

FAMILIES AND CORRECTIONS JOURNAL

Family-based reintegration:
The “original” circle of support and
accountability.

Canadian Families and Corrections Network |
Regroupement canadien d'aide aux familles des détenu(e)s



Volume 15 Number 1
Spring, 2012

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Family-based reintegration:
The ‘original’ circle of
support and accountability.....2**
- Volunteers and the circle
of support14**
- Face to face with
intergenerational crime.....16**

**The mission of the Canadian
Families and Corrections
Network is “Building stronger
and safer communities by
assisting families affected by
criminal behavior, incarceration
and community reintegration.”**

**The CFCN is a registered
Canadian charity, registration
number 875428062RR0001.**

Board of Directors:
Debra Barriault (President)
J. Timothy Buehner (Secretary)
Chris Carr (Treasurer)
Val Corcoran
Mary Radojic
Terry Richardson
Alexis Scott
Jill Steever

Family-based reintegration: The ‘original’ circle of support and accountability. By Lloyd Withers.

The CFCN has found, through its Community Family Liaison Worker (FLW) pilot for women and their families and through Family Group Decision-making for Reintegration (FGDMR) pilot for men and their families, that the family, with support, can provide better support and that the family, with accountability, can provide better accountability.

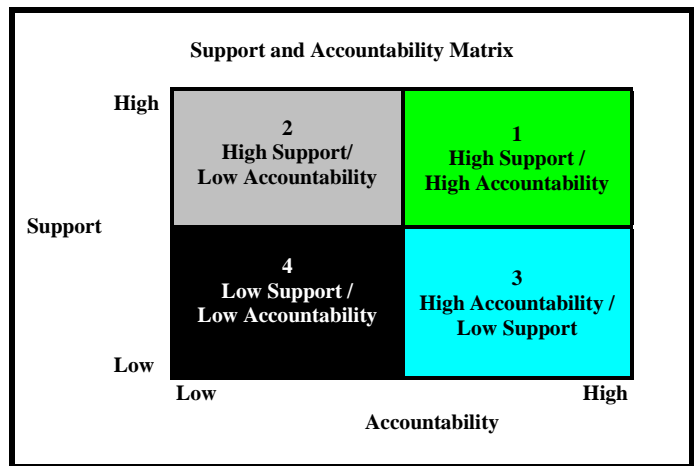
Because of this, one of the concepts that the CFCN has put forward is that the family with an incarcerated family member is, or can be, the “original circle of support and accountability.” Inside Canadian federal corrections and around the world, there is an understanding of the Circle of Support and Accountability (CoSA) model and its value in community corrections. One of the reasons why the CoSA model may work so well is that it provides a surrogate family, doing what a pro-social family often does for its members.

Where family ties exist, there is no need to create a Circle of Support and Accountability. Something already exists for the offender that can be built upon, when it is appropriate to do so. In fact, Andrews and Bonta (2006) identify family ties to be one of the four 'natural' supports, the others being work, school and leisure activities. Family support may lead to increased conditional release success and to lowering intergenerational criminal activity. If there is a commitment to safer communities, then community corrections must involve the provision of appropriate support to families. Further, and while it may seem counter-intuitive, community reintegration and strategies that engage the family needs to begin when the family member is sentenced to a custodial sentence, not at the point of release.

When strategies that involve families are discussed, the difficulties posed quickly come to the forefront. Often it is because some families provide negative support and negative accountability. In order to focus discussions, the CFCN developed the Support/Accountability Matrix as a tool to assist in understanding under what conditions marital and family support makes a difference (Withers, 2005). The model itself points out that the family is, or can be, an asset that needs to be protected during a

custodial sentence and into community reintegration.

Many families have a vested interest in successful reintegration. Often the family’s biggest fear is that their returning family member has not learned the necessary skills to get out and to stay out of prison. These families realize that the offender is responsible for her or his own progress. The family has an expectation of change and they hold their incarcerated family member accountable for that change. They want the person that they love to be home with them and they are willing to provide the necessary support in order for this to occur. Families also have an expectation that the correctional process will provide their incarcerated family member with the right interventions, in a timely manner, delivered by skilled service providers and within a safe environment. They also have a reasonable expectation that the correctional process will protect them as a family, allowing reasonable opportunities to foster family relationships.



The Support and Accountability Matrix postulates that there are several types of families.

Some families already provide high support and high accountability. The family has the capacity to respond appropriately and to hold their incarcerated family member accountable for addressing the harm caused by the crime and for engaging in programs or treatment that aim to prevent future harm. These pro-social families require supportive correctional policies, practices and attitudes that maintain family

capacity and resilience. Strategies would include a) a forthright and factual approach by correctional staff at Visitor Security Control and in the Visits and Correspondence Area; b) appropriate information and orientation about visiting and search procedures; c) information on supportive institutional services and community organizations; d) reassurances of the family's value and worth as individuals and in the importance of family ties during incarceration and reintegration; and e) ongoing reviews of correctional policies or practices that may have negative collateral consequences on the family relationship.

Next, some families wish to provide appropriate support and accountability but may inadvertently reward or reinforce antisocial thinking or behavior. They thus provide support but limited accountability. In attempting to support the offender, the family may do things for their incarcerated family member without any expectation of behavior change on the part of the offender. In fact, some families are fearful that the family relationship will end if they hold the offender accountable. The family ends up sacrificing accountability, and their own well-being, in order to maintain the family relationship. A supportive family may feel guilty if they do not support the offender's requests. Knowing this, the offending family member may manipulate the family. For families who provide high support but limited accountability, effective correctional policies and practices may be able to increase the family's capacity to hold the offender accountable and may be able to bolster the family's resilience to avoid pressuring and manipulation. Strategies to assist the family's capacity to provide accountability can include a) information on pressuring, contraband and CSC's drug interdiction strategy; b) information provision on available community resources that may assist in self-care strategies; and c) information on parenting and relationship education; and d) programming within the Visits and Correspondence Area that can reinforce and strengthen such things as the parent-child bond for the incarcerated parent, partnered relationships or for parents and other family members that are maintaining contact.

Some families provide limited support to the offender and with high accountability. The family has the capacity to provide accountability but may

no longer be interested in providing support for a variety of reasons. They may have been harmed by the offender's criminal behavior, by an ongoing series of sentences, by the type of offences in which the offender engages, and/or the effect that the offender's behavior or incarceration has had on them in the community. The family may have supported the offender at one time and held the offender accountable. They expected the offender to change. The offender, however, continued in his or her antisocial, pro-criminal behavior and the family withdrew support or terminated contact with the offender. The family may also be concerned with the real or potential effect of the offender's behavior on other family members. Although the family may feel guilty for withdrawing support, it does not believe that it has a choice but to do so. These families, however, may initiate greater support if the offender demonstrates a willingness to address the issues that led to incarceration.

Strategies to intervene may be limited if the family has limited contact with the offender. In some cases, the family may choose to re-engage and to support the offender if the family feels supported by the correctional process and its staff. The post-sentence community assessment may be an opportunity to provide information to the family about the potential of interventions, programs or services that CSC provides to assist the offender to develop a crime-free lifestyle. Information on legal rights related to custody and access may be helpful when children are involved, for both the caregiver and the incarcerated parent. Other information or referral may be needed by the caregiver of children because social supports that are available for parents are usually not available to other family members.

Finally, there are two types of families who provide low support and low accountability. The first type of family has the capacity to respond with support and accountability but is not interested in maintaining or fostering a relationship with the offender. The family has completely disengaged from the offending family member. The family may have been 'burnt out' as a resource by the offender. A family member may have been the victim of the offence for which the offending family member is incarcerated. There may be minimal contact with the offender, and if it exists at all, it amounts to a few letters per year or a phone call at

Christmas. There is no desire or interest in providing either support or accountability.

The second type of family that provides low support and low accountability actually provides negative, antisocial support and pro-criminal accountability. As a result, these families may have significant contact with the justice and corrections systems. In fact, families that provide negative support and accountability may drive much of CSC's security procedures related to searches and drug interdiction strategies. One or more members of the family may be criminally oriented and seek out opportunities to collude with the incarcerated family member to introduce contraband into the institution or to extort other inmates through physical threat or by ensuring that a debt is owned. In some instances the family in the community is extorted to introduce contraband because of the high suspicion of security that is focused on the pro-criminal family. Families who provide antisocial support and pro-criminal accountability may already be restricted from visiting at the institution because of previous attempts to introduce contraband or because of their own criminal charges or convictions.

The CFCN has been asked the question of "What percentage of families fall into each quadrant?" The CFCN has, to date, not been able to research this question. With respect to families who fall within the quadrant of low support/ low accountability, however, Withers and Folsom (2007) found that 32% of newcomers to the Millhaven Intake and Assessment Unit had a partner, intimate or other family members who were convicted of a crime. The researchers also found that approximately 15% of newcomers were incarcerated because a family member was the victim of the offence. These statistics may give some indication of the number of families who may provide negative support and negative accountability and low support and high accountability. A review of incidence involving family members who are apprehended through the drug interdiction strategy may reveal some of the families who provide high support but low accountability.

Two models of family-based reintegration.

The CFCN was fortunate to receive funding to develop and evaluate two family-based community

reintegration projects. The Community Family Liaison Worker (FLW) project for women and their families was run at Nova and Joliette Institutions for Women, while the Family Group Decision-making for Reintegration (FGDMR) project for men and their families operated out of Frontenac and Montée St-Francois Institutions. All four institutions were federal correctional institutions and thus all incarcerated family members were serving a sentence of two years or more. Both approaches were based on the Support and Accountability Matrix, on correctional research and used a community engagement approach.

FLW Project

The Correctional Service of Canada has increasingly recognized the significance of the family experience of federally sentenced women (FSW), including the families of Aboriginal women. Family concerns of women offenders are significant before, during and following incarceration. Incarceration affects not only the mother but also her children. The incarcerated mother is often a single parent and thereby the sole care-giver and financial supporter of her children. Her children may have witnessed her arrest. Custody and access issues are more likely to arise for women. In fact, the separation from their children is emotionally devastating for the incarcerated mother and remains a concern for her during incarceration and reintegration (Eldjupovic, 1999).

The Correctional Service of Canada has striven to address many of the issues within the Creating Choices document (Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990), and with ongoing reminders by the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) to be diligent in this task. The Correctional Service of Canada surpasses most others in the world in the provision of programming that supports family members to maintain family ties during incarceration. Significant interventions related to families include the introduction of the Private Family Visiting program and the Mother-Child program, as are releases under Section 84 of the CCRA because Aboriginal communities and families are assisted in reintegration planning.

Inspection reports on Nova Institution for Women and Grand Valley Institution for Women were completed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of

Prisons for England and Wales in 2005, as a component of the Correctional Service of Canada (2006) response to Recommendation 19 of the Canadian Human Rights Commission (2003) report on women offenders. The reports focused on four practice areas in what are termed “‘healthy’ prison test areas - safety, respect, purposeful activity and reintegration.”

CSC's action plan included a recommendation:

To better support and assist women offenders in preparing for their return to the community, CSC is exploring the possibility of having a community support worker in each of the women's institutions.

The Correctional Service Canada (2006) identified the following resources or projects that are currently being developed to support families:

- *Family-based reintegration toolkit*
- *Training of volunteers in accompaniment and support approach*
- *Counselling to offenders and their families to assist them to understand how institutions function and alleviate the impact of incarceration on family members*

The CFCN had pioneered the three resources identified above but these resources were aimed primarily for the families of federally sentenced men. New resources and approaches were required that addressed the unique family needs of federally sentenced women. These need areas included the children of federally sentenced women and custody and access during incarceration and upon reintegration, expected differences among the parents of federally sentenced women related to fostering custody and access of the offender with her children, the role of victimization among women and its impact on parenting style and expectations, and expected relationship differences in marital/ partnered support among federally sentenced women. The CFCN was also aware that the FLW model should be based on a client-centred approach, aimed specifically on family reintegration needs as the women understood their needs to be.

The FLW project provided a strengths-based approach to family and community reintegration. It assisted the incarcerated woman to develop a family reintegration plan based on the woman's strengths and need as she understood her own strengths and need areas. It develops a multisystemic link between the FLW, the case management team, the

woman, her family and one or more community organization.

The FLW approach provides a 'continuum of care,' notwithstanding this phrase has been overused and sometimes misrepresented. For the purposes of present article, continuum of care is defined as a process of support and accountability that begins at intake, continues during incarceration and stretches for at least one year or more, post release. It involves the woman and her significant family and community relationships, correctional staff, and community organizations. In addition to an intake and assessment role, the FLW assisted in a coordinating role within the continuum of care. The FLW was able to reframe the various perspectives to assist the various players to understand each other a little better. This coordination role can be critical as a working agreement on the way ahead can be developed.

A Family Strengths and Need Assessment (FSNA) tool was developed for the FLW project, and the tool was completed by the woman with the assistance of the FLW. The FSNA gathered information on family strengths and needs, on family structure, on partnered and parenting relationships and ultimately on family-based reintegration plans and needs. A modified version of the FSNA was included in the “A New Time/ Un nouveau regard” toolkit that was given to women and their families. The toolkit was based on, and contained, comments and findings from community consultations on women and their families.

After the completion of the FSNA, the woman could choose to work with the FLW to develop a written family-based reintegration plan that was shared with the woman's Case Management Team. The family-based plan was met to augment the correctional plan.

The FLW then linked the woman and her family with a community organization for structured support with the family-based reintegration plan, and for a period of one year, post release. Under this community engagement approach, the community organization was provided with a small honorarium through a letter of agreement. The honorarium was intended as a recognition or support to the community organization and to enhance the capacity of the organization while the organization served to increase the capacity of the family to provide support and accountability.

Table 1. Rates of Return to Custody in a Two Year Follow-up of Federally Sentenced Women

	Gobeil and Barrett (2008)				Withers (2012)	
	Cohort 1 (2002-03)		Cohort 2 (2003-04)		FLW Participants	
Return to Custody	<i>n</i> / 333	%	<i>n</i> / 326	%	<i>n</i> / 21	%
Any Revocation	124	37.2	124	38	7	33.3
Reconviction	94	28.2	94	28.8	1	4.8
Violent Reconviction	14	4.2	17	5.2	0	0

Finally, an implementation manual was developed to prevent program drift and to allow for project replication. Did it 'work' depends on what criteria is used for evaluating the results. While not the only criteria that could be used, and sometimes not the best criteria, is the effect on recidivism to evaluate program success. Often it is the family's own evaluation of the effect on the quality of life which bears its own significance within a project such as the FLW project. However, given that the funding for the FLW project came from the Correctional Service of Canada, recidivism was considered to be reflective of project success.

One challenge in using recidivism to measure project success is which definition of recidivism to use. A particular definition of recidivism can over- or under-estimating the rates of recidivism across studies if care is not used to determine which definition was used in the study. In their study of federally sentenced women in Canada, Gobeil and Barrett (2008, p. 5) analyzed their recidivism data as follows:

Recidivism was defined in three ways: 1) *any* revocation of conditional release (due to a technical violation, new charge, or new offence) occurring within two years of release; 2) any *reconviction* occurring within two years of release; and, 3) any *reconviction for a violent offence* occurring within two years of release.

This approach addresses several issues related to calculating rates of recidivism as it provides three different statistics and over a fixed, determined time period. Gobeil and Barrett (2008) include revocations as this may over-estimate the rate of recidivism in comparison to studies that only consider reconvictions. They includes reconvictions as a separate statistic since the individual has been sentenced by the courts and thus not innocent of the new charge that led to the

revocation. The recidivism rate is not confounded by technical violations. As Bonta, Rugge and Dauvergne (2003, 4) state, there is in fact a "return to crime." The final consideration is whether the reconviction was for a violent offence as this is a major consideration for program design and evaluation and for public safety.

Table 1 compares the results of the study by Gobeil and Barrett (2008) with the FLW project's two year follow-up on 21 women and their families who were went through the one year of structured family support with a community organization. Other women and their families have not yet completed two years of release and were thus not included in the FLW sample. When compared to the federally sentenced women in Gobeil and Barrett's study, 33.3% of the FLW participants had a revocation compared to 37.6% in their study. It should be noted that the majority of the revocations came from FLW participants at Joliette Institution rather than the FLW participants at Nova Institution.

The largest difference is in the number of reconvictions: only one (4.8%) FLW participant committed a new offence within two years, compared to 28.5% of federally sentenced women in Gobeil and Barrett's 2008 study.

FGDMR

While family group decision-making exists in other forms, the CFCN developed Family Group Decision-making for Reintegration (FGDMR) approach as a specialized application of family group decision-making aimed at family reintegration following reintegration for men and their families. The application uses a family group conference inside the correctional facility (restorative justice component) to develop a family plan based on seven dynamic factors that have been shown to be a concern during community

corrections (correctional research component) and with a community mentoring team comprised of CFCN volunteers who supported the entire family with their family plan for one year, post release (community engagement component). The one year of family support by the volunteer team enhances the family's capacity to provide support and accountability to the returning family member; it assists in addressing the harm that the family experienced and it helps improve family safety. One year of support was also chosen for two other reasons. First, if someone is going to re-offend, it generally occurs within the first year of release. Second, it is the CFCN's experience that it takes one year for the family to start feeling like it is a family again.

For this project, the FGDMR Coordinators provided a group orientation to new offenders at two minimum security federal institutions: Frontenac Institution in Ontario and Montée St-Francois Institution in Quebec. At the conclusion of the orientation, the participants could request that their family receive the family orientation mailing that contained the "Time's Up/ Un nouveau depart" toolkit and other useful information on family reintegration, support and accountability. Each orientation participant who requested a family mailing was followed up with an individual interview to discuss their family and reintegration. The interview included the use of a genogram and ecogram to discuss family-based reintegration. The FGDMR Coordinator also used motivational interviewing to determine if the individual would like to participate in one year of supported family reintegration, as well as to discuss any contraindications for participation. For participants who wished to continue their participation, a consent to disclose was signed for the FGDMR Coordinator to discuss the participant's involvement in the project with the institutional Case Management Team.

If there were no contraindications, the participant was asked to contact their family and to have the family contact the FGDMR Coordinator to determine their capacity and willingness to participate in one year of supported family reintegration, post release. Contraindications could exist at the assessment phase or during the family group conference, including such issues as unaddressed power imbalance (family violence,

sexual abuse, violence against children), unaddressed family safety issues, refusal of the offender to participate in aspects of the official correctional plan, lack of "truth-telling" during intake, assessment or during the family group conference and family capacity issues.

The last two contraindications deserve further comment. Truth-telling is a restorative justice principle and the incarcerated family member is required to inform his family what he did that led to his incarceration. It is a surprising fact that some family members do not know why their family member is incarcerated. As well, the participant is asked to share a written apology for how his actions affected his family. Guidance in preparing this apology was provided to the inside participant as part of his preparation for the family group conference. The other contraindication is that the family reintegration plan must be developed and implemented by the family and the role of the community mentoring team is to increase the family's capacity - It's family's plan. It does not build family capacity if the community mentoring team is placed in the position of being experts who impose the plan on the family. That is counterproductive to building family capacity.

If there is agreement to proceed, both the incarcerated family member and the family in the community was prepared for the family group conference (FGC) inside the correctional facility. Financial support was provided to the family to travel to the institution. CFCN volunteers and the FGDMR Coordinator formed a Community Mentoring Team to support the family. During the FGC, the Community Mentoring Team assists the man and his family to develop the family plan. At the conclusion of the FGC and once the plan is signed off by the family, the family plan was shared with the institutional Case Management Team and, upon request, with the National Parole Board. The FGDMR Coordinator would accompany the man and his family to the NPB hearing if requested. At release, the Community Mentoring Team met with the man and his family on a structured schedule: weekly for the first 6 weeks of release, followed by every two weeks for the next 6 months and then once a month until a final meeting that celebrated the family's one year of successful reintegration.

The same question of 'did it work' that was posed of the FLW project needs to be asked of the

FGDMR project. FGDMR was evaluated using two different methods. First, a matched control group was used to determine any FGDMR success. Recidivism statistics from other studies was also used to see if there was any change in the rate of recidivism.

Table 2. Rates of Reconviction in a Two Year Follow-up of FGDMR participants

	FGDMR Group n / 27	Control Group n / 22
Reconvictions after two years of release	0	2*

*p=.09

As can be seen, there was no statistical difference in the recidivism rates between the FGDMR Group and the Control Group ($p > .05$). However, it is certainly pointing in the right direction.

Several factors may have influenced the results between the FGDMR group and the Control Group, including the small sample size ($n = 27$). Additionally, there may have been a treatment effect as both the FGDMR group and the Control Group were provided services by the FGDMR coordinator. The incarcerated family members in FGDMR and in the Control Group received the family orientation at intake. Each group had family ties and their families received the FGDMR family orientation mailing. This may also account for the 9% recidivism rate in the Control Group being much less than the expected recidivism rate of between 15% and 19% during the first year of supervised release (Bonta, 2003).

Another confounding variable may be that the offenders and families who chose to participate in the one year of mentored community support. As admission to the project was voluntary, the man and his family who agreed to participate were already motivated to succeed in family reintegration. In fact, having family support and ongoing visits in itself may decrease the likelihood of recidivism among offenders. In “Visitation and Post-Release

Outcome Among Federally-Sentenced Offenders,” Derkzen, Gobeil and Gileno (2009) did a file review of 6,537 offenders who were released during 2005 - 2006. Their findings were that there was a positive association between having visits while incarcerated and having lower rates of readmission back to prison. In other words, those who had visits were more successful at community reintegration and were less likely to engage in criminal behavior. All visiting appears to make a difference, whether it was visits and/or Private Family Visits with a partner, parents or children. The researchers found that:

Analyses based on the number of visits received revealed that offenders who received 6.7 visits (the average among offenders who received visits) had odds of readmission approximately 14% lower than their counterparts who did not receive visits. Similarly, offenders who participated in 2.0 private family visits (the average among those who participated) had odds of readmission about 22% lower than those who did not participate.

The researchers concluded that, because of the positive effects of having visits, it may be possible to augment the effectiveness of visiting programs to build a greater effect on successful reintegration.

As an aside, within one year of release, two of the incarcerated family members were deceased, thus leaving the $n=27$ participants available for a two-year follow-up. This is illustrative of the difficulties of life after incarceration.

The second means of evaluating the effect of FGDMR is to compare it to other studies and statistics. Several benchmarks were used for this part of the effect of FGDMR.

First, Bonta (2003, p. 11) found that the reconviction rates for all releases from a federal sentence in the first year was 44% and that 15- 19% of the reconvictions occurred while the offender was under supervision. Because the FGDMR participants received one year of support from the Community Mentoring team, it could be anticipated that 15-19% of the FGDMR participants would be reconvicted.

Table 3. A Comparison of Rates of Reconviction of FGDMR Participants With Other Approaches

	Offenders who were involved in an RJ approach. (Bonta, 2006)	Offenders who were involved in an RJ that included treatment. (Bonta, 2006)	Offenders participating in CoSA (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2005)	FGDMR
Reduction in recidivism (reconviction) rate	7%	31%	35%	100%

Next, Bonta (2006, p.1) looked at the effectiveness of restorative justice approaches to offenders. He found that:

On average, restorative justice programs were associated with a 7% reduction in recidivism. These programs were equally effective with juveniles and adults. Of the 67 programs reviewed, only 11 provided treatment to offenders. However, there was no difference in recidivism rates for offenders who received treatment and for those who did not receive treatment.

Because of the restorative justice component (family group conference) in the FGDMR approach, it would be expected that there would be at least a 7% reduction in the reconviction rate among participating offenders.

Thirdly, Bonta (2006, p. 2) states that:

There are many different types of treatment, some better than others. Most of the treatment services provided to offenders in the restorative justice programs were judged to be inappropriate and had no effect on recidivism. Only one program was identified that met the standards of effective offender treatment. It showed a reduction in offender recidivism of 31%.

Bonta (2006) does not specify which restorative justice program achieved the 31% reduction in recidivism. Since the FGDMR process was a multi-systemic approach and was of sufficient intensity and duration, this study was also seen as a benchmark with which to compare FGDMR’s effect on recidivism.

The final benchmark that was used is that of Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). While the offenders who participated in FGDMR component and the offenders who involved in CoSA are two very different offender population groups, CoSA’s effect on reducing recidivism was

included because FGDMR and CoSA share similarities in their implementation such as assessment, contracting for participation and the formation of a community mentoring team. It also was of interest since the CFCN’s position was that the family was the ‘original’ circle of support and accountability. Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo (2005, p. ii) showed that offenders who participated in COSA had significantly lower rates of any type of reoffending (35% overall reduction) than did offenders who did not participate in COSA. They found that:

Specifically, offenders who participated in COSA had a 70% reduction in sexual recidivism in contrast to the matched comparison group (5% vs. 16.7%), a 57% reduction in all types of violent recidivism (including sexual – 15% vs. 35%), and an overall reduction of 35% in all types of recidivism (including violent and sexual - 28.3% vs. 43.4%).

Table 3 compares the various rates of reconviction of FGDMR Participants with the recidivism rates from the studies mentioned above. It shows that FGDMR was successful in reducing recidivism in comparison to the other benchmarks.

The reason for using the benchmarks above is that the FGDMR project was run at two minimum security institutions (Frontenac and Montée-St. Francois Institutions and thus the FGDMR participants had already successfully reached minimum security. This point is an important one to consider given the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) principle: The FGDMR approach may need to be piloted at higher security with more high-risk offenders, including offenders who are being released from higher security directly into the community. It would be important to review the support and accountability provisions within the

Table 4. Comparison of Community Family Liaison Worker for Women and their Families (FLW) and Family Group Decision-making for Reintegration (FGDMR) models

	FLW	FGDMR
Orientation	<p>Individual orientation upon arrival at the institution.</p> <p>Family orientation mailing upon request of the woman that includes the “A New Time” guidebook.</p> <p>Participant offered another interview to discuss intake into the program.</p>	<p>Group orientation upon arrival at the institution.</p> <p>Family orientation mailing upon request of the man that includes the “Time’s Up” guidebook.</p> <p>Participant can complete a written request at orientation for further discussion about intake into the program.</p> <p>Each orientation participant who requests a family mailing receives a second interview for further discussion about intake into the program.</p>
Intake and Assessment	<p>Assessment for participation, including the completion of the FSNA (Family Strengths/Needs Assessment) assessment tool developed for the project.</p> <p>Consent to disclose is signed and boundaries of confidentiality are discussed.</p> <p>Initial family plan is drawn up, based on the woman’s understanding of family need from the information contained in the FSNA.</p> <p>Initial family plan is shared with the woman, who can then choose to continue in the program and involve her family or can choose to withdraw.</p>	<p>Program is discussed in full with the participant, using motivational interviewing techniques. Upon agreement, there is a family-based assessment for participation, including the completion of an ecogram and genogram.</p> <p>Consent to disclose is signed and boundaries of confidentiality are discussed.</p>
Family-based reintegration plan	<p>Discussion with the case management team about the woman’s participation in the program if the woman has chosen to continue in the program</p> <p>If there are no contraindications, the family is contacted for involvement in the program. If the family agrees to be involved, the woman continues in the program.</p> <p>The initial family plan is shared with the family for their input.</p> <p>A community-based organization is recruited to provide support to the woman and her family for one year post-release. An honorarium is provided to the community-based organization.</p> <p>Once the woman and her family have signed off on the plan, the family plan shared with the case management team, and the National Parole Board if the woman so requests.</p> <p>The FLW accompanied the woman to the National Parole Board hearing upon her request.</p>	<p>Discussion with the case management team about the man’s participation in the program and any contraindications to his participation.</p> <p>If there are no contraindications, the family is contacted for involvement in the program. If the family agrees to be involved, the man continues in the program.</p> <p>The entire family is prepared for a family group conference.</p> <p>A Community Mentoring Team of CFCN volunteers and staff are formed to support the man and his family for one year, post-release.</p> <p>A Family Group Conference (FGC) is held in the institution to develop the family's community reintegration plan. The FGC includes the family, the incarcerated family member, the FGDMR Coordinator and the volunteer support team.</p> <p>Once the man and his family have signed off on the family plan, the family plan is shared with the case management team, and the National Parole Board if the man so requests.</p> <p>The FGDMR Coordinator accompanied the man to the National Parole Board hearing upon his request.</p>

Post-release	The woman and her family are supported for one year post-release by the community organization, with meetings occurring on an agreed-upon schedule. The FLW keeps regular telephone and/or face-to-face contact with the community organization and the woman and her family. The family plan is revised if necessary.	The man and his family are supported for one year post release by the FGDMR Coordinator and the volunteer support team. The team meets weekly with the entire family for the first 6 weeks of release, then monthly and as required for continued family plan success. The family plan is revised if necessary.
Evaluation	The community organization sends a monthly report to the FLW on its support activities with the woman and her family. A final evaluation is completed by the woman, her family and the community organization when the supported family reintegration plan ceases after one year.	Volunteers and FGDMR discuss the meetings and lessons learned on supporting the family. A closing celebration is held at the end of one year of the family-based reintegration. An interview and written comments are used to evaluate the experience of the man and his family.
Implementation manual	An implementation manual is developed to prevent program drift and for project replication.	An implementation manual is developed to prevent program drift and for project replication.

family plan if FGDMR was piloted to participants who may be at a greater risk to re-offend. Further exploration with a larger sample may appropriately evaluate both the higher family need and the effectiveness of the FGDMR approach with offenders released from higher security (statutory release or warrant expiry). The FGDMR process's multi-systemic approach is of sufficient intensity and duration that it would be expected that FGDMR would have an effect on reducing recidivism among higher risk releases.

The original offences committed by the 27 incarcerated men in the FGDMR group did not appear to influence post-release success. Of the 27 participants, 12 men were incarcerated for a sexual offence against a family member; five were incarcerated for robbery, four for DUI, five for trafficking and one was serving a life sentence.

No conclusions can be drawn related to any cultural differences for FGDMR as the sample size was too small, with one aboriginal offender and one African Canadian participant.

The FLW model and the FGDMR model showed similar results in terms of having a positive effect on reducing recidivism. Table 4 shows similarities and differences in the models. The primary differences are how the family-based community reintegration plan is developed and how the one year of family-based reintegration support occurred.

Other considerations

Travel requirements for FDGMR staff and volunteers and for family members were higher than anticipated. In the Ontario component of the project, only four of the families were within the Kingston area and the remainder were not. There was a similar experience in the Quebec component of the project in that many of the families were not from the Montreal area.

Next, in many of the FLW and FGDMR cases, the families had limited or potentially disruptive community supports, pre-incarceration, during incarceration and prior to the release of the incarcerated family member. This placed a significant demand on FGDMR staff and volunteers who formed the community mentoring teams and on the community organizations who supported the families in the FLW project.

One of the difficulties for the families of affected by the criminal behavior, incarceration and community reintegration is to establish and maintaining appropriate community support. Under both models, there is a requirement to be proactive in contacting the family, in modeling appropriate relationships, social networking and in rapport building. The family is asked to be proactive in contacting the community mentoring team or the community organization if there is an immediate need for a family intervention. In the FGDMR

project, some volunteers from voluntary sector organizations who agreed to act as members of CFCN's community mentoring teams had a difficult time understanding that it was the responsibility of the mentoring team to take initiative to maintain contact with the family, to schedule meetings or simply to contact the family between scheduled meetings and ask how things were going. In the FLW project, some community organizations required as much support from the FLW as the CFCN volunteers required in the FGDMR project. The FLW was required, unexpectedly with the project's parameters, to allocate time to some of the organizations.

While the FGDMR Community Mentoring Team or the community organization providing family support under the FLW model are not parole officers, they are expected to use a similar approach to effective parole supervision. It is unrealistic to expect the incarcerated participant and their family to do what they may have never learned to do and it is up to the support team to model what it means to establish and maintain pro-social relationship.

Recruitment and retention of the volunteers was a difficulty and placed considerable stress on the FGDMR staff. Over the course of the project, many volunteers were unable, for a variety of reasons, to maintain their one year commitment to support the family. During the end of project evaluations by the offenders and their families, there were two strong statements from participants about volunteers having "bailed on us." This negative evaluation of the volunteers was tempered because the families benefited from extra FGDMR staff time to provide interim support until such time as other volunteers were recruited and trained to meet with the families.

Final thoughts

There are a lot of concerns to be addressed when a charity such as the CFCN delivers a project like the FLW and FGDMR projects inside a correctional facility. Effective partnerships need to be established between correctional staff and project staff. There may be different perspectives. An understanding of common goals is often reached in discussions about what constitutes support and accountability.

Eventually, a consensus can grow that the family, the charity and correctional staff are concerned about safe and successful family and

community reintegration. Often the charity has an important role to play, as this comment from a Parole Officer at Nova Institution for Women:

"I consider the Family Liaison Worker Pilot project at Nova essential to providing a holistic approach and services to our clients at Nova. Often within the government mechanism, and despite the best intentions, there are holes in the services that are available. I have often found myself in the position of providing support for our women, but am unable to do so due to restrictions. I have been able to ask [FLW] Krista Poole, on many occasions if she was able to help with an offender, and she was able to do so. These requests mostly pertained to child and family services, information on student loans or financial difficulties, and in general liaison with the community. The flexibility in services are essential when preparing offenders for release, and in effect encourage law abiding citizens, as they are treated as individuals with individual needs."

As was previously mentioned in projects with families, the effect on recidivism rates is not the sole determining factor in evaluating the success of a project. In the FLW and FGDMR projects, evaluations by the families who received reintegration support in the community described a positive impact on their quality of life. They recognized the value of one year of support, accountability and modeling of pro-social relationships that happened between the family and the Community Mentoring Teams in the FGDMR project or between the family and a community organization in the FLW project. Here are some comments from inside participants and from a family member:

"The program got me out. Other guys told me, "Don't take it, it won't help," but it did. The more stuff you have on your side the better it is for you and your family. I would like to go back into CSC to talk with guys, to tell them, "This family group program is how you work within the System, to prove to CSC and to your family that you should be out. You have to be a fool not to take a program like this." From an inside participant's one year evaluation.

"The family meeting [family group conference] was intense. It was a rollercoaster. It was good

to get that stuff off my chest. The next day it was a relief. I could hold my head up high again. I can get through this. I didn't know how strong I was until I went through the conference." From an inside participant's one year evaluation.

"The family meeting gave my kids a place to ask me the tough questions, questions that they had but didn't think they could ask me. My oldest child had the hardest time. The kids have to be so resilient. The guilt just consumed me, thinking back, when my daughter saw me on the ground, with the police officers with their guns on me and she was screaming, "Daddy, Daddy!" From an inside participant's one year evaluation.

"I didn't want to see what was going on. Then it was too late. Now we support each other in a different way. I was ready to leave him. Then I realized that it wasn't what he needed. I had a hope that things would be better in the future again." From a family member's one year evaluation.

"In our reintegration plan we have worked through employment issues, marital/family ties, personal and emotional support outside the family, associates and substance abuse. These were our core areas of concern. We made a plan to help us to recognize our areas of concern and then stay on track with these issues and we have been successful. It has taken a lot of work, but well worth the effort." From a family member's one year evaluation

When working with families, the workload increases exponentially with each family member that is involved. It is demanding work for all concerned. It is also 'well worth the effort' to see families successfully reach their goals of being a family in the community, once again.

The CFCN wishes to express its thanks to Chaplaincy Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, for their financial support for its projects and for making this report possible. The views and opinions contained in this report are those of the CFCN and do not represent those of Chaplaincy Branch or of the Correctional Service of Canada.

References

- Andrews, D. & Bonta, J. (2006). *The psychology of criminal conduct* (4th edition). Cincinnati: Anderson.
- Bonta, J. (2003). *The recidivism of federal offenders*. Research Summary 8(4). Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.
- Bonta, J. (2006). *Restorative justice and offender treatment*. Research Summary, 11 (6). Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.
- Bonta, J., Ruggie, T. & Dauvergne, M. (2003). *The reconviction rate of federal offenders*. Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada.
- Canadian Human Rights Commission (2003). *Protecting Their Rights – A Systemic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*. Retrieved from the world wide web at http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/legislation_policies/consultation_report-eng.aspx
- Correctional Service of Canada (2006). *Response and Action Plan for Inspection of Nova and Grand Valley Institution by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons*. Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada.
- Derksen, D., Gobeil, R., & Gileno, J. (2009). *Visitation and post-release outcome among federally-sentenced offenders*. Research Report R-20. Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada.
- Eljdupovic, G. (1999). *Parenting roles and experiences of abuse in women offenders: Review of the Offender Intake Assessments*. Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada.
- Gobeil, R. & Barrett, M. (2008). *Rates of recidivism for women offenders*. Research Report R-192. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.
- Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (1990). *Creating choices: Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women*. Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada.
- Wilson, R, Picheca, J. & Prinzo, M. (2005). *Circles of Support & Accountability: An Evaluation of the Pilot Project in South-Central Ontario*. Research Report R-168. Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada.
- Withers, L. (2005). *Restorative approaches to families*. Presentation to the Annual Conference of Citizens' Advisory Committees, November 26, 2005. Hull, Québec.
- Withers, L. & Folsom, J. (2007). *Incarcerated fathers: A descriptive analysis*. Research Report R-186. Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada.

Volunteers and the circle of support.

By Elizabeth Martin and Lloyd Withers.

It is now two months before Paul* will be released on parole from the correctional facility. Both he and his partner, Mary*, have been preparing for the Family Group Conference, or the 'FGC.' This evening they will prepare a family reintegration plan based on the seven factors important to successful reintegration. The CFCN's Family Group Decision-Making for Reintegration (FGDMR) Coordinator has had regular contact with them separately, getting them ready for one of the ways in which the CFCN supports families affected by crime, incarceration and reintegration.

As the Family Group Conference circle forms, Mary sits quietly and fiddles with her hands. She is quite nervous about meeting Sylvie* and Julie* for the first time. They are two volunteers who will form a community mentoring team with the FGDMR Coordinator. The three of them will meet with Paul and Mary regularly in the community for one year, supporting them with their family reintegration plan.

Mary keeps her head bowed. Around the circle, everyone introduces themselves and states the role they will play during the FGC. After an ice breaker, the FGDMR Coordinator describes each step of the FGC: the restorative justice teaching component, the restorative justice practice of truth-telling by the inside participant and the family's response, the identification of family needs and reintegration issues, the writing of a family plan for successful reintegration and a closing of the circle for the evening with a coffee and a snack.

It takes about ten minutes for the Coordinator to explain restorative justice and its principles. The circle then moves to the truth-telling. Paul names each of his offences and describes what happened in his crimes. He reads a restorative letter that he prepared with the help of the FGDMR Coordinator. In the letter he admits how his crimes and his incarceration harmed Mary. He accepts sole responsibility for his actions, explains what was going on inside of him before and during his offences, asks her forgiveness and commits to never again choose a criminal response to his problems. He concludes by expressing appreciation for Mary's

support. He is embarrassed by his show of emotions in front of the volunteers.

After Paul's truth-telling, Mary begins her response. She shares her anger and disbelief at Paul's crimes. She acknowledges how much his offences shocked her. She tells of the evening that she learned of his arrest, of falling to the floor and being unable to move for a long time. She describes the days that followed were like being in a fog. She was unable to do simple day to day tasks. She felt such deep shame, not wanting to believe that this was happening to her. She talks about the struggles of being on her own in the community, of struggling to pay bills and of visiting in a prison. She admits that she still harbours a fear that Paul will return to crime after he comes home. She ends by saying that she understands him better now and that she is willing to give him a second chance and that she will continue to support him. Mary believes that how well they are able to work together to prepare their family plan is one way for Paul to support their relationship. It is a demonstration of his commitment to her.

The FGDMR Coordinator asks Mary and Paul to leave the circle and to move to separate tables. Mary and Paul each draw up their own list of what they think needs to happen for reintegration to succeed. Coming back together in the circle, they determine specific objectives to address each family need area, whether it is something in their marital relationship, about work, about substance use and abuse, about day-to-day tasks in the community, about friends and peers, personal emotional issues, or attitudes or thinking patterns that can lead to crime. For each family need area, the community mentoring team helps them to identify community resources that can be used to help in for each need area. They assist to prepare strategy for rapid intervention in the event that the family plan starts to go off track, such as who Mary will contact, who Paul will telephone or with whom they both will meet.

Once Mary and Paul have agreed on each part of the family reintegration plan, the FGC closes with Mary and Paul thanking the volunteers for the

gentle guidance provided by the community volunteers. Mary, in particular, mentions that she appreciated the explanations about the Parole Board hearing and how parole works. The family shares how much they value the step by step approach in the family plan on the issues that were relevant to their relationship and to reintegration.

The Family Group Conference concludes with light refreshments. Everyone is satisfied with the work accomplished.

In the following days, the family plan is transcribed by the FGDMR Coordinator and, with a signed consent, is shared with the institutional Parole Officer and the National Parole Board of Canada. At the parole hearing, the Commissioner comments favourably on the how well the family plan is structured and how this support will be very beneficial to the parolee and his family.

The community mentoring team begins to meet with the family and the parolee during the first week of parole. Sylvie and Julie model pro-social relationships for Mary and Paul. They help to build family trust and participation by being punctual, reliable, respectful and non-judgmental. They listen and show empathy. They seek to reinforce protective factors so as to diminish the possibility of relapse. They help by pointing out stressors that could affect Paul's decision-making. As the family receives positive reinforcement from the community mentoring team on following their plan, they invest even more in their relationship.

In the fourth week of community support, the Parole Officer requests to attend a family support meeting. She is pleased with the support given by the volunteers and comments on how well the family plan has been working to help reach objectives which the Parole Officer had also hoped for.

In one of the regular meetings with the community mentoring team, Mary expresses how Sylvie and Julie have always treated her with respect. She is reassured by the benefits of their support and its contribution to a successful family and community reintegration. Mary comments: *"If we had left these issues unaddressed, reintegration would have been jeopardized."* Mary is grateful that she can count on the volunteers for good referrals as situations arise.

The volunteers also indicate how they enjoy meeting with the family in the community, in their own surroundings. The family is more and more at ease and less stressed as compared to when they first met Sylvie and Julie in the institution. Regular and agreed upon support meetings bring stability to the family and help them find answers to their questions in a timely fashion.

In addition to being available through a toll-free line, the FGDMR Coordinator attends several meetings and keeps in touch with the volunteers by phone and through the volunteers' written summary of each meeting.

The family-based reintegration support continues for one year. Mary and Paul successfully completed their family plan, along with 41 other families who have participated so far in FGDMR

Family ties (and volunteers) make a difference!

** All names have been changed for the purposes of this article, and the article combines the stories of several families into a composite story.*

FGDMR was piloted with success at Frontenac and Montée St-François Institutions from 2005-2008 by Lloyd Withers, Elizabeth Martin and Marg Holland. Since 2008, the Quebec Region, Correctional Service of Canada, has continued to fund FGDMR at Montée St-François Institution.

Copyright (c) 2012, CFCN. The Families and Corrections Journal is produced by the Canadian Families and Corrections Network. Your comments and submissions are welcome by email to Lloyd Withers, Editor, FCJ, at national@cfcn-rcafd.org or by mail to CFCN, Box 35040 Kingston ON K7L 5S5. Tel: 1-888-371-2326.



Face to face with intergenerational crime

By Jean Folsom.

Nothing brings the issue of intergenerational crime to the forefront more than seeing an offender in the morning and then his incarcerated son in the afternoon. Working in a small correctional organization, it is impossible to avoid dealing with offenders who are related through this type of familial bond, whether the second generation offender is a teen or young adult. It can present challenges and opportunities to the correctional psychologist.

Parental incarceration can have a strong, negative impact on the lives of children. The sudden loss of a parent to incarceration can be a very traumatic event for a child. This is especially true when the parent was living in the home and taken away by police in front of the child. The huge emotional loss for a child whose parent is incarcerated is typically compounded by the financial hardship and social stigma faced by the family. The stigma of parental incarceration may lead to internalizing problems in the child such as shame and anger which can result from bullying and teasing (Novero, Loper & Warre, 2011). The family may have to relocate for the remaining parent to find employment, to be closer to other family supports or to avoid the shame and harassment in their home community. Children whose mothers are incarcerated often experience more disruption to their lives than children of incarcerated fathers because the mother is typically the primary caregiver. These children may be removed from the home to be cared for by grandparents or foster parents. Loss, uncertainty and instability can become the norm for the children with parents in prison.

How many children are affected by parental incarceration? In Canada, the majority of male and female offenders are parents (Withers & Folsom, 2007; Eljdupovic, 2008). Extrapolating from data collected at the Millhaven Reception Unit in Ontario, Withers and Folsom (2007) estimated that 357,604 Canadian children are affected by paternal incarceration. This figure represents 4.6% of the total Canadian population who are 19 years of age or younger. The number increases when children whose mothers are incarcerated are added. Such a

large number of children means that they are living, going to school, playing sports, etc. in all of our communities. This is not, however, a uniquely Canadian problem. Similar situations exist in other countries as well.

Children of incarcerated parents face stressors beyond the imprisonment of a parent. Other factors associated with a parent's criminal lifestyle such as drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence occur in some of their homes. Parental incarceration, then, is only one in a series of negative life events that impact on the life of the child. It is little wonder that they evidence more problems than other children including exhibiting more criminal behaviour. Withers and Folsom (2007) estimated that the children of federally sentenced fathers are 2 to 4 times more likely to be in conflict with the law than Canadian children in general. Once in prison, second generation offenders report experiencing more anger and violence and they violate prison rules more frequently (Novero, Loper & Warre, 2011).

For children with parents in prison, it can be quite a challenge to maintain contact with the incarcerated parent. Phone calls and visits may be infrequent and the visiting experience itself may provide little opportunity for activities that children can engage in with their parents. The prison setting and the security procedures required for visits may appear quite daunting to small children. Thus, imprisonment presents serious challenges to the preservation of a parent-child relationship.

The co-incarceration of a parent and child may be a catalyst for the family to become engaged in treatment. Typically, the incarcerated parent worries about his/her child being in prison and does not want the child to continue on a criminal path. It may be possible to engage the parent in interventions, such as parenting skills, that could reduce the risk of the child becoming further involved in crime. Imprisonment may be a time when work can be done to improve the relationship between the parent and the child. It is likely that the incarcerated parent has not provided optimum parenting to the child and the child may harbour feelings of anger, abandonment and rejection. This may leave the

child open to criminal influences. Therefore, working on the relationship between the parent and the child may alleviate some of the vulnerabilities that the child has to the criminal subculture and ultimately to crime.

Another option may be to examine the list of criminogenic needs of the second-generation offender to determine which ones that the incarcerated parent or the family as a whole may be of assistance in addressing. For example, many of the second generation offenders associate with other individuals who are involved in crime. Having the resource of a parent available to address this issue may be beneficial, especially if the parent were to speak of the personal negative consequences that this behaviour has had on his/her own life. Also the parent may assist with making plans to involve the child in activities in the community such as sports clubs that would bring him/her into contact with other pro-social peers.

Having two generations of offenders on your caseload at the same time provides an opening to assist the entire family to break the cycle of intergenerational crime. Forensic/correctional psychologists are in a unique position to help the

family because of their extensive knowledge of the factors associated with criminal behaviour. In spite of the challenges of working with two generations of offenders, it may well be worth the effort.

*Thank you to Dr. Folsom for permission to reprint her article. "Face to face with intergenerational crime" first appeared in **Crime Scene Vol. 18 No. 2 (October 2011, p. 5-6)**, a publication of the Criminal Justice Section of the Canadian Psychological Association.*

References

Eljdupovic, G. (2008). Mothering roles of female offenders. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Canadian Psychological Association, Halifax, NS.

Novero, C. M., Loper, A. B., & Warren, J. (2011). Second-generation prisoners: Adjustment patterns for inmates with a history of parental incarceration. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 38, 761 – 778.

Withers, L. & Folsom, J. (2007). Incarcerated fathers: A descriptive analysis. Research Report No. R-186. Ottawa, Ontario: Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada.

The Canadian Families and Corrections Network | Regroupement canadien d'aide aux familles des détenu(e)s is a registered Canadian charity, registration number 875428062RR0001. With the purchase of a \$30.00 membership, you will receive a receipt for income tax purposes of \$20.00.

Please consider a further charitable donation to the CFCN to assist in our unique approach to crime prevention and harm reduction. You will receive a charitable receipt for the full amount of any donation of \$10.00 or more.

Thank you for your support, and please send your donation to:

Canadian Families and Corrections Network, Box 35040 Kingston ON K7L 5S5

Date: _____

Please find enclosed my membership fee/ renewal:

- Individual membership: \$30.00
- Corporate Patron: \$175.00 or more
- Non-profit organization / agency membership: \$65.00
- Student / senior / underwaged / Prison group: \$10.00

I wish to include a further charitable donation of: \$10.00 _____ \$25.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ \$100.00 _____ Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____