

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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thanks the following organizations for their contributions to the Conference:**

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for again providing financial support**

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for advice on planning and for providing speakers**

**The Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks  
for advice on planning**

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Youth Justice Worker Program at Douglas College**

**The speakers and group facilitators**

**Donna Cruikshank, the Conference Organizer**

**Martha Joy and Stuart Alcock for the Summary of Proceedings**

**CONTENTS**

Introduction ..... 3

Conference Program ..... 6

Working Together - Welcome and Introduction by Tim Agg ..... 8

Youth Presentation by members of the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks ..... 11

Youth Development and Diversity ..... 11

Youth Justice from a First Nations Perspective ..... 14

Participants' Responses to the presentations by the FBCYICN, Natalie Clark and the youth who accompanied her, and Grand Chief Edward John ..... 15

Best Practices for Youth Justice Programs ..... 17

Participants' responses to the presentation by Don Andrews ..... 18

YCJA and Youth Justice Policy ..... 20

Participants' responses to the presentation by Steve Howell ..... 21

Provincial Overview ..... 22

Participants' responses to the presentation by David Young ..... 23

Notes from the Group Discussions:

Fraser Region ..... 25

Interior Region ..... 28

Northern Region ..... 31

Provincial Group ..... 34

Vancouver Coastal Region ..... 37

Vancouver Island Region ..... 40

## Introduction

Since 2000, the Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies (PARCA) has designed and delivered three events to assist in planning for BC's implementation of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA). All have been in conjunction with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and the Department of Justice Canada. The events were intended to build and strengthen partnerships among government, community and non-traditional organizations, as well as to promote effective youth justice strategies based on best practices.

Building on previous successes, PARCA planned a fourth event for the fall of 2002. With the YCJA scheduled to come into force on April 1, 2003, the restructuring of MCFD services under a regional model, and the growing interest among aboriginal organizations in developing youth justice strategies, PARCA thought it timely to bring together the key government, community, aboriginal and other non-traditional partners for a working session.

PARCA hosted an invitational, provincial working conference on November 4, 5, and 6, 2002 in Vancouver, British Columbia. The purposes were to:

- Increase understanding of the impact of the YCJA on policy, programs and community partnerships;
- Promote policies, strategies and programs that are supported by the research literature as effective in preventing youth crime and in reducing recidivism;
- Strengthen partnerships among government, community, aboriginal, and youth sectors, including the identification of needed protocols;
- Increase community influence over the delivery of youth justice services; and
- Strengthen planning for specific regional and local needs and concerns, including developing pragmatic action plans.

Prospective participants were identified by the planning committee in collaboration with MCFD and invited from each of the five MCFD regions: Vancouver Coastal, Vancouver Island, North, Interior, Fraser. A sixth group represented province-wide interests. There were about 14-17 participants in attendance from each region for a reasonably representative group from across the province. A total of 95 people participated, with approximately one third from each of three categories: MCFD, community youth justice agencies, and aboriginal agencies and other non-traditional partners.

In an attempt to be sure that participants were starting from a similar base of information, each one was sent a package of relevant articles and papers in advance of the event.

The conference brochure at page 6 provides a detailed description of the conference agenda.

Because the Conference was intended to be a working conference, the organizers decided that there would be a published record of the discussions, these Proceedings. To this end, each of the six groups was assisted by a facilitator. Recorders recruited from the students in the Youth Justice Worker Program at Douglas College kept notes of the discussions – generating over 200 pages of detailed information about the topics covered and the plans emerging from each group.

Clearly, it is impossible to include every point made in the plenary presentations and the discussions in these Proceedings. We have reviewed all the notes very carefully and attempted to distill the recurring themes, key points and salient issues identified by the participants as deserving further attention.

The Proceedings include the outlines provided by the speakers who presented to the plenary sessions. The notes from the groups were used as a basis for describing participants' responses to these presentations – but are not attributed to the groups to avoid repetition.

These Proceedings also include an edited version of each group's notes. We have made every attempt to reflect what was said as accurately as possible. A reading of the notes prior to editing revealed that every groups' comments could be sorted under five sub-headings: Connections, Community Planning, Concerns, Contradictions and Plans.

Having spent time with all the notes, our observation is that the process of engaging people from government, service agencies, First Nations, aboriginal groups, and other youth serving fields in meaningful discussions is fundamental to the success of planning and change processes. It should be promoted as an essential and ongoing feature of the service system.

However, we also observe that there are some useful preconditions to discussions that would improve their effectiveness. For instance, making sure that everyone is starting from the same base of information can enhance the nature of the discussions and prevent misunderstandings – the conference organizers attempted to do this but it seems that not everyone read the advance materials. Similarly, there is a need to define the terms of reference and clarify the key concepts that are pertinent to the discussion at the outset to reduce the potential for presumptions and misinterpretations. As an example, "risk" has different meanings in youth justice (risk of offending or re-offending), in child protection (risk of abuse or neglect), and in general usage in social services (risk of a range of behavioural and/or emotional difficulties, both as a victim of others and/or self-authored). There was some evidence of confusion among these different understandings for the same term in some discussions.

Above all, we feel privileged to have participated in and witnessed this process.

Martha Joy & Stuart Alcock  
Vancouver, BC

**Editors' Note:**

The editors are aware that the terms "First Nations" and "aboriginal" have different meanings. We have referred to "Aboriginal Authorities" where the reference is consistent with MCFD plans. Elsewhere we have adopted the convention of referring to "First Nations and other aboriginal groups" in the spirit of inclusiveness.

Also, a number of abbreviations are used throughout these Proceedings as follows:

MCFD:	Ministry of Children and Family Development
PARCA:	Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies
YCJA:	Youth Criminal Justice Act
ISSP:	Intensive Support and Supervision Program

## Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies

### BC Partners Planning Workshops on Implementation of the YCJA

**Please note:** This event has been designed to

- Be a collaborative process, with the information collected from various working sessions distributed throughout the province;
- Be action and planning oriented;
- Offer an inclusive approach to problem solving; and
- Act as a catalyst to continued work in home communities.

Accordingly, participation in all sessions would be ideal and we invite participants to attend *the entire conference*, if possible.

The small group agendas are general guidelines; they need not be strictly adhered to as groups will develop in unique and diverse directions, depending upon regional priorities.

#### FINAL PROGRAM

**November 4, 5, and 6, 2002**  
**Coast Plaza at Stanley Park,**  
**1763 Comox Street, Vancouver, B.C.**  
**604-688-7711**

#### Registration

6:00 p.m., Mon., November 4, 2002

8:00 a.m., Tues., November 5, 2002

#### Monday, November 4, 2002

##### **Opening Prayer and Welcome**

7:00 – 7:30 p.m.

*Mary Charles, Elder and Band Council member, Musqueam Indian Band, and Tim Agg, Treasurer, PARCA and Executive Director, PLEA.*

##### **Group Dialogue** 7:30 – 8:15 p.m.

Agenda: Introductions/Expectations

##### **Presentation by Youth Delegation**

8:15 – 9:00 p.m.

Presenters: *Members of the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks.*

#### Tuesday, November 5, 2002

**Breakfast** 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

##### **Youth Development and Diversity**

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Guest Speaker: *Natalie Clark, Program Coordinator, Social Services and Community Safety Division, Justice Institute of BC.*

##### **Youth Justice from a First Nations Perspective**

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Guest Speaker: *Grand Chief Edward John, Task Group Member, First Nations Summit Society.*

**Refreshment Break** 10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

##### **Group Dialogue** 10:15 – 11:30 a.m.

Agenda: What in these two presentations challenged/confirmed your experience of youth issues in your area/region? What are the implications for youth justice policy and programming? What additional information do we need?

**Buffet Lunch** 11:30 – 12:30 p.m.

**Best Practices for Youth Justice Programs** 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: *Dr. Don Andrews, Ph.D., professor psychology, Carleton University, Ottawa.*

**Group dialogue** 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Agenda: What are the key points in this presentation that are important to consider for our region/area? How do these ideas support or inform our programs/ practice? What changes may be required?

**Refreshment Break** 2:30 – 2:45 p.m.

**YCJA and Youth Justice Policy**

2:45 – 3:45 p.m.

Guest Speaker: *Steve Howell, Director, Youth Justice Policy, MCFD.*

**Group dialogue** 3:45 – 4:45 p.m.

Agenda: What are the implications for our region/area of the information provided? Where can we access additional information about these issues? How can we work together to address these issues in our regions/areas?

**Banquet** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker: *Alan Markwart Assistant Deputy Minister, Child and Youth Mental Health and Youth Justice, Ministry of Children and Family Development.*

**Wednesday, November 6, 2002**

**Breakfast** 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

**Provincial Overview**

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Guest Speaker: *David Young, Assistant Deputy Minister, Child and Family Development, Ministry of Children and Family Development.*

**Group Dialogue** 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Agenda: What are the service and structural changes identified in this presentation, from your perspective? How does the new governance model impact our program

planning? What direction is the system heading and where are we going to fit in it?

**Refreshment Break** 10:30 – 10:45 a.m.

**Group Dialogue** 10:45 – 12:00 a.m.

Agenda: What is the work that needs to be done to be ready for April 1<sup>st</sup> implementation of YCJA? How do we ensure our collective wisdom is used? What policies/programs must be in place in the next 24 months?

**Buffet Lunch** 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

**Group Dialogue** 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Agenda: Who do we need to involve in planning for the long term? Larger system? What will our planning process look like in the short term? How will we keep the momentum going?

**Refreshment Break** 2:00 – 2:15 p.m.

**“Gathering of Wisdom”- Wrap Up and Commitment to Future Projects**

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Guest Speakers: *Dr. Andrews and group representatives.*

**PARCA Youth Justice Conference**

*is sponsored by the Provincial Association of Residential and Community Agencies with generous assistance and support by Department of Justice Canada, Youth Justice Policy.*

*We would also like to acknowledge the Ministry of Children and Family Development for their help in planning the conference.*

*We extend our gratefulness to Martha Joy for sharing of her abundant experience and wisdom (and asking seemingly endless questions!) in helping develop the conference program.*

*A special thank you to Dave Burgess, Instructor in Child and Youth Care Counselling and in Youth Justice, Faculty of Child, Family and Community Studies, Douglas College, and seven of his students, who volunteered as recorders for this event.*

## **Working Together - Welcome and Introduction by Tim Agg**

It is a pleasure to welcome everyone on behalf of PARCA and to provide a sense of what we can expect over the next couple of days.

We are diverse leaders – we come from aboriginal organizations, community agencies and government; we come from all regions of BC and we bring local, regional, provincial and national perspectives. Each of us has, or will have, responsibility for some aspect of youth justice in our region or community. Most of us are managers, decision makers or leaders. Some of us have worked in youth justice for decades; others are new to the field, and bring new perspectives. Together, we represent a wealth of experience, wisdom, energy and commitment.

The “Working Together” theme of this conference was reflected in the funding and planning arrangements. The Department of Justice Canada is the primary funder, through a budget dedicated to assisting the Provinces and Territories to plan the implementation of the new *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. PARCA took the lead in organizing the event and administering the budget, while program planning has been done in full consultation with the youth justice staff of MCFD.

This conference is an important milestone in a process that started in 2000, to help BC plan for the implementation of the new federal youth justice legislation. In spring 2000, three hundred people gathered to talk about youth justice. Many of us were at that conference, and recall its positive spirit and energy. I still hear enthusiastic comments about the impact and contribution of the 50 young people who attended.

In 2001 we brought back over 200 people for a more in-depth examination of “what works” – with Don Andrews’ help, we focused on program development, building on the principles of successful youth justice programming.

In January and February of this year about 450 people attended events in Nanaimo, Kelowna, Prince George and the Lower Mainland. We looked more intensively at the needs in each region, ways to work together more effectively, and how to prepare for the new legislation. We began to think about the implications for youth justice of the looming service and governance changes in MCFD. These regional conferences reinforced our growing partnerships and reflected rapidly growing participation of aboriginal organizations.

This event is not a traditional conference, but a more structured working session. We intend to build on what was done over the last three years and support the work that must take place in communities and within the new regions. Participation is balanced from among three core youth justice partners – community justice organizations, aboriginal organizations and MCFD programs. Each region is represented, as are the new provincial services.

All of us will be able to identify the groups who are not here. There are too few from the wider service system – education, health, other social services – and from other parts of the justice system – prosecuting and defense counsel, judges, and police. These omissions result from the limitations imposed by space and budget. One of the questions that we will pose in each region, for further work when we return home, is “who’s not here that needs to be involved, and how will we ensure they are at our regional tables?”

PARCA is committed to not talking about young people without including young people. However, as a result of discussions with the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, it became apparent that there were insurmountable obstacles to making this conference youth friendly, so we adopted a different approach. The Federation is represented at the conference and its members will make a presentation this evening. The challenge of finding effective and durable ways to ensure that young people actively participate in planning the services intended for them and the decisions that affect them, continues to be an important element of the youth justice agenda.

We are working towards three goals:

1. Planning: We want to hear from each region about the work that is needed in order to be prepared for the April 1, 2003 implementation of the new legislation – and who will be doing what. We also want to hear how, in the context of the restructuring process, the longer term planning for youth justice will take place; and how all the partners will be involved.
2. Dialogue: Many of us already work together, sometimes over many years; some of us are new to one another, at least in a youth justice context. With the system undergoing significant change, we need to better understand one another and figure out how we will work effectively together. We hope this event contributes to strengthening existing working relationships and forging new ones.
3. A good time: PARCA has a reputation for hosting constructive and fun events – we hope this tradition continues.

Our previous events took place in uncertain, turbulent times and this one is no different. What happens elsewhere in the service system impacts youth justice. I hear anecdotal evidence from around the province that the overall 23% budget cuts to MCFD are too severe and 30% cuts to child and family development services will result in harm to some children, young people and families, and that the Government should take a second look and ease up.

We can be optimistic about the future. History suggests that while our anxieties are not misplaced, youth justice services have considerable resiliency. They have survived reasonably well through BC’s economic and political turbulence – and they will continue to do so. Youth justice in BC has been among the most progressive in Canada – we are not perfect, but we are closer to doing it right than most jurisdictions. Good quality

youth justice programs have resulted from close community-government partnerships. These features provide a strong foundation on which to build future change.

We know that regardless of budget and structural decisions, the new legislation will be implemented, young people will be directly affected by it, and we will continue to deliver services because we care about the outcomes for young people and for our communities. Aboriginal communities will increasingly take charge of the services provided to their young people. All of us will continue to apply our limited resources as smartly, effectively and creatively as we can.

PARCA and MCFD are committed to promoting youth justice strategies and programs that are evidence based and demonstrably successful. This means a willingness to look critically, to change – and certainly to learn new ways.

It is also our intent that youth justice change be planned collaboratively among government, community and aboriginal leaders. Over the last 3 years we have witnessed the development of a strong partnership. This year we intend to set it to work. I hope all of us enjoy a productive, stimulating, and rewarding conference.

### **Youth Presentation by members of the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks**

Producer/director introduced a group of five members of the FBCYICN who presented and performed in five short dramatic scenes. Each scene reflected the experience of one of the group members in relation to various aspects of the youth justice system, from court to custody.

The group was brought together from around BC and planned, scripted and rehearsed the presentation over two days.

## **Youth Development and Diversity**

**Notes provided by Natalie Clark**

### **Key Questions to Consider:**

Integration of new knowledge and practice (such as the new act) requires openness, curiosity, self-reflection.

The questions which I am raising for us today – and that I hope you will consider over the next day and weeks to follow – and integrate in your work with youth include:

### **Who?**

- ◆ Who are we? The importance of grounding in our own experience (Key point re: connection across difference – relational/cultural model)
- ◆ Who do we mean when we speak of youth? Do we recognize the diversity of youth – the intersections of youth identity? Immigrant girls? Aboriginal boys? Gay, lesbian or transgendered youth? Girls at risk? Girls in the justice system? Bicultural youth? Youth of color? (overhead re: youth and multiple contexts)

### **What?**

- ◆ What are our connections to youth? (what contexts do we work with youth in – power relationships, connecting across difference)
- ◆ What principles guide our programs, services and practice? (points regarding the principles and preamble in the new act )
- ◆ What is our commitment to youth? What is our commitment to justice for youth?
- ◆ What do we mean by youth participation? Are they tokenized? Expected to tell their stories? What barriers to participating exist? (Youth presentation on key points)
- ◆ What questions are we asking of our selves and our programs? (key points do we consider youth and the intersections of race/ethnicity, class, gender, ability/disability?)

### **When?**

- ◆ When will we consider the relevance of models of change in our programs, practices, and work with youth?

### **Where?**

- ◆ Where are the youth in our community? points of connection? disconnection? Do we interact with youth at all points in our community? (key points regarding new act and reintegration into community – diversity of issues regarding rural youth, youth on reserve, etc.)
- ◆ Where do the partnerships and collaboration exist in our programs and services?

### **Why?**

- ◆ Why do we do this work? (grounding in our passion, commitment and practice)

- ◆ Why might this youth at this time be expressing themselves in this way? (key point regarding impact of issues like trauma on the justice system, and intersections of gender, race, age, etc.)

**How?**

- ◆ How are our programs designed to meet the unique and diverse needs of youth?
- ◆ How are our programs connected to community?
- ◆ How do we challenge our selves and our programs?
- ◆ How do we integrate the new act? What strengths and challenges do we bring?
- ◆ How do we make room in our programs for emerging issues, theories? How do we keep connected to these issues? (key points regarding trauma)
- ◆ How are youth involved in the development, delivery and evaluation of our programs and services?

## **Youth Justice from a First Nations Perspective**

### **Key Points of the presentation by Grand Chief Edward John**

1. Introduction – Sense of Place shapes Perspective
2. Factors contributing to the current circumstances of First Nations communities
3. Four initiatives occurring in aboriginal communities
  - Healing – arising from the impact of Residential Schools
  - Rebuilding – young people involved in their cultures; the fight for rights and title
  - Reconciliation – addressing and dealing with the historical relationships
  - Accommodation – how will aboriginal people and their interests be accommodated in the Canadian federation?
4. Understanding what really works in First Nations communities\*
  - Practical Sovereignty – effective control over our own affairs, resources, institutions and development strategy
  - Capable Governing Institutions
  - Cultural Match
  - Strategic Orientation – away from crisis management
  - Effective Leadership – adopt new models of leadership, replacing “power over” with “power with”
5. Lessons
  - There must be commitment to communities having effective control
  - The priority is to stem the bleeding and prevent more kids from being taken into care
  - The June 2002 Tsawwassen Accord is a major breakthrough on how we will work together
  - Youth justice needs the partnership and support of government and non-aboriginal groups but solutions will come from First Nations and other aboriginal communities

\*Note: based on 15 year research study conducted within the Navajo Nation by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. Further information can be found at: <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/hpaied>

## **Participants' Responses to the presentations by the FBCYICN, Natalie Clark and the youth who accompanied her, and Grand Chief Edward John**

The consistent theme among all the groups was how fundamental relationships are, at every level, to developing and delivering effective youth justice programs. Every group noted the importance of developing relationships with youth that are based on both mutual trust and respect, and recognition of their individual and often unique needs. Several groups also noted that finding ways to meaningfully engage youth in discussions when decisions are being made regarding programs is particularly important at this time of transition to the new legislation. There was also considerable discussion about how to foster and maintain the significant relationships youth develop with adults when they are involved in different programs. In their presentations the youth emphasized that these had a positive and lasting impact on their lives, which seemed to be a touchstone for most participants about what made a real difference from a youth perspective. Most of the groups discussed how to overcome the challenges the youth had faced in sustaining these relationships given the constraints of program mandates and eligibility criteria.

There was substantial discussion in all the groups about the need to establish collaborative relationships with First Nations and other aboriginal communities and organizations in order to develop a deeper understanding of both their experiences and values. Although there were some comments about the complexity of the larger issues stemming from the creation of the new Aboriginal Authorities and the transfer of funding, there were far more comments about what could be mutually gained from learning and working together:

- Greater appreciation of the diversity within and among First Nations and other aboriginal communities.
- More awareness of what First Nations and other aboriginal people know they need, their capacity to deal with their own issues and where they want assistance.
- Better understanding of cultural traditions, the role of the family and the impact of historical events on First Nations and other aboriginal people.
- Improved coordination, planning, and programs for First Nation's and aboriginal youth who are involved in the youth justice system.

Every group cited strengthening existing relationships and developing new relationships with other key stakeholders in their communities as essential during this period of potentially overwhelming change and transition. Community members, service providers, educators, police, judges and political leaders were all identified as significant participants in the decision-making process. Most groups noted that creating effective decision-making processes is dependent on everyone involved being willing to commit to open communication, genuine inclusion and shared responsibility. There seemed to be general agreement that there was a need for region-wide communication to ensure that everyone involved had access to information about what is happening and what is working – the ideal being to build a seamless system that is responsive to the needs of

youth and individual communities. However, there was some comment that in reality this was going to be challenging to accomplish due to the:

- Sheer magnitude and diversity of the issues to be addressed.
- Short turn around time to make decisions and implement programs consistent with YCJA.
- Increasing level of anxiety about funding allocations, cuts and transfers.
- Existing imbalance of resources between rural and urban communities.
- Boundaries of some communities being difficult to define - particularly from the perspective of “urban” youth and their families.

These discussions, early in the conference have a general tone of participants’ engagement with the issues raised in the plenary sessions and a sense of their rising to the emerging challenges.

## Best Practices for Youth Justice Programs

### Notes provided by D. A. (Don) Andrews

Major Source: Principles of Effective Correctional Programs by D. A. Andrews (Included in PARCA Conference Advance Reading package)

1. Programs and activities with the youth justice system are subject to evaluation with reference to many concerns. For example, 1) principles of justice (sometimes retributive and/or restorative), general deterrence and incapacitation, 2) principles of ethicality, legality, cost-effectiveness, human rights, youth protection, 3) legislation and policy, 4) public protection through reduced re-offending. I am talking about reduced re-offending.
2. The route to reduced re-offending is through the delivery of human service in the youth justice context – develop ethical, legal, decent, just and cost efficient ways of introducing human service.
3. The principles of effective human service in the justice context include those of risk, need, and general and specific responsivity. The power of these principles resides in the evidence-based power of a general personality and social learning perspective on antisocial behaviour.
  - Evidence regarding the major and minor risk/need factors
  - Evidence regarding the power of social learning and cognitive behavioural influence strategies; the power of structuring practices in the context of a high quality interpersonal relationship
  - Programs that do not adhere to these principles do not perform well.
4. Implementation and program integrity factors. The task is not easy, effective programs do not just happen, they are planned and monitored.
  - Assessments for risk and need
  - Select workers according to relationship and structuring skills
  - Train workers
  - Clinically supervise workers
  - Provide support for clinical supervisors
  - Community-based programming preferred
  - Residential programming with a focus on the community.
  - Other.....

## **Participants' responses to the presentation by Don Andrews**

There was a general sense among the participants that this presentation confirmed what they already knew, and for some, validated the changes they planned to implement. Although several groups spent some time discussing the different findings of the research that were presented and how these compared with their own experiences, the thrust in most of the discussions was toward the implications for programs and practices in their regions. The substantive theme in all of the discussions was the need to support and develop youth justice programs that are based on compelling evidence of effectiveness. There was also some agreement that the following components were necessary for establishing a "Best Practices" approach to youth justice issues:

- Focusing on the importance of building and maintaining relationships.
- Getting kids to buy into the programs by developing more youth-friendly services.
- Maintaining consistency with caseloads.
- Creating better links among service providers to improve integration and communication.
- Having the necessary resources available to do the work.
- Increasing the evaluation of services.
- Validating the work that has been done.
- Improving the continuity of services by retaining and maintaining local staff.
- Sharing the responsibility, and strategizing together to get the best results.
- Providing strong clinical supervision.
- Recruiting staff who are able to build strong relationships with youth, and have the required knowledge, skills and qualifications.
- Strengthening the commitment to ongoing training.
- Initiating and supporting more research on outcomes.
- Improving the quality of case management.
- Increasing the knowledge of available resources within communities/areas.

The discussion in some of the regional groups generated a number of different ideas about how they could proceed in their communities and regions. The suggestions were:

- Increase awareness and utilization of the Community Risk Needs Assessment tool.
- Bring in standardized policies and procedures.
- Develop a network that includes line workers to reduce their sense of isolation and frustration, and increase their opportunities to provide their input.
- Recognize that Probation Officers need to feel that they belong to something – that there is a vision and focus for them to work on as a whole.
- Create a regional Youth Justice Advisory group with both line workers and senior officials to identify common needs, share information and serve as a reference group for what is going on.
- Increase understanding and development of restorative justice programs.

- Hire workers from within the community whenever possible.
- Review policies of all stakeholders involved as part of developing an integrated and coordinated system.

Not surprisingly, there was a wide range of concerns identified in the different groups' discussions about the impending changes they faced and the potential impact these could have on delivering effective youth justice services. These included:

- The impact of budget cutbacks on the financial capacity to provide programs, particularly those that are based on prevention and extrajudicial alternatives.
- How to reduce the increasing amount of paperwork required so that the connection is with youth rather than with their files.
- The possibility that the new YCJA will result in police, judges, counsel and others taking a "widening of the net" approach.
- How to manage and coordinate effective reintegration of youth back into the community when they are released from custody.
- The impact of the Request for Proposals process on continuity of services for youth, their families and communities, and on recruiting and keeping qualified staff due to job security concerns.
- How to link the jurisdictions with different mandates to plan services collaboratively to reduce gaps, duplications and conflicts.
- The lack of available educational opportunities in communities for local residents to acquire the jobs.
- How to balance the need for flexible programs that will meet the differing needs of youth with the increased emphasis on funding being tied to "measurable outcomes".

## **YCJA and Youth Justice Policy**

### **Notes provided by Steve Howell**

A. Introduce colleagues Anne Kimmitt and Charisse Moore

B. What we have built together:

- Diversity of programming in B.C.
- Relative rates of custody and community supervision
- Relationships between government and service providers

C. The Big Changes

1. Community Governance (to be elaborated upon by David Young)
2. YCJA - significant features impacting community partners, implementation plans, etc.

D. Factors influencing and sustaining our future relationship

1. Provincial Standards
2. Federal Provincial Cost Sharing
3. Integrated case management
4. Aboriginal initiatives
5. Evidence based practice
6. Commitment and collegiality

E. Questions from the Floor (Anne Kimmitt and Charisse Moore will also respond)

## **Participants' responses to the presentation by Steve Howell**

Most of the groups discussed the possible outcomes of the implementation of the YCJA, noting the difficulty in projecting the effects in terms of numbers of youth and the demands for different types of services. The combined responses of the police, lawyers, and judges to the provisions of the YCJA, especially on sentencing patterns, are difficult to predict and may not become clear for as long as a couple of years, raising a question about the possibility of proactive planning for youth justice.

There was some comment about the importance of maintaining a range of services suited to low, medium and high risk youth and rather more comment about:

- The need for a plan for youth justice differentiated from, but connected to planning other youth services.
- The danger that low risk youth are not identified and will be underserved by prevention and early intervention services and/or have safe places available.
- The difficulty in finding services for high risk youth who are not under the YCJA, especially since it will be more difficult to move them into custody.
- The danger that youth will "discover" that their needs are better served under the YCJA.
- Custody programs needing to prepare youth for return to the community.

Although Steve Howell did not discuss the MCFD devolution to Regional Authorities in any detail, this theme appeared in a number of discussions in comments such as:

- Concern about whether budgeting, policy development and practice guidelines will be developed provincially or regionally.
- Whether different communities have equivalent capacity to accommodate new services for their youth.
- The importance of building real partnerships among government, agencies and communities.
- Clear understanding of who must be at the table.
- Whether smaller communities will be adequately represented in the new structure and processes.

The regional groups and the provincial group think that the demand for services may increase and expressed concerns:

- That communities and existing resources may not be able to accommodate the demand.
- That the extent of the change in demand will not be clear for months or years so monitoring and readjusting plans will be important.
- About the lack of information about the future of specialized services to young offenders.
- That the projected MCFD budget reductions will undermine plans for service provision.

## **Provincial Overview**

### **Key points of presentation by David Young**

1. Strategic Service Delivery Requirements
2. Community Partnerships
3. Vulnerability/Resiliency
4. Alternatives to Removal

Note: The article “Building Community Partnerships for Child Protection: Getting from Here to There” which was cited in this presentation can be found at:

[http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/socpol/farrow\\_3.4\\_final.pdf](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/socpol/farrow_3.4_final.pdf)

## **Participants' responses to the presentation by David Young**

Most of the discussions revolved around the information about the MCFD devolution to Regional Authorities and Aboriginal Authorities.

Many participants see these changes positively – as presenting interesting opportunities to develop a service system that is responsive to local community variations, interests and plans and as being a long needed recognition of the importance of cultural, community and family traditions of First Nations and other aboriginal groups.

At the same time, participants expressed some understandable anxiety about the changes and identified some issues requiring careful attention, some potential difficulties, and some unresolved questions.

The opportunities presented by devolution included:

- Better understanding and flexibility.
- Services consistent with First Nations and other aboriginal cultures.
- The recognition of local community needs and inclusion of their perspectives.
- The ability to recognize and build on existing good working relationships and enhance partnerships.
- The capacity to be resources to one another.
- Having a better community presence in agencies.

The issues and potential difficulties included:

- Developing open communication sooner rather than later.
- Danger of service fragmentation in moving to smaller units of governance with smaller budgets.
- The danger that the needs, interests or service designs from larger communities will overwhelm or be forced onto smaller communities inappropriately.
- Potential loss of focus on preventive services.
- The drain of energy and/or funds into accreditation processes.
- Recognizing that it will take consultation and time before all the Aboriginal Authorities are in place.
- Developing cultural competence and continuing to build appropriate responses to First Nations and aboriginal people before the Aboriginal Authorities are in place.
- The need for government and communities to educate Board Members about youth justice issues.
- The need for a higher profile for youth justice in the system.

The questions included:

- Can this devolution succeed when it is happening at the same time as funding cuts?

- Are communities ready for these changes?
- How to best balance the urban and rural interests in regions?
- How might the voices of youth be heard in the planning processes (e.g. Youth Councils)?
- How will the Regional and Aboriginal Authorities interface and deal with separate but related jurisdictions?
- When will roles and responsibilities be settled?
- Will authorities and/or agencies find themselves in greater competition for funds?
- Might some groups or agencies be discounted or marginalized as “special interest”?
- Will there be gaps in the continuum of youth justice services for some smaller populations (e.g. females, youth with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) because there is not the “critical mass” in any one region?
- Where does restorative justice fit?

Despite the range of concerns expressed, the tone of the group discussions seemed to indicate that participants were open to the structural changes being initiated by MCFD.

## Notes from the Fraser Region Group's Discussions

### 1. Connections

During their discussions this group identified a number of significant connections among different individuals and groups that need to be initiated, supported and strengthened.

- Youth want more opportunities to connect with adults who understand and respect them within their communities. They report that these key relationships have a positive influence in their lives.
- Connecting youth and their families to the different services they need, when they need them, and for as long as they need them, is crucial to building their capacities.
- Many youth are involved with several different systems due to the multiple issues they are facing. Strengthening the connections among these systems and those working within them is essential to co-ordinated planning for these youth. A persistent and critical issue is the lack of information sharing, creating both gaps and duplications in service delivery.
- Given that judges and counsel both have key roles in determining the outcomes for youth who are charged, it is important that they understand and support the objectives of the new YCJA. Finding ways to connect with them prior to implementation will provide increased opportunities to address mutual concerns and develop more collaborative approaches to potential conflicts.
- Connect the whole community.

### 2. Community Planning

A strong theme throughout this group's discussions was the need to coordinate all the different community planning processes that are taking place in their region to ensure the successful implementation of the YCJA.

- With 11 communities in this region, each determining their own service needs, there is widespread confusion about how funding will be allocated and what service/structural changes need to be made. There is some concern that representation of smaller communities will be lost.
- It is important to get communities to focus on establishing infrastructures that support youth and their families and the different community-based options the YCJA is bringing in. Both leadership and buy-in appear to be lacking at this point.
- In order to develop an effective plan for youth justice programs, there needs to be a comprehensive assessment of what types of programs are successful and ensure that these are adequately funded. The key to preventing custody counts from increasing is to have effective wrap around programs in place.
- Aboriginal and Mental Health representatives must be involved in community planning processes. Sto:lo Nation has had considerable success in keeping

youth out of custody by using a Diversion Committee in their communities. Sharing this kind of expertise would be very useful for everyone involved.

### 3. Concerns and Questions

The majority of concerns raised in this group seemed to converge on the issue of how to ensure that adequate and appropriate youth justice services are provided throughout the region. Participants also had many questions about funding allocations and the impact of budget cuts on programs for youth and their families.

- Although the YCJA is a good opportunity to re-evaluate programs and make sure they are in line with the objectives of the new legislation, there are significant concerns that the needs of low risk offenders will not be met due to the lack of community resources.
- Currently there is a shortage of bail beds. Youth who are on the waitlist now go into custody until a bed becomes available. Under the YCJA this option will not be available. It is not clear how these situations will be managed or how the new sentencing options – ISSP and Intensive Rehabilitative Custody and Supervision orders will be implemented.
- In this region there is a large population of high risk youth who need residential drug treatment programs that are not available. Some of these youth have burned all their bridges and are being rejected by their communities – this will always be a challenge.
- The lack of information available regarding who, how and when decisions are being made about service contracts, staffing levels and boundary issues is creating a general level of frustration.

### 4. Contradictions

Participants from the Fraser Region identified three different areas where they felt there were inherent contradictions in the situations they were facing.

- The primary focus seems to be on high risk youth offenders. However, by not placing low and medium risk youth offenders into extrajudicial programs that meet their needs, we are creating a situation where we will have more high risk youth offenders in our future. This will create a larger problem than we have already.
- While the process of reducing budgets and services is proceeding very quickly, the process of determining which offices will be closed or centralized is a significantly slower one.
- The expectations are to develop both community and family capacities, but with less money and fewer professional resources we are actually reducing their capacities. In many cases we are also overwhelming them with the nature of the responsibilities we are asking them to assume.

## 5. Plans

In the final session of the conference, the participants in the Fraser Regional Group outlined the following plans for the future:

- Ensure that there are Youth Focus Advisory Committees in every one of the 11 communities in the Fraser Region and that they include representatives from Mental Health, First Nations, Drug and Alcohol Services, contracted agencies and all other youth serving organizations.
- Organize a Youth Table (Youth Advisory Committee) which would serve as a central committee for the region and bring everyone together to work holistically.
- Take the information learned at this conference back to the Aboriginal Justice Liaison Committee and the Sto:lo House of Justice and continue to work together to educate those involved in the court system.
- Create a central office that has a listing of all available services within the region and information regarding the new legislation.

## Notes from the Interior Group's Discussions

The participants in this group did not spend much time talking about First Nations and other aboriginal matters. This was due to the very limited First Nations/aboriginal representation in the group. However, the group acknowledged the importance of the planned Aboriginal Authorities and the compelling plenary presentation by Chief Ed John. Noting that some First Nations and aboriginal groups are not as well prepared as others, the group agreed that Bands do have the ability to deal with issues even though some may take longer.

### 1. Connections

Connections emerged as a very powerful theme for this group and crystallized in to a plan to create a Youth Justice Network for the region. The group started, however, by acknowledging that connection is a key concept in working with youth. They made points about:

- Engaging individual youth.
- Challenging ourselves and developing mechanisms for input from youth and other clients into service planning.
- The importance of having all the players at the table.
- Region-wide communication is important as is making sure "everyone is on the same page".
- The belief that people can still be productive if agreeing on the direction, even if disagreeing on the means of progress.
- Bringing together all the organizations in the region to talk about common needs.
- Ideally there should be a seamless service system.
- Becoming resources to one another.
- Contracted agencies/service providers have the ability to adapt quickly to new legislation and program needs
- Having a standardized set of policies and service standards.
- Creating a Youth Justice Advisory Committee to the Regional Authority, including line workers as well as senior officials and managers.
- Meshing youth justice with other youth services.

### 2. Community Planning

The participants welcomed community involvement in planning services for the region but included some cautionary observations:

- There should be a basic set of values and principles that govern the Regional Authority's dealings with communities and agencies.
- New programs should be developed from the "bottom up" and not imposed from above – though programs may have to be prescribed to meet legal deadlines but should then be modified to fit.

- The needs of every community should be considered by including input from members of those communities and reflecting their values.
- We must avoid the “cookie cutter” approach to developing programs, taking what works in one location and imposing it everywhere.
- Communities should have some real decision making authority.
- Thought should be given to creating efficiencies and eliminating duplication of services in some communities through integration.

### 3. Concerns and Questions

Questions and concerns identified by the group included:

- In restructuring services, are there some “given” starting points?
- Does everything covered by the YCJA have to be running by April 1, 2003?
- What will the impact of YCJA be on demands for various services?
- Will ISSP become a growth industry?
- How might people access up to date information on the progress of change in the region?
- Care must be taken not to marginalize points of view if we are to build community involvement.
- Care must be taken not to discount or insult contracted agencies/service providers as “special interest groups”.

### 4. Contradictions

The group did not discuss contradictions per se but commented that the volume and stress of change (listed below) could have the contradictory effect of damaging some initiatives or overwhelming some processes or groups:

- Devolution of MCFD functions to Regional and Aboriginal Authorities.
- Devolution of MCFD staff to Regional and Aboriginal Authorities.
- MCFD strategic shifts.
- MCFD budget reductions of up to 30%.
- Reduction of MCFD staff, both line and supervisory/administrative.
- Organizational change in response to budget and staff cuts.
- Shift away from high-end residential resources to “Wrap Around Care”.
- Implementation of the YCJA.
- Economic slowdown in many communities, including the impact of the softwood lumber dispute.
- Ministry of Human Resources changes to income assistance creating economic and psychological impacts on many clients and/or their families.
- The requirement of accreditation for contractors by April 1, 2004.
- The demands on agencies of preparing responses to Requests for Proposals for new programs and on MCFD staff in assessing the responses.

## 5. Plans

The group decided to organize a Youth Justice Network for the entire region and committed to have it operating by January, 2003. The Network aims to deal with:

- Communications among all those interested in youth justice.
- Service planning discussions.
- Building a regional community interest in youth justice.
- Building and maintaining relationships among participants.
- Spotting trends.
- Creating task groups to deal with specific questions such as best practices, identifying key reference materials, etc.

The Network was seen as being based on the following assumptions or values:

- Inclusiveness
- Mutual respect
- Mutual recognition
- Communication
- Decision making
- Belief in community capacity
- Belief in service providers' capacity

In particular, by April 1, 2003 the Network will seek to:

- Define the network.
- Create an inventory of services and needs in the region.
- Have training for regional and agency staff on family conferencing.
- Create caseload and waiting list projections for agencies.
- Establish an advisory relationship to the Board of the Regional Authority.

Several participants volunteered to work on the plan.

## Notes from the Northern Region Group's Discussions

### 1. Connections

Participants emphasized connections in two ways –

- ◆ Programs must connect with youth by:
  - Being youth friendly.
  - Providing a voice for youth and including them in planning processes.
  - Respecting and trusting youth.
  - Building relationships.
  - Being client centred, responding to specific youth needs, and focussing on social skills development.
  - Providing timely service.
  - Attending to the main factors in successful programs (as outlined by Don Andrews).
  - Offering advocacy.
  
- ◆ Among government, Regional Authorities, service providers and communities by:
  - Creating partnerships.
  - Building relationships.
  - Respecting one another.
  - Collaborating.
  - Coordinating.
  - Communicating.
  - Encompassing the full range of services.
  - Based in and building from communities.

### 2. Community Planning

The discussions contained a great deal of comment on the role of communities in planning for and responding to the service needs of youth. Participants wanted to see:

- Empowerment of communities through involvement in both the conception and delivery of services.
- Building on existing capacity and support systems in communities.
- Developing links, partnerships and coordination.
- Recognition of and respect for community abilities, understanding and wisdom as well as differences and needs.
- Providing greater stability through predictable funding.
- Recognition of the special interests, traditions and capacities of First Nations and other aboriginal communities.
- Hiring within communities to create greater continuity of staff.

### 3. Concerns and Questions

Participants from the Northern Region saw the emerging situation as presenting opportunities and challenges, especially for First Nations. They were also concerned about the amount of service and structural change occurring at the same time as plans to cut budgets and commented on:

- Whether it is realistic to expect communities to increase their capacity at this time.
- How the impacts of economic slowdown, unemployment and other factors will compromise communities' abilities to respond to changes.
- The difficulty of uncertainty and the need for much better communication.
- Existing needs for better preventive services, restorative justice and advocacy.
- The tensions that could arise from different points of view such as whether the Aboriginal Authorities and the Regional Authorities have received their "fair shares" of resources; the relations between unionized and non-unionized agencies; the balance of services to low, medium and high risk youth or between youth under YCJA and those who are not.

The discussion revealed concerns about the impact of establishing the Regional and Aboriginal Authorities. As yet, much is unknown about their interface, jurisdictional responsibilities, funding allocations, and service delivery in some communities. For instance, while acknowledging the vital importance of recognizing aboriginal interests, cultural traditions and service needs, there are concerns that "splitting" budgets and services may reduce the range of services available in some places.

The group spent time exploring the opportunities and strengths implied by moving to Regional Authorities and community governance and contrasted these with threats and weaknesses that will accompany the changes.

### 4. Contradictions

The notes from the discussion reveal two areas of contradiction.

The first is the contradiction between the interests in promoting partnerships and collaboration versus the suggestion that government's role should be limited to creating the infrastructure but then allowing community efforts to prevail. This may be a useful reminder that some "old ways of thinking" about (past or current) uneasy relationships will persist for a while as people seek new ways of relating and that there will be a danger that these "old ways" will take over if commitment to change wavers, especially on the part of government.

The second area is that, because youth under the YCJA have a certain precedence in receiving services and because resources may be limited for low risk youth, we may see youth commit offences or become high risk in contradiction to our interests in reducing crime and risk.

## 5. Plans

In the final session of the conference, the Northern Region Group reported that they wanted to proceed with a future focus on:

- Youth services, not just youth justice services.
- Developing an inventory of services in the region.
- Ensuring communication among all interested parties. (To this end, the services of a communications officer have been offered to the First Nations.)
- Using community consultations to gather community insights.
- Identifying other collaborative strategies to get all community voices heard.
- Initiating dialogues toward common goals with police, mental health services ...etc.

## **Notes from the Provincial Group's Discussions**

The Provincial Group spent more of its time in discussions more closely focused on youth justice issues than the other groups who ranged more widely over the entire youth services field. However, the Provincial Group was clearly considering the events and plans affecting the larger approach to service provision, especially the devolution of MCFD into Regional Authorities and Aboriginal Authorities.

### 1. Connections

Perhaps not surprisingly, many of this group's exchanges about participation were less on connections within regions and more about connections across regions and with provincial bodies. They noted:

- That passion and imagination connect the participants in the Conference.
- The importance of promoting better relationships with youth.
- Providing a voice for youth and including them in planning processes.
- Being client centred and responsive to youths' needs.
- That education and health authorities must be involved.
- The need to maintain relationships among Provincial Government bodies, communities and agencies.
- The value of liaison between MCFD and PARCA.
- The need for guiding principles in establishing partnerships, collaboration, and coordination.
- The goal of having a full range of connected services.
- That research and evaluation must be connected across regions to maximize learning about and demonstrating the effectiveness of BC programs.

### 2. Community Planning

The participants spoke to the importance of:

- Good communication and working relationships.
- Making sure that key players are involved.
- The opportunity to engage with volunteers.
- Animating communities to become involved and express their interests in youth services and youth justice.
- The value of community advocates for community services.
- The ongoing interaction between the community and policy and planning processes.
- Maintaining good links between local communities, regions and provincial structures.
- First Nations and other aboriginal groups being able to address their concerns.
- Developing working relationships with First Nations and other aboriginal groups.

Because of its province-wide focus, the group seemed to identify issues that could prove difficult for some communities, such as:

- Expectations may be high, particularly from judges, but resources may not be ready.
- Board members for the new Regional and Aboriginal Authorities will need information – the Province may be able to produce some overall information (e.g. using Don Andrews' material) but local communities will need to advance local issues.
- PARCA may need to consider developing relationships at regional and/or local levels.

In addition to underscoring the importance of the regional Youth Justice Consultants and the value of maintaining some province-wide structures, the group members reminded themselves that, like everyone else, they too live in communities and might also have their own spheres of influence.

### 3. Concerns and Questions

The group raised a number of serious concerns and questions:

- How will the YCJA influence the numbers of youth in various types of programs and when might the trends become clear?
- What might be the effects (on custody centres and community based programs) of the early release of youth from custody?
- Might this create a “revolving door” for youth who are released before being ready or without adequate supports in the community?
- What needs to be done in the way of services to special populations (examples include youth with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effect, female young offenders, youth sex offenders)?
- Is there a danger that youth who do not understand their actions (e.g. FAS/FAE) might be at risk of higher custody rates?
- How might these services be delivered, especially if there is not the “critical mass” of youth in a community or a region?
- Is there a danger that regions will “refer” these problems to the custody system?
- How might services become more culturally appropriate in the period before the Aboriginal Authorities take responsibility for youth justice services?
- How do we best involve First Nations and other aboriginal youth?
- What are the key issues for youth justice in the new governance structures?
- How do we ensure consistent, high awareness of youth justice service needs across regions – through accreditation, use of Federal/Provincial funding leverage, monitoring and quality control measures?
- What are appropriate standards and accreditation processes?
- How do we assist communities to develop the knowledge and skills needed to participate in planning?

- What is community for urban children and youth?
- What will be needed in the way of training for provincial, regional and agency staff?
- What staff recruitment, training and redeployment approaches might assist in moving towards the sort of programming suggested by Don Andrews' findings?
- How can government and communities work together towards better media portrayals of the issues?
- Who will champion program evaluation and foster linkages and sharing of results?

#### 4. Contradictions

According to the notes, this group did not identify any contradictions. However, significant parts of the discussion were in relation to the opposing impulses (contradictions) between moving to a decentralized governance and service delivery system and maintaining a provincial presence.

#### 5. Plans

In the final session of the conference, the Provincial Group reported that they wanted to work on:

- Developing an information and education package, including attention to First Nations and other aboriginal matters.
- Developing performance measures with the sector, and with advice from academics.
- Consultation and relationship building with First Nations and other aboriginal communities to create effective ways of working together around the YCJA in the period leading up to the establishment of the Aboriginal Authorities.
- Addressing the question of how to serve and work with smaller populations of young offenders who may not have the "critical mass" to justify regional programs.

## Notes from the Vancouver Coastal Group's Discussions

### 1. Connections

The theme of connections was reflected in several different ways in this group's discussions:

- Initially, there was considerable discussion about the importance of finding ways to develop relationships with youth that would support their active involvement in planning discussions. The point was made that ensuring there is "a youth voice" present would help keep the focus of discussions on youth and meeting their multiple needs in an integrated way that makes sense to them.
- Participants also identified the need to encourage the involvement of First Nations and other aboriginal organizations in their planning for the new YCJA through establishing partnerships with them. A number of comments were made about the importance of investing the time required to make sure that these connections promote a deeper understanding of the issues and be sustainable over time.
- The need to build and enhance current alliances was also raised as a crucial component in preparing for the implementation of the new legislation in this region. The school system was cited as one example. It was also noted that interministerial and interagency efforts have been making a big difference, particularly in the area of prevention programs. This success seemed to be attributed to recognizing that informal structures are paramount and key to developing a system that is integrated.

### 2. Community Planning

There were three comments made by participants at the outset of their discussions about the role of communities in the planning process for the YCJA that seemed to resonate throughout the dialogue. These were the importance of generating an approach that emphasized "stewardship" – that there be a sense of shared responsibility, adhering to the principle that "it takes a whole community to raise a child", and keeping the focus on the "whole child" rather than segmenting different aspects of their lives. Participants noted that it was essential to encourage the active involvement of communities in planning programs and services. They identified the need to reach out to communities, find linkages, identify the issues they could accommodate and convince them that they could make a difference. The group also discussed a number of challenges:

- Being proactive with less dollars.
- How to work effectively within the timeframes, given the pressure to be ready for YCJA implementation.
- Meeting the need for flexible, integrated and culturally relevant programs that make sense to youth.
- How do we listen to what is needed and give up some ownership.

- The change in regional makeup means we need to include both rural and urban communities.
- The disparity between “Cadillac” services in urban areas and the total lack of services in rural areas resulting in these areas being forced to send youth away.
- Identifying the strengths of youth and building programs around these.
- Keeping the focus on a continuum of services.
- Managing growth will be key.

### 3. Concerns and Questions

This group raised the following questions and concerns:

- Are court orders going to drive programming?
- Are specialized programs sustainable?
- Who is coordinating and funding extrajudicial programs?
- What is going to be the impact of staff reductions in youth custody programs and transfers to the ISSP program?
- How can we determine if resources will meet the demand for ISSP programs, given that this is a new philosophy and program?
- What is role of the ISSP worker? How are they going to be selected? What are the expectations for qualifications and experience?
- How much funding is available?
- What are the core services that must be delivered? Where is there flexibility?
- What is the role of the home region to provincial resources (Circle of Eagles/Peak House)?
- We need to discuss how funding will evolve, particularly as it relates to the new Aboriginal Authorities – what are the effects on programs and services?

### 4. Contradictions

Although there was much discussion in this group about the need for effective management of the disparities in needs (rural vs. urban communities), expectations (extrajudicial and alternative measures vs. specialized programs) and resources (reductions in funding vs. increasing demands for service), there were no specific references to contradictions in the notes from their discussions.

### 5. Planning

The participants in the Vancouver Coastal Regional Group made the decision to use the last two sessions of the conference to focus on specific planning issues in their region. They started by identifying what programs and services needed to be in place for the implementation of the YCJA on April 1, 2003 and then compiled an inventory of what was currently in place. There was considerable discussion about what the impact of the new legislation may have on existing services, where potential gaps could be identified, how programs are now organized and what benefits could be gained from different alternatives. Not surprisingly, the key issue that emerged was about budget allocations

and how to support the new provisions in the YCJA. Participants in this group decided that the principles guiding service delivery should be:

- Want integrated services.
- Deal with accredited agencies with community presence.
- Should link with in-house and external youth delivery services.
- Need recognized expertise in the area.
- Must demonstrate cultural competence.
- Need linkage to justice system.
- Balance youth interest with community safety.

The next steps agreed to by the group were:

- Establish baseline funding for 2003/2004 (MCFD).
- Further define the headings on the schematic: Delivery of Youth Justice Services.
- Decide on funding for service areas and procurement (MCFD).
- Develop a communication strategy (MCFD)
  - connect with aboriginal community, sector, staff and Probation Officers
  - community and clients.
- Develop a workplan (MCFD)
  - timeline
  - responsibilities.
- Develop a transition plan (Sector/MCFD).

## Notes from the Vancouver Island Region's Discussions

### 1. Connections

Throughout their discussions participants in this group consistently identified the need to develop more connectivity by building collaborative partnerships with different key players throughout their region. These included:

- First Nations and aboriginal communities
- Youth
- Families
- Police
- Mental Health
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Funders
- Contracted agencies
- Schools
- Associations of lawyers and judges

The suggestion was also made that partnering with universities to research the results of programs could provide important information about what works in youth justice services.

### 2. Community Planning

There were many comments made during this group's discussion about the importance of being both inclusive and proactive in their planning with communities around change and the implementation of the YCJA. Although it was noted that there were some historical issues within their region that require sensitivity, these shouldn't stand in the way of working effectively together and forming a larger group that was representative of all of Vancouver Island. Participants said that this could be accomplished by:

- Identifying methods for reaching out to different communities and involving other community stakeholders.
- Getting information out to others about this session and learning about the needs in their communities.
- Developing a clear statement of principles that would set the ground rules and parameters for discussions, decisions, and the relevancy of issues.
- Establishing a process whereby the First Nations communities and non-aboriginal communities/organizations could learn from and about each others' strengths and limitations.
- Creating opportunities for youth involvement and voice.
- Recognizing that the best interests of youth have to prevail over formal systems and jurisdictions.

- Developing an effective means for acquiring, sharing and transmitting knowledge to all who are involved in the process.

### 3. Concerns and Questions

The main concern raised by participants in the Vancouver Island Regional group was how to coordinate the local, regional and provincial plans for implementation of the YCJA effectively, particularly in the context of the other significant changes that are being initiated at the same time. They identified the need to address the different degrees of “anxiety” being felt by the groups, agencies and organizations who are anticipating that they may be impacted by budget transfers and reductions. There were also several comments about the need to ensure that youth justice is retained as a significant strategic thrust within the “bigger picture” of MCFD. The collective concern about how to provide good services locally and regionally without additional funding generated a number of key questions about:

- Whether there is money available to support more aboriginal participation in planning.
- What is being done by the province to get ready for the new legislation?
- Whether the role of Probation Officers will change and how.
- What is the definition of high/medium/low risk youth from the perspective of federal government funding and regional budget allocations?
- The best way to involve other members of the community and support systems when youth are released from custody because there will be fewer programs available for them.
- What are the impacts of using Requests for Proposals on the ability of the community to collaborate effectively and on the process of delivering consistent youth justice services?

### 4. Contradictions

The notes from this group’s discussion revealed only one area where participants identified contradictory ideas. While there was considerable enthusiasm about the new opportunities to develop better processes, practices and programs to meet the needs of youth who are involved in the youth justice system, there was a collective concern about how this could be successfully accomplished with diminishing resources. Participants questioned how they could practically meet the increasing need to develop collaborative relationships with different stakeholders throughout their region when both time and funds are so limited. This same contradiction became apparent in their discussions about how to promote best practices in youth justice programs. They noted that there is an increasing need to provide more opportunities for clinical supervision, professional development, and research. However, there is no provision for these in the current budget frameworks.

## 5. Plans

In the final session of the conference, the Vancouver Island Regional Group reported that their plans were:

- To organize another meeting tentatively set for the end of November, which would involve a working group of MCFD staff to take the issues forward.
- To request that a Youth Justice Manager be selected who would be dedicated to raise the issues at the larger regional level.