

# A Two-eyed Seeing Approach to Wholistic Healing and Wellness for People with Drug Use Experience



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# Purpose:



The purpose of the project is to enhance our understanding of how cultural and land-based wellness interventions promote healing, and develop a stronger sense of community in Indigenous people with drug use experience.

This project is peer-developed and peer-led: **completing research with** Indigenous people's participation rather than **conducting research on** Indigenous people.

Sturgeon Lake,  
Saskatchewan

Vancouver and  
Sts'ailes Xa'xa  
Temexw, British  
Columbia



**Sts'ailes**

# Two-eyed Seeing Methodology

To see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous Ways of Knowing, while seeing from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge.

Learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.

# Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

CBPR recognizes that traditional and cultural knowledge is invaluable to scientific knowledge.

Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Community and Academic Researchers from British Columbia and Saskatchewan collaborated on this project

## Sequential Sharing Circle

As a qualitative research tool, sequential sharing circles allow researchers to build rapport with the participants. Each sharing circle was co-led by the Elder, community research associates, and academic research associates

## Portrait of Me

Portrait of Me is a self-assessment tool used to measure the effect of cultural interventions. Originally developed by Sturgeon Lake First Nation.

## Land Based Healing

Indigenous peoples use land based activities and ceremonies for reviving and promoting physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.

## MWSSD

The Medicine Wheel Spirit Shadow Dance (MWSSD) is a strengths-based approach for participants to better understand and explore their substance use.

# Inclusivity

Protocols of the cultural practices vary from nation to nation, and some participants may experience barriers to participating in these activities.



Keeping with the protocols for use of the sacred lands and territory of the Sts'ailes:

- The team endeavored to expand inclusivity while honoring cultural and traditional practices
- Permission was requested and given by the Chief and Counsel to host our retreat
- Permission was granted by Chief and Counsel for the team to provide harm reduction supplies to participants.
- For restricted medications, our Doctor corresponded with their physicians to ensure there was no disruption.

# Preliminary Findings – 5 Themes

## Emotional Growth

An evolving state of emotions based on a sense of trust, belonging, and valuing consistent relationships

## Willingness

Willingness to absorb new stimuli and benefit from it

## Spiritual Strength

Creating a sense of well-being, connection, balance, and a better understanding of self

## Connections

Creating their own community and social family network, a potpourri of shared cultures and traditions

## Reawakening of Culture

Revitalizing or learning cultural teachings that have been missing in their lives

# Preliminary Findings for the Vancouver Components



- ❖ Land-based healing is vital to restore and promote physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness for the urban Indigenous community.
- ❖ MWSSD provides a shame-free space for people to share deeply personal stories, and provides tools for personal insight.