

HIGHLIGHTING

Participatory Evaluation of Phase 3 of CAI's Overdose Prevention and Education Network (OPEN)

THE ROLE of

in the

OVERDOSE CRISIS



This evaluation provided evidence regarding the work peers are leading in reducing harm and preventing overdoses

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION:

EXPLORE THE IMPACT of OPEN ON:

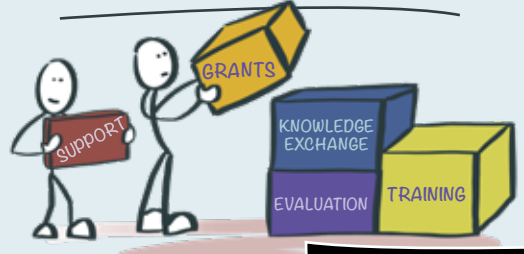


PEER ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNITY RESPONSE

SUPPORT GRANTEE CAPACITY BUILDING

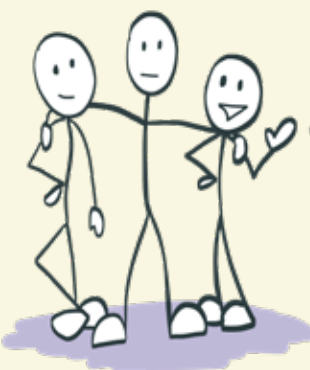


EVALUATION DESIGN

INTERVIEW & FACILITATION SKILLS

* WHO ARE PEERS ?

Peers are people with lived and living experience of substance use who use their lived expertise to inform effective health service programming and delivery.



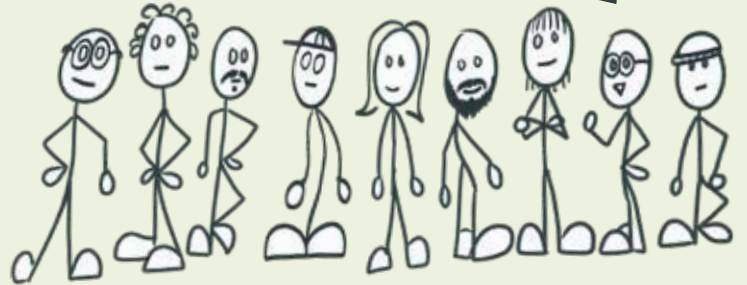
"You need current or semi-current lived experience, and not as a recreational user but as someone who's been criminalized for it, so that you have a baseline for understanding the systems to navigate through."

We acknowledge that this evaluation was conducted on the unceded ancestral lands of the x̱w̱məθkw̱ əy̱əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tseilil-Waututh) Nations.

ABOUT THE EVALUATION:



WHO IS THE EVALUATION STEERING COMMITTEE (ESC)?



The ESC was made up of:

5 PEERS and 2 SERVICE PROVIDERS from OPEN funded communities and 2 PEERS from BCCDC's PEEP team* and CAI STAFF



GOALS OF THE ESC:

- PEER TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING
- NETWORKING
- INTERVIEWING SKILLS
- FACILITATING DATA PARTY
- EVALUATION FEEDBACK

"You need to be able to talk to people in a clear and concise manner with no judgement. You need to have an open heart to the individuals who use... You have to be a good listener, because when you're working in groups, you're dealing with other people's opinions..."

THE EVALUATION DESIGN:

This evaluation used PARTICIPATORY DESIGN



Participatory evaluation actively includes and supports the capacity building of project stakeholders in the process to help ensure the result meets their needs and is usable.

METHODOLOGY



DOCUMENT REVIEW



ONLINE SURVEY



INTERVIEWS

↳ Peer Interviews

↳ Community Ally Interviews



DATA PARTY

FINDINGS:

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

MOMENTUM IS BUILDING

57%

of 28 Peers interviewed have been working through OPEN funded projects for a year

"Peers in our project are very essential front-line responders. Some of them have responded to hundreds of overdoses...They're leaders in the community and they are the connectors."

PEERS ARE ESSENTIAL

Peers are engaging in many aspects of the province's overdose response:

- ✓ front-line service provision
- ✓ community-level engagement and education
- ✓ systems-level advocacy

Peers are leading a wide range of harm reduction and overdose prevention work

A majority of peer interviewees gave out harm reduction supplies, shared information and did outreach

Giving out harm reduction supplies	26
Sharing information	26
Outreach	26
Referrals	25
Peer support or navigation	24
Naloxone training	23
Distributing naloxone kits	23
Connecting people with Overdose Prevention Sites	22
Mentoring	21
Drug Checking	17

Peers are also involved in community engagement activities:

- 24** Participate in advisory committees
- 23** Assisting with projects
- 22** Public speaking or advocacy
- 16** Training service providers

Peers are necessary to foster trust and build relationships with people who use substances

SUPPORT FOR HEALING

OPEN's focus on peer engagement gives grantees the ability to support the healing journeys of peer workers, whose work focuses on connecting hard-to-reach people with supports, harm reduction supplies and life-saving naloxone.



Peer work gives people the opportunity to connect with others, practice empathy and learn self-value.



FINDINGS CONTINUED:

UNRECOGNIZED WORK

Peers feel **underappreciated** / **unacknowledged** for the work that they do.

Peers want decision makers to:

- connect with peers without stigma
- include peers in the decision making process
- provide more peer funding
- create 24-7 culturally safe support
- decriminalize and regulate a safe drug supply

BARRIERS TO MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION



STIGMA

Particularly when peers are dealing with health care professionals, bureaucrats, politicians and police.



FUNDING

9/28 peers were volunteers. There needs to be an expansion of paid employment to train and hire more peers.

CALLS TO ACTION:



1 Acknowledge the integral role of peers in BC's overdose response, by:

- Ensuring robust representation of a diversity of peer voices at all overdose response strategy decision-making tables.
- Financially supporting initiatives that foster social inclusion and help peers build connections, network and create community.

2 Rapidly expand and fund paid peer worker positions within community-based organizations in a supported and sustainable way.

3 Support the adoption of organizational / institutional stigma auditing processes and standards of inclusive practice by all overdose response stakeholders.

- Ensure that services and supports for people who use drugs are trauma-informed, culturally safe, and free from stigma.

4 Decriminalize drug use and provide a regulated, safe supply of drugs.

