

A Survivor's Narrative of Institutional Harms Experienced in Manitoba Developmental Centre
and Prisons in Canada

By

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Abstract

This thesis is a case study that looks at the life story of a Black man, Dwight, who had been institutionalized at the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC) at the age of eleven in 1967 for three years. Dwight alleges that he experienced physical and sexual abuse, which led him to using violence as self-defence against older patients until he was expelled from the institution. Shortly thereafter, Dwight entered the correctional institutions in Canada, being incarcerated in sixteen prisons after the MDC. This thesis applies Goffman's (1961) theory of "total institutions" and critical disability theories. These theories are used to contextualize Dwight's perspective of his experiences on the processes of institutionalization, roles in institutions, and the social construction of disabilities. Oral history or life story interviews were conducted with Dwight to gain insight regarding his institutional experiences. These life story interviews cover his life prior to institutionalization at the MDC, his time inside, and his life in the community. There are several research contributions and implications. This case study provides an outline of the Black experiences in institutions for persons with disabilities. Other research contributions are that misdiagnosis does occur and in this case was socially constructed based on the time period of the 1960s. This study contributes to research that shows that race may affect the experiences of labelling as current studies reveal that Black youth continue to be more likely to be assigned a disability diagnosis when compared to their white peers. Finally, the importance of oral history as a methodology provides rich detail and new knowledge from lived experiences that other methods may not provide in the fields of sociology, criminology, and history. Future research with survivors of MDC and other institutions may benefit using oral history as it is flexible and allows for participants to share as much as they wish. This method of inquiry also allows interviewees to be heard as persons with lived experiences of disabilities have experienced marginalization in the historical narrative of institutions.

Keywords: Institutionalization, Incarceration, Victimization, Disabilities, Manitoba Developmental Centre, Critical Disabilities Theory, Total Institutions, DisCrit, Sexual Abuse.

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Introduction:

Institutional spaces, such as prisons, asylums, hospitals, or institutions for persons labelled with a disability, have lasting effects on persons that are confined within these spaces. Institutionalization is a process that may impact a person's self-conception of their identity, their roles, and how they view the community. This thesis utilizes the life history of a man who was institutionalized at the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC) and in numerous Canadian correctional institutions as he provides his narrative regarding survivorship, violence in institutions, and his life experiences of institutionalization and being labelled with a disability. This thesis is timely with the current shift in Manitoba to deinstitutionalize institutions for persons with disabilities. The relationship between people with intellectual disabilities and the community is impacted by the historical past of institutions, including the MDC in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Woodlands Institute in British Columbia, Huronia Regional Centre (HRC) in Ontario, and Michener Centre in Alberta. The literature shows that there is a lack of knowledge in Manitoba regarding the MDC and the extent of its practices. The practices of this centre is similar in Canada to the use of residential schools for institutionalizing Indigenous children until the late 20th century (Horodyski, 2017, 2020; Ineese-Nash, 2020). However, residential schools were a colonial attempt of cultural genocide and assimilation of Indigenous peoples into the colonial culture of the Europeans. Residential schools also had an age cap and was not used for definite stays as institutions such as the MDC or HRC were. As Malacrida (2015) states, it is important for these stories to be recorded so that the violence will not be forgotten or repeated.

The peak eras of institutionalization in Manitoba and throughout Canada occurred during the mid-twentieth century, which is the period of focus in the literature on the narratives of survivors and former employees in two studies (Burghardt, 2018; Malacrida, 2015). This thesis

addresses the history of the MDC and applies the lens of critical disability studies alongside Goffman's theory of "total institutions." Critical disability theory recognizes that issues of disabilities are not only questions of impairments, functional limitations, or enfeeblement, but they are also social constructions that liberalism's approach of prevention, cures, or rehabilitation cannot answer (Delvin & Pothier, 2006). The main goal and purpose of this thesis project is to bring the historical narrative of a survivor of the MDC into academic literature and to help enlighten Manitobans on the history of people with intellectual disabilities and the impact of institutional policies and processes on their lives. Moreover, this research addresses a blind spot in Canadian literature of institutional survivorship of persons incarcerated at the MDC.

Mary Horodyski (2017) has made further claims that there is a continued devaluation of persons with intellectual disabilities that leads to difficulties in preserving and describing the historical experiences of institutionalization of residents and allows for the continued ignorance in the community on the violence and harms experienced at the MDC (iv). Survivors have experienced being ignored and considered not credible witnesses for decades because of their label of having an intellectual disability. A concerning factor is the passage of time in several studies on similar institutions because persons with intellectual disabilities who experienced these asylums are largely from the mid-twentieth century are now elderly. Survivors in these studies were institutionalized as young children and adults from the 1950s to 1970s (Horodyski, 2017; Malacrida, 2015). There are claims that some may not have many years left to report on their experiences. Persons with intellectual disabilities are often unheard voices and excluded from historical narratives and academia (Burghardt, Freeman, Dolmage, & Orick, 2017; Burch & Sutherland, 2006). The subject for this study, Dwight, was institutionalized at the MDC but much later in his life it was determined that he had been misdiagnosed and should never have been

placed at the MDC. Dwight's narrative in this thesis project provides rich detail into his experiences at the MDC, as well as on institutional life in prisons, life on parole, his adjustments to life in the community, and how institutionalization has affected him.

Portage la Prairie and MDC History:

In the literature, the HRC, Michener Centre, and Woodlands Institute are all described in several studies as total institutions that remove persons with disabilities far from their families and communities, isolating and containing them while having the residents provide labour for the benefit of the centres (Burghardt, 2018; Feduck, 2012; Malacrida, 2015). During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, governments needed places that would house persons with disabilities and labelling an institution with more positive words such as "home" or "school" assured families that the staff would provide care and education. In the context of the MDC, the historical names of the centre represent its purpose; for example, the Home for the Aged and Infirm presented the centre as a home for those that were incapable of taking care of themselves, either due to age or disability. When Dwight was institutionalized at the MDC it was known as the Manitoba School for Retardates and the institution was presented to the public as a school for those that were labelled as "mentally retarded." Moreover, not much is known about the MDC regarding its operations and the experiences of its survivors (Horodyski, 2017). Horodyski (2017, 2020) has written standout work on the history of the MDC and its history within Portage la Prairie.

Portage la Prairie was a town incorporated in 1880 and established as a city in 1907 (Fuchs, 2023). The history of Portage la Prairie is one of boom-and-bust cycles with large institutions opening and closing, but there has been more loss than gain over the past decade. Portage la Prairie has had three large containment-based institutions that operated from the end

of the nineteenth century into the twenty-first century. These institutions have provided employment to the city's citizens and fed the economy. These centres, however, have either closed (women's jail and Agassiz Youth Centre) or are in transition to close (MDC). The women's jail opened in 1893 and provided jobs in the city for Correctional Officers, but the jail closed in 2012 once the new Women's Correctional Centre opened in Headingley after issues of overcrowding in the small facility (CBC News, 2006; *Riot at Portage Correctional*, 2020). The Agassiz Youth Centre, a juvenile detention centre that opened in 1910 known as the Industrial Training School for Boys as a corrective school, closed its doors in 2022 which caused concerns in the city about job loss (Fuchs, 2022; *Historic Sites of Manitoba: Industrial Training School / Manitoba Home for Boys / Agassiz Youth Centre (Crescent Road East, Portage La Prairie)*, 2023). These two centres have caused concern about the growing job loss in the city, plus the loss of one of Red River College's campus locations, and the announcement of the MDC's plan to transition to closure in 2021 caused further discussion about economy loss in Portage la Prairie (Baxter, 2022).

The MDC is one of two institutions remaining in Canada that are intended to house those with intellectual disabilities (Horodyski, 2020; Lefebvre, 2021). The Centre went through several names since it began operating in 1890, including the Home for the Incurables (1890-1924), Home for the Aged and Infirm (1924-1930), the Manitoba School for Mental Defectives (1930-1967), Manitoba School for Retardates (MSR) (1967-1984), and Manitoba Developmental Centre (1984-present) (Horodyski, 2020). These name changes are representative of both the social constructive changes of disabilities which expanded its criterion for intake. An example of the impact of the institution's name is how the Home for the Incurables understood their residents as incurable patients that were unfortunate and incapable of caring for themselves

independently. However, the residents were deemed capable enough to be profitably employed in garden work or other activities that would benefit the institution as they did not pay the residents for their labour (Horodyski, 2020).

During the late 1960s to mid-1980s under Dr. Glen Lowther as the director of the MSR, the institution developed a behavioural training program conducted by Dr. Garry Martin from the University of Manitoba. This behavioural training program involved the residents receiving positive reinforcements, such as candy, or negative reinforcements, such as hand-slapping, time-outs in seclusion, application of cayenne pepper, withholding meals, electric shock, restraints, and other punishments (Horodyski, 2020, 13). The behavioural training program was used into the 1980s while there were shifts outside of the MDC on how persons with disabilities should be treated. However, as early as 1973, the administration of the facility began considering changing the name of the centre to reduce the stigma of the label “retardates”, but this name adjustment only occurred in 1984 to the current centre name of MDC (Horodyski, 2020).

Throughout all these changes in the name of the institution, the centre had been under scrutiny repeatedly for bed bug and cockroach infestations, fecal matter being present on walls, beds, and clothing, alleged assaults and sexual abuse of staff on residents or between residents, and deaths inside the institutional walls that were not necessarily natural (Horodyski, 2020, 15). For example, in 1985 the Manitoba Ombudsman reviewed a case of a 36-year-old male resident who had been taken to Portage General Hospital after sustaining trauma to his abdomen, but the circumstances of the injury could not be determined even after an internal review of staff and an RCMP investigation. The “Welcome Home” program was established in the 1980s amidst increased scrutiny of the facility and a nationwide movement toward deinstitutionalization. This program transitioned approximately 200 residents out of the MDC. The program was able to

move these residents out of the MDC, but there remained approximately the same number of people with intellectual disabilities who needed community living supports to avoid (re)institutionalization (Horodyski, 2017, 2020). Some examples of community support needs are transportation, shopping, cooking, and navigation in the community. Eventually, the program transitioned into Abilities Manitoba which focused on services for people with intellectual disabilities, community living, and other resources (*History | Abilities Manitoba*, 2019).

For the MDC's past malfeasance, there have been consequences for the provincial government. In 2018, David Weremy, a survivor of the MDC who experienced over a decade of institutionalization, became the representative plaintiff of a \$ 50 million class-action lawsuit against the Manitoba Government (*David Weremy*, 2018). The class-action lawsuit states that residents of the MDC who resided at the institution between July 1, 1951 and 2016 and were alive could take part in the lawsuit. The suit alleged that only since 1990 have rationales for decisions been documented and publicized concerning major incidents, including human rights violations, sexual assaults, and breaches of safety, which still leaves a lot of unknowns about incidents at the MDC that span a century. The proposed settlement was officially announced on May 5, 2023 (Lambert, 2023a). The Court announced that survivor's could make a claim in one of two sections to receive monetary compensation (*Notice of Proposed Settlement in Manitoba Development Centre ("MDC") Class Action*, 2023). Section A claims requires only an affirmation that a class member was harmed to receive \$3,000. Section B requires the class members to provide the details of the harms suffered. Moreover, Section B is divided into sexual abuse and physical abuse with several levels with different criteria and amounts of money provided to claimants, ranging from \$4,500 to \$60,000. The settlement also promises that a

memorial will be created at the MDC's cemetery north of Portage la Prairie and \$1 million will be set aside as an endowment fund through the Winnipeg Foundation (Lambert, 2023a).

Terminology and Social Construction:

The use of language and specific terminology for those who have an intellectual disability has changed over the centuries. Common historical terms included mental defective, mentally retarded, feeble-minded, idiot, moral taint, maniac, mad, moron, and low-, medium-, and high-grade imbeciles, all pejorative and stigmatizing terms but these were the common labels of their time (Brown & Radford, 2015; Goddard, 1912; Malacrida, 2015; Scull, 2015a). Historical processes, acts, and Dwight's narrative may use any of the terms listed above. It should be noted that current terminology varies across regions globally. In the United States, the terminology of "developmental disability" is often used for persons with an intellectual disability and the United Kingdom uses the term "learning disability" (Burghardt, 2018). In Canada, Malacrida (2015) and Burghardt (2018) discuss how the advocacy movements of the 1990s led to a people-first language, adopting the term "people/persons with intellectual disabilities." Critical disability theory argues that the social construction of disability is often put onto the individual through ableist assumptions, institutions, and structures that create disadvantages for persons with disabilities. Rather, this is a result of mainstream society's inability or unwillingness to adapt, transform, or abandon its "normal" way of doing things (Delvin & Pothier, 2006). However, in Canada, more academics in critical disability studies or related fields are adopting the terminology of "persons labelled with intellectual disabilities" which is a recognition that disabilities are socially constructed that places a label on persons but also uses the people-first approach (Burghardt, Clayton, Dougall, & Ford, 2021; Horodyski, 2017;

Marshall, Nixon, Nepveux et al., 2012; Martino & Schormans, 2018). In this thesis, I will use the terms of “persons with intellectual disability/disabilities” or “persons with disabilities.”

Outline of Chapters:

Chapter one summarizes the literature on the histories of disability in Canada and some other Western countries, institutional settings, exclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities, transitions to the community living model, and reports and civil action. Chapter two is on the three theories I will use and how they inform my analysis of the life story of the subject. The theoretical frameworks of Erving Goffman's (1961, 1963) “total institutions” and stigma theory address institutions, roles within the institution, and associations with labels. Melinda C. Hall (2019) specializing in the philosophy of disability informs this thesis with her discussion on critical disability theory and its umbrella of theoretical influences from the fields of philosophy, sociology, and politics. The theoretical framework of this thesis also includes Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit) that addresses the intersectionality of disability, race, and gender. Chapter three provides an overview of oral history as a qualitative research method that often provides a voice to the powerless and marginalized populations (Janovicek, 2013), as well as the research questions and the methods for the recruitment of the subject. Chapter four will look at the key themes from Dwight's life history narrative and address themes that arise from his life story at the MDC, in prison, and community. Chapter five addresses how Dwight's life story narrative and his felt experiences speak to institutionalization and reflects the themes of Goffman's “total institution” and stigma theories and critical disability theories. Chapter six concludes this thesis by addressing the limitations of this study, providing recommendations for future researchers, and how oral history is important for research with survivors of institutional life. Persons with lived experiences of disabilities are important informants, including persons who have

experienced misdiagnoses of disabilities, and have experienced institutionalization in incarcerating institutions that removed them from their families and communities. These persons, like Dwight, are important informants on how these institutions have lasting ill-effects on their mental health and informs us of the importance of deinstitutionalization.

1. History and Literature Review

Persons with intellectual disabilities and persons who experience mental health conditions have been subjects of philosophical, sociological, ethnographic, and oral history studies. Some authors of the literature discussed below wrote as abled, white-middle class or influential persons and others are persons of colour or persons with disabilities. Voices of persons of colour and persons with disabilities is representative of the shift during the 20th century and continuing the movement toward inclusivity in research and literature.

1.1. History and Mental Health:

The history of disability, including the emergence of movements such as eugenics and disability rights movement, always responds to how the dominant classes and abled groups construct disabilities. Beginning in Europe and expanding into other Western countries, from the 18th century to the present, policy makers have justified the confinement of persons with intellectual disabilities that met the criteria, often citing reform and care as the aim for their residents. Michel Foucault was a French philosopher who has often been considered part of the post-structuralist tradition. Critical disability theorists, such as Bill Hughes (2015) have used Foucault to shed light on the historical practices that have restricted the actions of humans generally, including persons who are now labelled as disabled. Furthermore, disability and impairment neither refers to nor represents the individuals or specific population. Rather, from the Foucauldian perspective, it refers to a “de-centered subject position that is the product of the movement of power” (Hughes, 2015, 81-82). This means that individuality does not matter, what matters is how the enforcing power (for example, governments, doctors, or officials) provide a position that applies to all individuals of a group and removing their independent self-hoods. Licia Carlson (2015) states Foucault’s work works requires us, academics and people who are

interested in advocacy of disability rights, to consider how the classification of “mental retardation” affects self-definition of identities and agency. It is important to remember that persons with disabilities were classified as “morons,” “idiots”, “feeble-minded”, and “mentally retarded” and for many persons, like Dwight, these labels impacted their identities. Foucault’s (2006) work on the history of understanding “madness” during the Enlightenment era looks at how society removed individuals labelled as mad, placing them in institutions, as they suffered from various mental health conditions. Moreover, persons with intellectual disabilities were also placed under this label of “madness.” Foucault discussed how this group was often construed as being lazy and unwilling to partake in the growing capitalist state.

Foucault (2006) described how hospitals and prisons were used to house persons who were labelled with madness before the growth of asylums began in the 18th century in European countries, including France and England. These new asylums were presented to the public as philanthropic and intended to help cure madness and return people back to society to be productive members. Foucault turned to Samuel Tuke’s full-length account of a psychiatric asylum in the early 19th century in England as Tuke explored how “mad” persons endured poor conditions of some of these institutions like animals (2006; Raad & Makari, 2010). Foucault further comments that Tuke was attributed as a philanthropist, but the truth was that Tuke used moral and religious segregation to reform “mad” persons (2006, 250).

Tuke was white, abled, and part of the Quaker community. Quakers’ faith has Christian roots which began during the 17th century as practitioners believe that a part of God is in each of them. The Quakers were influential on asylum reform in England and the United States as they sought to manage the morals of persons placed within the asylums (Cherry, 2013). Tuke’s family owned the York Retreat in England, and he was part of the asylum movement in England and

United States after his work was published. Moreover, he believed insanity was only a partial loss of reason and that the insane person's intellect and morale were perverted until treatment was successful (Raad & Makari, 2010). Psychiatrists, Raad and Makari, discuss how Tuke's 1813 account and his Quaker faith greatly influenced the York Retreat psychiatric institute and the later asylums that developed in England and America during the 19th century.

It was during the 19th century when the construction of large public asylums changed the field of mental health institutions. Poorer classes were often sent to public hospitals, such as Bedlam in England, or to private madhouses where conditions were appalling, and the treatment was cruel (Showalter, 1981). Moreover, early doctors in the area of phrenology led to the development of the physiological explanation of mental illnesses and operations of brains that were conducted to study and discover "normal" and "abnormal" brain functions (Scull, 2015). Andrew Scull (1981a), a sociologist that researches the history of medicine and psychiatry, states that early institutions intentions were to safe keep patients and be places where they could no longer injure themselves or others. The increase of public asylums led to the increase of those admitted. Women were the majority of the patients admitted during the 19th century in European countries and the United States institutions; moreover, these asylums developed during this century because of the sex stereotypes of the period positing that women had to be protected against rape and seduction (Scull, 1981b).

In the United States, Canada, and other Western countries, a large network of institutions was established with a series of asylums built during the late 19th and early 20th century to segregate those with mental health conditions and disabilities from the main population (Scull,

2015).¹ Disability scholars Ivan Brown and John Radford (2015) discuss how the Canadian government in the early 20th century utilized a visual classification system for “mentally defective individuals” with a illustration of a model of stairs, which each level depicted the limits of each category that a person with intellectual disabilities may reach. These categories include “Idiot” (mentally 3 years and under), “Low-Grade Imbecile” (mentally 4-5 years old), “Medium-Grade Imbecile” (mentally 6-8 years old), “High-Grade Imbecile” (mentally 8-10 years old), and “Moron” (mentally 10-12 years old). This model of categorizing persons with intellectual disabilities led to institutionalization of an increasing number of persons; however, immigration of non-Western Europeans and the shift in political climate post-World Wars had its own impacts.

In Canada, sociologist and disability scholar, Claudia Malacrida (2015) claims the final motivator for the push toward institutionalizing those with a mental difference was because of the worries that prevailed regarding “degeneration” and threat to the good stock (Anglo-Saxons) because of the increase of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants beginning in the late 19th century. There were also gendered aspects of labelling women with intellectual disabilities as “mentally defective” and understood as being morally deficient; therefore, needed institutionalization to prevent them from having children with the “good stock” Anglo-Saxons who did not have any disabilities (Malacrida, 2015). Madeline Burghardt (2018) is a critical disability scholar. She states that World War II changed the political climate, and the ideologies of the Cold War era influenced the socio-economic and political conditions of the mid-twentieth century. These

¹ Brown and Radford (2015) discuss that when Orillia Asylum (HRC) in Ontario was opened in 1876 there were only 17 residents, all labelled as “idiots.” However, by HRC’s peak of operations in 1960s, the institution had 2800 residents. Ontario had 20 operating institutions for persons with disabilities in 1970, housing across them over 7000 residents, including children to adults. Across 41 institutes in Canada in 1970 there were 19,089 persons confined.

conditions influenced the containment of persons with disabilities in institutions like the MDC, HRC, Woodlands Institute, Michener Centre and the dozens of other institutions in Canada during the mid-twentieth century (Brown & Radford, 2015; Burghardt, 2018). Conformity, which was the need to have people adhere to the normative standards of “normal” and “abled” established by white, middle-class men, made these standards impossible, thus categorizing person with disabilities as the “Other.” During the Cold War, there was also the re-emergence of traditional construction of gender, work, sexuality, and what made a family “normal.” Finally, there was the need to strengthen the professional class and its role to develop a strong, flourishing nation (Burghardt, 2015, 2018). The history of disability in Canada informs us that the norms established by abled, white person influenced the political conditions that created designations of levels of disabilities which led to a demand for institutions to be built across Canada.

1.1.1 Exclusion and Mental Illness:

The anti-psychiatry movement occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. British psychiatrist theorist, R. D. Laing began to discuss during the 1960s that madness and sanity were a socially relative phenomenon (Nasser, 1995). For Thomas S. Szasz (1960) mental illness was a myth and “the concept of illness, whether bodily or mental, implies *deviation from some clearly defined norm*” (114, emphasis in original). When a person suffering a physical, intellectual, or mental health condition was diagnosed, they deviated from the norm established by abled persons. The norms for measuring deviation are psycho-social and ethical, and persons that were treated medically transitioned to the use of therapy for clients, and this term of “clients” replaced the old term of “patients” (Nasser, 1995; Szasz, 1960). Since the 1970s, the use of the term “mental illness” was replaced with “mental health condition”, recognizing as how Szasz discusses, there

are diseases or divergences that do affect the brain, but it is not an issue of the mind. This change in terminology is similar to the changes of terminology for persons with intellectual disabilities, moving away from the stigmatizing use of “mentally retarded”, “moron”, and other labels. This affirms that these terms are socially constructed and reflect different eras and thinking of mental health and disabilities.

Persons with intellectual disabilities have faced several forms of exclusions, which include having to live apart from mainstream society and families as they were contained and lived in institutions that were often far away from families (Armstrong, 2007; Barton-Hanson, 2015; Burghardt, 2015, 2018; Hughes, 2015, Malacrida, 2015; McCandless, 1981). Education is another form of exclusionary practices that persons with intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities experience in forms of restricted access and barriers to an education (Armstrong, 2007; Malacrida, 2015). The subject of this case study is Black and experienced barriers to education after being diagnosed as “mentally retarded” in 1964, including being separated from his classmates and tranquilized during the day prior to his institutionalization. Able-bodied students of colour experience this barrier in education too, which critical race theory addresses as being influenced by intersections of identity including race, gender, sex, age, and community (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). When students of colour also have a disability, many are often segregated from the general class population in comparison to their white class peers who have a disability (Annamma, Connor & Ferri, 2013). Critical disability theorists and advocates have also referred to exclusion as the prohibition persons with intellectual disabilities experience when it came to decision-making while institutionalized, such as clothing, food, activities, relationships, and so on (Burghardt, 2018).

1.2. Race, Age, Gender and Institutionalization:

Asylums, mental hospitals, or institutional care centres had several factors that influenced who was institutionalized in these places, such as race, age, and gender. In Canada and the United States, race did play a factor of institutionalizing persons with intellectual disabilities. Annamma et al. (2013) explore how race and ability interact in complex ways that is influenced by society and is subjective. The DisCrit scholars state the intersections of race cannot be ignored in the discussion of disabilities. Race did impact where children and young adults with disabilities were placed in Canada. Burghardt (2018) states that the residential school system in Canada during the 19th and 20th century was parallel in its operations with the government wanting to keep Indigenous persons separate from the largely white population in institutions, such as the HRC. The purpose of the residential schools was to assimilate Indigenous youth by forcing the colonial culture, language, and religion onto young, impressionable minds. However, there are a few known Indigenous persons institutionalized at the MDC (David Weremy is Indigenous) and at the Michener Centre as there were four Métis persons in Malacrida's (2015) study. Furthermore, the experiences of African and Chinese Canadians are absent from the literature on institutionalization, including the rates of their institutionalization (Burghardt, 2018). This may be due to policies established by the government to maintain separation of persons of colour from the white populations in institutions for persons with disabilities or their exclusion from these institutions that were primarily white. In the United States, the Willowbrook State School on Staten Island had racial factors as motivations for admitting Puerto Rican immigrants and African Americans (Hill, 2016). Malacrida's (2015) study had several Eastern European (Polish or Ukrainian) participants, and she discusses that during the 20th century this was an ethnicity considered "inferior" when compared to the Anglo-Saxon heritage.

During the mid-20th century in Canada and the United States, the age of persons admitted to institutions varied from young children to early adulthood. Hill (2016) states that the average age of admission at Willowbrook was 12.8 years of age and ranged from 3 years to 18 years of age at the time of admission. In Canada, Malacrida (2015) states that the Michener Centre ranged from 7 years to 25 years of age for admission. In Ontario, children as young as 2 were institutionalized (Burghardt, 2018, 212). David Weremy was approximately 14 years of age when he was institutionalized at the MDC (*David Weremy, 2018, para. 4*). *The Freedom Tour* explores David's story of his stay at the MDC and how he witnessed and experienced sexual and physical abuse, he also ran away numerous times to escape the MDC, and he was caught and punished each time until the centre gave up chasing him (People First of Canada, 2018). Dwight, the subject of this thesis, was institutionalized at the MDC when he was 11 years old. It is currently not known what the average age of admission was at the MDC.

The length of admission and the age of survivors when they left are varied between the United States and Canada. At Willowbrook, the average stay was 90 months (or 7.5 years) and the average age for discharge was 20.8 years of age (Hill, 2016). Both Malacrida (2015) and Burghardt (2018) report that the average stay in Canadian institutions was longer. Some residents were institutionalized for only six months, while others were released after thirty years. David Weremy was institutionalized at the MDC for 15 years (*David Weremy, 2018, para. 24*). The age of survivors when released may have significant impact on their experiences of reintegration into the community, dealing with trauma, and rebuilding relationships with families or building support networks (Feduck, 2012; Forrester-Jones et al., 2012; Scott & Rinaldi, 2017). An example is how Cindy Scott, a survivor of the HRC, has largely isolated herself to her apartment

as she avoids socializing with people and does not trust men due to her experiences (Scott & Rinaldi, 2017).

Women and girls have historically been targeted for institutionalization (Burghardt, 2018, 52). The female gender was targeted due to unfounded fears that “feeble-minded women of childbearing age threatened to pollute the general population due to higher rates of pregnancy and promiscuity” (Burghardt, 2018, 52). This fear of young women being promiscuous or sexually deviant is prominent in the eugenicist Henry Goddard’s (1912) study of a young woman named “Deborah.” Goddard was an American eugenicist who was influential in Canada but was not responsible for the policies Canada would develop regarding institutionalization of persons with intellectual disabilities. Goddard (1912) alleged that if “Deborah” had exited the institution in her early twenties then she would have been preyed upon and led a life that would have been vicious, immoral, and criminal due to her low functioning. This kind of thinking, along with religious beliefs on sexuality, gender, and fear of high pregnancy rates of the time, led to many girls deemed “feeble-minded” and institutionalized (Burghardt, 2018; Hill, 2016; Malacrida, 2015). However, young boys and men were also institutionalized as male survivors have come forward (Burghardt, 2018; *David Weremy*, 2018; Malacrida, 2015). Some of the reasons for admission for several of the boys institutionalized at the Michener Centre were truancy and need for appropriate schooling (Malacrida, 2015).

1.3. Disability Rights and Deinstitutionalization Movement:

Disability rights as a movement began in the 1950s to the 1970s when there was a collective mobilization on issues, including challenging what is measure of “normal” and advocacy for life in the community (Chan, Cao, Lu, et al., 2022; Sabatello, 2013). Maya Sabatello (2013) states that the Disability Rights Movement is one “from below”, with most

leadership positions belonging to persons with disabilities through self-advocacy. For example, People First of Manitoba is a community member-led organization that is run by and for persons with lived experiences of disability with the function of building solidarity and bringing awareness for the rights of persons with disabilities. Organizations like People First of Manitoba, People First of Canada, and many other advocacy organizations led by and/or with persons with disabilities began to push for the closure of institutions in Canada, the United States, England, Australia, and many other Western and Scandinavian countries. These countries began to have changing attitudes and policies in the 1960s regarding the care and institutionalization of persons with intellectual disabilities (Brown & Radford, 2015; Ericsson & Mansell, 1996).

The medical models of care and treatment within institutions were not replaced, but advocates for inclusion and the changes in the construction and understanding of disabilities allowed for the community living model to become a viable possibility (Brown & Radford, 2015). The community living model focuses on integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community with community supports to aid in self-efficacy (Chan et al., 2022). The community living model was advocated for by persons with disabilities, allies, and further supported by the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006). The UNCRPD was ratified in 2010 in Canada and is required to ensure the human rights of persons with disabilities (Canada, 2017). Such rights are included under Article 3c. where persons with disabilities shall have "full and effective participation and inclusion in society." Article 14 states that persons with disabilities shall be on an equal basis with others and that they shall enjoy the right to liberty and security. These articles in the UNCRPD represent the changes of where persons with disabilities belonged in, from institutions to community living.

Moreover, over the past several decades, scandals on the conditions of institutions in Canada were made public in newspapers, reports, and inquests. In Ontario, the well-known journalist and historian Pierre Berton published a column in 1960 in the *Toronto Star* regarding his visit to the Orillia Asylum (HRC) (Berton, 2013; Brown & Radford, 2015; Horodyski, 2020). Berton claimed that the real problem was one of public neglect after describing the leaky roofs, the conditions of the buildings, the one tub for 144 patients, the smell of urine and feces, and the overcrowding. Berton's article was a warning on the issues that the HRC was facing and that if something tragic, such as a fire, were to occur then the larger population outside of the HRC's operations could not use ignorance as an excuse:

Remember this: After Hitler fell, and the horrors of the slave camps were exposed, many Germans excused themselves because they said they did not know what went on behind those walls; no one had told them. Well, you have been told about Orillia. ...But should fire break out in one of those ancient buildings and dozens of small bodies be found next morning in the ashes, do not say that you did know what it was like behind those plaster walls, or underneath those peeling wooden ceilings. (2013)

A decade following Berton's column, the 1971 Williston Report in Ontario made recommendations for the closure of all large institutions following two serious incidents in the Rideau Regional Centre, another institute for persons with disabilities (Brown & Radford, 2015; Burghardt, 2018). The Ombudsman in Manitoba published an inquiry in 1987 which provided recommendations for the MDC to address staffing concerns and overcrowding (Horodyski, 2020). Concerns regarding the MDC became more prevalent in the media in the 2000s, spurred by the death of two residents, in 2004 and 2011 respectively, and what could have been done to prevent these deaths (*Dennis Robinson (deceased)*, 2007; *Inquest to the Death of Anne Hickey*, 2014). Attention to care of residents and the need for more staffing to support residents were two of the main issues that arose from these two incidents.

1.4. Life in Institutions and Civil Action:

What is known about life inside of institutions in Canada mostly comes from the survivors, former employees, and family members of deceased residents that never left institutions (Burghardt, 2014, 2015, 2018; Burghardt, Freeman, Dolmage & Orick, 2017; Burghardt et al., 2021; Feduck, 2012; Malacrida, 2005). These narratives form discussions on the use of forced sterilization, unpaid labour of residents, living conditions, physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, withholding food, solitary confinement, overcrowding, and how some families kept persons with disabilities a secret from their communities and some younger family members.² Persons with intellectual disabilities adopted the use of the term “survivor” because of their (largely) negative experiences while institutionalized during the mid-20th century and it is a less stigmatizing term than “victim” (Burghardt, 2017). Survivors’ narratives and researchers discuss the dehumanizing nature and culture of the institutions that were regimented more like military institutions than as homes or educational facilities, which institutional workers and doctors promised families (Burghardt, 2015, 2018; Malacrida, 2015). Life inside institutions wore down survivors’ personal identities and challenged their sense of worth as human beings, which has had lasting impact of self-worth for survivors (Burghardt, 2018, 87).

Survivors of institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities have largely been ignored by the public due to the social obstacles of labels such as “mental retardation” and belief by abled persons that they were unreliable sources (Burghardt et al., 2021). The Disability Rights Movement and organizations like Inclusion Canada and People First of Canada have pushed for

² Malacrida (2015) discusses that Alberta had legislation until 1972 under the Sexual Sterilization Act to sterilize persons with an IQ of 70 or less. Horodyski (2017) explains that British Columbia and Alberta were the only two provinces in Canada to have policies that allowed for sterilization of persons with intellectual disabilities. Moreover, sterilization policies outside of these provinces are largely unknown but there are some claims made, which remain unfounded, that sterilization may have been practiced in Manitoba (Horodyski, 2017).

deinstitutionalization and listening to the needs of persons with disabilities (Inclusion Canada, 2021). Over the past three decades, survivors have taken the provincial governments of Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta to court for compensation for the violence and harm they experienced while institutionalized (Health, 2018; Loriggio, 2013; *Muir v. The Queen in right of Alberta*, 1996a). In Manitoba, the class-action lawsuit came forward in 2018 seeking compensation of harms (*David Weremy and The Government of Manitoba*, 2018). Moreover, survivors of these institutions sought public apologies from the government as they understand that the past government's actions of institutionalizing, segregating, and abusing them are the root of their institutional experiences (CBC News, 2003; Lambert, 2023b; The Canadian Press, 2013). These apologies have brought closure for some and the means to move forward with their lives.

1.5. Costs-Benefits of Institutional Care:

Institutional care of residents and maintenance of the facilities are costly (Bredewold, Hermus & Trappenburg, 2020; Bughardt, 2018; Fisher, Lutz, Gadow et al., 2015; Wiesel & Bigby, 2015). Walsh, Kastner, and Green (2003) conducted a literature review on cost comparisons between community settings and institutional care settings for persons with intellectual disabilities in the United States. The authors state that costs vary between and within agencies and service systems; moreover, some of the studies revealed that there was a \$20,000 variance between institutional care and community group homes. Community living is generally lower in costs to maintain and support persons with intellectual disabilities. However, there are various disabilities that require more supports and care provided (such as cerebral palsy), which may affect the costs as Walsh et al. (2003) suggest, this includes the need for 24/7 support care for some with more needs (including bathing, cooking, and cleaning).

On the other side of institutional care, the MDC provides local employment and economic benefits for the city of Portage la Prairie. The announcement of the closure of the MDC, AYC, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba's Compass Residential Program, Crown Lands Property Agency, and Red River College Polytechnic's campus all total 456 public sector job losses that pay just over \$27 million per year (Sanders, 2022). Families and the community are impacted by this job loss, but the outcomes of community living for persons with disabilities has generally revealed that post-institutionalized individuals felt they had greater quality of life in the community (Baker, 2007; Bigby & Fyffe, 2006; Forrester-Jones, Carpenter, Cambridge et al., 2002; Forrester-Jones, Carpenter, Coolen-Schrijner et al., 2012). Secondary schooling institutions, care institutions, and detention centres have provided Portage la Prairie economic benefits for almost a century that they may not otherwise have experienced as a small city in Manitoba and its population of approximately 13,000 (Government of Canada, 2022). It may be assumed that many other cities that had institutions for persons with disabilities had the same economic benefits of employment that Portage la Prairie gained with the MDC and other institutions.

The history of disability in Western society is lengthy and complicated by the social construction of disabilities and mental health conditions. The political climate throughout the hundred plus years in Canada affected how persons with disabilities were considered by the government and the decision to categorize persons with intellectual disabilities. The literature of this chapter further informs this research that institutional life has lasting impacts for survivors and their institutionalization provided economic benefits to cities.

2. Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts:

There are two theoretical frameworks for this case study that are explained below.

Critical disability theory addresses the intersection of disability with race, gender, and other variables of identity. Erving Goffman's (1961) "total institutions" explores the operations and functions of institutions, including mental hospitals and prisons. These two theories inform the research and the discussion that comes from Dwight's narrative.

2.1. Critical Disability Theory:

Critical disability theory is an approach that "offers an important lens in unravelling the inherent complexities associated with disablement and equality" which then looks to the systemic barriers and oppression that persons with intellectual disabilities face in society (Rioux & Valentine, 2006, 23). The theory of critical disability is an interdisciplinary study and theory that originates from the field of philosophy and roots in different disciplines (Hall, 2019). These disciplines are politics, gender, disability, history, and cultural studies. Critical disability theory acknowledges the precarious positions that persons with disabilities occupy and how society marginalizes persons with sensory, physical, and cognitive impairments (Goodley, Lathom, Liddiard & Runswick-Cole, 2019). Critical disability theory further involves the intersectionality of a person's identity and circumstances, including the type of disability, gender, race, sexuality, socioeconomic, education, and other intersecting factors (Delvin & Pothier, 2006; Goodley et al., 2019; Hall, 2019).

Michel Foucault's philosophy followed the post-structuralism tradition which rejected universal laws that structuralist philosophers used to explain the surface level of what was happening in cultures and systems (Olssen, 2003). Foucault's philosophical discourse is part of

the interdisciplinary approach of critical disability theory. Critical disability theorists have utilized Foucault's works as he was interested in the knowledge and power as they are connected to social change that is found in the disciplines of human sciences, including criminology, sociology, psychiatry, and psychology (Tremain, 2015). Such works from Foucault that look at the historical changes in control, punishment, and organizations are *Madness and Civilization* (1965), *Discipline & Punish* (1977), and *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008), which are used and addressed by critical disability theorists. Tremain (2015) discusses that Foucault looks at how the problems and practices of how biopower operates through networks and objectivizes people as subjects. Biopower is part of the processes of controlling populations through means of subjugation and making a person's identity dependent on social control.

2.1.1 Dis/ability Critical Race Theory:

Critical disability theory has seen further development of interdisciplinary theoretical approaches, such as Dis/ability critical race studies (DisCrit) (Hall, 2019). Annamma et al. (2013) proposed DisCrit attempts to have scholars recognize the connections between critical race theory and disability theory, as well to engage in joint thinking between the fields to solve issues that people of colour face. Hall (2019) states that DisCrit theorists argue that racism and ableism operate jointly as racism is based on white ideals of ethnicity and ableism creates measures of what is "normal" by the standards of white, middle-class, men. Racism and ableism intensify and borrow from one another as they circulate interdependently and are often neutralized and made invisible to uphold notions of normalcy (Annamma, Ferri & Connor, 2018, 55 as cited in Hall, 2019). Furthermore, DisCrit places emphasis on social constructions of race and (dis)ability, as well as recognizing the impacts, materially and psychologically, of a person being labelled as race or dis/abled and this is outside of western cultural norms (Annamma et al.,

2018, 57 as cited in Hall, 2019). DisCrit's interdisciplinary approach under the umbrella of critical disability theories is important for this case study as Dwight is Black and has experiences that is discussed similarly by Annamma et al. (2013) with young Black youth discriminated against and labelled with a disability, which may also be impacted by issues of racism.

2.2. Total Institutions:

Goffman's (1961) theory of total institutions and his concepts of institutional functions applies to understanding the operations, economic benefits, and structures of the MDC and other institutions in Canada. Goffman states that "Every institution captures something of the time and interest of its members and provides something of a world for them; in brief, every institution has encompassing tendencies" (4). Institutions are a product of their time and go through changes because of social and political changes. Goffman conceptualizes that there are four general features of a total institution that I apply to the historical understanding of the MDC's structure and operations. The first general feature is that all aspects of life in the institutions for residents are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. The second is that all residents' daily activities are conducted together; moreover, all residents are treated alike and required to perform the same activities together. The third feature is that all phases of the day's activities are scheduled for the residents (or inmates), and these activities are imposed by a system of formal rulings and body of officials. The fourth feature is that the various enforced activities are for a single rational plan that is designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution (Goffman, 1961, 6). The concepts of these four general features of a total institution are contextualized on Dwight's narrative of experiences in the MDC, his two decades in correctional institutions, and how it shaped his community life experiences. The institutions he was incarcerated in had specific means of operations, functions, and processes of containment.

Another series of conceptual features that Goffman discusses that is used to inform Dwight's narrative are primary and secondary adjustments. Primary and secondary adjustments represents how the individual adjusts to the life in an institution, do they abide by the rules and contribute to the establishment (i.e., primary adjustment) or does the individual refuse to acknowledge the rules of the establishment (i.e., secondary adjustment). Furthermore, Goffman states that secondary adjustment is when the individual stands apart from the designated role and the individual's self-hood is taken for granted by the institution. Secondary adjustments are further divided into disruptive and contained secondary adjustments. Disruptive secondary adjustments are radical and aim to rupture the operations of the organization. Contained secondary adjustments participate and contribute to the establishment, but they push or reject the organization in a much less radical and disruptive manner. Goffman supplies that there are four features that characterize primary and secondary adjustments and how they may connect to the underlife, or the life inside the walls, of the institution. These include: (1) the participant is granted certain standards of welfare above the minimum that is required to keep a person going; (2) there may be joint values where the interests of the organization and individual coalesce; (3) there may be incentives provided for individuals whose interests are not the same as the organization; and (4) there may be participants that are induced to cooperate by threats of punishment and/or penalties.

2.2.1 Stigma Theory:

Goffman's (1963) stigma theory claims that society is responsible for establishing the means of categorizing persons and the attributes for these categories. The stigmatization of persons through labelling is a social process and at times can be a system of removal of specific populations, such as disabilities, race, religious, and so forth. There are three features of stigma

theory that are used as a lens to discuss Dwight's narrative on the label of "mentally retarded."

The first is that stigma is an attribute that is rooted in the relationship of a language (3).

Secondly, stigmatization is an ideology to explain a person's inferiority and danger they represent to the dominant social classes that set the idealized standards. Goffman discusses that stigma terms "such as cripple, bastard, moron" are used as metaphors and imagery, but the original context and meaning of the terms are not considered when used conversationally about someone (5). Finally, Goffman claims that when an individual with a stigmatizing label is around "normals," the stigmatized individual will begin to ally with the "normals" and see themselves through a non-stigmatized lens (107). For this thesis, stigma terms include the label of "mentally retarded," while the "normals" are persons without this label and have no experience of institutionalization at a centre like the MDC.

The theoretical frameworks of critical disability theory, DisCrit, total institutions and stigma theory informs this research in several ways. The first is that by using critical disability theory and DisCrit, an understanding about Dwight's narrative is gained regarding the intersection of his ethnicity, gender, age, systemic racism in schools and correctional institutions, and how Dwight perceives these issues. Goffman's theoretical work of total institutions and concept of several features helps inform academia how Dwight perceived his time in institutions. The roles he adopted under primary or secondary adjustments are important for this research as this informs us, the reader, of his experiences in different roles. Finally, stigma theory allows a lens to interpret and understand Dwight's perceptions of the stigmatized label of "mentally retarded."

3. Methodology

3.1. Overview:

This thesis aimed to provide a voice to persons with intellectual disabilities or former employees of the MDC in Manitoba to discuss their treatment and/or work environment at the institution. The original goal of 3-5 participants, was reduced to one participant. The low response rate may be due to several factors, including participant interest, People First of Manitoba is a small organization, and they were also busy with filming a documentary on several survivors' experiences. There was also the impact of ethics on the amount of time for recruitment as ethics approval occurred late December and recruitment began in January 2023 and Dwight was recruited in March. This thesis shifted into a case study that explores the life history narrative of one individual who experienced institutionalization over the span of two decades. The subject of this case study, Dwight, provided his personal knowledge and insights into life in institutions and the transition to community life on parole.

The history of institutional experiences for persons with intellectual disabilities still requires further study as 41 institutions operated across Canada during the mid-twentieth century (Brown & Radford, 2015). There are several substantive research projects on the survivors' experiences of institutionalization in Canada (Burghardt, 2015, 2016, 2018; Feduck, 2012; Malacrida, 2005, 2015; Rossiter & Rinaldi, 2018; Scott & Rinaldi, 2017). This study, like similar studies in Canada, takes a qualitative approach.

3.2. Qualitative Methods:

This section will outline qualitative methods, the research questions, the sample and sampling, interviewing, ethical considerations, and thematic analysis and reflexivity. Oral history

is a qualitative research methodology that is designed to bring forth deeper and more nuanced understandings regarding the narration of life experiences from a micro level but can be contextualized within broader issues. Oral history is a method that employs interdisciplinary strategies of historical and testimonial accounts (Mulvihill & Swaminathan, 2022). The key characteristics of oral history are the narrative, orality, subjectivity, credibility, and objectivity. Critiques of oral history have focused on memories of the narrator being affected by sentimentality. However, Mulvhill and Swaminathan (2022) discuss that oral historians have emphasized that documentary sources can be just as selective or one-sided as the narrator's perspective. Previous research in Manitoba has examined the difficulties in accessing archival records, which may take several months with FIPPA requests to be fulfilled, and how the photocopies may be of poor quality, and a great amount of the information blackened out (Horodyski, 2017).

Oral history is an important research method that gives voice to powerless and marginalized populations as academia has written about these populations, but not necessarily empowering them or serving in their best interests (Janovicek, 2013). Dwight states that no one has ever asked him for his story before and sharing his story was important to him. Oral history allows people like Dwight to "reclaim knowledge by making memories public" (Malacrida, 2015, 242). People who provide their oral histories is also a form of affirming their experiences. Many of the survivors of institutions have experienced marginalization and silencing. An example is the testimonies of residential school survivors and the importance of these stories being made public for reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state (Angel, 2012). These shared stories are the survivors' emotional and felt truths. Oral history as a research method allows for new and complex interpretations of the past from the perspective of Dwight,

rather than the traditional sources of academics, doctors, or lawyers. As Mulvihill & Swaminathan (2002) discuss traditional documentary evidence of events, for example in Dwight's case this would be court or correctional documents, however, these sources are one perspective that may not be objective if they had personal opinions about Dwight. It is not possible to corroborate every detail of Dwight's life as professional documents may have details that are omitted for privacy reasons.

3.2.1 Research Questions:

Not much is known about the MDC when compared to other facilities such as the HRC, Michener Centre, and the Woodlands Institute on the operations of the facilities and the experiences of survivors (Burghardt, 2018; Feduck, 2012; Horodyski, 2017, 2020; Malacrida, 2015). I developed the research questions to bring my focus on understanding Dwight's narrative on the impacts of institutionalization at the MDC, the traumas he experienced, and its lasting effects on him as a survivor that has transitioned into the community:

- I. How do we interpret survivor's felt experiences as reflections of characteristics of a "total institution"?
- II. How can a survivor's experience during the mid-20th century at the MDC inform us about institutional processes during this period?
- III. How does survivor adaptation inform us about what institutional life?
- IV. How do supports (monetary, therapy, relationships, etc.,) effect community (re)integration outcomes for survivors?

3.2.2 *Subject:*

The original participant study was anticipated to have 3-5 participants based on the period of 1951 to 2016 as outlined by the class-action lawsuit in Manitoba and persons who were willing to come forward to participate (*David Weremy and The Government of Manitoba*, 2018). The period outlined in the class-action lawsuit has a starting date from the 1950s which was the beginning of peak institutionalization in Canada. Participants were required to be living in the community and no longer associated with the institution. This was to avoid any current residents or employees being identifiable while still associated with the MDC.

3.2.3 *Purposive Sampling:*

For this project, purposive sampling was the approach used to find the right participant. Sampling approaches seek specific individuals who meet the criterion for inclusion in their studies. Ilker Etikan (2016, 2017) discusses that purposive sampling relies on the researcher to know who will provide the best information for the study. Moreover, purposive sampling relies on the researcher to identify their potential participant population. My knowledge about the MDC is based on the information of former residents, such as David Weremy, who have come forward in the media and People First of Canada's (2018) documentary that had sixteen self-advocates were seeking to bring awareness about institutional life. Post-institutionalization, some of these individuals have joined People First of Manitoba, which is an organization that is led by its members which have lived experiences of disability. This advocacy work demonstrates that persons with intellectual disabilities and survivors of the MDC are willing to speak and this population were potential participants. People First of Manitoba's primary function is to build solidarity and awareness for the rights of people with disabilities. I contacted People First of Manitoba via email to requesting the act as intermediary to find potential participants.

3.2.4 Recruitment of Dwight:

This study was prepared to interview persons with intellectual disabilities, recognizing that they are a vulnerable population, and focusing on the importance of their inclusion in research with careful considerations made regarding their participation and informed consent (Atherton, Steels & Ackroyd, 2017; Ellem, Wilson, Chui & Knox, 2008). An ethics application was completed and approved through the University of Winnipeg ethics department to conduct the interviews and recruit participants. I created a poster and pamphlet with information on the study with my professional contact information that I provided to People First of Manitoba who acted as an intermediary for recruitment. People First of Manitoba along with Abilities Manitoba used their emailing lists to send out the poster and pamphlet (see Appendix A). Potential participants, workers, and support network persons could reach out to inquire or ask questions about the study. This case study's subject, Dwight, reached out through People First of Manitoba and, after a brief correspondence, we agreed to talk three times by phone over a total of 4.5 hours. Dwight wished to be identified by his legal name for his narrative and had signed a release of privacy for the use of his transcription. Dwight wished to not be anonymous, and I had made the choice to not anonymize his narrative and provide him a pseudonym because his narrative is self-advocacy of his experiences and the details of events, such as the riot at British Columbia Penitentiary, are easily identifiable from the narrative.

3.3. Structure of Interviews and Analysis:

Burghardt (2018) and Malacrida (2015) both conducted semi-structured interviews in their qualitative research of survivors' experiences in institutions in Canada. These two studies are currently the most in-depth studies on two centres in Canada, HRC and Michener Centre respectively. The use of interviews in these two studies informed my choice of conducting

interviews with Dwight. Oral history allows for the researcher to lead the research, while allowing the narrator to lead the interview in a direction they choose (Mulvihill & Swaminathan, 2022). I started the interviews, checking in with Dwight and then, once the recorder was on, I asked Dwight to share his story, however much he wished to share that day. Dwight would share his narrative until there was a natural end to a story and I would then ask Dwight a question to gain further information or clarify some things he discussed. My follow up questions reflected concepts of the features of an institution (i.e., was there a choice in activities) and with the lens of critical disability theory and DisCrit (i.e., how did Dwight's perspective of being Black affect his understanding of experiences) (See Appendix B). It was important to try and avoid asking leading questions on how Dwight views himself and to avoid guiding his responses. Leading questions could affect a person's response during an interview to meet an assumed response they think the interviewer wants to hear.

3.4. Thematic Analysis and Reflexivity:

I conducted a thematic analysis of the narratives collected to identify and report patterns within the collected data. Sharp and Sanders (2019) explain that thematic analysis involves several steps, consisting of becoming familiar with the data, generating coding categories, generating themes, review of the themes, defining and naming themes, and locating exemplars. Dwight's narrative was coded by eight colours as I generated broad themes during the first review. For example, orange was used for any stories or phrases on institutional violence and pink was for family relationships. The second review of the narrative looked over the broad themes and narrowed them down into more specific categories, such as witnessed violence, experience of violence, and instigation of violence. Furthermore, thematic analysis allows for

common themes to develop out of Dwight's narrative. Thematic analysis lets these experiences of themes to be discussed as connections or reflections that Dwight shares in his narrative.

Reflexivity is part of thematic analysis that forces the researcher to recognize their influences or the influence the research has on the researcher (Mackieson, Schlonsky, and Connolly, 2019). With most of the research that has come forward in Canada, the research participants have largely been persons with intellectual disabilities and not many persons were misdiagnosed. When I started this thesis, I anticipated, based on the Canadian literature of institutional survivors, that persons with intellectual disabilities would come forward or some former employees to bring awareness from their respective perspectives. When Dwight had contacted me over email, I was unaware that he had been misdiagnosed and assumed because he had reached out as a survivor that he had an intellectual disability. My assumptions are in part due to most studies focusing on persons with intellectual disabilities and very rarely does the research mention that misdiagnosed persons participate in those studies. It was my error of assumption that all survivors have experiences of disabilities. However, I recognized the importance of persons who have been misdiagnosed as key informants on institutional life in institutes like the MDC.

Critical disability theories rely on reflexivity as they recognize several issues, including ableist researchers, gender, race, class, power imbalances, and other factors that requires the researcher to be reflective on their participation in research (Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard, & Runswick-Cole, 2019; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). The use of reflexivity makes the researcher remember the goals of the project and who they are representing in their project (Gothard, 2010). The goal of this thesis is to discuss the lasting impacts from Dwight's narrative

on his experiences of institutionalization at the MDC and correctional institutions, while maintaining respect for Dwight's narrative and willing participation in this study.

3.5. Ethical Considerations:

Regardless of whether a person has a disability, the main ethical consideration involving people in oral history projects are that there is a possibility that the sharing of these stories could bring up old trauma from living or working within an institution. However, participants have come forward in other studies to share their narratives of abuse and trauma they experienced or witnessed (Burghardt, 2014; 2018; Burghardt et al., 2021; Feduck, 2012; Malacrida, 2005, 2015; Scott & Rinaldi, 2017). Atherton et al. (2017) explored what motivates persons that are labelled with intellectual disabilities to participate in oral history projects, finding that participants wished to create vital links between the past and present. Moreover, survivors' perceptions are that their stories can serve to protect and preserve peoples' memories of institutionalization and its effects.

During the pre-interview, I outlined the informed consent form to Dwight. The informed consent form was based on Khalilah Johnson's (2016) discussion on informed consent and ensuring that a participant knows the purpose and potential uses of their narratives in academic studies. This is to ensure that a participant can make an informed decision regarding their participation or refusal to participate based on all the information they receive either from the consent form or questions on participation and the study (124). The informed consent form was part of the pre-interview process, and Dwight was provided a digital copy to sign. The form had several topics highlighted, such as how the research will be used and protection of personal information (see Appendix C). Moreover, a list of mental health services and phone numbers was offered to Dwight to ensure that he knew he could reach out for support if he felt any emotional discomforts from sharing his stories.

3.6. Interviews:

3.6.1 Pre-Interview:

I offered Dwight the option of having our pre-interview session over Zoom or phone as he is not located in Winnipeg and he chose phone. I had Dwight call me at his convenience as I did not want to call him and place pressure on him to answer the phone or to participate. I initially designed the pre-interview to be a session where a participant could take the time to decide, and a follow-up email would be sent to inquire if they would like to organize an interview session. Dwight decided during the pre-interview session after the consent form was discussed and signed that he would like to proceed right into the first interview session.

3.6.2 Interview Sessions:

A total of three interviews were conducted with Dwight. These interviews ranged from 60 to 120 minutes per session, totalling 4.5 hours. He shared stories of his life to the extent he wanted and until he decided that there was no more that he would like to share or answer. The chronology of events described in the interviews were not linear, as Dwight discussed non-consecutive events and periods across interview sessions. In some instances, he provided fuller or added to accounts of events he had discussed in a prior interview. At the beginning of each interview, I would set up my audio recorder by my phone on my desk, which was on audio speaker. During the second interview, Dwight mentioned some mental health distress over sharing his story between interview sessions, causing sleeplessness. It was only during this discussion I chose to interrupt his sharing and asked again if he would like resources for mental health, but he declined and explained why he refused these supports based on his past institutional experiences. Whenever Dwight paused in his narrative I did not immediately speak

up unless I felt that he had ended a specific story. By remaining quiet, this allowed for Dwight to add more detail, have a break from speaking, or collect his thoughts.

3.6.3 Post-Interview:

After the three interviews were completed, Dwight and I arranged for one more phone call. Dwight called me once more and we discussed the use of his story for the project and if he wished to donate the transcribed audio-recordings to People First of Manitoba. The purpose in donating the transcriptions is to help preserve the history of survivors of the MDC. Dwight agreed as he wishes to have his story told. He digitally signed the consent form (see Appendix D for audio consent form), and a copy is for People First of Manitoba. It is stipulated in the audio-recording donation consent form that Dwight maintains the right to withdraw his consent on the use of his transcription and have it removed permanently from any place that People First of Manitoba may use the transcription. The rationale for the donation of the transcript, with Dwight's consent, is that there are numerous survivors who have not come forward to share their stories of institutional life at the MDC. People First of Manitoba will have the choice of making Dwight's narrative public, but Dwight's transcripts will not be destroyed, unless he wished to withdraw his consent.

Non-profit organizations, like People First of Manitoba, that are member led are important organizations to search for participants in research on persons with lived experiences of disabilities. There are ethical considerations made when interviewing persons with traumatic life experiences and precautions for the mental health of participants must be considered. Finally, the choice of using oral history as a research method is to empower the narrator to share as much as they feel is necessary to tell their story.

4. Thematic Findings

To begin this chapter, I will provide a summary of who my subject is. This is to help contextualize his perception of his experiences to the themes found in his narrative. The use of “mentally retarded” is for the historical use of the label that was given to him by doctors at the age of eight, which is a label that he lived with for 26 years of his life. The are broad themes outlined below which I will discuss how I further coded them into narrowed-down themes and specific categories that relate to each other. From Dwight’s narrative, the following themes will be discussed (1) institutional spaces as experiences and processes; (2) violence; (3) relationships; (4) systemic violence and labelling; and, (5) life on parole experiences.

Dwight is 68 years old and identifies as Black. Dwight described that he was a “problem child” and that when he was eight years old, he was diagnosed by a doctor as “mentally retarded.” Then at the age of eleven in 1967, Dwight was institutionalized at the MDC. He alleges that he was continuously placed on tranquilizers and ran away from home repeatedly. He was sent to the MDC by his adoptive mother and a social worker. Dwight discussed that he was institutionalized at the MDC for three years and he described his daily experiences of sexual and physical abuse by older patients and staff, his experiences of being locked in solitary confinement, and how he used violence to defend himself and to ensure that the institution no longer wanted him there. During Dwight’s institutionalization at the MDC, there was a short period of time in 1970 that he was sent to live with a foster family in the Portage la Prairie community. Although he made several friends while in the community, he committed a robbery in Portage la Prairie with these new friends and he was caught and sent to the Vaughn Street Jail in Winnipeg. In 1971, Dwight entered the federal penitentiary system for the first time at the age of 14 with a sentence for stabbing a Corrections Officer. After serving his sentence, he was

released to the Winnipeg community, Dwight participated in a murder three months after his release in 1973. In 1974, Dwight received a sentence for 20 years-to-life. Between the MDC and correctional institutions in Canada, Dwight was institutionalized in seventeen different facilities with the label of “mentally retarded” used to classify him from 1967 to 1990. In the late 1980s, Dwight won a judicial review, which included a clinical psychologist report stating that Dwight was misdiagnosed when he was a child. He was released on parole in 1990 and describes that he is in a healthy relationship over the past 17 years where he feels love and support from his common-law wife.

Dwight describes how he believes and acknowledges that the crime he committed in 1973 was “a horrible crime” but claims that it stemmed from his rage over what had happened to him during the three years he was incarcerated at the MDC. Dwight describes in his narrative that he will never be free from his trauma as he states “I go to sleep, I wake up and I’m thinking about that. I’m thinking about that North Home.”³ Much of Dwight’s narrative is not possible to fully corroborate facts and details, but the purpose and use of Dwight’s perspective is to gain insight of how he felt he experienced institutionalization. His narrative is his truth and how he perceives his life events.

There may be people who know of the crime Dwight was convicted for as it was written about by a late Chief Prosecutor for the City of Winnipeg, John D. Montgomery. Montgomery wrote and published a book in 2004 titled *Beyond Redemption*. From Montgomery’s narrative, the reader is provided scathing critical comments of not only Dwight and his co-accused, Jack Bender, but also of persons who worked within the criminal justice system and the changes in

³ Dwight claimed that North Home was the name of the centre that staff would use instead of the Manitoba School for Retardates. North Home was interchangeable in Dwight’s narrative with the other centre names.

sentencing with the introduction of the Faint Hope Clause in the Criminal Code in 1976. This new clause was established under s.745.6 of the Criminal Code after the abolishment of the death penalty in Canada. Life sentences replaced the abolished death penalties and the Faint Hope Clause was offered as a possibility at lowering the time of parole ineligibility through judicial review to a minimum of 15 years (*The "Faint Hope Clause" – CCJA*, n.d.). Montgomery was very critical of several persons in his book. The first is Samuel Minuk, a judge, who sentenced Dwight to Stony Mountain for "shivving", an improvised handmade knife for stabbing, a cellmate and punching a Corrections Officer. Montgomery colourfully described Minuk as a "modern-day Friar Tuck" as he was sympathetic to Dwight's circumstances of living in institutions since he was a child. Moreover, Montgomery claims that Minuk stated Dwight was committing violence because of his time in institutions. Montgomery also criticized Allan Partington, a National Parole Officer, as he wrote about Dwight's progress in prison, noting that Dwight had an interest in playing chess and reading about philosophy.

Montgomery seemed to assume that because Dwight was labelled as "mentally retarded" he could not show an interest in reading or playing chess, writing "you unearthed, Mr. Partington, that Lucas had, at one time, been classified as retarded and placed in the Manitoba School for Retardates. And you know, as a sociologist with an insight into psychology, that the intelligence quotient can't be raised appreciably" (110). Montgomery's comments on intelligence quotients (IQ) are surface level understanding of IQ testing, ignoring possible biases, and does not address environmental factors that could have impacted Dwight's IQ tests when he was a child. IQ tests are related to the field of psychology and the use of these tests have raised issues on Western cultural biases and environmental factors that may influence testing (Kim & Zabelina, 2015).

Montgomery's narrative is critical of Dwight, Bender, criminal justice system actors, the system itself, and politicians who advocated for the Faint Hope Clause. The focus of this case study is Dwight's narrative, but it is important to acknowledge that Montgomery had the perspective of a Crown attorney who saw the tragedies of victims and their families. Dwight described Montgomery as a "very racist, unfair prosecutor...[with] a job to do." Montgomery's job was representative of the Crown and State to prove in Court if a person without a doubt committed a crime that broke rules established by the State in the Criminal Code. Montgomery and Dwight have polarizing perspectives of the crime committed and Dwight's time in prison based on their personal views and experiences. Montgomery's narrative may have been influenced by personal biases of "mentally retarded" persons and persons of colour, as well as the time he served as a Crown attorney.

4.1. Institutional Spaces as Experiences and Processes:

This section is divided into two parts. The first aims to understand Dwight's experiences in institutional spaces and the second aim is to understand how Dwight perceived his processes of institutionalization. The broad theme of institutionalization was the most prevalent in Dwight's narrative as he spent a significant period of his life, 23 years, within institutions. Dwight discussed several institutions that incarcerated him including Manitoba Developmental Centre (referred to as MSR),⁴ Portage Home for Boys (Agassiz Youth Centre), Stony Mountain, British Columbia Penitentiary, Saskatchewan Federal Penitentiary, Matsqui, Millhaven, and Kent.

⁴ Dwight did not like to refer to the MDC by its current name because he had known the institution as the MSR, Manitoba School for Retardates. For this chapter, the institution will be called MSR to reflect Dwight's narrative.

4.1.1 Institutional Experiences:

This theme focuses on Dwight's narrative of institutional physical and emotional experiences in numerous institutions. The focus will be drawn to experiences of life in institutions and the spaces they offered (i.e., maximum-, medium-, and minimum-security units for example) and how Dwight occupied these spaces. Dwight's first institutional experience was when he was 11 years old in 1967. His mother told him he would be going to a hospital for just a couple of weeks. He describes his entrance into the MSR:

...they took me there and basically...I was taken to the head office there and a gentleman, I never forget his name, by the name of Dr. Lowther. He started asking me a lot of questions and of course, the questions he was me I couldn't answer because I didn't know what was going on. They got a couple of male nurses, and they came down and they gave me a pair of boots. They gave me pants and a shirt, and they told me to come with them. There was two parts at the institution. One part was for the female. The other part was for the adults. They took me to this building, and they took me to the top floor to a place called West Two.

Dwight's introduction to the MSR was one of confusion as to why he was inside there. Neither his mother nor the social worker explained why he was being sent to the MSR. He went on to describe the space of West Two:

Now, I've never experienced any like that before because now I'm in this range. They just had beds. They didn't have separate dorms or anything like that. And when I entered, they actually took the clothes I was given off me and put in a pair of pyjamas. Now, I experienced when I was on that ward, people that couldn't communicate. They would be rocking back and forth, masturbating, and twitching their fingers in front of their eyes. There were several people like that there. And of course, I got scared because I had no idea of what this was all about, what they were going to do to me. Would I end up like these people? So, I sat in the corner of the ward with my knees up, my face buried...in my knees.

Dwight's narrative of his first day at the MSR describes numerous instances witnessing occurrences of physical and sexual abuse. Dwight described that he was asked several questions but his confusion and fear of what was going on made it difficult to answer Dr. Lowther's questions. The second part of the first quote is that Dwight's clothing was removed, and he was

provided clothing by the staff. The clothing he wore to the MSR was his only personal belongings and those were taken from him. These pyjamas were later described in the narrative as being the same as the rest of the residents. The space of the MSR was spaced by gender and Dwight was placed among adult men. The fourth issue found in Dwight's narrative on his first institutional experience is how the space of West Two provided no privacy to the residents. It was a ward filled with beds where he witnessed residents masturbating or rocking back and forth, which scared him since he was a child.

Dwight further described that the bathroom was down the hall and out of sight from the nurses' station across West Two. The spaces of West Two and the distance of the bathroom from the nurses' station raised the risk of violence in the institution. Dwight describes both the physical and emotional traumas that were the result of the design of West Two and the actions and inactions of residents and staff. Dwight described his first assault at the MSR:

I was afraid to use the washroom, but then I had to go, so I would get up, and the washroom was down the hall, separated. So, you couldn't, nobody could see what was going on. And I'm not even in that place a day. And I did not know any better. And one of the patients, an older gentleman because I was the youngest one there, slapped on the back of the head, grabbed me, pulled my pants down and started having sex with me. I was so afraid that I mentioned it, I called out to the nurses, and they totally ignored it. This would happen on a daily basis. Not just one, but a couple of them were doing it. And if I didn't, if I didn't say yes to what they are doing, they would slap me, punch me and things like that.

As a result of these incidences and the inaction of staff, Dwight secluded himself into a corner.

He described that he refused to go to the washrooms down the hall and would soil himself.

Dwight's narrative of the space of West Two speaks to the traumas of harm within a space a person is forced to inhabit and share with their assailants.

There are two other spaces that Dwight discussed in detail that he experienced while institutionalized at the MSR. While Dwight was institutionalized at the MSR, he was transferred

to the cottages on the property. These cottages housed thirty or so persons, Dwight described the residents as older teens or adults, with open space inside the cottages with all the beds in view, but that there was also a pool table for the residents to use. The pool table was for recreational uses for the residents, but Dwight viewed the pool table's balls as important tools for self-defence. Dwight described how he took two pool balls and placed them in a doubled sock to attack a fellow resident in his cottage. This incident had Dwight taken back to West Two and confined in a special room:

But this time they put me, they had on that ward, they had three cells, basically rooms with bars on the windows and metal doors. And they would put me in there and the lights were on 24 hours a day. They never dimmed them. They never turned them off. They were always on. They would give me a nightgown that I lived with, I had no blankets or sheets on the bed. So basically, if I wanted to sleep, and get away from the light, I would have to take my garments off and cover them over my head so I couldn't see the light. And I lay fully face down and no exercise. The only time I got out of that cell is when I had to dump my potty. So that would be in the evening. Maybe around 6 o'clock in the evening, they would take me out. I would dump my toilet. I would go back into that room, and they would lock the door and I wouldn't see anybody until the next day.

This passage of the solitary confinement cell at the MSR is a room that deprived Dwight of space for physical activities. Moreover, there was no running water or toilet. The space of the confinement cell was not designed for comfort as the lights were on for 24 hours a day and after spending extended amounts of time in these cells, it would be disorientating for the person confined. Dwight moved between the spaces of the confinement cell, West Two, and for a brief period he was placed in the Portage la Prairie community with a foster family, and the cottage over a period of three years.

While residing in the cottages, residents at the MSR were provided with two opportunities that the residents inside the main buildings were not. The first was that Dwight was able to participate in a class at a small schooling program on the MSR grounds. The second

opportunity was that the residents of the cottages were able to participate in various activities on the weekends. Dwight described some of these activities:

So, one of the treats that they had for us was on the weekends. They used to have Friday dances where the patients from the cottages only, not the main building, the cottages only were allowed to participate in these dances. And Saturday and Sunday we had a canteen night. That day would last until 6:00 at night. So, there you go down to your canteen. If you had money, you buy pop and chocolate bars. There is one of these old-fashioned music stations where you put quarters in, and you select your music to play it.

This was a division of experiences within the MSR. Dwight further describes these weekends as times when he could spend it with Joyce Kipling, an older Indigenous woman who was also a resident at the MSR. Joyce helped him with his reading and writing skills. He enjoyed his time with her, and he described that he gave her no trouble if he felt he was getting frustrated with his learning progress. Dwight compared learning from Joyce to the struggles he experienced in the MSR's class program, often experiencing feelings of frustration, but Dwight explained Joyce was patient with him. Dwight later noted that she was a mother figure to him and described that a year after Joyce's death he was kicked out of the MSR for stabbing a resident.

By the age of fourteen, Dwight was raised to adult court and sentenced to two years at Stony Mountain Institution in Stony Mountain, Manitoba.⁵ He participated in learning a trade but also experienced being placed in what he described as "the Box," a concrete boxed cell that was completely enclosed save for a small grate which the guards would open to look at the inmates inside without opening the cell. Dwight served approximately half of his sentence between Stony Mountain and Saskatchewan's Federal Penitentiary (SFP) in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan before being released on mandatory supervision.

⁵ Both Montgomery's (2004) book and Dwight's narrative discuss how the judge, Samuel Minuk, wanted to sentence Dwight to two years less a day, but Dwight insisted on two years so that he could learn a trade while in Stony Mountain.

From 1974 to 1990 Dwight served time in more than a dozen federal prisons across Canada. For Dwight, the federal penitentiary system was easier to manage the spaces due to his institutional experience at the MSR:

And when I went into the penitentiary system, like the worse prison didn't matter, that institution [the MSR], actually, because I went through it was like going through a college and learning, you know, like what you have to do. And when you go to a university which is the penitentiary system, and they treat you like a wild animal. But that's okay because you already went through that when you're in a mental institution.

Dwight discussed in his narrative that he was often placed in solitary confinement with special handling units (SHU) due to his violent behaviour. This passage also reveals how Dwight was not worried about prison life because it was better conditions than his perception of his experiences at the MSR when he was a youth. He then further alleged that he had spent eight years in solitary confinement in British Columbia Penitentiary in New Westminister. Dwight described the conditions of solitary confinement:

And that was a horrible experience where you're locked up in a cage 23 hours a day when you came out of your cell. You had a guard that walked back and forth with a loaded shotgun, and if you got out of hand, they would shoot you. I would come out, and like I was saying, I just didn't care anymore. So, any time a guard came up to my door, they opened the door and I punch them in the face. Get in a fight. They were extremely terrified of me. I did so much time in the hold, you are being fed bread and water basically two weeks on, two weeks off.

Dwight further commented that at least the solitary confinement cells in the British Columbia Penitentiary would dim the lights in the cells for the night, there was a mattress but no blankets or sheets, and no air conditioning. Dwight said he would lay on the floor of the cell with his face pressed to the toilet and flush the toilet to get the toilet cold enough to cool himself off. Dwight's experiences in incarcerating institutions, like the MDC and British Columbia Penitentiary, were largely spent in solitary confinement or maximum-security units.

4.1.2 Institutionalization as a Process:

When I questioned Dwight about the prison abolishment movement, he agreed that prisons were harmful, but described himself as experiencing a state of institutionalization:

Prisons to me, or institutions to me, is my home. So, you can call it institutionalization, whatever, but I'm telling you: institutions are now my home.

Dwight's institutional life began as a child at eleven years old. Dwight entered the federal prison system while he was still a minor and was often considered a dangerous and violent offender that required to be contained in maximum security units. Dwight completed correspondence courses while institutionalized in Ontario, the violent offenders' program while in British Columbia, and eventually transitioned into a minimum-security unit before his release in 1990. Dwight has been living in the community for over three decades despite his negative experiences in institutions.

Dwight adapted his behaviour for the duration of his stay in the federal corrections system, a state that has been called being "institutionalized." He states that:

... prison is actually a place to be. It's comfortable. I know people there; you pretty well get to do whatever you want knowing full well that you will never probably ever get out again. ...So, you call it being institutionalized. I was brought up in institutions from the age of eleven. I think I'll be sixty-eight in a couple of weeks and so my whole life has been in mental institutions, reform schools and provincial jails.

Dwight described that when he was institutionalized at Millhaven Institution in Bath, Ontario, the warden made sure that each inmate had a radio and television in their cell. Prisons, as Dwight discusses them, provide a contained structure with routine and the necessities that of food, shelter, clothing without the daily stresses of community living (for example, paying bills).

Dwight had the same warden years later at Kent Institution in Agassiz, British Columbia and Dwight commented that the prison had a gym. Dwight throughout his life story emphasized the importance of exercise to him. Dwight's description of his feelings on institutionalization may be informative of the significant period of his life that he was incarcerated. For Dwight, institutions

are a place he considers home and without his wife, he states that he would rather be back in prison than out in the community.

4.2. Violence:

Violence has a multitude of definitions and understandings. The Violence Prevention Alliance defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation” (*Violence Prevention Alliance Approach*, n.d.). The Violence Prevention Alliance Approach describes four categories of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, and deprivation or neglect. This section is dedicated to the violence that Dwight experienced, witnessed, instigated, and committed.

4.2.1 Experiences of Violence:

Dwight's first day at the MDC had already been filled with fear and confusion, and then when he made his way to use the bathroom, which was down the hall from the range of West Two, an older patient sexually assaulted him. Dwight described how he called for help, but the nurses did nothing to end the assault. The sexual assault was not limited to patients against patients, Dwight alleges that the nurses also sexually assaulted him. Dwight described that this violence was normalized in West Two and Elm Cottage as many residents experienced the same violence as him every day. Such violence was not limited to sexual abuse, but extended to physical abuse, forced medication and use of tranquilizers, lack of access to choices, such as choice of food, clothing, or bedding, and there was a lack of autonomy.

Dwight's escape attempts were punished with beatings and solitary confinement in West Two. However, Dwight described his final escape attempt as different from the other escape attempts in how he was brought to a different building:

This time was different. Four of them grabbed me. They put a straitjacket on me, they dragged me towards this building. I thought I was going to the West Two, back to that horrible place. This time it was different. We came up to this building that was a red building, you couldn't see inside there. Apparently, I was told before, that's where all the really, really, really bad patients were. And I'm thinking they can't see out. You can't see in. And I thought they were going to put me in there. They took me down a flight of stairs in a basement, and they proceeded to kick the shit out of me again. They opened the door. There's four freezers there. We're in a morgue. I had no idea where we were at. All you could smell is their shit and piss and whatever else is there. They opened the door. That was a tray. They pulled the tray out. They forced me onto the tray, I'm in a straitjacket, I'm fighting, I'm screaming. They pushed the tray in and slammed the door.⁶

He claimed that staff violence regularly occurred against residents, including laughing, kicking, and sexual assaults. Dwight further noted that the staff would only provide one cup of water on the tray of food when he was in solitary confinement at the MSR. This may be viewed as a deprivation of the physiological need for water to keep hydrated to have a person's morale break and conform to the institution's rules. Moreover, Dwight described that he would not receive any more water even if he needed it. Dwight described the use of solitary confinement as a punishment:

And they thought that was that would soften certain people off by doing that to me. That I would not run away anymore. That I wouldn't do this. That I wouldn't do that. It just made me more bitter and made me more vengeful. That made me more violent.

Dwight described solitary confinement as a violent method used to mentally break him down, but Dwight claims that solitary confinement only made him more violent in response.

⁶ This story cannot be confirmed, but Dwight said that this was the morgue for the MDC, as the MDC operates a cemetery for residents. However, this is simply Dwight's perception of the events.

4.2.2 *Witnessing of Violence:*

Dwight claims to have witnessed sexual assaults of residents on West Two and staff using violence against residents. He claims that he witnessed a pair of brothers on West Two commit self-harm by burning cigarettes onto their bodies. Violence regularly occurred at the centre, but Dwight did not mention that he witnessed any deaths before Joyce's death. He retells the events of her death:

So, one Saturday, and I'll never forget this. One Saturday, it was one in the afternoon. It was sort of like it was winter, it was a cloudy day and I'm walking towards the canteen. They had this big water tower there and I heard some screaming. I didn't know where the screaming was coming from. I looked up and I saw her climbing up the ladder on the water tower. I saw this doctor. He was the head doctor of that institution; is I never forget his name because I witnessed something that he actually did. His name was Dr. Lowther, and he was a real creep. ...I saw her climbing up this water tower. I looked up because I heard the screaming and I saw him grab her ankle. So, when he grabbed her by her ankle, she lost her balance and she fell, and she had hit every one of the rings on that water tower right to the ground. When she hit the ground, her head hit the bricks. They had all these bricks holding up the water tower like a stand. And she had hit her head on that, and her head just busted right open. I couldn't have been more than thirty feet away from this. I never saw a dead body before. I went up to her and I was like, she's still alive. But she wasn't. She was staring at me; half of her head was gone. He came down. He pushed me away from her and told me not to say anything. He actually took me to the women's section and put me into the canteen. Had the door locked. And what happened was when they let out, took me back to the cottage. Everything was cleaned up. The only thing that was there was blood and still part of her head. And that just traumatized me in such a way that it turned me into a very cold individual, where I had no feelings toward somebody that hurting or violence. Everything was blank.⁷

This passage reveals several important matters in witnessing a violent death and how it is handled. Dwight witnessed someone he cared for climbing the water tower. He claims that he heard screaming as Dr. Lowther, the Medical Superintendent of the MSR, attempted to get Joyce to come down. Dwight's perception of Dr. Lowther's involvement with Joyce's death may be

⁷ In the *Freedom Tour* (2008), David Weremy and another survivor, Wayne, discuss how persons regularly hung themselves at the institution or jumped off the water tower. David was institutionalized at the MDC for 15 years and Wayne for 30 years. David brings up Joyce's death in the winter, briefly mentioning that someone had gone up after Joyce.

skewed due to his personal feelings of Dr. Lowther as a “creep” and by the abuse that he and many other residents experienced at the MSR. Moreover, Dr. Lowther’s perspective of Joyce’s death is not known as he passed away in 2019 (*Memorable Manitobans: Glen Harrison Lowther (1926-2019)*, n.d.). Dwight had never seen a person die before and instead of the staff discussing what happened with Joyce to Dwight and other witnesses, he was told to remain silent about the incident. Dwight claims that this event caused him to feel traumatized and indifferent to others’ pain.

Dwight was still a minor when he was incarcerated in Saskatchewan Federal Penitentiary shortly after being kicked out of the MSR. Dwight discussed that this federal correctional institute was the worst and most violent prison in which he was incarcerated across Canada.

Dwight explains an episode of when he witnessed violence at Saskatchewan Federal Penitentiary:

That place was a very dangerous prison. Because see, once you’re in line to get your mail, they had holes in the wall, you line up and you go through there and they are in the hallway, they pass you a tray with your mail and coffee on it. And a guy told me, he says, do yourself a favour. And I says, why. He says because there is going to—there’s at least a killing every month in there. Now, I’m a kid, tell me that, says put a tray on your back, a tray in front of you. So, I go through there. I’d say the second week, I was there a guy in front of me got stabbed and he was dead. So, because I already experienced death at the Manitoba School for the Mentally Retarded, Joyce, I was a very cold individual. And then I walked over him, went to my cell, had my meal, and then a month later, a couple months, nine months later, I’m released from the federal penitentiary.

In this passage, Dwight reflects on how witnessing Joyce’s death left him numb to witnessing other people being harmed and killed inside these carceral spaces. Dwight claims that he heard from a fellow inmate that there was a death per month in Saskatchewan Federal Penitentiary and he claimed to have witnessed at least one death. Death was normalized for Dwight while he was still a youth in these institutional spaces.

4.2.3 Instigating Violence:

Dwight began to use violence while in the MSR as self-defence and to deter older, bigger residents from sexually abusing him. This violence included an episode from the cottages at MSR due to the continued sexual abuse Dwight faced:

And I went through that once again. And I decided: you know what? I have to start defending myself because if they don't, this continue. This will continue the entire time I was there. So, there's one gentleman that was a really, a very aggressive person. And every time I saw him, I was afraid. So, what I did is I took a pair of wool socks. I doubled the wool socks up. They had a pool table there. So, I put two balls in the sock, and I went, and I hit this gentleman in the back because I was shot, and he was tall. He turned around and I hit again and this time I got him in the head. When he went down, I hit him again. So now this guy is out, there's blood all over the place. There's blood all over me. I got the shit kicked out of me. They dragged me back to that ward that they released me from.

Dwight was twelve years old at the time of this incident. This incident led to Dwight being placed in the solitary confinement room in West Two. This passage discerns that Dwight turned to violence to defend himself from sexual and physical abuse because the staff at the MSR was not protecting him from other residents. Dwight called the MSR staff guards and described them as part of the problem with the institution:

Haven't forgotten any of the names of the people that work there, including the doctor that ran that facility. And he knew what was going and he didn't care. He did not care. These nurses, I referred to them as guards, did whatever they wanted.

The reaction of the staff, when a resident ran away or was disruptive, was to beat them and place them in solitary confinement, which Dwight experienced several times. After Joyce's death, a social worker placed Dwight with a Portage la Prairie family. He made several friends, which he claimed they became a small gang and robbed a convenience store in 1969. Dwight was eventually sent back by a judge to the MSR which led to Dwight's description of his final plan to get out of the MSR, which was to injure something and ensure that the staff thought of him as a threat. He described that he was permanently kicked out of the MSR after three years for

stabbing a resident. Dwight described that he only wanted out of the institution and did not wish to kill the person. Dwight described this event and his reasons:

So, it's hard for me to really tell you this, but I did not want to stay there. And the only way I could get out of there is to hurt somebody. And if I did that, I knew that they wouldn't take me back. So, I stabbed one of the patients, stabbed them about three times. He didn't die. I didn't want him to die. I ran away.

Dwight explained that the use of violence against another resident at the MSR was his way to get out permanently. This passage discusses how Dwight interprets his memory of this incident as being a necessary action take to ensure he was not wanted amongst the resident population of the MSR.

While Dwight was serving a sentence for a Break and Enter (B&E) in Winnipeg in 1970 or 1971 at Winnipeg Remand Centre, Joe became a father figure to Dwight and informed him that violence was normal in prison:

He was like a father to me. And he told me, look this is what you get to do. You're in prison now. But if anyone comes after you. You got to kill him. You got to do this. You got to do that. So, I had that in my mind all the time because he said it was alright.⁸

This impression of violence in prisons Joe provided Dwight about institutional spaces was interpreted by Dwight as being acceptable and a necessary skill to live in these spaces. When Dwight was eventually released to the community, he remained in the community for three months until he and his co-accused were caught for murder. Dwight explains the use of violence and the murder:

I got out on mandatory parole. Mandatory supervision, that's what it is called. I was only out for three months then because of what I went through when I was in at the Manitoba School for the Mentally Retarded. And you know what, I had all this rage built up in me. I had this rage. It was, I couldn't explain it, that when I walked down the street, I wanted to kill everybody because it's like I went through all this and, you know, I'm just a kid. So, at the age of 18, I killed one person. I got caught for it. It was a [unintelligible]

⁸ Joe is an alias.

murder that it was like unprovoked. And it was the rage that went through me in what I had experienced and when I did that, the relief, it was like I felt so relieved but yet I committed a horrible and I got caught. And I was sentenced to life for 20 years.

Dwight made no mention of his co-accused in his description of the murder. However, Dwight focused on himself in his story on how he felt relief in killing someone as an emotional management for his experiences at the MSR. Dwight had not been taught any other method to deal with his anger except to use violence. This use of violence is in reaction to his negative feelings.

While Dwight was serving his sentence at the British Columbia Penitentiary, once he and two inmate friends were released from solitary confinement in 1975, he participated in a hostage taking of 15 people that resulted in one death. Dwight states the following about that incident:

So, we took fifteen people hostages, threatening to kill them, if our demands were not met. And the moral of the story on that one was the guards rushed the area, shot, and killed one of the hostages. And I got cracked on my head and my head split open where it took several [unintelligible] and I had a bullet hole in my shoulder. Any was shot in the face twice, once in the stomach. A female hostage was shot in the neck, in the chest because I was aware, I could see what was happening. I passed out. Wake up two days later. I'm not in the hospital. I'm in the cell at New Westminster Police Station. So, after that incident, I was involved in another one because they put me back in SHU.⁹

For Dwight, violence was a response tool to try and gain something, whether material (for example, his first conviction was for B&E as he claimed he stole clothes and money) or reputation as Dwight discussed:

...nobody's going to ever forget my name. Or ever want me back there, I would not be surprised if they say, yes, we remember him. That's how bad I was. I'm not glorifying it or anything, but I was really hurt. I had no family support where people can visit me or tell me that they cared or loved me or anything like that. I was just bounced from one institution to another, to another, to another, and then finally released on full parole in 1990.

⁹ Montgomery (2004) also discussed this hostage taking at the British Columbia Penitentiary and focused on how Dwight had the blood of another person's life on his hand. However, Montgomery does discuss that it was a guard who had shot the hostage in the crossfire.

In this passage, it is discerned that Dwight viewed his violence as a method of gaining a reputation as a violent person. Moreover, he associated his use of violence stemming from his traumas.

Dwight claimed that it was when he had one warden at Millhaven treated Dwight fairly in his perspective. Dwight described the warden:

He was a really good warden. He'd come down. He made sure that when he was there, that everybody had a radio and television in their cell. That was the first thing. Second thing, every inmate that was on the range was entitled to two hours exercise in the yard, they built the yard where they can mingle.

Dwight claimed he decided to behave more for the guards and promised himself to not commit any crimes while that warden remained the warden of the Millhaven or Kent Institution, as the same warden worked at the two institutions while Dwight was incarcerated. Dwight did not state which years he was incarcerated at Millhaven and Kent, however, Dwight was likely in his twenties or into his early thirties by this time in his narrative. Between the relationship between Dwight and the warden being a positive one, where Dwight felt respected, and Dwight growing as an adult may have resulted in the opportunities that eventually allowed Dwight to enter a Violent Offenders program several years before his release.

4.3. Relationships:

There were several types of relationships that Dwight discussed in his narrative, including family relationships, friendships, and loved ones.

4.3.1 Broken Relationships:

Dwight was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta in 1955 and was adopted by a Black family in Winnipeg in 1957 through the Manitoba Children's Aid Society. He does not know how he got

from Alberta to Manitoba, but he mentioned that they were simply looking for a Black family to adopt him since he is Black. Dwight's relationship with his family was complicated as he discussed his them several times with a focus on his mother as being responsible for institutionalizing him at the MSR.¹⁰ He discussed an incident where he felt that he was treated differently because he was an adoptive child:

But my foster parents, my foster father, worked on the railroad, so he was never there. I think maybe one week every two weeks he'd go up. He'd be there for a week, maybe two weeks. And he'd be gone again. Whereas my foster mother, on the other hand, was totally abusive. She would slap me and spank me every opportunity that she got me. And basically, I knew that the Children's Aid Society was giving her money for clothing and that. I knew that was happening at a very early age. I was like eight years old, and I understood that every month a social worker would come over and give my mother a brown envelope. So, I knew that there was money in there, but yet with that money, I never got clothes. I got clothes from my sister, passed me down from my sister.

Dwight never discussed if his siblings were adopted or if they were his adoptive parents' natural children. Dwight discussed several issues in this passage that affected his relationship with his family. The first is that his mother was physically abusive, and his father was absent due to work. The second issue for Dwight was that the Children's Aid Society was involved, providing money for his care. However, Dwight was given his older sister's clothing to wear rather than boys' clothes. He described:

I never got clothes. I got clothes from my sister, passed me down from my sister. So, now I got to go to school dressed up in blue jeans and women's boots and a woman's jacket wear. That created a lot of problems in school because people would laugh. I would get in fist fights. So, the schoolteachers did not know how to deal with me at that time. I was classified as being mentally retarded, put on tranquilizers, sat in a schoolroom, in a little cubbyhole by myself. I was always asleep. I do remember that. And they basically expelled me from school. And when I got home, I was locked up at home in my house, was unable to leave the house. The only way I got out of the house was by running away.

¹⁰ Dwight also referred to his adoptive parents from Winnipeg as his foster parents. Dwight was also sent to live with a foster family for a short period while in Portage la Prairie.

For Dwight, the issue of wearing feminine clothing ties to the school problems, which led to use of tranquilizers, and, finally, developed into problems at home. It was several factors that worked in a cycle that affected Dwight's behaviour at home and school. This passage draws attention to how Dwight currently perceives the masculinity of clothing, which may have been the same when he was a child if he was teased about the clothing. Tensions with his mother only escalated as Dwight blamed her for placing him in the MSR and the family had mostly cut ties with Dwight for close to two decades. Dwight's reunion with his mother in the late 1980s was the result of his girlfriend. The following passage reveals the broken relationship between Dwight and his mother:

I was in the private family visit with my foster mother, and all I do is cry through the entire visit. If my wife wasn't there, I would have ended up killing her because that's how much anger I had inside me. My foster father, I didn't mind him because he's never around. So, he never committed any abuse. When I went to the boys' home, he came out to visit me all the time with my uncle. My mother never did. I never ever saw my foster sister again. But he came with every opportunity to come to see me. Visit me at the boys' home, when I was in Headingly jail, in Stony Mountain, every opportunity he got, he visited me. Right until I got out on the street. He helped me pack my stuff. He helped, with my brother, drive me to the halfway house. And I think I went back to visit them a couple times. Then he passed away at the age of sixty-four. So, I guess, I know, I did a lot of stress on that family. He died of a heart attack. My mother died when she was seventy-two. My sister died at age 32 of cancer. And the only thing I had left in Winnipeg were my nieces that are there still today. I never went back to visit them. I think the last time I saw them was at my mother's funeral. I helped move some of her belongings to my niece's. That was it.

Dwight's anger and blame is directed solely at his mother for what he had experienced as a child at the MSR. His relationship was more positive with his father as he visited him several times in institutions in Manitoba. However, Dwight blames himself for causing stress for his father.

Moreover, Dwight discussed his relationship with his family:

So, I mean even my brother and his kids, I didn't want to be around them. And the reason why I didn't want to be around them and they're all adults now is because I didn't want them know what I went through. I know that my brother, when I first got out, he was having a fight with his wife because she didn't want me around him. She didn't want me

in her house. And my nephew [told me]. I think he was about, maybe three. He came up to me and told me, Dad said if you ever went back to jail he'd never visit you again. And when he said that and I look at my, their side. No. I can't be around them. And I stayed away from them purposely. I'm still talking to my brother once a month, my sister once a month, they call me or I call them, but I don't want to get involved with the family because I don't want their family knowing exactly what I went through. Because, you know, kids are kids and they'll ask. And then when you start to cry, [they'll stare] while you're crying.

Dwight's relationship with his family was complicated. As Dwight discussed the relationship, his time in prison and his crime appears to be the issue for family interactions. Dwight did not explain if the kids were his nieces or nephews or if this extends to the next generation too.

Dwight claimed that it was his decision to lessen the interactions with his family, but from the passage it is possible that his sister-in-law also influenced the lessened family interactions between him and his brother. Dwight further discussed how he was made as an example by his sister to discourage her son's bad behaviour:

[My] nephew was here a couple of days ago and he was expelled from school at the age of five. He didn't fight [but] smashed windows. He do all that stuff. But now he's 40 years old. He's got five kids. He owns his own business. He's a totally different human being. Totally different. And his mother, he visited me a couple of times when I was inside. His mother would always say to him, when they were leaving, if you don't smarten up, you're going to be on the inside with your uncle, you don't want to be there. And he never did. Never again. But I'm glad that he's been successful. And I feel that if I hadn't had a label put on me, I probably wouldn't be here. I probably would have been somewhere else in the community, maybe a successful businessman or something.

Dwight claimed in this passage that his sister was using him as an example for her son to stop misbehaving. That misbehaviour would lead to a life in jail. Dwight discussed that he was glad his nephew has led a successful life, but then draws a comparison to how they were treated as children. Rather than being placed at the MDC, Dwight questioned if he had remained in the community where he would be now. Dwight discussed his overall view of his family as a source of abandonment:

People got rid of me when I was adopted. My adoptive parents got rid of me because they couldn't handle me. But nobody sat down asked, hey, look it, what are you going through? What happens at your home? You know, I mean, nobody ever did that. They were just in a hurry to open up a door and lock me up in a room. So, you know, like being to seventeen institutions in your lifetime, I should not be out here.

Dwight does not address his birth parents as his parents, they are simply people who gave him up. The family that adopted him were the ones he looked to as family until his adoptive parents got rid of him as well, sending him to the MSR. Although Dwight discussed that there were interactions between him and the family over the years, his narrative focused on the tensions that developed within the family since his childhood.

4.3.2 Relationships in the Community:

Dwight has indicated that his current wife was his girlfriend during the 1980s while he was incarcerated in prison. However, she had given up on him coming out and ended their relationship prior to his judicial review. Dwight described the end of their relationship:

I transferred to Warkworth. We got our private family visits one day and she just said, I can't do this anymore because she didn't see me getting out. And I said to her, I totally understand. And when I was released to the halfway house, I wanted to go back in. And the only reason I didn't go back in is I felt that maybe someday I'd run into her, and we'd be able to continue our lives together. And that happened. Exactly. That being on the street for several years, one day I did run into her. She happened to be divorced and she was living on her own with her daughter. I was, hey, I'm available. I was so happy that that happened. If that hadn't happened, yeah, no I would have been back in prison because I didn't really care. My plans were, if that never happened, to go back to prison and get transferred to British Columbia, because that's where all the best prisons in Canada are.

Dwight discussed how they rekindled their relationship and that Dwight had hoped this would happen as he transitioned into the community. Furthermore, his incarceration had affected their relationship the first time as visitations placed strains on relationships because they must be planned through Corrections Officers and the corrections system. Dwight indicated that he and his wife have been together for the past 17 years. Dwight described his relationship with his wife

and stepdaughter as being positive. Since he was not incarcerated, Dwight described how he could be there for his family. He described that his wife is someone he appreciates as she loves and supports him:

I'm with somebody who loves me, even though we do argue from time to time. I appreciate her. If she were to die tomorrow, I don't know what I would do. But right now, I'm with her and she's giving me a lot of hope. And she supports me for whatever I do. And I appreciate that.

Dwight indicated that his relationship with his wife brings him hope and the ability to live in the community. Furthermore, he claims that his relationship with his stepdaughter is healthy, as they regularly chat. Dwight discussed how his wife introduced him to her family and that he has more contact with her family, visiting and spending more time with them than his family.

Dwight has built relationships while living in the community, but they do not know his past as he does not tell anyone. This includes the friends he has made in the community, who he describes as "straight Johns" and he uses this term to indicate persons that have never committed any crimes or experienced prison. He further comments about when he walks in the park for exercise:

And if I'm walking outside and I see somebody exercising, I like to get involved telling them what they're doing right or what they're doing wrong, showing them. A lot of these guys in the neighbourhood, just love seeing me in the park. They all come out and we all exercise together. And when I exercise with them, I tell them you don't need a gym. Come. Come to the park. I'm here most of the time. Exercise with me. But anyway, I need to do something like that in order to keep myself occupied. Because then if I'm not occupied in doing anything, then all these thoughts of prison and mental institutions, they'll come back.

Dwight tries to keep himself occupied through his routine of going to the park and by chatting with some people who go to the park for exercise. He also maintains contact with people he used to work with since his retirement. These are all persons he knows in the community, but they do

not know the entirety of Dwight's past experiences in institutions nor the crime he served time for. Dwight described several times that he does not share experiences of institutional life:

I don't tell her [his stepdaughter] nothing. I don't tell anybody anything.

Another description:

And everyday that I wake up and I see the things I've done, I don't want to hear about it. I don't even want to see it. And if you mentioned it to me, you know, like I don't want my brother to really hear what I went through. I don't want my sister to hear what I went through or my nephews and nieces. I don't see them. So, they don't ask questions that I'm an uncle they never seen. So, they have no questions. And I've purposely done in that way so I wouldn't have to answer to anybody in regards to my experiences, because if I did, they probably would become frightened of me, scared, and I know I would. If I sat in a park and I started speaking with a guy and he said all this stuff. I'd be like, hey I got to get out of here and find the quickest way out of this park.

This description focuses on how experiences of institutionalization affect how the former institutionalized person may create fears or rationalises that persons who do not share the same experiences could not understand their experiences. Rather, Dwight's institutional harms and experiences make himself perceive that if he were to discuss his life story with family, friends, or people in the community they would fear him. This description may speak to other persons who have experienced a significant period in institutions and how they view that non-institutionalized persons as being unable to understand the person with traumas.

4.3.3 Friends in Prison:

Dwight expressed several times that prisons could be his home. Dwight further described that prisons were a place where he had met people:

You meet people, they become best friends. Some of those people are still there. They're in their seventies. You miss them. I'm out here.

Dwight was in prison for a significant period of his life, he was institutionalized from the age of eleven into his early 30s and he had lost youth and early adult life to institutions. However, the

friendships he made in prison remain important to Dwight. This included the friendship and mentorship that Joe provided Dwight while on remand in 1970. Joe informed Dwight of the rules of prison life that Dwight understood and used for the next twenty years. Dwight described how one rule was to kill a person if they came after him. Another of Dwight's friends, Andy, led him to using further violence while they were incarcerated at British Columbia Penitentiary and they took fifteen hostages with a third person. Dwight indicated through several stories that he became best friends with his fellow inmates. This built trust between him and his friends, and this trust extended to participating in hostage takings and acts of violence. Dwight claimed he had spent several years in solitary confinement and within SHU, but these friendships were important for having connections with other persons in an institution that were experiencing the same things as him.

For Dwight, these friendships remain important as he lives in the community because without these friendships, his institutional experiences would have been vastly different. These friendships may have begun as a means of survival, but Dwight describes how he misses these people. He said the following about a man he served time with:

I read in the paper a guy that I did time with robbed a bank. Nobody robs banks anymore, robbed a bank, got caught, and they classified him as being a career criminal and gave him ten years. No, they gave him a life sentence. With a chance of parole for ten years. But they're recommending not to be given a parole, but this guy's like 71 years old now. He doesn't want out, he committed that robbery, knowing full well that nobody commits bank robberies anymore. So, you look, and everything is digital, everybody has cameras all over the place. So, if you commit a crime nowadays, they're going to have your picture on the news within 5 minutes. And that's what happened with him. That's how he got caught.

Dwight described this person that he had served time with sympathetically. Though Dwight had no contact with the unnamed friend since living in the community. He indicated that he

understood the motives that the man had for committing the robbery, knowing it would get him sent back into prison.

4.4. Systemic Violence and Labelling:

“Systemic violence” refers to the social structures and constructions that sustains and reproduces the harms as Dwight understood his experiences in institutions. These two themes of social structures and constructions tie together as the labelling process that cause harms.

4.4.1 Systemic Violence:

Dwight indicated several times in his narrative that institutions, such as the MSR or corrections, treated him differently because he is Black. Dwight briefly describes his memory of people at the MSR:

At that time when I was in there, there weren't that many Native people in there, there was only maybe three plus Joyce. And he [David Weremy] was in there for all of his life. Most of the population of the MSR was Caucasian with a small population that was Black or Indigenous. Dwight did not indicate if there were any other Black residents at the centre. Moreover, Dwight perceived that there were no Black or Indigenous persons working at the centre during his time at the MSR:

These nurses, I referred to them as guards, did whatever they wanted. There was no black guards there. There was no Aboriginal people there except for the patients that were serving time there. And I say serving time because the ones I ran into, they were like me. There was nothing wrong with them. It was just that maybe society had given up on them, placed them in that place, and they went through the same thing that I did.

Dwight discussed the time he was removed from the MSR it was due to a male social worker he described as Asian. This was the only time he referred to a worker at the MSR as person of colour in the otherwise white staffed centre. Dwight claimed that this social worker argued that he should not have been in the institution and temporarily placed him with a foster family in

Portage la Prairie. From Dwight's perspective, his narrative suggests that this social worker, as a person of colour, felt sympathy and perhaps believed that Dwight was wrongfully institutionalized because of his race.

During Dwight's brief stay in the community, he made several friends from school and they formed a "little gang." This small gang then decided to rob a convenience store in 1969.

Dwight described the incident that sent him back to the MSR:

Their [the friends] passion for, and basically, we formed sort of like a little gang, there was about seven of us. We went to a corner store, and we robbed it. And, of course, I'm the only Black kid in that area, so it wasn't too hard to track me down. They got me and they took me to Winnipeg, to Vaughn Street detention centre. I go there and that was an adult prison. They had the boys on the ground floor. At that time, they had the juveniles on the ground floor on the opposite side of the institution. They had male inmates serving time there, they'd bring our food and all that stuff. So, they put me there and I escaped with a couple other guys, and we got away. And about two weeks later, we got caught and I was taken to court because I committed that robbery in Portage la Prairie. They took me back to Portage, and when they took me back to Portage, I'm there, I go to the court with the other two guys that give me—that basically helped in the robbery. At that time, the boys' home, Portage Home for Boys, that's what it was called. The age was – after that, they can only keep you until you turn twenty-one. And they brought it down to eighteen. But when I was there, it was twenty-one.

So basically, I go to court, the other two kids that were with me on that robbery were given a year apiece. They, when I went up and they, of course, they said all together. And the judge sentenced me to an indefinite stay in the Portage Home for Boys until I turned twenty-one. And we committed the same crime. But yet these guys got a year, and I got an indefinite stay in the reform school. But that social worker that worked at the North Home, at Elm Cottage, had me sent back.

This passage suggests that Dwight witnessed and experience the differences in how he was provided an indefinite stay at the Portage Home for Boys, while the other two boys, who were perceived to be Caucasian, were given a one-year sentence. Dwight describes that the same social worker who had Dwight placed in the community, asked the judge that Dwight be placed back at the MSR permanently since the Portage Home for Boys had an age limit of 21 at the

time. Dwight did not discuss if he thought the judge may have viewed his records at the MSR in full.

Dwight further discussed how racial discrimination is part of incarcerating persons of colour...

If they're Black or Aboriginal, they end up in prison. They are the bottom of the totem pole, you're the lowest on the totem pole. And the only way that you feel comfortable is the friends that you make in there. They are the people that made you feel comfortable. They were your friends; they were your family.

...and how persons of colour are treated differently was also highlighted:

...when you're in that environment, they don't care at all. If you're a minority, guess what? You have a harder go at it comes to transferring to other institutions. Or to seeing getting approval for private family visits, anything like that.

This discrimination revolved around race. Inquiries for transferring or requesting family visits or other needs becomes complicated by Corrections Officers. As Dwight claims, the Corrections Officers do not care for the minority population's needs. Moreover, Dwight discussed how issues in prisons placed the focus on the minority population as being at fault for issues that affect the operations of the institution. Dwight's discussion on the hostage taking at British Columbia

Penitentiary focused on racism and blame:

You go onto the Internet, type my name, you'll be surprised 50, 48 years later, they still talk about me and still like, why don't they talk about the white guy that was involved with us?¹¹ All they talk about is Andy and myself. That was the guy. Guy that was the third person, he's white. I don't even know what happened to him. They don't speak about him, but yet they still speak about Andy and myself. Reason why? Andy, he's Aboriginal. I'm Black. That's where the discrimination is. And it's always been there throughout the system. Even today, you know, if you're of colour of skin, you're in prison, you have a rough go. The only people who treat you with respect are the people you're doing time with.

This passage reveals Dwight's understanding of how the focus has been placed on him and Andy over the years due to the colour of their skin. Dwight is a visible minority and Andy is

¹¹ Clair Wilson, the third man responsible for the hostage-taking, was discussed briefly in Montgomery's (2004) book, but the focus and blame for the death of the hostage was placed on Dwight, even though it had been the guards that shot and killed the hostage, Mary Steinhauser, as she was caught in the middle of the guards' gunfire.

Indigenous. However, Dwight claimed that the third person was white, and he managed to be mentioned less in the context of the hostage taking due to Dwight's perception of skin colour affecting the focus of newspapers and institutional workers. The erasure of the third person, the white person, seemed to be an issue for Dwight because it removed the distribution of blame across the three men for the hostage taking.

4.4.2 Labelling

Dwight discusses several labels in his narrative that were either limiting or freeing. Many of the labels fell in the "limiting" category. This includes the label of "Black" which Dwight often discussed his race as a Black male created barriers for him in institutions. Dwight never discusses the label of "persons with an intellectual disability," as this label did not exist when he was misdiagnosed as a child. Dwight reiterates several times throughout his narrative of his experiences of being labelled as "mentally retarded" and what it meant for him based on his life experiences of having to deal with label until it was removed after a judicial review:

Oh, he's mentally retarded. Then it's like you got the plague. Everybody wants to stay away from it. Nobody wants to help you because you're mentally retarded. They don't care about you because you're mentally retarded. And that word is not accepted in his house.

The label of "mentally retarded" was also a limiting label in prisons as Dwight discussed that it would have Corrections Officers weary of him. He perceived that the Correctional Officers as he entered British Columbia Penitentiary believed he was a threat based on his label:

I think I was nineteen. And they wanted to know why I was put in a mental hospital, and they wanted to know, I guess if I was going to be a threat because I was classified as being mentally retarded. And when they said that there was a broom handle, there was broom actually in the interview room. And I took that broom, and I broke it over the psychiatrist's head and chased the social worker around the interview room, hitting, hitting him with the stick. And of course, I got teargassed and dragged to the hole. But

that would give you an idea of that label, because that label being placed upon you when you're not, when you've been misdiagnosed, it creates a lot of horror. And, you know, like it's really hard to explain because everybody looks at you as maybe you're retarded or, you know, stabbed other inmates, but certain inmates didn't give a shit. And that would be the people I hung around with. And I just didn't want that word used when I was in prison around me...

Dwight claimed that the use of the label of "mentally retarded" triggered deep emotions of anger and rage. It is a label that has a lot of stigmas attached to it and has resulted in Dwight getting into physical fights or attacking a person over the years. An example is in the passage above, Dwight described his physical attack on two persons for using the label. Moreover, this passage is set only five years after he was expelled from the MSR, Corrections Officers and personnel asked why he was placed in the MSR, but not what had happened. Dwight claims that no one has ever asked him why he was labelled as a child or what he was going through, including when he was a child, and no one asked him what was happening at home or at school.

Dwight used the descriptor of "animal" several times in the narrative. He stated that the institutions turned him into an animal or treated him like an animal. Dwight commented that the MSR turned him into an animal because nobody cared for him there. He indicated in his narrative that British Columbia Penitentiary had done the same:

From there [Stony Mountain], I ended up in the British Columbia Penitentiary and treated like an animal. Locked up in solitary confinement. Going through the same thing is what I did, what I went through at the MSR. So, I was used to it. I was immune to it because I already went through that when I was a kid being locked up in a cell 23 hours a day, 24 hours a day, basically, with very little food, lights burning 24 hours a day.

This description of being treated like an animal is how Dwight perceives being locked in solitary confinement, something he allegedly experienced for eight years while in British Columbia Penitentiary. Dwight further associated the label of being turned into an animal of creating "a lot of bad things." Dwight associated the bad things, such as the hostage takings he participated in at British Columbia Penitentiary.

A third label was “murderer,” which Dwight discussed as something he accepts.

Furthermore, Dwight claimed he acknowledges the murder he participated in and served his time for. He described it as being a label that is not as problematic as “mentally retarded”:

Yeah, you know what, I committed a crime, and I accepted the punishment. You can call me a murderer all you want; it doesn't bother me. But just don't call me mentally retarded because if you call me that, as far as I'm concerned, that's a lot more serious than being a murderer. Again, if you want to get in this fight or something, just call me that and see what happens. Cause that, even though that label has been taken off me. I still feel it. I feel like—I still think of my foster mother that put me in that place and turned her back on me.

Dwight further discussed the use of the label “murderer” used by people that he assumed were Parole Officers, as he claims nobody else in the community would recognize him due to how much he has changed over the decades. This includes changes to his behaviour, mentality, and physical appearance. Dwight claimed that the shouting of “murderer” at him came from Parole Officers. He described how Parole Officers degrade him and other parolees as a form of public shaming:

But yeah, I've come out of a hospital and having people drive by, roll down the window, call me a murderer. You know what I mean, I've had that. I know that came from the parole people because that's how they degrade their people, that inmates out on parole that have been successful. And they feel that he committed a horrible crime, and he killed one of their peace officers, that yeah they're entitled to do that, but they're not. That really horrified me.

In this passage, Dwight is not referring to his own experiences, but someone that killed a peace officer. This public shaming is abrupt as Dwight described that he had been leaving the hospital after an operation. It also appears from the passage that it caused momentary fear as it was in a very public space.

Dwight comments that the removal of the label, “mentally retarded” provided him a lot of relief and attributes the removal of that label as the reason he was released from prison and won his judicial review:

And when I won my judicial review, when the psychiatrist and the clinical psychologist said that I was misdiagnosed as being mentally retarded, it just took a lot of relief off my shoulders. Now, I'm not classified as being mentally retarded. Now, I'm normal... The thing that got me out was that label and having that label lifted off me.

"Normal" is a label that Dwight views as being important for living in the community and for communicating with people. In opposition of "normal," Dwight indicated in his narrative that persons with the label of "mentally retarded," based on his definition and understandings were incapable of the things that he had done, such as murder and hostage takings. As he explains:

And for a gentleman that was classified as being mentally retarded, a lot of my actions and the things I did when I was inside reverses that because you would automatically look and say, well, this is impossible. This guy is mentally retarded, he's not capable of doing this.

Dwight's construction of "normal" was based on intelligence and how he perceived himself amongst his friends in prison. He claimed that his friends in prison did not care about the label because they were like him:

The prison system is totally different. Because when you're in a prison system, you're dealing with people of the same intellect as yourself. So, you're dealing with people that—so they commit a crime, they're there, but they're intelligent people. You can communicate with them. Whereas if you're in that MDC, they're not intelligent people there. The only people that you could deal with were the staff members themselves, which created a lot of sexual abuse and all kinds of problems where you wouldn't want to be around them. You may find one or two people that have the same intellect as yourself, but they've been there for a long time. And that pretty well, that pretty well was their home.

Dwight's labels of "normal" and "mentally retarded" were shaped by his experiences inside institutions and how he identified different persons within the context of the two labels. Dwight's claimed status of being institutionalized and his friendships in prisons made the label of "normal" more desirable to have. There is a distinction between the categories of the two labels. "Normal" is freeing for Dwight and providing him perceived opportunities, including his release from prison and "mentally retarded" was limiting and reminded him of his time at the MSR. Moreover, this passage reveals how the label of "mentally retarded" is a stigmatizing label and

marker that makes the labelled person the lowest ranked person possible. It is an isolating label that significantly impacts not only how the individual views themselves, but also how the individual sees themselves in comparison to others who are labelled the same or differently. This passage also indicates how the individual understands how people perceive them.

4.5. Life in the Community:

Dwight has experienced difficulties in adjusting to community living. This section explores Dwight's transitional period of post-institutionalization that began in 1990.

4.5.1 Transition into the Community:

Dwight experienced uncertainties during his release into the community. He described how it felt like torture:

And now I went to judicial review. I'm entitled to be released to the street and it totally depended on the parole board. After serving 18 years, they release me on full parole. I didn't want to go. I had nobody. I didn't know how to dress. I got no job. I made no friends, no family. How am I going to survive? I didn't want to go. That was like torture. It was like—like when they took me up their front gate, I wanted to turn back and saw I was just kidding, I didn't want out, put me back inside. But something deep down inside me told me that I could make it.

This passage demonstrates Dwight's complicated feelings of release. He spoke of how he lacked friends and family in the community. Although, his father and brother did help him in the beginning to settle in the halfway house, they lived in a different province and could not stay to support him on a regular basis.

Dwight described the first several years of his life in the community. He discussed how he resided in a halfway house and relied on fast food restaurants for cheap meals since he did not know how to cook. Dwight provides insight into how he struggled with adjusting to community life:

And the thing is that when I first got out, I didn't know how to dress. I didn't know how to speak to people. I would always challenge people, like, you know, they would stare at me, and I would think that I'm back in prison and I have to fight these people. I was never in a situation where I was on the subway and there's, you know, 60, 70, maybe a hundred people in that car with me. Now, I'm claustrophobic and I just couldn't handle that. ...I didn't know how to cook because I never cooked my own foods. I had to go to fast food places to buy food to eat. Um, I think the first time I was at a movie theater, which blew me away because I was never, ever in a movie theater before. I never was at a pub before socializing with people, never experienced that before, and never experienced somebody else that loved me, that wanted to stay by me knowing my history, which didn't matter. They loved me.

Dwight experienced both the uncertainties of success in the community and new things he never got to explore as a child and emerging adult, such as going to a movie theater or going to a pub.

These were opportunities to socialize with other people that Dwight was never offered in his younger years. Dwight indicated that he found these as exciting opportunities, including going to an aquarium or baseball game, things that people who have never experienced institutionalization may not understand as they may have the opportunities and choices to attend such events and places. Moreover, this passage indicates Dwight's struggle to adjust in the community after living in institutions for 23 years. This included if people looked at him and he interpreted these glances as ones of persons challenging him and that he had to fight against them. These interpretations of glances were institutional behaviour that Dwight was socialized to while in prison to interpret as friendly or foe. Dwight also indicated in this passage that he now suffers from claustrophobia, and this is linked to his years of solitary confinement and living in cells.

I asked Dwight if he faced any discrimination while trying to find employment as he transitioned to life in the community. He claims he has faced discrimination and reiterated that he did not know how to dress, but that he did find a job:

Yes, I did. But the thing was that I'll tell you how that came about. I was walking down the street and I walked by this men's clothing store, and I looked at the window,

[Retailer], and they had a sign on the window looking for employees or somebody that wanted to work there. So, I walked in there. I didn't know how to dress. I had these khaki pants on, and the shirt looked like it was falling off my back. I walked up to the guy there, Asian people. I walked up to them, and I said, I would like to work here. Now, I looked at the other guy and they looked back at me, and they said, okay, this is what you're going to do. You're going to sweep the floor. You're going to receive the truck with the clothes.... And you don't know how to dress, you take whatever you want in the store and that's on the house in clothing, sport coats and pants, shoes, they supplied that. And that was my start right there.

Dwight indicated that this was a break, he was able to move out of the halfway house because of this job. This job led to him having employment in men's clothing retail for over two decades until his retirement just a couple of years ago. There is a distinction in this passage regarding the clothes Dwight was wearing as he walked into the store and the clothes in which he worked in. He did not share if he had to fill out a resume or pass a criminal record check. However, Dwight indicated that working in a men's clothing store provided him financial stability:

Always make my budget. I actually did so well. All my furniture, everything, was all money from all my bonuses, not out of my pocket, bonuses, the car, and all this from bonus. That gives you an idea how much money I was making.

Dwight further discussed this financial stability at length. Moreover, Dwight indicated that due to this stability he can provide for his wife:

She's family. She's helped me. She supported me. I'm out here. I've watched on TV that the husband is the provider. I provide everything. I paid for the rent. I paid for the food. I paid for everything for walking down the street. If she wants something, a pair of boots or coat. I always take care of her before I take care of myself.

This passage indicates that Dwight placed a gendered role on himself as a provider, which his employment provided the freedom to do so. He stated that he saw through media that the husband is the provider, and he ensures that his wife is provided for.

4.5.2 Precarity of Parole:

I asked Dwight if a Parole Officer ever suggested therapy or provide supports in the community for the trauma he experienced as child, he said that he did not trust people. He answered the question with the following comments on his early transition to community life:

No, you know what? I did. I was stupid. I was going through, I don't know. It just came up. I wanted to kill myself or something. And I was, I couldn't, I was so depressed, and I had a review with my parole officer, and I had to go down to the main office because of the epilepsy that I suffered and the medication, they state that it does cause depression and suicidal thoughts. So, when I told her, it was a female officer, and when I explained it to her, she left the room for a second and then all of a sudden three OPP come in, put the cuffs, and drag me to the Don Jail when it was still open. I was there for two weeks. Her supervisor came down to see me and she spoke with me for about an hour, and she says that I wanted to send you back [to prison], but I was looking at your file and that you've made so much progress since you've been out. She said, I'm going to let you out again. You're going to leave here, you're going to be on the street, she says. But if you say anything like that again, I have to put you back in. So, I says, this is totally understandable. And I never said anything because that's what these parole officers do, if you mentioned something that is out of the ordinary or that you shouldn't be doing. They revoke your parole, send you back.

Dwight further claimed that Parole Officers did not want people on parole committing suicide in the community because they are viewed as property, and deaths in the community affected their reputation. He further discussed that he is no longer suicidal, however he added that he would not trust people, such as mental health supports, due to his experiences at the MSR and this experience in the passage above. For disclosing his struggles and his feelings to his Parole Officer, he was cuffed and sent to jail for two weeks.

Dwight further discussed in his narrative that he is on parole until he dies. Dwight stated that only in death would he have the freedom he has never had. As Dwight remains on parole for life, he indicates in his narrative that he could be removed from the community at any time:

I'm on life parole. Anything I do, anything new that they can come up to my door right now and arrest me and take me back to prison. They don't even have to have an excuse. But they could do that. So, every day when I wake up, you know, like I know they

wouldn't do that. It would have to be something serious. But I do wake up knowing that if my wife turned around and said, hey, look at me he hit me or he did this or he did that. Oh, yeah, they would send the cops down here and arrest me and take me back to prison. I'd never got out again. That's basically the bottom line. So, yes, I'm not free and I'll never be free. And the reason behind that was because of that center I went to at the age of eleven. It institutionalized me.

In this passage, Dwight discusses that he knows his life in the community can only be revoked through serious charges, but it is the feeling of precarity that is important for understanding Dwight's community life. It may unknowingly cause stress for Dwight on a daily basis as Parole Officers seem to hold the power to send him back to prison if they wished to revoke his parole, but he also knows they must have good cause to do so. Rather, this demonstrates the power imbalance Dwight feels regarding his life in the community and Parole Officers' powers over him.

4.5.3 Mental Health:

In the passages above it suggests that the experiences of institutionalization, the sexual abuse, traumas, and the precarity of life on parole has its impact on Dwight's mental health. This includes depression, suicidal feelings, and associating spaces in the community with institutional spaces, such as gun towers and fences. Moreover, Dwight indicated that this was the first time he shared his narrative of what happened to him, and this has caused him sleeplessness for 48 hours:

So, I'm not think about what I've done in the past and where I came from. I'm thinking about what I'm doing at this particular time, whether it's watching TV, talking with you, talking with somebody else, going out for a walk, you know, exercising in a park, keeps me occupied because when I'm, like our last conversation, you said something that if there is a problem, that you had these numbers for me to contact, if I felt that was necessary, I told you it wasn't necessary. But that little chat with you last week when I went to bed that night, I couldn't sleep, couldn't sleep for 48 hours. That's how much of an effect that had on me. And then, you know, like a couple of days later, I started sleeping for 2-3 hours. But the reason why I couldn't sleep is because my mind kept on going back to being in that MD-center, constantly went back to that abuse and went through because I shared that with somebody now, being beaten, raped, and locked up and put in that freezer until I passed out. Little things like that. And all came from there.

At this point in the second interview when Dwight discussed his lack of sleep due to sharing his story, I interrupted him to discuss with him about taking a list of some mental health numbers that would be accessible for him 24/7. However, Dwight indicated that he distrusted people associated with hospitals and issues associated with mental health are things that he must do on his own. Dwight then discussed that he would go for a walk or look for activities to keep his mind occupied and not focus on the past as he regularly did.

As much as Dwight tries to not focus on the past, he indicated that wherever he goes in the community that he lives in or looks out the window of his home, he sees gun towers, fences, and guards. His wife is his greatest support and reason for remaining in the community. He states that if his wife were to pass before or leave him, he would not remain in the community:

I have the support and if that support left me, you know, I wouldn't go through the toughness of, you know, going out, looking for a job and being able to pay the rent, buying my clothing is too much. It's just too much to buy the groceries. I do a great job doing all that. But it is a lot. And it would be hard for you to understand if a person spent most of his life inside institutions that, hey, these things happen.

Community life is difficult and overwhelming as Dwight explains in this passage. For much of his life, he has lived in institutions that provided clothing, food, and shelter with no worries of having to do these tasks. There is a routine within the corrections system that Dwight was introduced to when he was 14 years old and did not leave until his later 30s.

Dwight discussed that when he and his wife visited her family that was not in the city, he was able to sleep for the first time in his life for more than eight hours during the night. He said that the place he was staying in provided him relief and comfort that he never experienced before. The place was less crowded, it was not like the large city he currently lives in, and he said he was able to relax during this two-week period before returning home and returning to his

schedule of sleeping 3-4 hours a night and seeing gun towers, fences, and guards wherever he goes.

Dwight's narrative provides insight to his perspective of a person that was institutionalized for significant period of over two decades. Claims of institutionalization has affected his life in the community, and this is rooted in his traumas from the MSR. In the next chapter, I will address how Dwight's experiences inform us about institutionalization.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss how Dwight's life story and experiences speak to the effects of institutionalization. This chapter is divided into five parts that address (1) processes of labelling and its impact on a person; (2) institutionalization and violence; (3) institutionalization and relationships; (4) institutionalization and its impacts on life in the community; and (5) effects of institutionalization on mental health. The previous chapter's themes overlap with how I discuss Dwight's experiences as a broader issue of institutionalization.

5.1. Processes of Labelling and its Impact:

Dwight discussed in his narrative that at the age of eight he was diagnosed by a doctor as being "mentally retarded." This was in 1964, when institutionalization for persons labelled as "mentally retarded" was at its peak across Canada with 41 institutions (Brown & Radford, 2015). Moreover, the label of "mentally retarded" has to lessen stigmatizing labels because of the Disability Rights Movement (Haller, Dorries & Rahn, 2006). Goffman (1963) claims that society is responsible for establishing attributes that are applied to persons when they are categorized. A person that is labelled is an application of a stigma, which is a social process; moreover, this labelling process is part of a system that removes specific populations from larger society (such as disability, racial, and religious groups). Dwight discussed that, during his time at the MDC, he was the only Black person institutionalized at the centre and there were only a few Indigenous residents that he saw and remembers. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, Indigenous youths were institutionalized in residential schools, which is the same period that persons with disabilities were institutionalized. Residential schools operated with the intentions of forcing Indigenous children to assimilate into the colonial culture (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012).

The experiences of Black youths or young adults labelled as disabled and institutionalized during the 1950s to 1970s remains relatively unknown in Canadian studies (Burghardt, 2018). There may be several reasons for why persons of colour are not coming forward to discuss their experiences in institutions for persons with disabilities in Manitoba and more broadly in Canada. Milan and Tran (2004) discuss that during the 1960s the majority of the Canadian Black population lived in Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, and the Asian population was largely on the west coast in British Columbia. This may explain that there is an absence of Black and Asian survivors coming forward in the prairie provinces, like Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. However, this does not explain the absence of persons of colour narrative from other provinces (Feduck, 2012). This may also be due to interest and willingness in participating in the research.

Dwight was labelled as “mentally retarded” for a significant period of his life, twenty-six years, and this may speak to broader issues of colonialism in Canada that devalue the lives of persons of colour. Robyn Maynard (2017) claims that Black people with disabilities face discrimination and this is a persistent issue rooted in racism and the colonial state. Although, slavery was abolished during the 19th century in Canada, Maynard explains that the colonial control of Black people extended to the criminal justice system and has led to overrepresentation in the corrections system. Current studies on survivor experiences in institutions are primarily European, however, this may reflect colonial practices of using other institutions, such as residential schools and corrections, to incarcerate and remove Black and Indigenous peoples from communities as a means of colonial control. However, from Malacrida’s (2015) study we know that Métis children were institutionalized at the Michener Centre. Dwight is unlikely to be an outlier of a Black child institutionalized at the MDC or other institutions in Canada but may

suggest that other institutions were used. After all, Dwight had entered the criminal justice system as a minor and this is supported by Montgomery's (2004) description of seeing Dwight in court for the first time back in 1972 when he was still a minor.

Dwight attributes his misdiagnosis as a child due to the fights he engaged in at school because he was forced to wear his sister's clothing. Due to the troubles Dwight was causing his teachers at school, he was placed on tranquilizers by the doctor. Dwight claims that he was treated differently compared to his classmates due to his diagnosis and he was segregated from the rest of the class due to the use of tranquilizers. Dwight's labelling as "mentally retarded" led to his mother and a social worker placing him in the MDC. Dwight's experiences of being labelled have lasting impacts on Dwight, including that the label and use of "mentally retarded" to describe him ignites anger. Dwight discussed that this anger would be enough to fight a person if someone used the label to describe him.

Dwight claimed that while he was incarcerated at the MDC there were some people he believed that should not have been institutionalized. His narrative on his fellow MDC inmates described that the people were like him, and he did not perceive them as disabled. Dwight's identity among fellow prison inmates was not based on his label of "mentally retarded," it was how he presented himself to his fellow inmates as a young, Black, violent man. Dwight's stories on his experiences of fighting residents, inmates, and staff at any of the institutions where he was placed can be explained by Goffman's theories on identity and destructive secondary adjustment role. Destructive secondary adjustment as a role is radical and aims to rupture the operations of an organization compared to the contained secondary adjustment which is less radical but rejects the organization's ideals. Dwight's claims that his experiences at the MDC when he was placed in a solitary confinement room in West Two created resentment and bitterness toward treatment

by the staff and the institution. An example of disruptive secondary adjustment is when Dwight discussed how he responded to his confinement with the growing use of violence that ultimately resulted in another resident being stabbed. This led to his expulsion from the MDC.

Dwight also discussed three hostage takings that he participated in while in prison and how he regularly fought Corrections Officers. He further claimed that the staff were fearful of him and largely kept him in solitary confinement or within SHU. Goffman's (1963) primary adjustments is seen in Dwight's later narrative of experiences in corrections. Goffman describes primary adjustments includes features that the participant may find joint values with the organization, provided certain standards of welfare and incentives, and they may be induced to cooperate by means of threats of punishment or penalties. An example of primary adjustments is found in Dwight's narrative when he claimed that once he reached Millhaven he began to cooperate more with Corrections Officers. In his later years of incarceration, Dwight participated in correspondent courses to finish his high school, the Violent Offenders program, and transferred to a medium-security unit.

Annamma et al. (2013) discuss that there are consequences of labels, even if a person does not identify with that label, which may lead to rejection from cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender groups. The authors further explain how DisCrit problematizes the ways that race and disability are social constructions that are maintained by oppressive systems are used to justify limiting access through labelling. An example of a consequence is when a person rejects the label(s) applied to categorize and oppress them, which is what Dwight claimed he struggled with for many years while incarcerated and labelled as "mentally retarded." When Dwight and the people attending his judicial review heard that he was misdiagnosed as a child, he explained that

he felt a lot of relief that he could identify as “normal.” He further discussed how he was relieved that others heard that he was misdiagnosed:

And the jury started crying, all that stuff. And they went out the courtroom for maybe 10 minutes and they came back and granted my judicial review.

Dwight claimed that during his years of incarceration, the label of “mentally retarded” made him feel different and he felt that Corrections Officers treated him as a threat due to this label. He never identified with the label of “mentally retarded” as he saw himself as being different from many of the residents he perceived as fulfilling his definition of “mentally retarded.” Moreover, the label of “normal” provided Dwight with opportunities that he felt he did not have before. Dwight desired to be called “normal” for a significant period. Dwight believes that because the clinical psychologist deemed him “normal” this allowed him to be released from prison.

Goffman’s stigma theory can address these two categories of labels and how Dwight interacted with them and people he associated with these labels. Goffman states that “the more allied the individual is with normals, the more he will see himself in non-stigmatic terms, although there are contexts in which the opposite seems true” (1963, 107). This statement explains that the people Dwight met at MDC were representatives of the “mentally retarded” label he wished to disassociate from. Meanwhile, the “normals” were his friends and fellow inmates in prison. However, in Dwight’s case, he was misdiagnosed as a child, and he was relieved to be assured that he was just as “normal” as anyone else. The label of “mentally retarded” remains a heavy term for Dwight. He does not tolerate the mentioning of the label to describe him or others because of the stigmatization he experienced through labelling.

5.2. Institutionalization and Violence:

Dwight's previous experiences at the MDC normalized the violence of staff or residents against residents. Dwight witnessed and experienced violence and traumas from his first day in the MDC and Joyce's death. He described after witnessing Joyce's death he lacked empathy for others, and he even wanted others to feel as he did. This lack of caring and desire for others to feel the same pain as him led to the murder that he participated in. These feelings and consequent behaviour relate to Gresham Sykes' (1958) theoretical model of the "pains in imprisonment." Sykes viewed the deprivations inside a prison, such as freedom, autonomy, security, access to goods and services, and lack of heterosexual relationships. This may place stress on inmates and in turn leads to misconduct and violence (Crewe, 2011; Rocheleau, 2013). Sykes discusses that there were two paths for an inmate to take while dealing with frustrations of the corrections system. He explains:

On the one hand, he can attempt to bind himself to his fellow captives with ties of mutual aid, loyalty, affection, and respect, firmly standing in opposition to the officials. On the other hand, he can enter into a war of all against all in which he seeks his own advantage without reference to the claims or needs of other prisoners. (1958, 82).

Dwight's narrative on the MDC and time in prison speaks to both of Sykes' claims. While at the MDC, Dwight was against the institutional system, and he was willing to discuss how he used violence to two residents. When Dwight was in the corrections system, he made friends and he claims that they remain friends. An example is how Dwight claimed that his father figure, Joe, introduced violence to him as the norm of prison culture and assured Dwight that it was acceptable to kill someone in prison as a means of survival. Violence has significance for a person's reputation in an environment that is emasculating through the "pains of imprisonment" that a person may experience while incarcerated (Michalski, 2015).

Michalski (2015) outlines four uses of violence that are legitimate in institutional settings, which are punishing disrespect, violence as self-defence or protection, forms of self-help to resolve interpersonal conflicts, and maintaining one's reputation. Dwight adopted the use of violence in the MDC to protect himself and ensure that persons bigger than him were no longer sexually assaulting him as he was only a youth at the time and described that he was much smaller compared to the older residents and staff. From Dwight's life history narrative and perspective, the institutional life in the MDC and prisons both had violence as part of the culture. This culture of violence and institutionalization was not conducive to creating a person that was ready to live independently in the community. Dwight indicated in his narrative that the violence and traumas that began in the MDC have had lifelong impacts. He describes that he still lacks empathy for others, including if he hypothetically witnessed a person's death it would not create an emotional reaction of sympathy from him.

Dwight describes the MDC as a college of learning and experiencing violence which made it easier for him to later deal with prison life. For other survivors who have come forward from the MDC, like David Weremy, violence is often described in the stories shared. Violence at the MDC and other institutions seems to be part of the culture inside these institutions (Burghardt, 2018; Malacrida, 2015; Scott & Rinaldi, 2017). This violence was fostered by the staff and system as indicated by Dwight's and other survivors' narratives.

5.3. Institutionalization and Relationships:

Dwight's narrative provides insight into the effects institutionalization has had on his relationships over the years of his incarceration. Institutionalization had negative effects on his relationships with family and wife. Sykes (1958) discusses that part of the "pains of imprisonment" and its effects on heterosexual relationships as a deprivation of the emotional

connections with a partner. Dwight developed friendships inside prison, and he still considers these people his friends thirty-three years post-institutionalization, but these are male friendships, not the heterosexual and emotional relationship he has with his wife.

Dwight placed the blame for his institutionalization at the MDC onto his mother. His relationship with his family, except for his father and brother, was broken throughout the time of his incarceration. Institutions, such as the MDC and corrections, remove persons from their communities and sometimes relocates them to places that are too great of a distance for visitations. Vigne, Naser, Brooks, and Castro (2005) hypothesized that the existence of negative or positive pre-prison relationships may have an impact on in-prison contact and this can be seen in Dwight's case. His pre-institutionalization relationship with his mother was negative. He described it as an unhealthy relationship as he alleges that she would beat and slap him regularly and made him wear his sister's clothing to school. When they had a reunion several years before Dwight's release, he described the visit:

I was in the private family visit with my foster mother, and all I can do is cry through the entire visit. If my wife wasn't there, I would have ended up killing her because that's how much anger I had inside me.

This emotional breakdown reflects Dwight's perspective that his mother was the cause of his abuse at the MDC because she had taken him to the institution.

Dwight's relationship with his wife began in the 1980s while he was incarcerated. They spent eight or nine years together, and Dwight discussed the obstacles they would face in requesting to have private family visits. Dwight claimed that racism, due to him being Black, created further obstacles as the prison system works against persons of colour. Dwight's institutionalization created a strain on the relationship that became insurmountable for his wife who decided to end their relationship as she never saw him getting out of prison. When Dwight

re-entered the community, his father and brother provided some support first by helping him move to a halfway house and later assisting him in moving to a place of his own. Several years after Dwight was living in the community, he rekindled his relationships with his now wife. Dwight discussed how he and his wife have been together for seventeen years and she remains a healthy support for his life in the community. He discussed that she is aware of his time in prison but remains unaware of his time at the MDC. Dwight discussed his feelings about the MDC:

I don't even like calling it that name. I want to call it what it was when I was there. The Manitoba School for the Mentally Retarded or known as the North Home. That's what they called it. Just those two words. And if you're in that place and if you felt that you shouldn't have been there. That was the most humiliating and embarrassing thing that you could ever go through because you went out into the community on the walk with one staff. Everybody knew you were a patient; nobody would want to do anything with you. They wouldn't speak to you.

Dwight claimed that the MDC was the most humiliating experience of his life. Dwight's three years at the MDC created a lot of shame rooted in his experiences of sexual and physical abuse, witnessing Joyce's death, and solitary confinement.

Dwight's narrative speaks to the embeddedness of friendships inside institutions in contrast to his community friendships. Although Dwight participated in negative activities such as hostage takings with his prison friends over the years, in our interviews he talked in much more detail about them than the friends he has made in the community. As discussed above with associating with labels, his friends in prison are people he associated with and feels he can relate to. He made friends in prison that shared his experiences while in prison. If they were a person of colour, like Andy, they may have also experienced the same "tougher go," as Dwight calls it, and all the challenges one may experience in prison because of structural and systemic racism. In comparison, Dwight calls his friends in the community "straight Johns." They do not know about his time in prison, the crime he participated in and served time for, and his traumas from the

MDC. Dwight explained that if he discussed his life experiences with people in the community, they would become fearful of him and his past at MDC was something he did not share with others. He also indicated to me several times if I were to search his name, he believed I would not wish to continue interviewing him:

If you were to type my name into your laptop right now, in Winnipeg, you probably wouldn't want to talk to me again because all this information will come up. Still comes up from '75 right up to now. That's still there. Type my name and they talk about the history. This prosecutor wrote a book about it.

I was not sure if Dwight felt that I would be scared or disgusted if I looked his name up on the Internet, however, his perception is that if a person was to search his name they would not be interested in associating or have a conversation with him.

5.4. Institutionalization and Transition to the Community:

After Dwight won his judicial review and was set to be released in 1990, he had some hesitancy about being released and he commented in his narrative that he wanted to turn around and tell the guards that he was joking about being released. Dwight had complicated feelings as he was unsure about leaving the prison system he lived in for eighteen years, but he also discussed how he was hopeful that he could make it out in the community. Cid, Pedrosa, Ibáñez, and Martí (2021) state that having optimism about reentry is a crucial factor in achieving a positive reintegration back into society. They had a sample of 538 men and women in prisons and on parole complete questionnaires to gauge participation in various programs in corrections and if they had social supports from family while serving their sentence. Dwight discussed that he was optimistic on moving into the community:

I wanted to turn back and say I was just kidding, I didn't want out, put me back inside. But something deep down inside me told me that I could make it.

Dwight was also slightly pessimistic because he had not experienced community life since he was a child and he discussed how he had no family or friends in the community. When his relationship with his wife rekindled, her support helped Dwight feel like he could live in the community.

Prisoners' reentry into the community may face structural inequalities and discrimination that can reduce employment and housing options (Olliffe, Hanberg, Hannan-Leith, et al., 2018). Despite these challenges, Dwight was able to find housing and employment. His reentry into the community was a difficult transition, as he found that the halfway house was a horrible experience. Furthermore, he discussed several times that he did not know how to dress or talk, and he viewed persons walking on the street as people he would have to fight when he perceived their looks as judging him. Dwight's transitional experiences in the community can be related to the invisible punishments in the community post-institutionalization where former inmates face discrimination during their reentry. Dwight claims to be institutionalized because of his experiences in institutions:

All I know is prison. It's being institutionalized. That's all I know. At least if I went back, I can say to myself. I got an idea what was happening out here. I appreciated it. But the fact is that it's not for me. It's tough, it's not easy to get by. And it's hard for you to understand because you're a younger person. So it's really, really hard for you to understand where a person like me is coming from, the mentality.

In the passage, Dwight discussed how thirty-three years post-institutionalization he still feels that all he knows are prisons. His childhood and early adulthood were spent in institutions and this affected Dwight's perceptions of community life and prison life, or life outside and inside. Dwight claimed that if his wife were no longer with him, he would find it too difficult to continue living in the community, which includes buying groceries, paying rent and bills, and other tasks related to living in the community.

There are both cognitive and external challenges that persons re-entering the community from institutions may experience. Cognitive challenges may include visualizing inanimate objects as potential weapons or seeing gun towers where there are none. External challenges are an awareness of the substantial space around them compared to their former, smaller confines; facing discrimination or difficulties in finding housing and employment; and accessing health care and healthy foods (Cid et al., 2021; Martin, 2018). Dwight provides further insight based on his experiences in transitioning to community living. He visualizes past oppressive features of the prison, such as gun towers, guards, and fences. Dwight was in institutions since the age of eleven. His community life experiences before institutionalization at the MDC are limited to how he interacted with the community as a child. Dwight indicated that as an adult he was able to experience going to a movie theatre, baseball game, and aquarium for the first time. He was also able to interact with people in different spaces. Dwight discussed these as exciting things that he never previously experienced as a youth or young adult. These activities may be understood as part of reclamation of experiences that many in the community have participated in.

5.5. Effects of Institutionalization on Mental Health:

Dwight's life story provides a narrative that is based on his experiences of institutionalization, sexual and physical abuse, participation in a murder, the precarity of life on parole and transition to community living, and broken family relationships. Dwight has never shared his story about his time at the MDC. After the first interview he did not sleep for 48 hours. Due to his time at the MDC, he does not trust mental health supports or hospital staff members:

I hate dealing with people that have anything to do with hospitals, whether they're there to help me or not. I don't want to deal with them. Something that I have to do on my own. And I did. And today isn't hard at all. If I do feel like I'm going back and thinking

about something, I'll go for a walk. Today is a nice day and the sun is out. ...I'll go for a walk, that'll keep me busy for awhile. That was just last week because I explained, I told you things that I've never told anybody before and that brought it on.

Dwight's experiences at the MDC have lasting effects on how he handles his mental health. His narrative is informative of the possible mental health effects of long-term institutionalization for prison inmates and survivors of the MDC. Furthermore, there are long-term mental health effects for persons who experienced childhood abuse and trauma.

Oliffe et al. (2018) provide insight into "jailhouse mentality" and the mental health of men in- and outside of the prison system. When men enter a prison system, they are unable to maintain their previous masculine identities or fulfil roles they had within their families, work, and community. Imprisoned men are forced to adapt to new identities and social structures within the prison (Oliffe et al., 2018). Dwight's life story is different from men who grew up in the community before institutionalization. Dwight lived in the community with his family until he was eleven years old, he then had to adapt to life in the MDC, which has proven to have lasting effects on his mental health due to his experiences in the institution and his violence that led to incarceration correctional institutions. When Dwight entered the federal corrections system, he already had an institutional mentality and suffered from institutional traumas from his experiences at the MDC.

Oliffe et al. (2018) discusses in their study that the mental health of men who have experienced institutionalization may turn to exercise and physical activity. They may also go through a process of reinventing themselves once in the community by altering attitudes and thinking. Dwight mentioned in his narrative that he had a good attitude, better than before institutionalization. However, Dwight discussed how he is pushing forward and not thinking about the past, but he still thinks about the MDC but does not speak about it. Dwight chooses to

find ways to distract himself from thinking about the MDC, including walks, exercises, and television. Dwight did not discuss his prison experiences in the same manner as he discussed the MDC, he was more open to discussing his experiences in correctional institutions, even when he described some institutions as horrible places, but they never compared to the MDC. The prison system, for Dwight, was easier to endure while incarcerated and to talk about his experiences post-institutionalization.

Dwight's narrative spoke to several effects on a person's life because of institutionalization, either in prisons or institutions for persons with disabilities. His experiences in the MDC, prison system, and community spans over five decades and demonstrates the lasting impact of institutionalization on relationships and mental health. His narrative speaks to the effects of institutionalization that other survivors of institutions for persons with disabilities may experience.

6. Contribution and Limitations of Research and Future Research

This section addresses the contributions that this research provides and the limitations of this case study.

6.1. Research Contributions:

Several complete studies were conducted in Canada that include interviews of survivors, families, and former employees of institutions for persons with disabilities (Burghardt, 2018; Feduck, 2012; Malacrida, 2015; Rossiter & Rinaldi, 2018; Scott & Rinaldi, 2017), but there remains little known about survivors and institutional life at the MDC in Manitoba. There are challenges in accessing data on the MDC. Horodyski (2017, 2020) has worked on disseminating information on the archival history of the MDC and outlined the problems of gaining access to information regarding the centre's operations through FIPPA requests. Former residents, like David Weremy, claim that the MDC keeps as much as possible a secret about its operations and what happened to its residents based on their personal experiences of abuse and witnessing others' abuse and suicides (People First of Canada, 2018). The documentary, *Freedom Tour*, had David Weremy and other survivors discuss how they were constantly silenced on the issues that were occurring at the MDC. In addition to providing more to our understanding of the MDC, there are several contributions that can be made from Dwight's life story narrative for academia.

The first contribution of Dwight's narrative and this research is that before this study the Black, or African Canadian, experiences of institutionalization are relatively unknown at the MDC, HRC, and Michener Centre (Burghardt, 2018; Malacrida, 2015). Malacrida's (2015) study had participants that were of European ancestry. Dwight's perspective and life history as a Black person are important for research on institutional experiences in the MDC and other similar

facilities across Canada. His narrative fills in a gap that currently exists in Canadian research on these institutions and effects on the Black population of Canada.

The second research contribution is that Dwight's experiences of being labelled as a child may be problematized through DisCrit. DisCrit studies can address why Dwight had been labelled as a child with a disability, including the label of "mentally retarded," as being the product of intersecting factors, including race, religion, and communities. Annamma et al. (2013) discuss that Black students continue to be more likely to be labelled with a disability than their white peers. This is rooted in racial discrimination and beliefs that Black persons are inferior to their white peers. We know from studies in the United States that racial factors led to increasing institutionalization of the Puerto Rican and Black communities during the twentieth century in institutions for persons with disabilities (Hill, 2016). In Canada, it was primarily Europeans, and Indigenous peoples that were institutionalized. However, while Indigenous peoples were probably more likely to be institutionalized in residential schools during the twentieth century. Malacrida's (2015) study and the testimony of David Weremy, the lead plaintiff in the class-action lawsuit against the MDC, suggest that Indigenous persons were also placed in these institutions for persons with disabilities as a minority population. Overall then, Dwight's housing at MDC is due to at least in part to racism and this is supported by a broader DisCrit literature outlining how racial discrimination contributes to unnecessary institutional placement.

The third contribution is how Dwight's life story of living with a label for close to three decades affected his experiences in the MDC and correctional institutions in Canada. The impact of abuses that Dwight experienced in the MDC affected him upon release from the institution which led to anger issues and hatred for others that led to a path where he committed various crimes until he was convicted of murder and served eighteen years in federal correctional

institutions and now is on life parole. There remains little research on a person's experience of institutionalize in different facilities, and how one might contribute to the other. Dwight began in a facility for those diagnosed with intellectual disabilities but ended up in a correctional facility for offenders. The powerful effects of labelling were also illustrated by this research. Dwight was misdiagnosed as "mentally retarded", but when it was acknowledged that he was misdiagnosed the effect on his self-image and identity was life changing. This supports research that shows people are measured against a category of "normalcy" which is based on the structures of the white, abled, and middle-class (Annamma et al., 2013). The life and experiences of persons that are misdiagnosed are important and this merits continued attention by researchers.

The final research contribution demonstrates the importance and use of oral history as a methodological approach for collecting life story narratives of survivors of institutional life. Dwight had been institutionalized for twenty-three years in seventeen institutions across Canada, including the MDC. Oral history, as a qualitative methodology, provided Dwight the freedom to share as much of his life story as he wished. If structured interviews were conducted, Dwight may not have shared the same stories. Questions had been prepared ahead of interviews to probe further into Dwight's narrative, but questions were also developed based on what he had shared. Oral history has been used in previous studies (Malacrida, 2015; Rossiter & Rinaldi, 2018) and this case study further contributes to the importance and use of this methodology for future research with survivors.

6.2. Limitations of Research:

The most significant limitation of this research is that there was only one participant to develop a case study. However, this was due to complications with recruitment that impacted the timeline to complete this project. The planned research was to have 3-5 participants of survivors

and former employees. With one participant for the case study, it was not possible to triangulate and develop patterns between participants' narratives on institutional life. Triangulation of data from the thematic findings in the life story narratives may have further supported the claims made in this thesis. One or two more participants, including a former employee, would have further contextualized Dwight's narrative.

The other major limitation of this research was that I did not question Dwight on the validity of his narrative. Some parts of his narrative are confirmed from Montgomery's (2004) book. However, this research is focused on Dwight's perceptions of his memories and experiences. The aim of this study was to thematically analyze and address common themes that arose between institutionalization at the MDC and federal corrections.

There are also strengths in using Dwight as a life study subject for this oral history project. He is a unique individual because of his experience in the federal penitentiary system after his institutionalization at the MDC. While Goffman aligns mental health asylums with prisons as total institutions, the literature tends to focus on one or the other. In my research, the similarities in institutionalization and institutional life are made evident through Dwight's experiences and legitimize Goffman's key concepts, such as total institutional features and primary and secondary adjustments.

6.3. Future Research:

As this study only had one participant, future research would benefit from collecting the life story narratives of other survivors or former employees who wish to share their narratives. Oral history makes memories and personalized perspectives as records. Moreover, this population is ageing with survivors in their late sixties and into their seventies, and collecting narratives is now a timely issue. Future research on survivors of institutionalization should look

further into the impacts of race and labelling, and into utilizing DisCrit to understand how labels have been used to segregate persons of colour who do not meet the criteria of “normality” that is based on white, middle-class, and Anglo-Saxon standards (Annamma et al., 2013; Burghardt, 2018).

More research is needed on the experiences of Black and Asian persons who have experienced institutionalization, either as persons with disabilities or persons who were labelled with a disability and later “freed” of that label by being informed that they were misdiagnosed. Finally, research on the current and past residents of the MDC and their experiences of transitioning into community living, the supports required, and their narratives on those experiences is an area of research that should be conducted to aid policy recommendations for persons with disabilities that have transitioned from large institutions into communities.

7. Conclusion

This thesis originally aimed to interview between three and five survivors and former employees of the MDC, but due to unforeseen circumstances, a case study was developed with one participant. This case study used oral history as a methodology, conducting life history interviews with Dwight to learn about his perceptions of his life. The purpose of life history interviews for this study is not to question the validity of the narrative or challenge the interviewee's claims and memories but contextualize the narrative to broader concepts of labelling and institutionalization. His narratives included his life prior to institutionalization, experiences of institutional living at the MDC and in federal correctional centres, and his life on parole in the community. Persons who did not fit the category of "normal" based on the white, abled, middle-class standards of the time led to persons being diagnosed as "mentally retarded" and they were segregated from their "normal" peers. Persons with disabilities or impairments may experience impacts of intersections from their race, gender, and age as I demonstrate in this case study and is seen in other studies conducted on institutionalization and segregation (Annamma et al., 2013; Burghardt, 2018; Feduck, 2012; Forrester-Jones et al., 2012; Goddard, 1912; Hill, 2016; Malacrida, 2015).

The research questions focused on understanding Dwight's life experiences in the context of Goffman's theory of "total institutions" and how these experiences may inform us about institutional processes. The questions also sought to understand how a survivor of the MDC adapted to roles within institutions and if in his post-institutionalization experiences in the community provided him support to adjust to life outside of institutions. Dwight's personal experience of institutionalization is different from other survivors who have intellectual disabilities because he was misdiagnosed as a child. However, he did experience twenty-three

years of institutionalization that began with the MDC. Dwight claims he experienced months of solitary confinement in the MDC and eight years of solitary confinement in the British Columbia Penitentiary. Dwight's period of transition into the community while on parole is explored in this study and addresses how his wife is his main emotional support for his life in the community.

Goffman's theory of "total institutions" and his concepts of primary and secondary adjustment roles are applied to understand what role a person may adopt to live within an institution. Critical disability theory and DisCrit address the impacts of the processes of labelling and understanding disabilities and problematizing how the intersections of race and disabilities are socially constructed and by whom. These theoretical concepts together allow the research and findings to problematize Dwight's perceptions of his experiences in institutions and parole because of his race and social constructions of "normal" and "mentally retarded" of the time he was diagnosed. Moreover, Dwight's own construction of what makes a person "normal" or "disabled" is influenced by socialization within institutions. Dwight's self-declaration of being institutionalized is important for understanding the long-term mental health effects of institutionalization and the permanent harms of institutions that incarcerate and segregate persons from the community and family. The findings of this case study have several main themes emerge from his narrative, including secondary adjustment (Goffman, 1961), but also how the behaviour of a child, such as acting out and the frustration felt by family and teachers impacts the processes of labelling which Dwight experienced. Other themes that emerged from the oral history were the impacts of institutionalization on Dwight's relationships (family, friends, and loved ones) and the culture of violence that exists within institutions.

Disabilities and the processes of labelling disabilities have developed and changed over the past several decades, yet normalcy remains to be measured in a Western context against the

white, abled, middle-class standards. This remains problematic for persons with disabilities or persons who experience impairments. Disabilities may result in impairments, physically, emotionally, neurologically, or cognitively and inclusivity of persons with disabilities is dependent on the willingness of government policies, communities, employers, educators, and families to enforce the inclusivity that advocates and persons with disabilities advocate for. Moreover, the UNCRPD, which is ratified in Canada, provides tenets that Canada should follow to recognize the rights and abilities for persons with disabilities to live in the community, have equal opportunities, and accessibility as some examples.

The social construction and understanding of disabilities have come a long way over the past 50 years; however, Dwight, and likely others, still feel the effects of these labels with feelings of anger or affecting their mental health based on their experiences in institutions. The class-action lawsuit in Manitoba is now a settlement that will provide survivors that come forward with some monetary compensation based on their level of abuse that they testify about to court (*Notice of Proposed Settlement in Manitoba Development Centre ("MDC") Class Action*, 2023). Moreover, the Manitoba Premier, Heather Stefanson, read an apology in the legislature as part of the \$17-million settlement. In response, David Weremy, the representative plaintiff for the lawsuit against the government, claimed that it felt good to hear an apology (Lambert, 2023b). Deinstitutionalization of large institutions in Manitoba is coming to an end with the government moving to close the MDC in March 2024. Now people, like David, Dwight, and many others, survivors and advocates, wait for the MDC to cease its operations and for the remaining residents to transition into community living.

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Appendix A



People First of
Manitoba

November 9, 2022

Myla Devora Held
University of Winnipeg
Thesis: Closure of the Manitoba Developmental Centre, oral history.

Re: Request for People First of Manitoba Collaboration.

Dear Myla:

Thank you for your interest in the lived experience of Manitobans labelled with a disability who lived at the Manitoba Developmental Centre. Deinstitutionalization has been the top priority of People First and we look forward to survivors being represented in Manitoba's history.

This letter is to confirm our collaboration as community intermediaries and a commitment to forward information to our networks and potential survivors.

Kind regards,

Valerie Wolbert

Valerie Wolbert, President
People First of Manitoba



Appendix B
Interview Questions

The following interview questions primarily arose as response to Dwight's narrative.

- I. Did you ever receive a diagnosis?
- II. Did your adoptive family or mom ever reach out to you after leaving the MDC or the North Home or any institution?
- III. Did you face discrimination when trying to find employment once after being incarcerated for so long?
- IV. Do you feel like it's a series of failures of systems that failed you?
- V. Did you have that thinking at one point that you would rather have stayed there [in prison]?
- VI. How do you feel about the MDC lawsuit and the move to closure?
- VII. What do you think about prison abolition?
- VIII. What is your relationship with your stepdaughter? Does she know your past?
- IX. What do you hope that others will learn [from sharing your story]?
- X. After leaving the MDC, did any of prison institutions use the labels that you were given of "mentally retarded" or disabled?
- XI. Did they [prison institutions] know about what was happening at the MDC?
- XII. Did you consider taking part of the MDC lawsuit?
- XIII. Do you think they [lawyers] didn't proceed contacting you further because the label was removed from you?
- XIV. What were the first five years like when you were out on parole?
- XV. How do you characterize the "outside"?

- XVI. Do you think the program [MDC] was centered around a racial issue?
- XVII. If you weren't white and the children were considered problems, and that's why they're institutionalized?
- XVIII. Did a parole officer suggest therapy or provide you any supports in the community for you?
- XIX. Is it [mentions of suicide] a condition that they'll [parole officers] send you back?
- XX. How has the label of murderer affected you?
- XXI. Have you gone back in recent decades to the cemetery or to see the buildings or have you avoided it [MDC]?
- XXII. So, is it the systems or are they different? (In regard to a statement comparing the MDC and prisons.)
- XXIII. Do you think that leads to a connection that they continue to seek these institutions because they don't know anything else?
- XXIV. Were you part of a gang?
- XXV. So, how did that meeting go with your foster parents?
- XXVI. Were you adopted by a white family or black family?
- XXVII. Do you still have those feelings that you aren't really free?
- XXVIII. So you had a toilet there, not at the MDC?

Appendix C



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

TITLE OF STUDY

The Oral Historical Narratives of Survivors of the Manitoba Developmental Centre

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR

Myla Held

M.A. Student, Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg

Winnipeg, MB

Email: held-m@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR'S SUPERVISOR

Dr. Alex Tepperman

Assistant Professor

University of Winnipeg

Email: a.tepperman@uwinnipeg.ca

PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to collect the oral stories of persons who lived and/or worked within the institution known as the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC) in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada. This project seeks to understand how individuals adapted while within the institution and their transition into the community. This study also recognizes the importance of the statement "Nothing about us without us" as a guiding principle for this study.

When this study is completed, it will be published for academia and possibly made available for Institution Watch and People First Manitoba. This study is for both the academic and disability communities. By participating in this study, you should be aware that this study's purpose is to share knowledge for these communities. The completion of the written study is to be completed by Summer 2023 and you will be notified when it is completed.

The University of Winnipeg Human Research Ethics Board approved this research study.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This study plans to conduct interview sessions from early February to mid March 2023. For this study, you will first have a pre-interview to discuss the project and the informed consent form.

Any questions regarding this study may be asked during this session or at any other time when you wish to have more information. There will be approximately 3 to 4 interviews that may last 2 hours or longer, depending on your comfort level to continue discussing your stories and experiences, up to a maximum of 4 hours per session.

At the beginning of each interview, I will ask you for consent for audio recording of the session. If you are uncomfortable about your interview being audio-recorded, you can tell me. I will put away the audio equipment and take notes instead. You may request a break at any time during the interview session or request to end for the day. After the three interviews are completed there will be a follow-up interview to see how you are feeling about the study, if you want your stories to be used in the study, and you may offer feedback for me on your experiences in participating in this study at this time.

RISKS

Due to the nature of the study's topic of institutional experiences which may or may not include personal or witnessed experiences of violence and harm, it is recognised that there could be risks of feelings of anxiety, stress, fatigue, or other feelings that may affect you during your participation in this study. A list of local numbers to mental health lines will be provided for you to keep and that you may wish to call and discuss your feelings. This list will detail the agency, the phone numbers, and information about the resource. These sources provide counselling in areas of suicide, coping, sexual assault, loss, mental health, and a wellness line for Indigenous peoples. During the interviews you may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement in the study at any time.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is also a risk during this study as the pandemic remains ongoing. A day prior to each interview session, COVID-19 screening will be assessed for everyone attending the session. If the numbers of COVID-19 infected rises, I will assess the situation and we may introduce other methods of interviewing if necessary, including ZOOM or phone interviews. ZOOM will be used as last resort for interviews, and they will be used through the University of Winnipeg's ZOOM account and password protected.

Masks are not mandatory, but I will be wearing a mask. I will also bring additional masks to each interview session in case you wish to have a mask for the sessions. Hand sanitizer and social distancing will be practiced ensuring the health and safety of everyone. If you have further questions or concerns about the risks of COVID-19 for in-person interview sessions, please notify me and I will make the necessary arrangements based on current COVID-19 mandates.

BENEFITS

I hope that your stories and experiences obtained from this study may help develop the academic literature in Manitoba regarding the MDC's history and its operations which has largely been unknown to the Manitoban community for decades. Your narratives will also benefit the larger, growing literature on survivor experiences in institutions across Canada as there are only several

studies on this topic in Canada. I hope that you may find this study beneficial and empowering to be heard and listened to, as well as ensuring that your stories and experiences are not forgotten.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

For the purposes of this research study, your stories will be anonymous (except this consent form) unless you request to waive your right to privacy and have your legal name used in transcripts and forms. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the possession of the researcher's supervisor's office on campus grounds.
- If names of other individuals arise in your narratives, code names will be assigned to these individuals to maintain their privacy and yours.

This study uses audiotaping to record your narratives, the files will be destroyed after the study is completed or your interviews will be given to you. These audiotapes will be transcribed and provided to you for review and approval to ensure that you are represented the way you wish in the transcription or remove parts of your story that will be used in the study. You may edit and/or request parts or all your transcribed interview to be removed from the study.

Participant data, your stories, will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents (i.e., police). These incidents include suicide risk and imminent threat to yourself, or others lives (if stating there is a plan to end your life, or another's life and I believe this is a real threat). If you are having a difficult time, I will encourage you to reach out to the mental health links I will provide you and we will stop our interview sessions and your participation in the study will not go further.

SUPPORT PERSONS

During your interview sessions, you may choose to have a person with you for support. They will sign an informed consent form specific to them. You may choose to request them to leave at any time during your interview sessions or have them not attend any sessions if you choose to change your mind. The support person also may choose to leave at any time if they need a break. You may choose to take a break or end with them for the day if they choose to break or leave for the day.

PEOPLE FIRST OF MANITOBA

The interview sessions you complete with me are audio-recorded (unless you have opt-out of audio-recorded interviews) and once completed and transcribed, you will have the opportunity to decide if you would like your audio-recordings (or transcript only) to be donated to People First of Manitoba for historical preservation of survivor experiences at the MDC. These recordings (or transcripts) may be used on their website, promoted on social media, newsletters, reports, and

other resources. Your donation of audio-recordings (or transcripts) is not mandatory and is to be made with your consent. Once they are donated to People First of Manitoba, you may withdraw your consent to the donation of your audio-recordings from People First of Manitoba who will be responsible for removing your audio-recordings wherever they have posted them to be accessed (i.e., www.institutionwatch.ca).

If you have wished to remain anonymous for your interviews, you will use your code name during the recordings and you will assign code names to any persons you mention in your stories to maintain the privacy of you and others. I will also edit the recordings (by cutting out names, editing sounds into the recording) if you used your legal name and decide to make the audio-recording anonymous. The donation consent form will be addressed and completed at the end of the interview sessions.

COMPENSATION

I recognize that your time is valuable and that your participation in this study is voluntary and appreciated. At the end of your interview sessions, I will present you a gift of appreciation for sharing your time and stories with me for this study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact me, my contact information is provided on the first page, or you may reach out to my supervisor for this project Dr. Alex Tepperman (a.tepperman@uwinnipeg.ca). If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with me, please contact the Ethics Program Officer of UHREB at ethics@uwinnipeg.ca.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study before your stories are fully collected, you will have the option of having what is collected to be used in the study or have all notes, transcripts, and audiotapes destroyed. You may have your information and stories withdrawn at any time during the study, except once the study is completed and published. You will be notified prior to its completion to ask for your consent once more in using your stories for this study prior to its written completion.

CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any

time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

CONSENT TO DONATE AUDIO-RECORDINGS**TITLE OF STUDY**

The Oral Historical Narratives of Survivors of the Manitoba Developmental Centre

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR

Myla Held

M.A. Student, Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg

Winnipeg, MB

Email: held-m@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR'S SUPERVISORS

Dr. Alex Tepperman

Assistant Professor

University of Winnipeg

Email: a.tepperman@uwinnipeg.ca

WHY DONATE?

Your donation of your audio-recordings is voluntary and is not mandatory. The history of the Manitoba Developmental Centre remains largely from an ableist perspective, your audio-recordings would help develop the perspectives of the survivors of the MDC. These audio-recordings would help in archival records of the centre, its operations, and the people that have been affected by institutional life.

If you opted-out from having your interviews to be audio-recorded, you may choose to have your transcriptions donated instead.

If you chose to remain anonymous, everything possible (i.e., through editing) will be done to ensure that only code names for yourself and others in the recording are used and associated with the recordings if you choose to donate the recordings or transcriptions. If you had waived your privacy originally but choose to retract your consent to use of your legal name, the audio-recordings and transcriptions will be edited (with beeps or cut out) whenever a name is used.

PEOPLE FIRST OF MANITOBA

The interview sessions you complete with me are audio-recorded (or handwritten) and once completed and transcribed, you will have the opportunity to decide if you would like your audio-recordings and/or transcriptions to be donated to People First of Manitoba for historical

preservation of survivor experiences at the MDC. These recordings may be used on their website, promoted on social media, newsletters, reports, and other resources.

WITHDRAWAL OF AUDIO-RECORDINGS POST-DONATION

You are free to withdraw your consent regarding the use of your audio-recordings once they are donated. After they are donated to People First of Manitoba, you may withdraw your consent by informing someone from People First of Manitoba and they will be responsible for removing your audio-recordings wherever they have posted them to be accessed (i.e., www.institutionwatch.ca).

A copy of this consent form will be provided to you and People First of Manitoba. If you decide to withdraw, they will have a copy of this form. If you require additional copies of the form for your support person, I will provide you additional copies for your records.

CONSENT


I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my donation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to donate my recordings and/or transcriptions of my interviews.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____


Waived Privacy for Interviews. Do you wish for your name to remain in the transcripts? Yes _____
No _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix E



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Looking for Participants for the Project:

Oral Historical Narratives of
Survivors of the Manitoba
Developmental Centre

The researcher is currently looking for past residents and former employees of the MDC to hear their stories from when they lived and/or worked there.

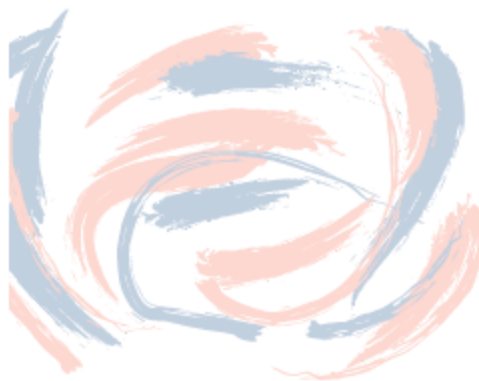
TO LEARN HOW TO PARTICIPATE OR FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROJECT

Please contact Myla Held:
(held-m@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca)



Call for participants:

Past residents and/or former employees are being sought to hear their stories and experiences from when they lived and/or worked at the MDC.



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

Project Title:
Oral Historical
Narratives of
Survivors of the
MDC



Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to collect the oral stories of persons who lived and/or worked within the institution known as the MDC. This project seeks to understand the roles and processes that individuals adapted to while within the institution and their transition into the community.

Methods of Study

This project will use audio-recording equipment to record stories. You may have an assigned codename or waive your right to privacy and have your legal named used in the study.

Interviews will begin in early February and run until March 2023. I wish to hear your life story, so there will be approximately 4 interviews at 90 minutes or longer per session.

Each interview will be transcribed by Myla and provided to you for approval for the study.

To Participate or for More Information:

Please contact Myla Held at held-m@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca

Voluntary Participation and Rights as Participants

If you choose to participate, it is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not you wish to take part in the study.

You retain the right to withdraw from the study at any time, this includes removal of your stories from the study.

You may also wish to entrust People First Manitoba with your audio-recording at the end of the study for archival purposes. You will retain the right to withdraw your audio-recording at any time.