

# John Howard Society of Canada

## Core Statements, Values and Principles

The Society has adopted a series of statements which set out the Mission, Methods and Description of the Society. These “Core Statements” are as follows:

**Mission Statement**      Effective, just and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime.

**Description**      The John Howard Society of Canada is an organization of provincial and territorial Societies comprised of and governed by people whose goal is to understand and respond to problems of crime and the criminal justice system. They are fiscally responsible for the continuance of the work and service of the National Office.

**Methods**      In furtherance of its Mission, the Society:

- works with people who have come into conflict with the law,
- reviews, evaluates and advocates for changes in the criminal justice process, engages in public education on matters relating to criminal law and its application, and
- promotes crime prevention through community and social development activities.

More specifically, the Society engages in the following:

- Advocacy, which includes active, planned and frequent contact with the media, key government policy analysis, advisors and politicians and committees with respect to the promotion of the objectives of the John Howard Society of Canada;
- Research related to the development and dissemination of briefs and positions on matters of national importance which incorporates positions of member societies in the furtherance of the objectives of the John Howard Society of Canada;
- Communication with members societies to promote a coordinated consultative process which allows the national society to monitor and respond to the needs of members and facilitate joint projects between the John Howard Society of Canada and its members;
- Community Education which focusses on the sharing of information among members and the promotion of the objectives of the John Howard Society of Canada to the members through board development activities and broad based community education initiatives which enhances the role of the John Howard Society throughout Canada;
- Coalition building through a coordinated process of information sharing and the dissemination of materials with other like minded national organizations;
- Resource development initiatives to strengthen the ability of the national office to further the objectives of the John Howard Society of Canada.

# The John Howard Society of Canada

## Core Values and Principles

### 1. **People have the right to live in a safe and peaceful society as well as a responsibility implied by this right to respect the law.**

- 1.1 The John Howard Society undertakes the responsibility to promote activities which contribute towards healthy community life.
- 1.2 The John Howard Society creates the opportunity for the prevention of crime through social development.
- 1.3 The John Howard Society shall develop services which encourage the development of attitudes of responsibility and accountability on the part of those people who have been in conflict with the law.
- 1.4 The John Howard Society will pursue the application of provisions contained in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms particularly as it relates to our mandate.

### 2. **Every person has intrinsic worth and the right to be treated with dignity, equity, fairness and compassion without discrimination. In particular, those involved in the criminal justice process should be treated in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of the Canadian Human Rights Act.<sup>1</sup>**

- 2.1 John Howard Society promotes the application of the least onerous sanction within a restorative justice model.
- 2.2 John Howard Society promotes the concept of minimum intervention in the applications of the sentence, and the correctional services shall not, through non-judicial action, increase the punishment beyond the sentence imposed by the court.
- 2.3 The John Howard Society seeks to ensure that offenders retain the rights and privileges of ordinary citizens except those rights and privileges explicitly removed by the sentence imposed on them by the court.
- 2.4 The John Howard Society seeks to ensure that the criminal justice process guarantees the universal accessibility of all public services to offenders.
- 2.5 The John Howard Society provides aftercare services in order to successfully integrate offenders into the community.
- 2.6 The John Howard Society is committed to respecting the confidentiality of client information and to informing those with whom it deals of the limits to confidentiality resulting from legal obligations.
- 2.7 The John Howard Society shall monitor government policy, administration and service delivery with respect to offenders with a view to ensuring inmates are treated

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<sup>1</sup>As of January 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Act sets out the following as prohibited grounds for discrimination: race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted, or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.

with dignity, equity, fairness and compassion.

**3. All people have the potential to become responsible citizens.**

- 3.1 The John Howard Society shall provide services which give the offender the opportunity for personal development and integration into the community.
- 3.2 The John Howard Society encourages the voluntary participation of its clients, because a sense of responsibility and accountability are best conveyed when the offender chooses to make change.
- 3.3 The John Howard Society advocates the use of imprisonment as a last resort only, and undertakes to provide services in ways consistent with its values and principles whose goal is to reduce the use of imprisonment.

**4. Every person has the right and the responsibility to be informed about, and involved in, the criminal justice process.**

- 4.1 The John Howard Society shall engage in research and study of all aspects of the criminal justice process and shall advocate for reform and change in the law and its administration that is consistent with and implied by its values and principles.
- 4.2 The John Howard Society shall make the public aware of the needs and issues involved in criminal justice.
- 4.3 The John Howard Society promotes community acceptance of responsibility for both the individual and social aspects of criminal activity. The Society will encourage citizens to become involved in the delivery and management of justice related services.
- 4.4 The John Howard Society has the right to have access to all potential recipients of its services as well as to complete and accurate information concerning the criminal justice process.
- 4.5 When a need for services is identified, the John Howard Society shall provide the service directly or encourage others to provide it.
- 4.6 The John Howard Society has a right to consult with, and be consulted by all levels of government regarding the delivery of correctional services.
- 4.7 The reform and advocacy activities of the John Howard Society will be conducted within the means and guidelines of democratic change.
- 4.8 The John Howard Society seeks to identify social and economic conditions which contribute to crime or hinder the search for effective solutions to the problems of crime.

**5. Justice is best served through measures that resolve conflicts, repair harm, and restore peaceful relations in society.**

- 5.1 The services of the John Howard Society shall be directed towards individuals and communities, not towards specific components of the criminal justice system.
- 5.2 The John Howard Society endorses a restorative model of justice and is committed to implementing that model in its own work with those individuals who request assistance.
- 5.3 The John Howard Society encourages social cohesion and the safety of individuals in society through mediation, reparation and, wherever possible, reconciliation.
- 5.4 The John Howard Society provides effective responses to crime which includes personalizing the process, attempting to resolve the conflict in the community in which it took place and developing caring environments.
- 5.5 The Society advocates for a system of justice which does not utilize or perpetrate violence and revenge.

**6. Independent, autonomous non government voluntary organizations have a vital role in the criminal justice process.**

- 6.1 The John Howard Society places priority upon funding arrangements which allow maximum autonomy and freedom.
- 6.2 The John Howard Society undertakes to monitor the manner in which government authorities fulfill their responsibilities in the administration of court imposed sanctions for criminal activity by ensuring that the government remains accountable to the community for its actions and policies and by seeking an effective voice particularly for those facing a period of incarceration.
- 6.3 The John Howard Society is committed to the view that the range of social and medical services and educational opportunities generally available to members of our society should be available to inmates of penal institutions and undertakes to advocate for the provision of these services and opportunities by government and by others and to assist in their provision where there is a need and where it has the financial and personnel resources to do so.
- 6.4 The John Howard Society of Canada is a federation of provincial John Howard Societies that in turn are societies involving local John Howard Societies. The provision of services is a provincial and local prerogative which provincial and local societies undertake to perform in a manner which is consistent with the values and principles of the national body.