



HARM REDUCTION

THROUGH AN INDIGENOUS LENS

Understanding Indigenous History, Self Awareness

Factors that increase vulnerability to drug-related harms for Indigenous Peoples are framed by the historical and ongoing traumas related to colonization, including the residential school experience, poverty and child apprehension and involvement in the child welfare system, as well as inadequate access to education, health services and social supports. The system of reservation allocations plays a huge role in the social struggles, by way of creating a dependency system.

The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous is wide & getting wider. WHY?

RACISM AND STIGMA Systemic Racism toward First Nations is a barrier to Health care.	ACCESS TO TREATMENT First Nations peoples report less access to mental health and addiction treatment that is culturally safe and appropriate.	SOCIAL DETERMINANTS First Nations in BC are less advantaged than many other Populations.	INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA Unresolved Intergenerational Trauma is associated with a higher risk of substance use
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Source: First Nation Health Authority

Harm Reduction: Through an Indigenous Lens

Objective:

- Reduce opioid deaths & overdoses, as well as risks among the Indigenous population & promote culture as healing

Action:

- Increase access & reduce barriers to harm-reduction services, tools, sites and Culturally appropriate programs

Outcome:

- Increased culturally appropriate services servicing Indigenous clients, self identified and a sense of pride

Principles and Practises

- Indigenous Harm Reduction is a process of integrating cultural knowledge and values into the strategies and services associated with the work of harm reduction. (FNHA collaborated def.)
- Indigenous knowledge systems are strongly connected to spirituality, holism, and the natural environment.
- Significant emphasis is put on Culture as Treatment

SIMILAR PRINICIPLES

- Meet the person where they're at
- Peers helping peers, being inclusive, involve PWUD
- Enhance self awareness

Harm Reduction Response (Basic)

Increase understanding of harm reduction and make greater range of harm reduction options available

- Safe supply of substances
- Supervised consumption sites
- Substitution therapies

Support peer-support models

- Street patrol systems
- Supplying dealers with harm-reduction supplies

Identify locations with high frequencies in overdose events: Convenience stores, coffee shops, fast-food establishments

- Supply locations with harm-reduction tools
- Train staff in harm-reduction practices

Indigenous Harm Reduction Response

Enhance Cultural Identity, Instill Sense of Belonging

- Safe; **identify yourself/service**
- Supervised consumption sites; **create safe spaces**
- Substitution therapies; **Promote culture**

Indigenous Mentorship (*the process of passing on knowledge, wisdom and guidance*)

- Street patrol systems; **Building trust/relationships**
- Supplying dealers with harm-reduction supplies; **Knowledge sharing**

Indigenizing programs and services

- Supply locations with harm-reduction tools; **Culturally appropriate services**
- Train staff in harm-reduction practices; **ensure cultural competency**

Culture as the intervention

Objective:

- Increase cultural wellness and awareness for urban Indigenous people resulting in improved self-esteem & self-identity

Action:

- Create cultural programming to promote community engagement, introduce cultural competency to service providers

Outcome:

- Increased participation in cultural programming including low-barrier engagement, Pride and a sense of belonging

Definitions: Culture as intervention

Indigenous Decolonization: Self paced; a healing journey in response to post-traumatic stress caused by colonial expansion, genocide, & cultural assimilation

Culturally-focused treatment: Addresses wellness in a holistic sense that emphasizes balance among one's tradition, culture, language, & community