

WHAT WE EXAMINED

Every instance of separate confinement at BC's youth custody centres over a 3-year period: January 1 2017 to December 31 2019.

- Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre
- Prince George Youth Custody Services Centre



SEPARATELY
CONFINED
307
TIMES

What is separate confinement?

Youth may be sent to a custody centre while awaiting trial or after being sentenced on a criminal matter. Separate confinement is the physical and social isolation of youth in custody. Separate confinement can cause psychological harm and exacerbates existing trauma or mental illness. The risk of psychological harm from separate confinement increases over time.

WHAT WE FOUND

Prolonged and Repeated Separate Confinement

- Increased use of prolonged separate confinement (72 hours or more) at Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre.

Average duration of separate confinement at Burnaby increased from:

36 HRS TO 108 HRS.



- Prolonged separate confinement was most commonly used to respond to youth who were self-injuring or suicidal.
- Individual youth were confined for long periods of time:

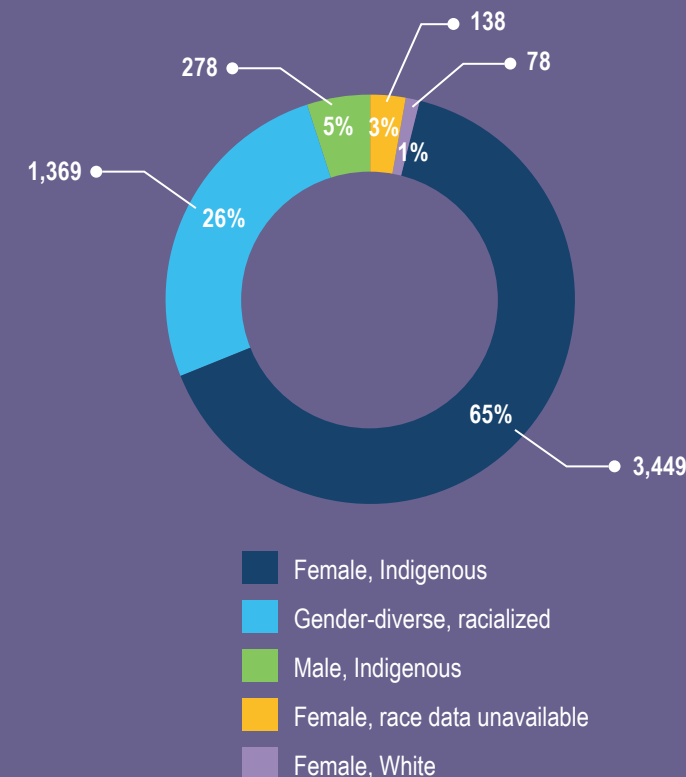


Concerning Conditions

- Significant minimization and restriction of meaningful social contact
- Unsafe physical space
- Repeated use of force, including forcible removal of clothing
- Limited or no access to cultural supports, schooling, outside time and recreation
- In some cases, communication with mental health support through the meal slot in the door

Disproportionate Impact

- Indigenous youth were separately confined more often and for longer periods than non-Indigenous youth.
- Female youth, and mostly Indigenous and racialized female youth, disproportionately experienced hours of prolonged separate confinement in response to self-injury:



Ineffective Oversight

- The existing internal review process fails to safeguard against the harms of repeated and prolonged use of separate confinement
- No inspections of youth custody centres as required by legislation

WHAT WE RECOMMENDED

- Change the law to limit the use of separate confinement to no more than 22 consecutive hours
- Prohibit separate confinement for particularly vulnerable youth, including those under 16 and those with complex mental health needs
- Require consideration of social history of Indigenous youth in all custody decisions
- Establish independent review body that has power to order youth be released from separate confinement
- Implement trauma-informed, culturally safe care for youth with complex mental health needs
- Develop and implement inspections process that incorporates international standards

Goal of Report Recommendations

Eliminating the psychological harms caused by prolonged and repeated isolation of youth in custody.