

KEY ELEMENTS: INDIGENOUS-CENTRED HARM REDUCTION AND HEPATITIS C PROGRAMS

*These guiding principles are based off a national programming dialogue with Canadian Indigenous programming leaders. This list can help you to plan or evaluate impactful programs in your community. To read the full report, *Indigenous Approaches to Harm Reduction and Hepatitis C Programs*, visit CATIE.ca.*

CREATE SPACE FOR INDIGENOUS PRACTICES, LANGUAGES AND CULTURE

Indigenous Ways of Knowing have a central role and value. Indigenous Healers, traditional medicines, arts, connection to land and other traditional practices can help reconnect an individual to their culture and create space for healing.

It is important to recognize that Indigenous cultures are unique and constantly changing. People will vary on how closely they identify with Indigenous culture. It is important to give individuals the space to choose how to engage with programs and service providers.

PROMOTE SELF-DETERMINATION IN PLANNING AND DELIVERING PROGRAMS

Indigenous and community-led programs are more impactful. Community members know their own needs, resources and people best. When communities or community agencies directly control program resources or funding, they can plan and deliver appropriate services that will be sustainable in the future.

ENGAGE PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE IN PROGRAM PLANNING AND DELIVERY

People with lived or living experience have unique knowledge and experience that is necessary to plan and deliver effective programs. They can advise and consult on the planning and evaluation process. Agencies should employ them to both plan and deliver services.

DESTIGMATIZE PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITIES

Judgment and rejection is why many people mistrust and avoid the health system. Recognize that stigma can come from several sources. One can be an advocate and educator in the community to destigmatize drug use and hepatitis C, counter racism in the health system and deliver programs with respect and compassion.

CREATE PROGRAMS THAT ARE PERSON-CENTRED

Programs are ultimately about serving people. Do not let drug use or disease status define someone. A wholistic approach to care addresses all facets of wellness, not just individual diseases or conditions. Consider who an individual is and where they are coming from, including the role of their family, community and past experiences. Give love and compassion, and base care in positivity and non-judgment.

RESPECT FOR ONE'S PERSONAL JOURNEY

Adapt programs to serve people no matter where they are at in their wellness journey. People should be able to choose how they work with service providers and determine their own wellness journey. This may mean prioritizing other issues above hepatitis C or drug-use treatment as part of their wellness journey.

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