



THE BRIDGEBACK

REINTEGRATION AND TRANSITION PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTS
FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH AND EMERGING ADULTS

PURPOSE

The Bridgeback provides Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) for justice-involved/impacted individuals, meaningful employment and training pathways, utilizing YAAACE's labour market strategy ("hire learning") and our dynamic and transitional custody model.

TARGET POPULATION

**Black/
Indigenous Youth**

Aged
12-17

**Emerging
Adults**

(Committed crime before 18th birthday)

Aged
18-25+

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada



Housing



Education



Employment
& Skilled Trades



Health &
Self-Identity



Positive Support
Network



Reintegration,
Safety
& Transition
supports

1. Federal Framework to Reduce Recidivism. Public Safety Canada. 2022. Web

2. Targeted Engagement in support of the Implementation Plan for the Federal Framework to Reduce Recidivism. Public Safety Canada. 2022. Web

IN ALIGNMENT WITH



CANADA'S

BLACK JUSTICE

STRATEGY aims to address the anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination that has led to the overrepresentation of Black people in the criminal justice system, including as victims of crime.



5 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PILLARS:

- 1 to improve the **social determinants of justice** for Black people in Canada
- 2 to address the state of **policing**
- 3 to change Canada's **courts and legislation**
- 4 to reform Canada's **correctional system**
- 5 **Parole, re-entry and reintegration** measures that reduce recidivism and strengthen reintegration

KEY ISSUES

- Violence exposure harms child development.
- Justice-involved youth face compounding barriers to mental health support and employment/training pathways
- High recidivism (60%) is tied to unaddressed trauma
- Disproportionately high instances of gun violence victimization and perpetration amongst Black youth
- 75% of Canadian homicide victims are racialized; 44% identify as African, Caribbean, or Black
- Black Canadians comprise 4.3% of the population but experience homicide rates four times higher than non-racialized Canadians
- Gun violence accounted for 44 of Toronto's 86 homicides in 2024, up from 73 in 2023.

ONTARIO PRISON POPULACE



8000

*average per day

- 93% male
- 20% Black
- 18% between ages 18-25
- 15% no fixed address
- 20% charged with homicide
- 33% violent crimes
- 9% weapons offences

KEY ACTIONS TO UNDERTAKE

- Implement gun, gang & violence intervention strategies
- Deliver trauma-informed care, healing spaces and DBT supports
- Provide employment, training, and system navigation support (health, education, employment, legal, social, etc)
- Purposeful, change-oriented participant engagement
- Foster pro-social community relationships
- Deliver DBT for justice-involved youth and violence-susceptible youth
- Mentorship training for justice-involved and violence-susceptible youth, including diversion as an alternative to custody
- Training for justice professionals and youth service providers.
- Strengthen data collection and outcome measurement with IPSOS and Stats Canada to demonstrate long-term impact of YAAACE's prevention and intervention programming.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: THE BRIDGEBACK

- Provide DBT therapy that will provide life-saving emotional, social, and cognitive tools that will enhance emotional regulation, improved interpersonal skills, reduction in self-harm and risky behaviour, mindfulness and grounding, etc.
- Provide meaningful social and economic opportunities for justice involved individuals using the federal framework to mitigate recidivism and the Black Justice Strategy recommendations.

KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS

EDUCATION & REINTEGRATION SUPPORT

Education (asynchronous learning), credit offering, mentorship, employability training, and life skills programs pre and post-release.

TRAUMA-INFORMED THERAPY

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) for justice-involved emerging adults and adults vulnerable to violence.

FRESH START DIVERSION PROJECT

Diversion program in partnership with Kids of Incarcerated Parents and City of Toronto Youth Violence Prevention Strategy.

JUSTICE NAVIGATION

Justice Navigation: Legal education, guidance through judicial processes, and referrals to community resources.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training for justice professionals and youth service providers using YAAACE's pro-social curriculum and facilitation guide

IN-CUSTODY & TRANSITION SUPPORTS

Coordinated in-custody mentorship, DBT Training, and YAAACE's pro-social curriculum to strengthen transition outcomes.

OUTCOMES

WHY YAAACE?

YAAACE has a proven record of innovation in violence prevention, education, and community mobilization. Its programs consistently align with citywide and federal frameworks for youth safety and economic empowerment, making it a trusted partner for evidence-based intervention work.



Reduced recidivism



Civically engaged citizens



Labour market reattachment through skills development and capacity building



Long term public safety gains



Life Stabilization



Less vulnerable to gun violence victimization and perpetration



Social, emotional and cognitive wellness



Dynamic custody Innovative model that can be replicated for effective reintegration

PROGRAM DELIVERY PARTNERS



Powered By:
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& Canada's BLACK JUSTICE Strategy



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