

WE'RE NOT THE BIG CITY: COMMUNITY AND DRUG USER- LED REPSONSES TO THE TOXIC DRUG SUPPLY

Location: Zoom Meeting ID: 840 8775 6853

Date: March 16, 2023

Time: Tech Check at 12: 30PM (Est)
Start at 1PM (Est)

AGENDA DETAILS

**TOPIC: WE'RE NOT THE BIG CITY: COMMUNITY AND DRUG USER-
LED REPSONSES TO THE TOXIC DRUG SUPPLY**

ATTENDANCE: 91

PRESENTERS: MKWA GIIZHIS, MISSY MCLEAN AND ASHLEY SMOKE

I. INTRODUCTIONS (ASHLEY)

- a. Welcome everyone
- b. Land acknowledgement & Opening
- c. Introduce the idea and overview

II. HOW WE ENDED UP HERE TODAY (ALL)

- a. History of Missy & Ashley

- i. What led Ash to Missy (Ashley)
 - Modeled tweak easy from Petersburg
 - People of personal and professional lived/living experience of the ongoing drug poisoning crisis and toxic drug supply.
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- ii. What led Missy to the work (Missy) ****i.e., Experiences, Holding Hope/Healing Hearts,** The idea that brought you to the community meeting planning an unsanctioned OPS
 - Ashley came to North Humberland and forced to move, actively using street supply and tried to get off street supply

b. How Missy and Mkwa Connected (Missy) ****Brief as it will come later**

- Ashley was doing a presentation where Missy was also presenting- family member and support and Drug User and advocates.
- Mkwa as the OG supports Missy and Ashley in their journey.
- Rural community (Cobourg) that is small and conservative and folks save and care for each other.
- Raises awareness and education, organizing the community for a safe space, not a lot of anonymity.

III. THE TOXIC DRUG SUPPLY

- a. State of Northumberland Drug Supply (Ashley) ****Drug from city, services of a small town, stigmatizing and racist attitudes of a small town= unique dynamic**
 - Drugs from the city and cut harmful other drugs into the drug supply.
 - PWUD taken advantage of by those in the city who capitalize on barriers for PWUD in rural areas (cutting and contamination)
 - Supply of the city with services of a small town- lack of HR services, lack of cultural relevance
 - Conservative political climate
- b. Peterborough Drug Supply (Mkwa)
 - Harm reduction practiced before harm reduction was introduced.
- c. The impact on families and supporting those affected by the toxic drug supply (Missy) ****Talk about your work with healing hearts and holding hope and what it is like supporting all those families.**

- Saved many lives in the community because of this initiative.
- Smudging takes places and connection to resources occur here.
- Low barrier support system
- Healing Hearts (MSTH)= Group which talked about grief from the harmful drug supply included parents who wanted to know about harm reduction
- Holding Hope (MSTH)
- ONPUD and NDU
- Tweak Easy Volunteers

IV. A RURAL, RESPONSE

- a. Ashley Introduce Missy (Ashley) **Will speak to the first day we went to the community meeting and Missy brought this tent saves lives and gathered a group of women & PWUD to lead the movement
 - Missy with an idea and Ashley wanted to change Drug Users with harm reduction.
- b. The idea and what brought Missy to the decision to start an OPS (Missy)
 - PWUD needed empowerment before engagement due to the level of stigma in this toxic political climate.
- c. The role and engagement of PWUD (Ashley) ***Lack of empowerment, need for engagement, Ashley to creatively engage and empower pwud in the area where they have been made to feel like vulnerable victims

V. THE INSPIRATION AND SUPPORT NETWORK- PETERBOROUGH OG'S (MKWA)

- a. History of Tweak Easy Peterborough (**When/Why/Who/How -
- b. Experience leading the initiative
- c. Growth of Tweak Easy
- d. The Impact Tweak Easy has on the Community
- e. The impact Tweak Easy has on the volunteers and those that support
 - **Good and Bad- Grief, Burnout, Lack of support, Inability to obtain sustainable funding, Rewards, Relationships, Helping the community, etc.)
- f. Collective, peer support network for Unsanctioned OPS's to support each other, network and share information

**What this looks like, how you started it and Why you decided to do this

- We all contributed in different ways: on-site volunteering at the OPS itself, fundraising, advocacy and promotion, administration/organizational support
- On-site volunteers are considered “core volunteers” and there are about a dozen of us who keep the physical site running, safe and stocked

VI. FUNDING

- a. Funding Landscape for Drug-User Orgs (Ashley) ***Funding landscape for Drug-user led organizations w/o non-for-profit status, limitations and constraints, How Northumberland Drug Users funds itself (crowd funding and onpud- plug the etransfer)- Ashley
- b. How Cobourg Funds Itself (Missy) ***e-transfer on slide
- c. How Peterborough funds its sites (Mkwa) **etransfer on slide
 - Northumberland Drug Users- crowd funded

VII. YOUR SUPPORT

- a. Why we need more support and Advocacy from Orgs and Gov't to keep our ppl alive (Ashley)
- b. Last Words (Missy and Mkwa)
- c. Thanks-You's and remember those who have propelled us into action (Ashley)

VIII. Q&A

1. Is there advice for folks who are nervous that is interested in doing something like this?
 - People with no experience, listen more than you speak and people are experts.
 - Set up on private land so police cannot remove
 - Don't be scared
2. What other organizations have responded to this initiative
 - Behind the scenes conversations with these organizations but once work was done they did not support