

Healing and the Colonial Prison: Emerging Research on Cultural Prison Programming and Indigenous Re-entry Experiences

July 20, 2026

1:30-3:00pm MT

Canada is mass incarcerating Indigenous peoples, with one in three people in prison identifying as Indigenous. What are the impacts of incarceration on Indigenous health, well-being, and community reintegration? Drawing on two large studies involving more than 2,000 interviews with incarcerated people—nearly half identifying as Indigenous—this presentation shares what participants told us about life inside prison, the role of Indigenous cultural programming in supporting wellness and connection, the challenges of pursuing healing within prison environments, and the barriers and supports they encounter when returning to their communities after incarceration.



Learning Outcomes:

- The roots and realities of Indigenous mass incarceration in Canada, and how communities are responding
- What Indigenous people tell us about life inside prison, including the role of cultural programming and the health, wellness, and support needs they identify as most important
- Early insights from a major new study of community re-entry experiences—drawing on nearly 1,300 interviews—and what they reveal about the barriers, supports, and wellness needs shaping Indigenous peoples' transitions back to community following incarceration
- Concrete actions you can take to support Indigenous people affected by the prison system and strengthen community-based pathways to healing, wellness, and reintegration

Speakers:

Dr. Justin Tetrault is an assistant professor of sociology and criminology at SFU's School of Criminology. Justin is a citizen of the Red River Metis Nation and is working with Elders, Indigenous researchers, and prison staff to help develop community-based cultural supports for justice-involved people.

Dr. Sandra Bucerius is a professor of sociology and criminology, and director of the Centre for Criminological Research in the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta, where she leads Canada's largest prison research project and studies social inequality, incarceration, and community re-entry.



Target Audience: Community members, front-line workers, service providers, students, and anyone interested in Indigenous justice and community reintegration.

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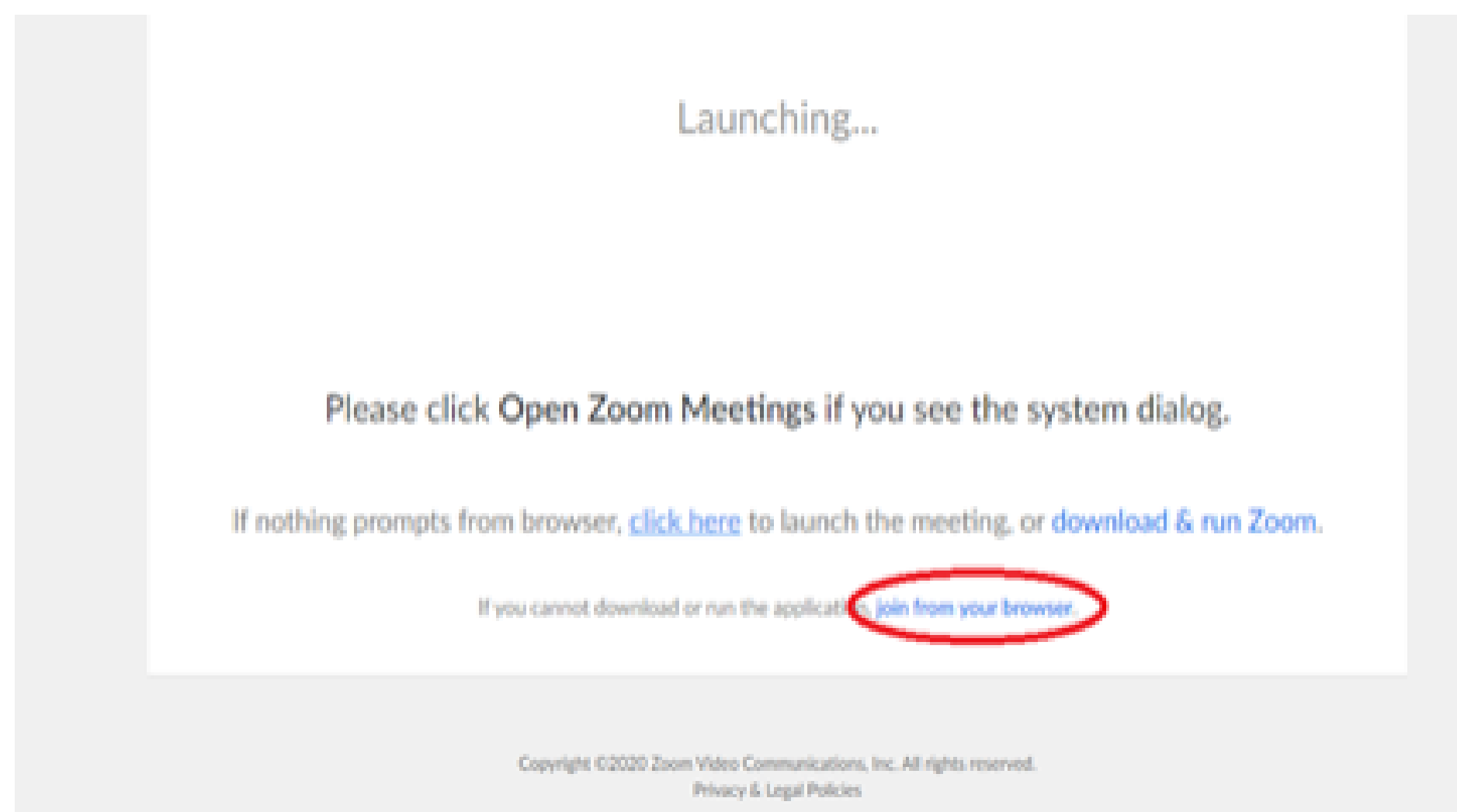
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