



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Decolonizing Addiction and Indigenous Harm Reduction

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Overview

1. Why We're Here
2. Decolonizing Addiction
3. Indigenous Harm Reduction
4. Sneak Preview





Background

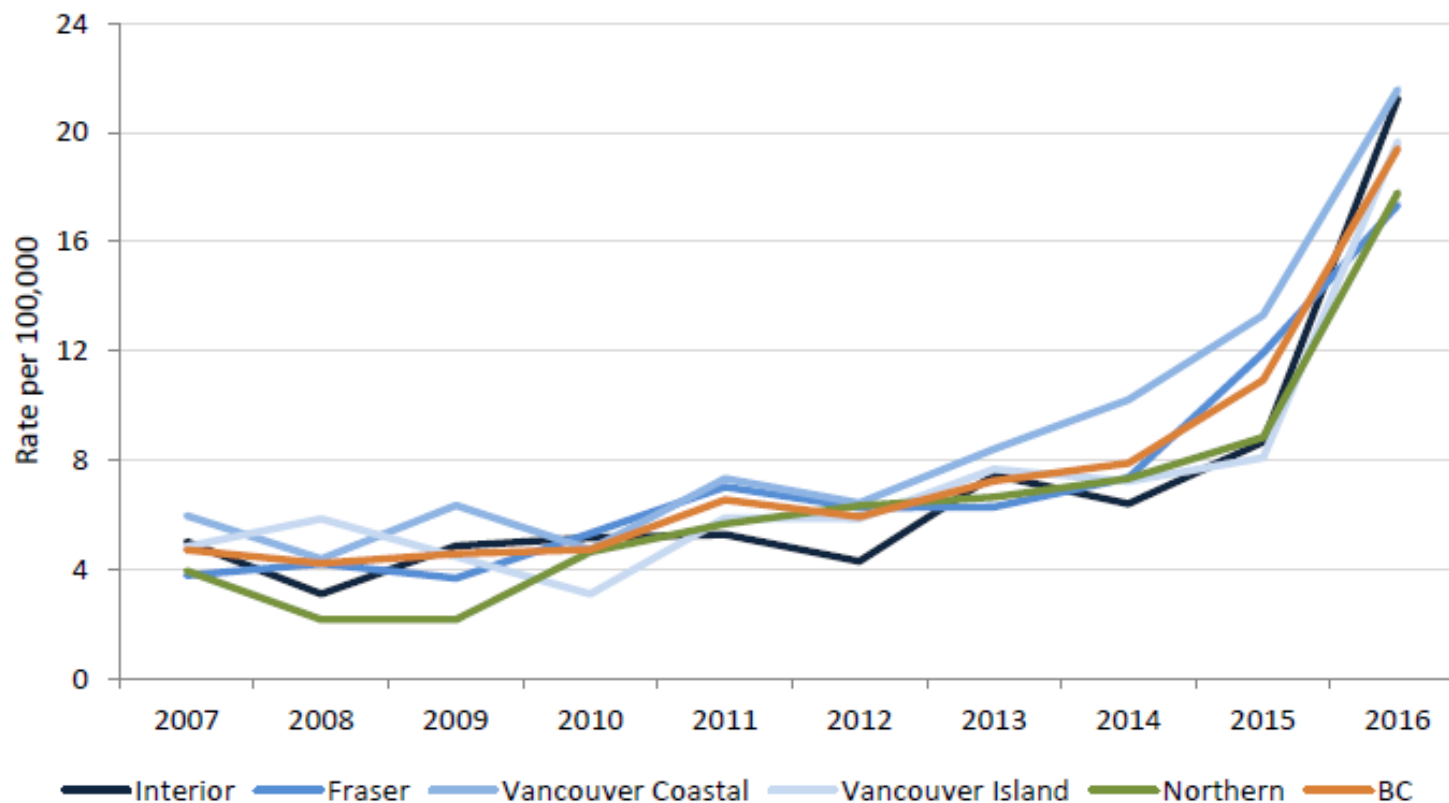
- 86+ communities distributing Naloxone
- 100+ workshops since May 2016
- Beyond the crisis: looking at transformation
- Working together





Provincial Emergency Update

Illicit Drug Overdose Death Rates by Health Authority, 2007-2016





Overdose Data and First Nations in BC

Preliminary Findings



Released July 28th, 2017

Overdose Data and First Nations in BC

Preliminary Findings

"In my twelve years of work as a physician in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, I learned a lot from my patients.

Many of them, a tragically disproportionate number, were First Nations people. Through the generosity and courage of their sharing, I saw that the sources of addiction do not originate in the substances people use but in the trauma they endured.

In fact, the self-medications my patients employed were an understandable response to a set of unnatural circumstances, namely the historical trauma inflicted on First Nations throughout Canadian history, and up to the present."

Dr. Gabor Maté

Good health interrupted: First Nations perspectives and experiences of holistic health and wellness

The First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness (previous page) is a visual depiction of First Nations peoples' collective philosophy that the mind, heart, body and spirit (i.e., mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of health) are all connected and are supported by culture, relationships, and responsibility to family, community and the land.¹

Colonization introduced devastating impacts to First Nations peoples' health through forcible displacement from the land and disconnection from culture, family and community, ceremony, language, knowledge, and traditions.² The resulting loss and trauma, intergenerational trauma and internalized racism continue to be experienced today through symptoms such as substance use and harmful behaviours that result in early loss of life and other health outcome disparities for First Nations peoples.



SYSTEM-WIDE OPIOID PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE FOR FIRST NATIONS IN BC

4

ACTION AREAS

- Prevent people who overdose from dying
- Keep people safe when using substances
- Create an accessible range of treatment options
- Support people on their healing journeys



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How do you define addiction?



Definition of Addiction

- Medical?
- Criminal?
- Social?
- Individual?
- _____?





Decolonizing Addiction: Why?

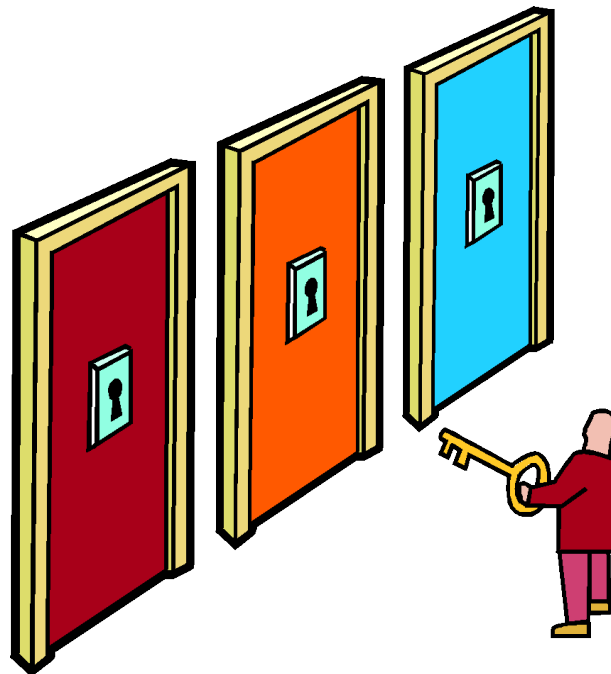




Decolonizing Addiction: Myths

Myth 1:

“Addiction is a choice, and if you loved me you would stop using substances”





Decolonizing Addiction: Myths

Myth 2:

“We need to kick out people who sell drugs out of the community to stop the problem”

First Nations should reconsider banishment, says Indigenous physician

Doctor cautions communities to focus on harm reduction rather than barring drug dealers

By Lenard Monkman, CBC News | Posted: Nov 03, 2017 6:00 AM ET | Last Updated: Nov 03, 2017 9:30 AM ET



Dr. Marcia Anderson says the war on drugs and other punitive approaches to end drug use have been ineffective. (Submitted by Melissa Brown)



Decolonizing Addiction: Myths

Myth 3:

“Rock-bottom factor”





Decolonizing Addiction: Myths

Myth 4:

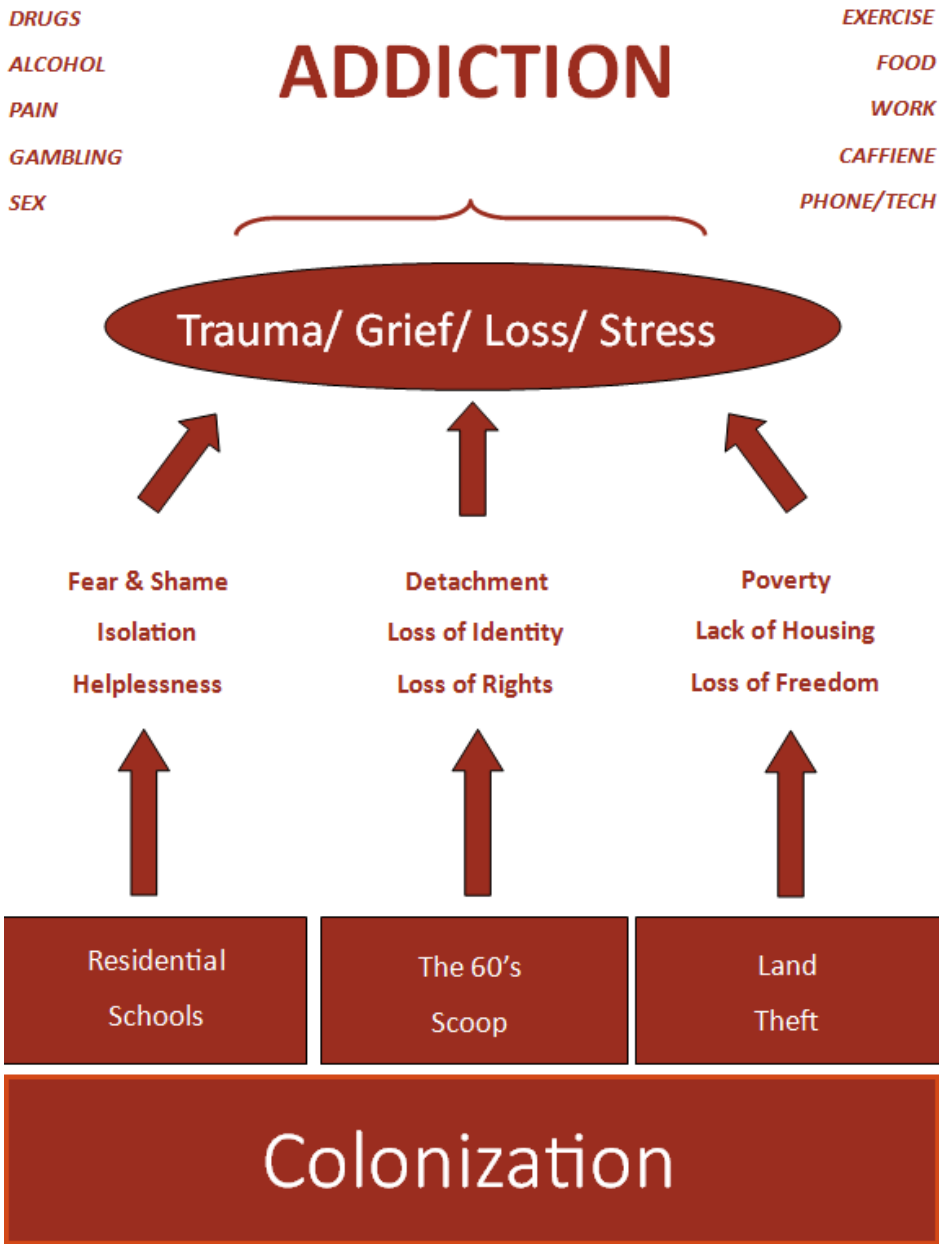
“All people who use substances are addicted”

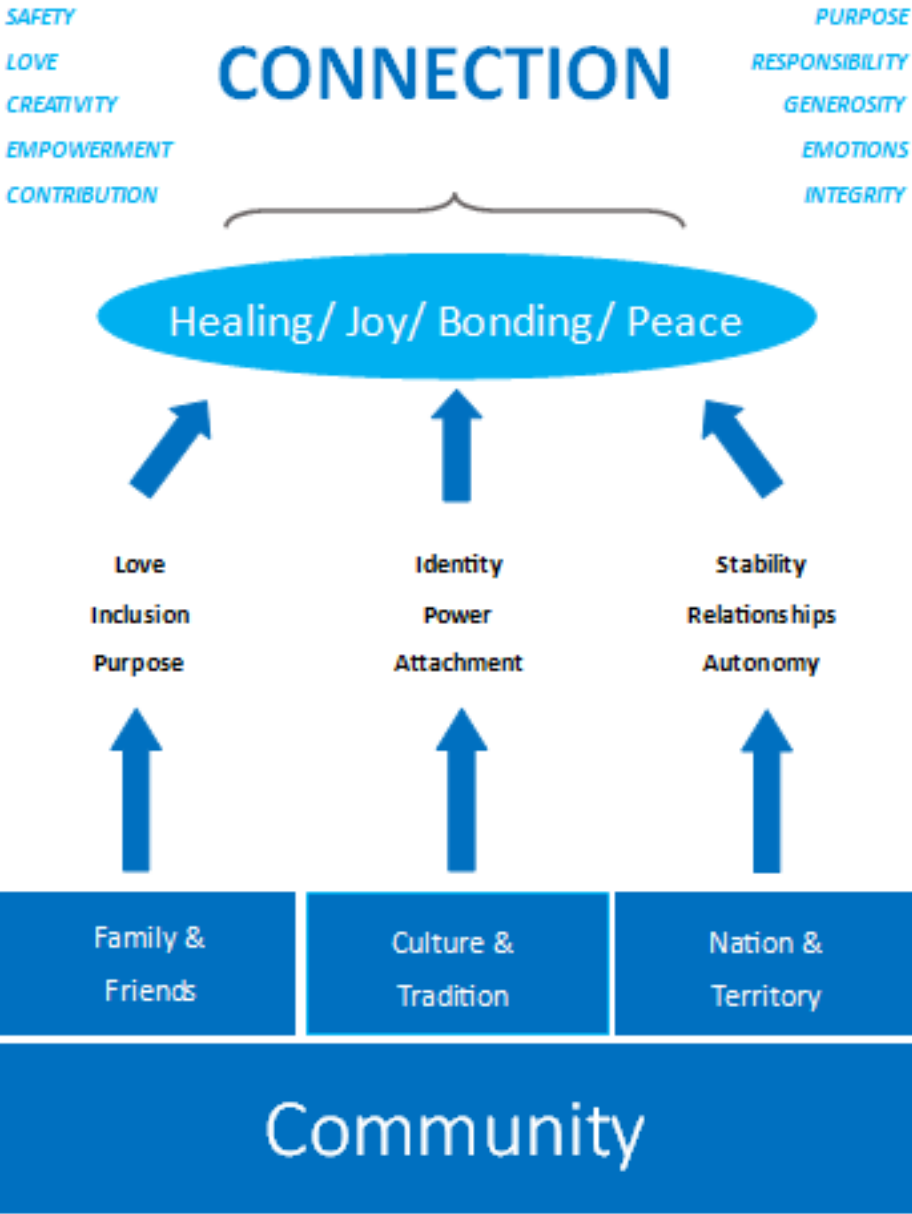




What about Prescription Drugs?









Harm Reduction

Needle Distribution,
Condoms, Outreach,
Relationships, Support,
Education, Dignity
Human Rights

Culture & Tradition

Fishing, Hunting,
Storytelling, Language,
Gathering, Artwork,
Canoeing, Singing,
Dancing, Ceremony,
Spending Time With
Each Other

Compassion,
Mindful Judgmental,
Relationships, Inclusion,
Patience, Care, Positive
Communication,
Meeting People Where
They Are At



Indigenous Harm Reduction Principles & Practice





Indigenous Harm Reduction Principles & Practice



Relationships and Care

Healing requires
working
together as one
heart and one
mind



Strength and Protection

Healing is
embedded in
culture and
tradition



Knowledge and Wisdom

Healing requires
time, patience
and reflection



Identity and Transformation

Healing involves
finding out who
you are and
accepting who
you were



Relationships and Care

This looks like:

- Forming relationships and providing outreach to people who seek support

This sounds like:

- Connecting with people who use substances over something other than their substance use



Strength and Protection

This looks like:

- Recognizing that culture and tradition are intergenerational strengths and keep communities resilient

This sounds like:

- Practicing culture and tradition and maintaining connection and relationships



Knowledge and Wisdom

This looks like:

- Meeting people where they are at on their healing journey and being mindful of where we are at on our healing journey

This sounds like:

- Providing good information and resources, actively working to reduce stigma, and being mindful of the way we talk about substance use



Identity and Transformation

This looks like:

- Providing ongoing opportunities for compassion and inclusion along the healing journey

This sounds like:

- Acknowledging that substance use is a journey, with abstinence not always as the end goal



Sneak Preview



Lessons Learned





Questions/Comments

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<http://www.fnha.ca/overdose>

<http://towardtheheart.com/>

