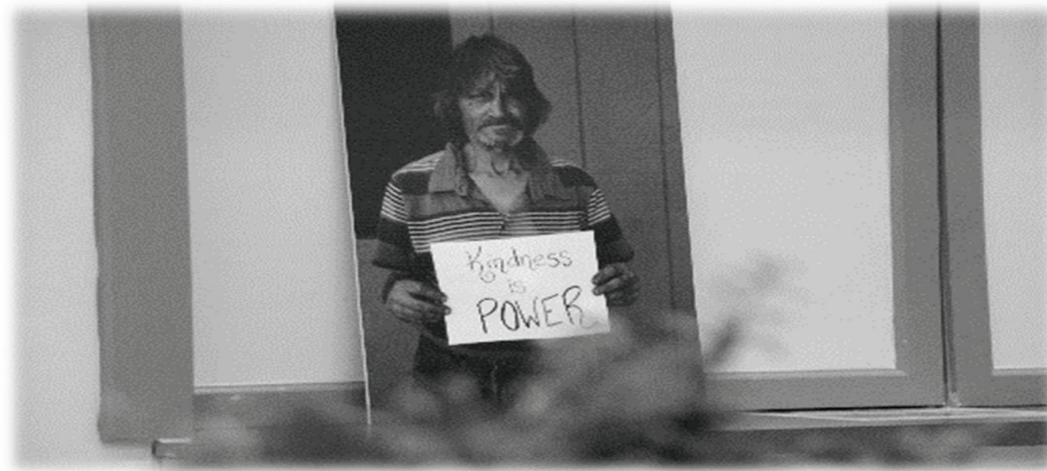


Its Not Your Problem Its **OUR** Problem

Substance Use and the Poisoned Drug Crisis in Cowichan



Cowichan Community Action Team



Our Cowichan Communities Health Network includes individuals, groups and organizations. We share a commitment to facilitating connections for good health within our communities. Our common ground is the World Health Organization's 12 Key Determinants of Health.

For good health, people need more than good health care: they also need adequate income, employment, education, social connections and healthy places to live. In fact, all 12 Determinants interact and affect health. By considering the whole picture and working together, all citizens of Cowichan communities can enjoy better health.

History

- Response to death
- Request from CVRD to establish a task force to identify sobering and detox services within Cowichan
- Sobering and Detox Task Force Report to BC Coroner and community partners
<https://www.ourcchn.ca/cat/Final-%20Sobering%20and%20Detox%20Report%20May%2031%202016.pdf>
- Team moved beyond original task once meeting together
- Our Cowichan Communities Health Network requested to provide facilitation
- Lobbied for additional funding
- Created service delivery model for Sobering and Assessment Centre
- Worked to reduce barriers to access
- Continue to evaluate

Our Journey- Where We Began

- Sobering and Detox Task Force
- Sobering and Assessment Program



Sobering Beds Program

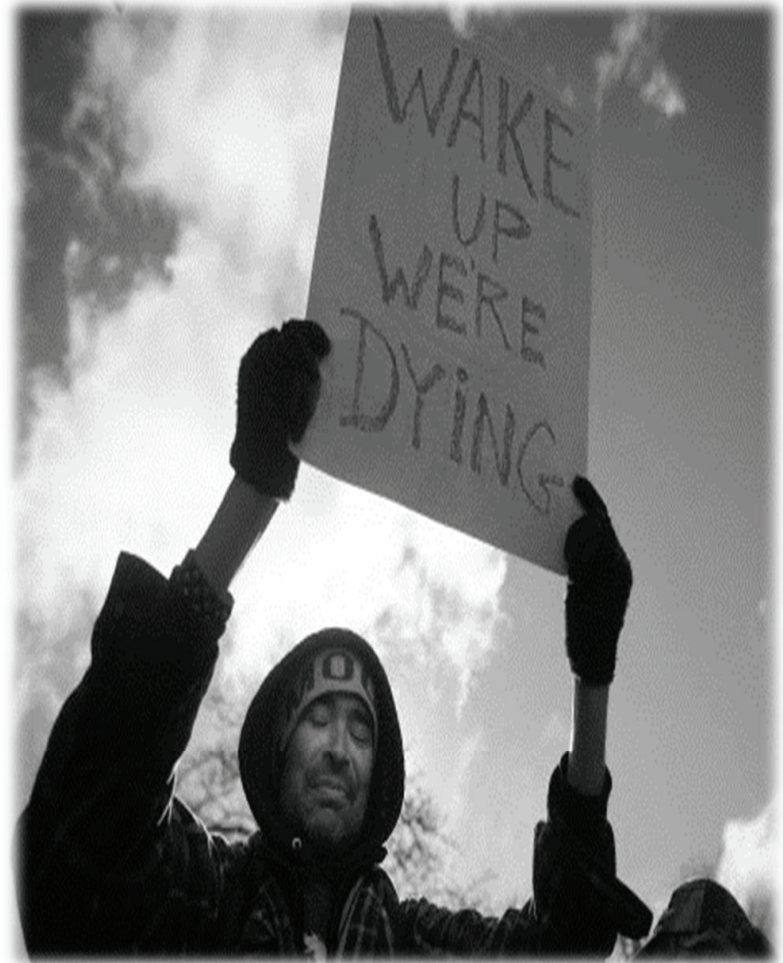
- Sobering program opens December 2016
- Diverts 500 individuals a year from jail cells
- From December 2016 to Dec 2022 the program has supported 8914 client visits. (Average of 1500 client visits per year)
- Establishment of the Community Response Team

Community Response Team



And then the Opioid Crisis Hits

- Foundation of a collaborative team already established
- Able to respond immediately
- Add resources and expertise that was missing
- Tackle the complex challenge together



Overdose Prevention Sites

COWICHAN VALLEY CITIZEN



Vancouver Island Health Authority has opened Cowichan's overdose prevention site at 715 Canada Ave. (Google Maps)

Long-awaited overdose prevention site opens in Duncan

“This new overdose prevention site... will save the lives of Cowichan residents”


Sep. 18, 2017 9:37 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS

Overdose Prevention Site

- Opened Sept 12, 2017 on Canada Ave -112 visits per month
- Moved April 7, 2018 to Trunk Rd- 21,794 per year
- Moved again in 2020 to the new Wellness and Recovery Centre – over 31,000 visits per year since then
- **We have lost 40 individuals to toxic drug poisoning in 2022 in our small community**
- **0 people at our OPS have died**

This indicates that the extent of substance use was far greater in our region than anyone had imagined. The poisoned drug pandemic brought people out of the shadows from what was once hidden.

Community Response Team to Community Action Team

- Ministry of Health identifies Cowichan as priority community
 - CAT to align with provincial response and build community of practice
 - Funding comes with this designation
 - We have chosen to focus on entire region
 - Hire CAT Coordinator and Peer Coordinator (15-16 hours per week each)
 - Increase membership – open door
- 

Our Strengths- Communication- Advocacy Cowichan Community **Leadership Table**

- Mayor, City of Duncan
- Mayor, Municipality of North Cowichan
- Chief, Cowichan Tribes
- Mayor, Town of Lake Cowichan
- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- MLA and MP
- Superintendent, RCMP
- Chair, School District 79
- MHO, Island Health

Our Community Action Team Leadership

- Our Cowichan Communities Health Network
- Medical Health Officer, Island Health
- Cowichan Tribes
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Cowichan Valley Branch
- Business Representatives
- Community Member at Large
- Peers

Our Community Action Team Members

- Our Cowichan Communities Health Network
- RCMP
- City of Duncan
- Municipality of North Cowichan
- Cowichan Tribes
- Town of Lake Cowichan
- Peers and Families with lived experience
- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- Business Representatives
- BCEHS
- Front-line Community Agencies
- First Nations Health Authority
- Cowichan Division of Family Practice
- Cowichan Housing Association
- Island Health, Mental Health & Addictions
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Cowichan Valley Branch
- MLA and representatives
- Social Planning Cowichan
- Cowichan Housing Association
- School District 79
- Discovery Youth and Family SU Services
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Lookout Health and Housing Society
- Phoenix Wellness Centre
- SO many more

Education, Learning and Addressing Stigma

- University of Victoria Centre for Addictions Research of BC
\$12,000.00 grant
- Neighbourhood/ Community Dialogues
- Open Houses
- Us and Them Film Screening
- Focus on Facts Data and Analysis Reviewed
- Research and Best Practices
- Education Sessions
- Overdose Awareness Days
- Stigma Exhibit
- Sharps information
- Regional Symposiums
- Peer Engagement
- Open Door



CAT

Overdose Response through a culture of collaboration

Our Cowichan/CAT/CMHA Back Bone –provides oversight and ongoing communication, holds historical data and documents

Monthly Meetings, Shared Planning, Shared Evaluation, Shared Funding, Weekly Newsletter and Social Media

Indigenous Cultural Approach

Village

Harm Reduction/
Naloxone

Using Alone

Peer Led Street Smart/
Outreach

Youth Engagement /Supports

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CAT and Others- Aligning our Efforts

- Coming to a place where no ONE owns the problem- We ALL do
- How do we work together?
- Where can we align our efforts?
- What do we do when things go wrong or the going gets tough?



WE'RE BETTER STANDING TOGETHER

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO THE POISONED DRUG CRISIS

• HUL'QUM'NUM HOME TERRITORY •

All we are is a **STORY**...

All our work is in **RELATIONSHIP** to understanding stories.

It's important to **SHARE** our stories **OVER and OVER** and find ourselves in that story and **invite** people in.

REACH OUT to help members of our **COMMUNITY**

When we started out, we had to **FACE** the ways we didn't work well together...

...but we're a helluva lot better when we **DO!**

THE VILLAGE

EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES!

We have a safe place to come back to

As a community, we **KNOW** what we **NEED**.

Now: What is **OUR PLAN?**

COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM (CAT) IS A DOORWAY FOR CONNECTION

How do we frontline the **heart-centered services?**

STABILIZE then create where people go next

Grow **TRUST** and relationships

offer **LOW BARRIER** primary care

Provide **health** and a **S-A-F-E** place

come together to work in **partnership**

I am **healing**, I am **growing**, and I am **here today**.

See the **Strength** in the person to your right.

ANY OF US CAN BE VULNERABLE

Hold SPACE for those left behind... and for possibilities

let's come to our **senses**

BREATHE

GROUND OURSELVES

Uy' kwunus i lumnamu

Ii ch'o' sthuthi?

create **sacred space**

visit in person

Show how we're **interconnected**

Support youth

Shift attitudes

compassion empathy support

I value you

MY SON

PEER

OUTREACH TEAM

share our vision

educate

listen

respect

I have a business to run...

...and I want to help.

Continue to invite and welcome people into the field

Spark DIALOGUE

WITH CARING CONVERSATIONS CARDS

Pregnancy is a key moment of opportunity for systems change

I practice **SELF-REFLECTION** and own **invisible racism**

We'll meet you where you're at.

MIDWIFE

Tell the truth and learn from mistakes

look to our mentors

Appreciate all the work we've done

How long have you been in this field?

10 YEARS!

20 YEARS!

30 YEARS!

Jennifer Shepherd
www.livingtapestries.ca

WE'RE ALL CONNECTED



DATA

access use share

Detox and rehab in Cowichan

Address **Stigma** in our systems

Learn about **toxic brain injury**

The Voice of Individuals

- Reaching out in dialogue with individuals with lived experience
- Listening
- Empowering
- Created a Street School and Street Smart



Our Vision for Wellness
All people of the Cowichan communities enjoy good health and wellbeing.


Community

- Restore Hope, Safety and Security
- Renew Compassion, Community and Collaboration
- Identify and Address Root Causes

Persons Who Use Substances

- Reduce Harm to Self and Others
- Stabilize and Treat Addiction
- Support Pathways to Recovery
- Reintegrate into Community

Our Vision for Community Wellness

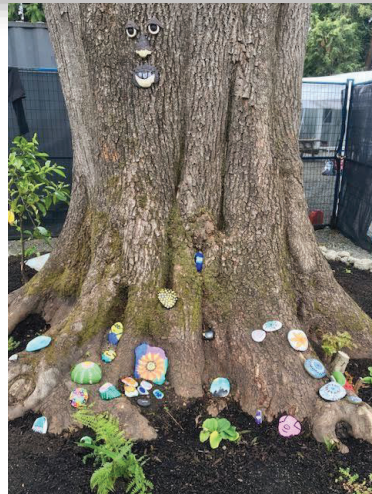
- Lead by Peers, data, best practices and a community solution to our challenges Cowichan partners created a business case model for what was needed in our region.
 - Presented it to Minister Judy Darcy in November of 2019.
- 

The Story of the Village

We have gone from this...



To this..... The Village



It is more than a housing model. It is a recovery model, community improvement model and a mechanism to change outcomes for the residents, neighbours, health services and law makers.

Services Available

- Shelter & Stabilization
 - 3 meals daily (2 funded)
 - Showers & bathrooms; offsite laundry
 - Medication administration (TBA)
 - Individualized case planning to work towards self-identified goals:
 - Housing, Health, Legal, Family, Cultural, (Pre) employment Housing retention, health/wellness services, learning opportunities, cultural, vocational and life skills
 - CAT
 - Cowichan Tribes
 - Peer programming
 - Island Health Teams
 - Cowichan Tribes and House of Friendship
 - Island Health teams (SUIT, ACT, Public Health)
 - Work experience & volunteer programs



Peer Program

- Peer program currently employs:
 - Village residents
 - peers from community
- 4-8 hour shifts daily
- Peer programming outcomes:
 - Skill building
 - Work experience
 - Confidence, further building stability
 - Provides purpose
 - Increased self-reliance
 - Feelings of pride in giving back

“Since moving into the site I've managed to maintain full time employment, I've put on weight, I've come a long ways. My family looks at me in a completely different light now.”



Peer Empowerment and Leadership

- Narcan Popups



- Building Bridges



- Youth Outreach



- Peer to Peer Support




Positive Guest Experience

- Previously homeless for 5+ years
- suffering with acute, chronic health issues nearly impossible to have treated
- Remarkable improvements in quality of life
- Accessing healthcare supports
- Family now know where connect with him and now pick him up regularly
- He's attending local community meetings improving his life
- Connecting with staff and community partners onsite
- Attained identification, a bank account, and started applying for jobs one month of moving in
- He's express happiness, gratitude and contentment with staff, neighbours and friends

"The temporary 'small shack' community has helped my husband and I because this allows us to stay off the street and keeps us warm, safe, and encourages us to live more healthy lifestyles. We are very grateful for the opportunity to have a place to sleep, a place of safety, a place where we can eat, a place to stay warm. Without this community we would still be on the street fighting. Thank you for all the help."



Key Messages to Overcome the Challenges of Change

- It's not WHAT we do it is HOW we do it in Cowichan.
 - 100% comes from trusting and collaborative relationships and working together each contributing what they can.
 - Peers are a part of every step of the way.
 - We have consistent and ongoing leadership that inspires and keeps us motivated and let's us believe in what is possible.
 - We hold each other up in dark days and hard times.
 - We are all heading in the same direction together and have now grown from 12 members to over 200!
 - We adapt, reflect and move forward to address challenges as they arise.
- 

Why do we do This?



I am a father & a son.
I am 52 years old.
My favorite color is blue.
I wanted to be a truck driver when I grew up.



I had morphine for the first time at age 21.
People assume that I am a bad person.
If I had one wish it would be to be pain free and be
able to do the things I used to do.

I was 17 years old when I was diagnosed with
HIV. I had a heart attack because of stress
and I had to quit my job at the time.



For More Information

- Cindy Lise Regional Facilitator Our Cowichan Communities Health Network cindylisecchn@shaw.ca
- Johanne Kemmler CAT Coordinator Johanne.f.kemmler@gmail.com
- Cailey Foster Peer Coordinator cowichancatpeers@gmail.com
- Supporting documents and videos can be found on Our Cowichan website www.ourcchn.ca