost to Incarcerate Youth" – October 2006, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.

111 Canadian studies on the effects of criminal justice sanctions found that harsher punishments do not deter repeat offences. In fact, harsh punishment led to a 3% increase in recidivism among all groups of offenders, including youth.

Statistics Canada – "General social survey-Criminal Victimization" September 2006.

Aboriginal youth make up 5% of the youth population in Canada, however, they make up 22% of total youth admissions to remand, and 25% of the total youth prisoner population.

"Behind Bars in Canada" 2006.

Aboriginal females accounted for 44% of female youth admitted into the corrections system, whereas Aboriginal males accounted for 29% of male youth admitted.

Statistics Canada – "Youth correctional statistics in Canada 2014-15".

The *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, enacted in 2003, is the legislation that governs how youth aged 12-17 years are to be dealt with by the Canadian justice system. The Act provides for a separate youth justice system that is meant to protect the public while holding young persons accountable in a manner that is *proportionate to their level of maturity and the seriousness of the offence*. The Act mandates that every period of custody should be followed by a period of community supervision to assist youth in their rehabilitation and reintegration.

Statistics Canada – "Youth correctional statistics in Canada 2014-15".

RÉSUMÉ

Innovative Interventions at Williams Lake, British Columbia

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Cet article traite d'une réponse créative aux facteurs socio-historiques et économiques qui favorisent l'adoption d'un mode de vie criminel chez les jeunes ainsi que d'un programme intitulé interventions novatrices [*innovative interventions*], conçu et géré par la *Punky Lake Wilderness Camp and Society* (PLWCS), en partenariat avec la Bande des Premières Nations de Toosey, la Section des services de police sociopréventifs de la GRC, le mouvement Jeunesse pour Christ et le conseil communautaire de justice réparatrice de Williams Lake [*Williams Lake Community Council for Restorative Justice* (WLCCRJ)] au bénéfice de la région *Cariboo Chilcotin* (Williams Lake) de la Colombie-Britannique. Ce programme est offert au *Old School Training and Recreation Centre* et comporte une dimension novatrice et souple de mentorat axé sur l'emploi et les compétences essentielles à l'intention de certains délinquants, de même que de courts séjours au camp pour des jeunes à risque de tous âges. Les membres du personnel incluent un policier auxiliaire (qui est également le gestionnaire de projet et l'agent de développement économique de la Première nation Toosey), un agent administratif et au soutien des programmes, un Ancien issu de la collectivité locale ainsi qu'un pasteur pour les jeunes émanant d'une Église locale, qui oeuvre également comme entrepreneur et, à la fois, comme superviseur et comme mentor avec l'appui et de la collectivité et du personnel de la *Punky Lake Wilderness Camp and Society* (PLWCS). Financé par le truchement de la Direction de la sécurité communautaire et de la prévention de la criminalité, interventions novatrices offre des habilités de travail et contribue au développement de l'estime de soi des jeunes dans le cadre d'heures sanctionnées passées à une école élémentaire abandonnée du *Chilcotin Country*. Tous les jeunes de la vieille école ne sont pas sous le coup d'une ordonnance de probation ou à compléter des heures de travaux communautaires; certains proviennent de forums de justice réparatrice, sont recommandés par la collectivité ou se présentent d'eux-mêmes. On compte aussi des camps proactifs pour tous les âges de jeunes présentant un niveau de risque élevé.



Founded in 1998 as a not-for-profit society mandated to provide Tsilhqot'in aboriginal justice and social services programming to youth, family and community, Punky Lake Wilderness Camp Society (PLWCS) primarily serves the Tsilhqot'in and Southern Carrier communities of the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of British Columbia.



Traditional cultural values, healing and support methods are enshrined in PLWCS Innovative Interventions, including in-community and camp programs for crime prevention (diversion and alternative measures) and healthy development and sports programs for Tsilhqot'in aboriginal youth and families.

PLWCS's holistic approach incorporates the medicine wheel as a philosophic base for its community work within the camp programs and its community development strategy supports communities through a number of initiatives and training opportunities for youth, adults and elders.

Tsilhqot'in Restorative Justice (TRJ) is a federally funded PLWCS Indigenous Justice Program that extends R.J peacemaking circles to the urban centre and Nation. With its office at Williams Lake and camps in Chilcotin territory, PLWCS also invites participation from First Nations youth from other areas and non-First Nations youth.