

Newsletter



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Centre for Forensic
Behavioural Science
and Justice Studies

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Public Forum

Improving the Lives of Mothers in Prison**March 20, 2025****HLTH 1150****1 pm - 4 pm**

Public Forum 2025:

The Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies is organizing a 2025 Public forum on March 20, 2025, from 1-4 pm on Campus. The theme of this year's offering will be "Improving the Lives of Mothers in Prison"

There will be two keynote speakers presenting at the forum followed by a panel discussion. Both speakers will present best practices for serving the needs of women in prison, including access to reproductive services and products and children's and mother's rights while they are in prison. There will also be a panel with representation from federal corrections.

This is a free event and will be perfect for University students, staff, and faculty; federal and provincial government representatives; community-based organizations; and community members. [Sign up today](#) and share this information with those you think may be interested.

**EMAIL US TODAY TO
REGISTER!**

EMAIL US AT
forensic.centre@usask.ca

IN THIS ISSUE

PUBLIC FORUM 2025**CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2025****DIRECTOR'S CORNER****INFOGRAPHIC****PHOTOGRAPHY
COMPETITION****ANIMAL AWARENESS FOR
THE SUBSTANCE USE
WORKFORCE****WELCOMING NEW CFBSJS
MEMBERS**

Keynote Speakers:



(Photo submitted by Dr. Martha Paynter)

DR. MARTHA PAYNTER

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND THE PRISON SYSTEMS IN CANADA

Dr. Martha Paynter has worked to advance abortion access in Canada for over 20 years. A writer, nurse and public scholar, she is recognized internationally for her expertise at the nexus of reproductive and prisoner health. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Nursing; Director of Nursing Research for the Contraception and Abortion Research Team, a national network based out of the UBC Faculty of Medicine; Affiliate Scientist for the Reproductive Options and Services ROSE abortion Clinic at Nova Scotia Health; a member of the Dalhousie University Health Law and Justice Institute; and founder and past chair of Wellness Within: An Organization for Health and Justice, the only non-profit in Canada dedicated to advancing reproductive justice for people in prisons. In 2022, Fernwood Publishing released Dr. Paynter's first book, *Abortion to Abolition: Reproductive Health and Justice in Canada*. Her second book, *Lawless: Abortion Under Complete Decriminalization*, will be released on September 28, 2025. She has published over 50 peer-reviewed articles and participated in 250 news media interviews. She works in close collaboration with community groups and lived experience experts to advocate for abortion access and prisoner rights. In 2017, Dr. Paynter received the sesquicentennial 150th anniversary medal from the Senate of Canada for her volunteer service to the country.

[Read the abstract!](#)



(Photo submitted by Prof. Robin Hansen)

PROF. ROBIN HANSEN

SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION AND THE DENIAL OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN INCARCERATION DECISIONS

Robin F. Hansen is an Associate Professor at the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, Canada. An international law specialist, she teaches public international law, conflict of laws and human rights. Her primary research interest is on how legal personhood is constructed within legal systems, and particularly how this construction frames accountability. She is the author of *Prison Born: Incarceration and Motherhood in the Colonial Shadow*, which examines the rights of newborn children not to be automatically separated from their mothers by the state without due process.

Prof. Hansen examines the impact of parental incarceration on children and identifies the points in legal system processes where children's rights must be better considered if Canada is to meet its obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. From a child's perspective, separation from one's mother is a very significant decision, which requires fair process under s. 7 of the Charter; such decisions must be made in full acknowledgement of the child's rights to health, and to freedom from discrimination. Discriminatory assumptions regarding the maternal value of incarcerated women to their children must be directly rejected in favour of an approach that does not pre-emptively deny children their legal rights to due process.

[Read the abstract!](#)

Participating in the Panel discussion:

KATHY NEIL

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER INDIGENOUS CORRECTIONS
CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA



(Photo submitted by Kathy Neil)

Kathy Neil is a proud Métis descendant whose ancestors originated from the Red River Manitoba area. On May 1, 2023, Ms. Neil was appointed as the first Deputy Commissioner for Indigenous Corrections. Kathy holds a BA with a major in Indigenous studies and sociology from the University of Saskatchewan. She has 27 years of experience in the field of corrections; holding many positions including Mental Health Facilitator, Community Health Worker, Warden and Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Correctional Operations. She has first-hand experience working directly with federally incarcerated Indigenous peoples and has a deep commitment to fostering reconciliation, cultural awareness, and equitable treatment for Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system. As a trailblazer in her field, she has been instrumental in shaping policies that recognize and address Indigenous needs and ensure interventions are culturally responsive. She has strong ties to her community and believes that positive relationships are key to assisting and supporting inmates on their rehabilitation journey.

Call for Proposals 2025

Our Centre is proud to offer funding opportunities to support groundbreaking research in crime, justice, and corrections. If you're a graduate student or faculty member passionate about advancing knowledge in these critical fields, now is the time to act!

Faculty Grants provide up to \$10,000 to support innovative research projects, while Student Awards offer up to \$6,000 to cover research-related expenses. These funding opportunities are designed to empower researchers with the resources they need to make a meaningful impact.

Applications for the 2025 funding cycle are now open, with a submission deadline of March 17, 2025. Don't miss this chance to elevate your research and contribute to transformative change in forensic sciences and justice studies.

Faculty Funding Page:

<https://cfbsjs.usask.ca/funding/faculty-funding.php>

Student Funding Page:

<https://cfbsjs.usask.ca/funding/student-funding.php>

Funding Opportunities

To help build research capacity across the broad domains of crime, justice and corrections, the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Sciences and Justice Studies offers various types of research funding for graduate students and faculty.

- **Faculty Grants:** Up to \$10,000 to support research projects.
- **Student Awards:** Up to \$6,000 to help cover research-related costs.

The 2025 applications are live and the deadline is **March 17, 2025.**

Apply now to take your research to the next level!

Faculty Grants

Student Grant

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



(Photo by Matt Smith - Dr. Mansfield Mela)

Maintaining the mother-child bond should be a central goal of correctional services when diversion from the criminal justice system is not an option. Research has consistently shown that preserving these relationships leads to better outcomes for both mothers and children, reducing recidivism and breaking cycles of incarceration. As best practices continue to emerge, efforts to assess, mentor, and advocate for incarcerated mothers remain critical. However, significant gaps still exist in policy, law, services, and research.

To address these issues, we invite you to attend our upcoming Public Forum on Improving the Lives of Mothers in Prison, held at the University of Saskatchewan. This event will bring together experts, advocates, and community members to discuss and develop solutions for this important issue.

At the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies, we remain committed to bringing pressing justice-related issues to the forefront of academic and public discussions. As we enter the final year of our strategic plan, we are proud to reflect on the progress we have made.

Many of our objectives have been successfully completed, leaving a lasting impact on the community. Our team—Drs. Jewell, Stoliker, Tetreault, and Roma, alongside our dedicated coordinator Lilani Samarakoon—continues to embody the spirit of being ‘small but mighty,’ delivering high-quality research and advocacy in the field of forensic science and justice studies.

We are also thrilled to introduce our new and improved website, designed for easier navigation of our projects, research opportunities, and upcoming events. This updated platform will serve as a valuable resource for students, faculty, and justice professionals interested in forensic mental health related research. We encourage you to explore the site and engage with our work.

We are currently inviting applications for two exciting funding opportunities:

- Faculty Seed Funding – supporting innovative research in forensic and justice studies.
- Graduate Student Forensic Research Grant – providing financial assistance for students conducting research in related fields.

We encourage all eligible applicants to take advantage of these opportunities to further their research and contribute to the advancement of forensic science.

Mark your calendars for our Public Forum on Improving the Lives of Mothers in Prison. Join us as we discuss meaningful reforms that can create a more humane and rehabilitative environment for incarcerated mothers and their children. Your participation is vital in shaping policies and practices that foster positive change.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Dr. Mansfield Mela
Director

Infographic

We've been expanding our outreach by creating infographics to highlight the impactful research being conducted at the Centre. The following is one of such infographics we have created to provide a condense version of the research summary.

Please visit our Reports Page: <https://cfbsjs.usask.ca/research/reports.php>

PREDICTABILITY OF COGNITIVE SCREENING TOOLS FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS OF DEMENTIA AMONG OLDER PEOPLE IN CUSTODY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Older people in custody (50+ years of age) are at increased risk of developing neurocognitive issues, such as dementia, as correlates of cognitive and functional decline are heightened among incarcerated populations. Research from several high-income countries estimate that anywhere between 1 to 70% of older people in custody may be living with dementia or cognitive impairment depending on the correctional context and population characteristics. To further investigate these concerns, this study assessed the performance of several cognitive screening tools for detecting suspected cases of dementia when compared to a formal diagnostic assessment. This study sought to address the following questions: (1) what is the prevalence of dementia and cognitive impairment among older people in custody? (2) to what extent can the selected cognitive screening tools accurately predict a diagnosis of dementia? and (3) which cognitive screening tool is best able to predict a diagnosis of dementia in a custodial sample?

SETTING & METHODS

- **Where?**
 - Multi-level custodial forensic psychiatric treatment centre operated by Canada's federal correctional system in Saskatchewan (SK).
- **Who?**
 - Older individuals, including any non-Indigenous persons aged 50 years or older and Indigenous persons aged 45 years or older.
 - A total of 28 individuals completed the initial cognitive screening tools (CICA and CSI'D'), whereas 18 completed the MMSE and final diagnostic assessment.



SCREENING TOOLS

Community Screening Instrument for Dementia (CSI'D')

- Modified for use in custodial populations and includes a participant interview and informant (i.e. caregiver) questionnaire.
- The Cognitive Score (CS) and Informant Score are combined to create a Discriminant Score (DS).
 - Poor performance = $DS \geq 0.184$ or CS only ≤ 28.5 (flagged for possible dementia)
- A separate scoring protocol for Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons was used to mitigate potential educational and cultural biases.

Canadian Indigenous Cognitive Assessment (CICA)

- Validated in community-based populations. This study used the standard version which has not previously been used within custodial populations.
- A CICA score of 34 or less is indicative of possible dementia.

Mini-Mental State Exam (MMSE)

- Assesses cognitive function and impairment and has been used in several previous studies (without modification) among older and aging people in custody.
- A MMSE score below 24 is favoured for classifying cognitive impairment in community-based dementia studies.

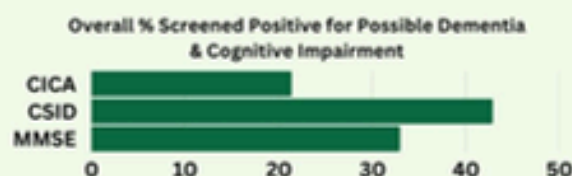
Study Authors: Bryce E. Stoliker, Krista Lagimodiere, Christie Tetreault, Lisa Jewell, Ashmini Kerodal, Olajide Adelugba, Susan Chalmers, Mansfield Mela, Megan O'Connell, Lindsay Reddick, Travis Boone, Shelley Peacock, Megan Surkan, & Arlene Kent-Wilkinson

Study Completion Date: December 31, 2024



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RESULTS OF SCREENING TOOLS



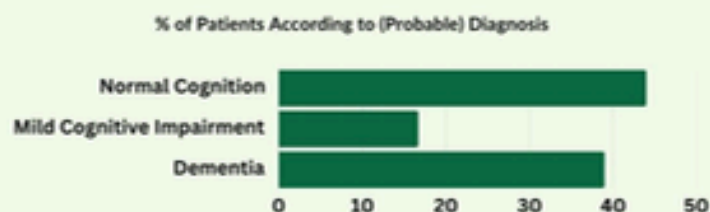
Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) Curve

- ROC analyses assessed the diagnostic performance of the CICA, CSID, and MMSE against the classification of probable diagnosis of dementia vs normal cognition or mild cognitive impairment.
- The CICA (AUC = 0.766, $p = 0.018$) and MMSE (AUC = 0.792, $p = 0.008$) significantly classified cases of dementia.
 - The Area Under the Curve (AUC) values for these instruments suggest fair performance.
- The CSID Cognitive Score (AUC = 0.636, $p = 0.308$) and Discriminant Score (AUC = 0.714, $p = 0.129$) did not significantly classify cases of dementia.
 - AUC values for these models suggest poor to fair performance.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Comparisons

- A higher proportion of Indigenous participants were screened positive for possible dementia on the CICA (35% vs 0%) and CSID (53% vs 27%) as well as cognitive impairment on the MMSE (36% vs 29%). However, the only statistically significant difference was found for the CICA.
- While screening tools were more likely to flag Indigenous than non-Indigenous persons with possible dementia and cognitive impairment, non-Indigenous persons were more likely to receive a probable diagnosis of dementia.

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT



CUT-POINTS

- It is important to define appropriate cut-points for classifying possible cases of dementia and cognitive impairment. Results from ROC analyses suggest the following cut-points:
 - CICA:** ≤ 35
 - MMSE:** ≤ 25
 - For both the CICA and MMSE, these cut-points would result in a true positive 71.4% of the time and a false positive 27.3% of the time.
- Estimates may be unreliable for the CSID, however, a cut-point for the CS would be ≤ 30 (true positive rate = 57.1%; false positive rate = 27.3%) and a cut-point for the DS would be ≥ 0.2812 (true positive rate = 71.4%; false positive rate = 9.1%).

CONCLUSIONS

- Instruments were more likely to screen Indigenous than non-Indigenous persons with possible dementia and cognitive impairment. Possible reasons for this finding relate to:
 - Risk assessments over-classifying Indigenous persons.
 - Higher prevalence of certain health and social factors amongst Indigenous populations.
 - The established scoring protocols may not be sensitive to the current population.
- CICA and MMSE performed well in classifying cases of dementia and thus may be considered appropriate instruments for screening within similar custodial populations.
 - CICA may be most appropriate for screening for possible dementia within Indigenous custodial populations.
- With an increasing number of older adults in custody, combined with an elevated risk for dementia and cognitive impairment, there is a need to improve the provision of care to this population.
 - Effective screening processes are crucial for identifying possible cases of dementia and providing appropriate care.



CFBSJS -Photography Competition

We're excited to invite you to share your photos. This is more than just a contest; it's a chance to celebrate our community's creativity and perspective. Grab your cameras, unleash your creativity! Together, let's capture the spirit of our Centre!

Please visit our Photography Contest Page:

<https://cfbsjs.usask.ca/photography-competition.php>



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CFBSJS PHOTO CONTEST!

FORENSIC PERSPECTIVES: THROUGH YOUR LENS

- submit a photo that represents your view of the Forensic Centre and its impact to society

- ✓ The photo that wins 1st place will receive **\$100 prize**

- ✓ Selected photos will be showcased on CFBSJS website

Submit Your photo:
forensic.centre@usask.ca

More Information :
<https://cfbsjs.usask.ca>

Submission Deadline:
March 17, 2025

This contest will open for all UofS students in any discipline!



Photo Requirement

Make sure your is:

- in JPG format
- saved at quality 10 or above
- set to sRGB colour mode
- between 1-5 MB



Animal Awareness for the Substance Use Workforce - 5-hour self-paced online course

Learn how to integrate animals into recovery and wellness strategies, explore therapeutic benefits, and develop an action plan for animal-aware practices.

Register today: PAWSitiveConnectionsLab.com



REGISTER NOW

Animal Awareness for the Substance Use Workforce

In this course you will learn to:

- Identify evidence for the human-animal bond
- Recognize the role of animals in recovery & the wellness journey
- Distinguish animal roles and interventions
- Identify therapeutic benefits and concerns
- Incorporate animals ethically and professionally
- Generate and share ideas for practice integration

Why Take This Course

- First-of-its-kind course to be offered in the substance use health field
- Majority of Canadians consider their pet a family member and support
- Learn about companion, therapy, service, and emotional support animals
- Developed by a team of experts with academic and lived and living experience in the fields of mental health, substance use, and human-animal interaction
- Grounded in a One Health framework & recognizes Indigenous worldviews
- Practical, interactive, and evidence-informed for real-world application
- Develop an action plan for your organization to become animal aware

EVERY PERSON DESERVES ANIMAL AWARE CARE

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5 Hour Self-Paced Online Course
\$49 + tax CDN
INTRODUCTORY PRICE

Includes Continuing Education Certificate & University of Saskatchewan Digital Badge

Continuing Education Credits Pre-approved for:

- Canadian Counseling and Psychotherapy Association
- Canadian Addiction Counselors Certification Federation
- SK Association of Social Workers
- College of Registered Nurses of SK
- College of Licensed Practical Nurses
- SK College of Paramedics
- Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers
- and more!



WELCOMING NEW CFBSJS MEMBERS

Dr. Crystal Giesbrecht

Crystal Giesbrecht is the Director of Research at the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), the member association for domestic violence shelters and counselling Centres. She is a member of the Expert Advisory Panel for the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, and a member of Saskatchewan's Multi-Sector Review Committee for Clare's Law. Crystal completed her PhD in Justice Studies at the University of Regina in 2024. Her doctoral research related to typologies of perpetrators of IPV.



(Photo submitted by Dr. Crystal Giesbrecht)