



# Indigenous Diversion Centre – Prince George

*You belong here*



BC FIRST NATIONS  
JUSTICE COUNCIL  
DIVERSION CENTRE

# Indigenous Justice Landscape of Prince George

---

Demonstrating need – at-a-glance (*BC Corrections data*):

- 63% of people in custody in the northern region are Indigenous.
- 70% of people in custody in the northern region have mental health or substance use disorders.
- 80% of people in custody in the northern region are classified to secure (high) custody.
- 11% of people in custody in the northern region are women and 67% of women in custody are Indigenous.
- 77% of Indigenous people in custody in BC are in pre-trial custody.
- The Prince George Regional Correctional Centre has a capacity of 198 beds, but houses 254 individuals, meaning it is 28% over-capacity – resulting in great risk to both inmates and staff.
- Recidivism rate for Indigenous offenders is 38% (*Statistics Canada 2019*).



BC FIRST NATIONS  
**JUSTICE COUNCIL**  
DIVERSION CENTRE



# Indigenous Diversion Centre -

## CULTURE AND HEALING *You belong here*

- 90-day adult programming guiding a healing journey
- Individualized healing plans – four-sacred winds (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual goals)
- Specialized positions - Elder in Residence & Cultural Coordinator
- Ceremonial focus
- Reconnection to Self, Family, Land, Spirit, and Culture
- Referral to supportive social services and long-term case management
- Ongoing cultural activities to create a supportive community
- Peer support from program graduates

## PRE-CHARGE DIVERSION

- RCMP referral
- 90-day healing journey program
- Work closely with RCMP Community Policing Coordinator
- Referral to supportive services
- Referral to Restorative Justice, when applicable

## POST-RELEASE DIVERSION

- Self-referral
- BC Corrections, Correctional Services Canada referral
- PGRCC connections
- Address criminogenic factors to reduce recidivism
- Referral to immediate care services and other programs





# Pre-Charge Diversion Program

The BC Prosecution Services Charge Assessment Guidelines (2023) state:  
*"the well-documented, long-standing, and pervasive discrimination Indigenous persons have suffered in all parts of the criminal justice system makes it particularly important for Crown Counsel to consider every reasonable alternative to prosecution before approving a criminal charge against an Indigenous person."*

RCMP can be seen as this first line of implementing this policy on diversion.

## Eligibility criteria:

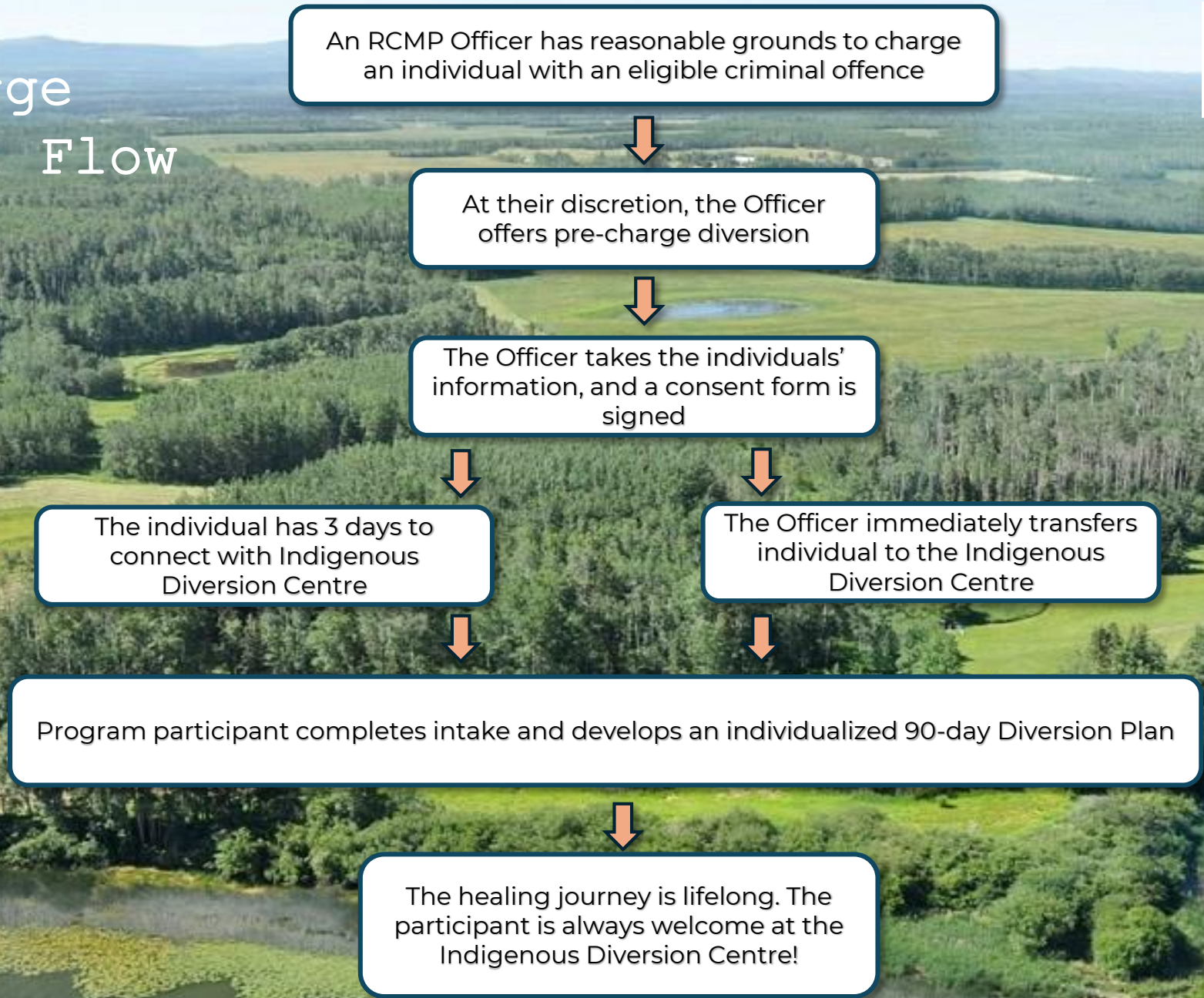
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must agree to participate in the program
- The suspected criminal offence meets eligibility criteria
- Indigenous person

## Eligible Criminal Charges

- Minor Assault
- Break & Enter
- Cause Disturbance
- Drug Offences
- Fraud
- False Pretenses
- Mischief
- Possession of Stolen Property
- Theft
- Uttering Threats



# Pre-Charge Referral Flow Chart





# Indigenous Diversion Centre Activities

- Engaging in ceremony guided by our Elder in Residence and a bi-weekly Sweat Lodge Ceremony
- Build a Sacred Bundle and learn the significance of each item
- Development of an individualized Healing Plan supported by a dedicated social worker through long-term case co-ordination
- Development of a specialized Diversion Plan (pre-charge)
- Participating in seasonal land-based activities (fishing, walking, gathering, etc.)
- Participating cultural activities (beading, cooking, drumming, canning, etc.)
- Participating in 12 guided teachings
- Ongoing Peer-to-Peer Support
- A welcoming environment where participants are always welcome to drop-in.

# Weekly Activities Snapshot

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3 <b>GUIDED LESSON</b> Shift Happens: Coping and Change (10am-12pm)	4 <b>Bundle Journey with Elder Marcel</b> Making a Drum (10am-12pm) <b>'Atsoo's kitchen</b> Moose Stew (1pm-3pm)	5 <b>Sweat Lodge Ceremony (Men's)</b> (1 pm – 4 pm) Marcel's	6 <b>CULTURAL ACTIVITY</b> Painting Rocks/drums (10am-12pm) <b>GUIDED LESSON:</b> Why am I so Angry? (1pm-3pm)	7 <b>FREESTYLE FRIDAY</b> (10am-12pm)
10 <b>GUIDED LESSON</b> Living a Circular Life (10am-12pm)	11 <b>CLOSED</b> Remembrance Day	12 <b>Let's Get on Our Land</b> Lheidli Tenneh Memorial Park (1 pm – 4 pm)	13 <b>GUIDED LESSON:</b> Better Conversations, Stronger Connections (1pm-3pm)	14 <b>FREESTYLE FRIDAY</b> (10am-12pm)
17 <b>GUIDED LESSON:</b> We are Relational (10am-12pm)	18 <b>Bundle Journey with Elder Marcel</b> Making a Drumstick (10am-12pm) <b>'Atsoo's kitchen</b> Salmon Patties (1pm-3pm)	19 <b>Sweat Lodge Ceremony (co-ed)</b> (1 pm – 4 pm) Marcel's	20 <b>CULTURAL ACTIVITY</b> Jam Making (10am-12pm) <b>GUIDED LESSON:</b> Mind Matters (1pm-3pm)	21 <b>FREESTYLE FRIDAY</b> (10am-12pm)
24 <b>GUIDED LESSON:</b> Self-Care (10am-12pm)	25 <b>PGRCC Sweat 1:00 pm</b> (9am-4pm) <b>'Atsoo's kitchen</b> Indian Ice Cream (1pm-3pm)	26 <b>Let's Get on Our Land</b> Cotton Wood Park (1 pm – 4 pm)	27 <b>GUIDED LESSON:</b> Awakening Spirit (1pm-3pm)	28 <b>FREESTYLE FRIDAY</b> (10am-12pm)

# Anticipated Outcomes

---

Significant movement towards Strategy 1 of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy

---

Reduction of number of Indigenous people with a criminal record

---

Reduction in numbers of incarcerated Indigenous people in Prince George Regional Correctional Facility

---

Increased community safety and crime prevention – safer families and communities

---

Improved relationship with RCMP and Indigenous justice partners (reconciliation)

---

Individual healing plan goal attainment (employment, housing, etc.)

---

Increased personal sense of wellbeing and cultural connection

---

Improved outcomes for Indigenous people leaving custody centres – enhancing health and reducing recidivism



BC FIRST NATIONS  
**JUSTICE COUNCIL**  
DIVERSION CENTRE

# Success So Far...

- 78 total referrals, 36 pre-charge referrals
- 2 post-release participants have graduated the program. The Graduation Ceremony was very well attended!
- 10 Sweat Lodge Ceremonies hosted since August 2025-February 2026
- Participants are starting to create a community and encourage others to join programming
- Participants feel comfortable at the IDC and want to come to the IDC outside of scheduled programming





# Challenges So Far...

- Contact information incomplete in some referrals
- Difficulty contacting referrals who don't have access to phones or have regular address
- Gaining consistent engagement from participants who are experiencing immediate socioeconomic barriers such as homelessness and substance use concerns
- Utilizing existing space effectively, as some individuals wish to remain in the IDC while others require a quiet area to sober up safely

# Addressing Challenges

- Maintaining a strong connection with Prince George RCMP Community Policing Department to increase referral completion
- Increase staff training on substance use, including mental health first aid, NARCAN training, de-escalation training, etc.
- Meeting with community partners, such as BC Housing to explore possibility of priority spaces, to address participant barriers to engagement
- Reconfigure IDC space to maintain balance between creating a safe space for participant decompression and programming





Mussi cho (big thanks!)



BC FIRST NATIONS  
JUSTICE COUNCIL  
DIVERSION CENTRE