

Community-driven harm reduction programs in Canada

Rebecca Morris-Miller, Grenfell Ministries

— Kim Ritchie, Grenfell Ministries

Michael Clarke, Manitoba Harm Reduction Network

Colleen Tower, Northern Health Region

Samantha Pranteau, Tenant Overdose Response Organizers Program

Matthew Bonn, Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY



JOURNÉE MONDIALE CONTRE L'HÉPATITE

JULY 28 | 28 JUILLET



Canada's source for
HIV and hepatitis C
information

La source canadienne
de renseignements sur
le VIH et l'hépatite C

Agenda

1. Context Setting and Overview

Matt Bonn, Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs (CAPUD)

2. Presentations:

- **Grenfell Ministries Overdose Prevention Line**

Rebecca Morris-Miller & Kim Ritchie

- **Flin-Flon Harm Reduction Lockers**

Michael Clarke & Colleen Tower

- **Tenant Overdose Response Organizers (TORO) Program**

Samantha Pranteau

3. Panel discussion and Q&A

Type your questions and comments in the chat box!



The screenshot shows a software window with a menu bar (File, View, Help) and a globe icon. Below the menu bar is a dark blue header for the 'Audio' section, which includes a 'Sound Check' indicator with a green bar and a question mark. The main area contains two radio buttons: 'Computer audio' (selected) and 'Phone call'. Below this, a microphone icon is followed by the word 'MUTED' in orange. A dropdown menu shows 'Microphone (HD Webcam C510)'. A volume slider is visible below the microphone. At the bottom, another dropdown menu shows 'Speakers (High Definition Aud...'. Below the audio settings is a 'Questions' section with a dark blue header and a large white text area. At the very bottom, there is a text input field with the placeholder text '[Enter a question for staff]'. On the left side of the window, there is a vertical toolbar with four icons: an orange arrow, a red microphone with a slash, a white square, and a green hand with an upward arrow.



Grenfell
Ministries

OVERDOSE PREVENTION LINE

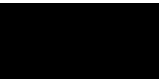
*Reach Out. Resources.
Reconnection.*

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Grenfell Ministries would like to acknowledge that the City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

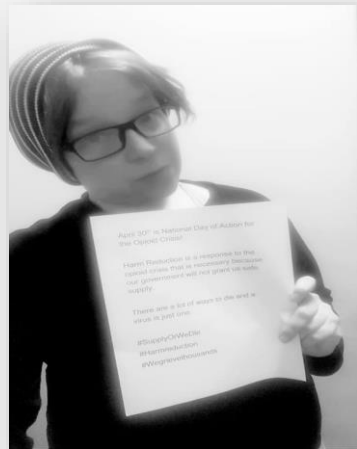
Today, the City of Hamilton is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island (North America) and we recognize that we must do more to learn about the rich history of this land so that we can better understand our role.

§To truly support our indigenous communities we need to be ally's and co-conspirator's in protest's and advocacy towards greater change for those communities.



A BIT ABOUT REBECCA AND KIM

Rebecca is the Founder and Connections in Corrections Program Coordinator of Grenfell Ministries. She utilizes her lived experiences with substance use, homelessness, trauma, and recovery to connect and build rapport with folks we serve and community. She is skilled in engineering new forms of harm reduction. Rebecca is an advocate for changes that address the injustices and structural inequities that our prominent within our society. Her pronouns are She/Her.



Kim is the Program Director of Grenfell Ministries and a community worker whose career has focused on developing innovative programs and frontline work in residential settings that serve women experiencing homelessness. Kim's extensive lived experiences with substance use, homelessness and sex work have guided her advocacy efforts on many fronts in the hopes of initiating shifts in social consciousness and deconstruct structural violence. Her pronouns are She/Her.



ABOUT GRENFELL

Grenfell Ministries, a Unitarian Universalist faith-based Ministry that aims to provide support to marginalized communities through programming that focuses on seniors, youth, those experiencing homelessness folks who use substances, and those who are or were formerly incarcerated. We serve with integrity, compassion and promote individuality and self-empowerment. We are committed to building communities through advocacy and activism.

We are a peer-run , peer-led organization that strives to improve the quality of life for those we serve on their terms. In solidarity, we offer organized voices of lived experience in the hopes of encouraging programming, policy adaptation and to reduce stigma and discrimination. We collaborate with various organizations and services to assist folks with meeting their needs and offer grief support to families who have lost loved ones to the overdose epidemic on an individual and group basis.



Overdose Prevention Line - Grenfell Ministries

Our Programs Related to Overdose Prevention

- Ontario Wide Overdose Prevention Line
- Street Outreach Team
- Naloxone Training and Distribution
- Harm Reduction Supply Distribution
- Education Around Mental Health and Substance Use

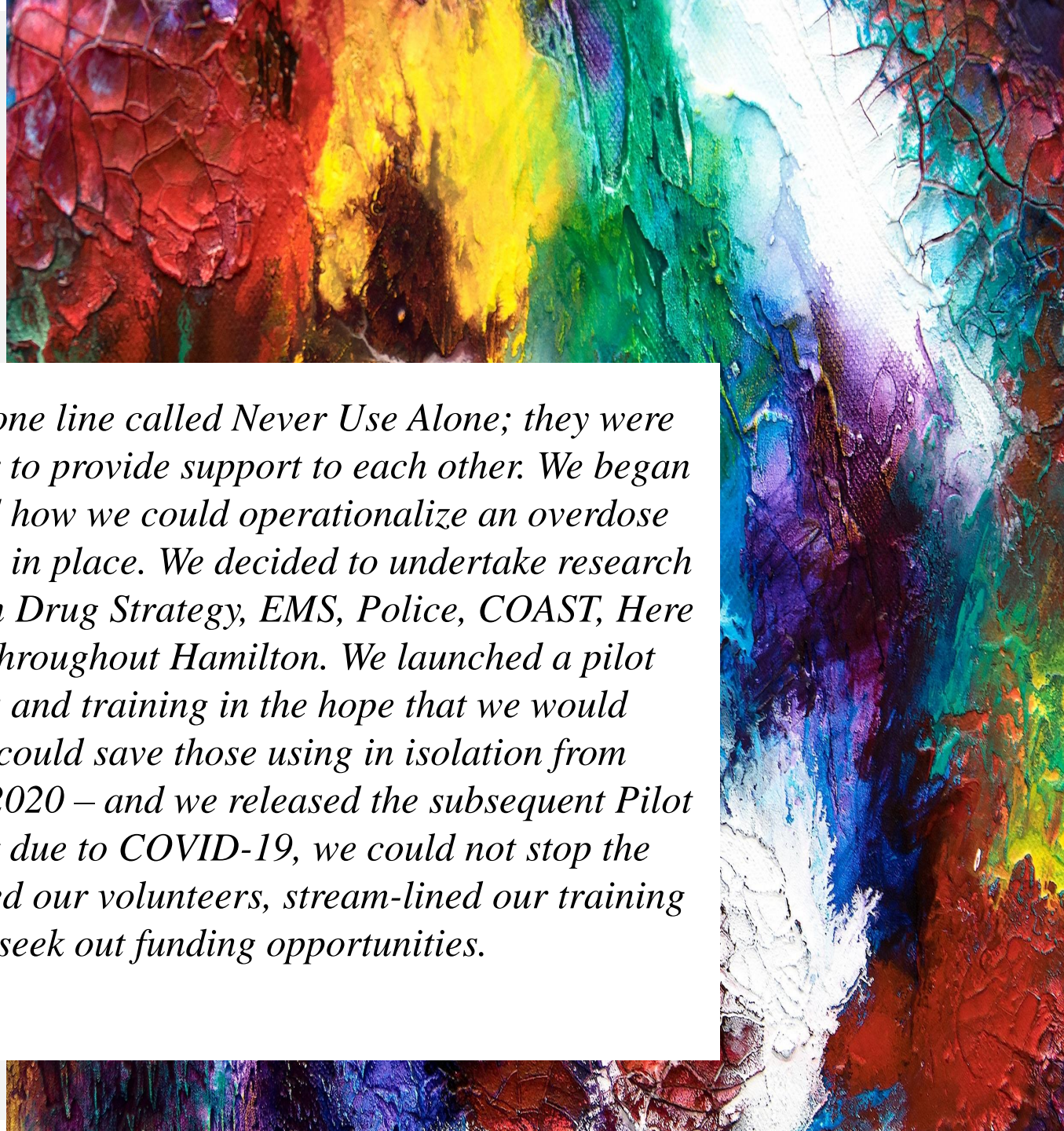


AN INTRODUCTION VIDEO

https://youtu.be/LaYEK2O5_os

HOW THE OPL CAME TO BE

We first saw that the United States had a phone line called Never Use Alone; they were a group of peers that had organized in order to provide support to each other. We began to investigate the Canadian possibilities and how we could operationalize an overdose prevention phone line legally, with protocols in place. We decided to undertake research and met with Marchese Pharmacy, Hamilton Drug Strategy, EMS, Police, COAST, Here 24/7 and various community organizations throughout Hamilton. We launched a pilot project to collect data, fine-tune our policies and training in the hope that we would create a tangible phone line service that we could save those using in isolation from death. Our pilot project ended on April 25, 2020 – and we released the subsequent Pilot Project Report; we did, however, decide that due to COVID-19, we could not stop the operation of the line. We have since increased our volunteers, stream-lined our training process to an online format and continue to seek out funding opportunities.



WHAT IS THE OVERDOSE PREVENTION LINE

Grenfell Ministries Overdose Prevention Line (OPL) is a number that folks who use substances can call when they are about to use alone. The OPL is a peer developed initiative, and the call will be answered without judgment. Callers will be asked for a “code,” which is comprised of the first two initials of their first name, the first two initials of their last name and their year of birth. We also ask what they are about to use and how much, as well as their location. No personal data such as phone number, street address, or full names of callers is collected or stored. The operator will stay with them on the phone line during administrations of substances, in the event that they receive no response after administration of narcotics the operator will call 911 and alert them to a possible overdose at the location provided by the caller.



Grenfell Ministries Ontario Wide
Overdose Prevention Line
1-888-853-8542
WE WILL ANSWER YOUR CALL

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of colors including red, yellow, green, blue, and purple, with a cracked, marbled texture. A white semi-transparent rectangular box is positioned in the lower right quadrant, containing text. The text 'HOW IT WORKS' is written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font. To its right, the text 'Training, Volunteer, Support and Daily Operations' is written in a smaller, white, italicized serif font. A solid black rectangle is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

HOW IT WORKS

*Training, Volunteer,
Support and Daily
Operations*

CHOSEN HOURS OF OPERATION

When the Pilot Project first began, it was impossible to complete a thorough needs assessment on a province-wide scale regarding when peak hours of substance use occurred. Grenfell Ministries committed to extended hours during the first six weeks that the line was in operation, to gather data on when the call volume of highest call volume. After the six weeks, it was apparent that most calls occur between the afternoon and evening. Grenfell Ministries responded to this by changing the original Monday to Friday from 10:00 am-10:00 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 pm-midnight to Monday to Friday from 12:00 pm -10:00 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 pm -12:00 am. Ideally, the line would be available 24/7, but these times accommodated both the service user and Grenfell Ministries' current resources.

OUR TECHNOLOGY

The initial research indicated that folks who are active in the substance-using communities were already providing phone and video support for friends who were using substances alone. To date, no one had developed a formal program that could address this need on a larger scale. Before implementing the program, there were a few challenges that would need to be addressed. The most formidable challenge for Grenfell Ministries was that operating a formal call-in centre was beyond the scope of Grenfell Ministries, both financially and physically. For Grenfell to run a Pilot Project to gather data, it was decided that seeking out a technology that would allow volunteer operators to answer calls from the comfort of their own homes would be the only option. Access to the phone line needed to be as low barrier as possible, as those who use substances statically have lower socioeconomic status (Rehm & Probst, 2018). Since many use in isolation and secrecy, it was decided that having folks call in would allow for greater accessibility and anonymity connecting with hard to reach populations.

The Line2 application offered an Elite Plan that incorporated a toll-free number with unlimited calling and messaging for the United States and Canada and could be used on multiple devices. The Line2 application works on any network and offers 24/7 live chat support in case any technical issues arose. The plan also has a call queue function that allows for a call to be forwarded to another device when the main operator is currently on another call, allowing for two calls to be answered simultaneously by two operators at one time.

Additionally, calls can be run through on multiply devices, ensuring that no calls are missed in case a volunteer's device was damaged, wet, lost access to the internet or battery failure. The Line2 application offered a practical, cost-effective solution.

OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

We have policies and procedures for each of our programs, including the Overdose Prevention Line; we also have a governing document of Operational Guidelines for Grenfell itself. As an organization, we are incorporated and carry 4-million-dollar liability insurance. We are also a public health certified naloxone distributor as well. For the line to be covered and exempt from liability, should an overdose occur, we also covered under Ontario's Good Samaritan Act.

Our Team

We have our Program Director who oversees the phone line along with all other Grenfell projects; we have as well our Phone Line Supervisor who oversees the daily maintenance of the line, the schedule and is available for shifts when folks call in; We also have tech support and peer support available for all line volunteers for the duration of their shift.

Each shift has a phone line operator, phone line supervisor and a peer support person available for debriefing.

Our Training

We have streamlined training modules that are available online. This training takes folks through the process of what they will do on a call, as well as touches on harm reduction, safe using, naloxone use, proper injection methods, information about cotton fever and, of course, our script sample. We usually do a phone call to folks when they first ask about being a volunteer, they then complete the online course which has questions to be answered throughout, after finishing the course we then complete a test call with folks as well.

COST BREAKDOWN

Financial Information

- Our line is run using the Line 2 Application which cost approximately \$30.00 per month Canadian.
- We run completely on Volunteer time, so no one who operates the line is paid including the Phone Line Supervisor.
- Marchese Health Care, a leading pharmacy in harm reduction. Donates \$60/month to cover the costs of the Line 2 Application and to help offset the cost of any promotional items, such as the printing of our flyers, posters and our Overdose Prevention Line business cards. The OPL business cards are plastic and the same size and shape as credit cards. The design of the business cards was intentional. The size and material meant that folks would be less likely to lose the card with our OPL number on it, and the card could be used to break up substances about to be consumed.



The background of the slide is a vibrant, abstract composition of colors including red, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The colors are layered and textured, resembling cracked paint or a marbled surface. The overall effect is dynamic and artistic.

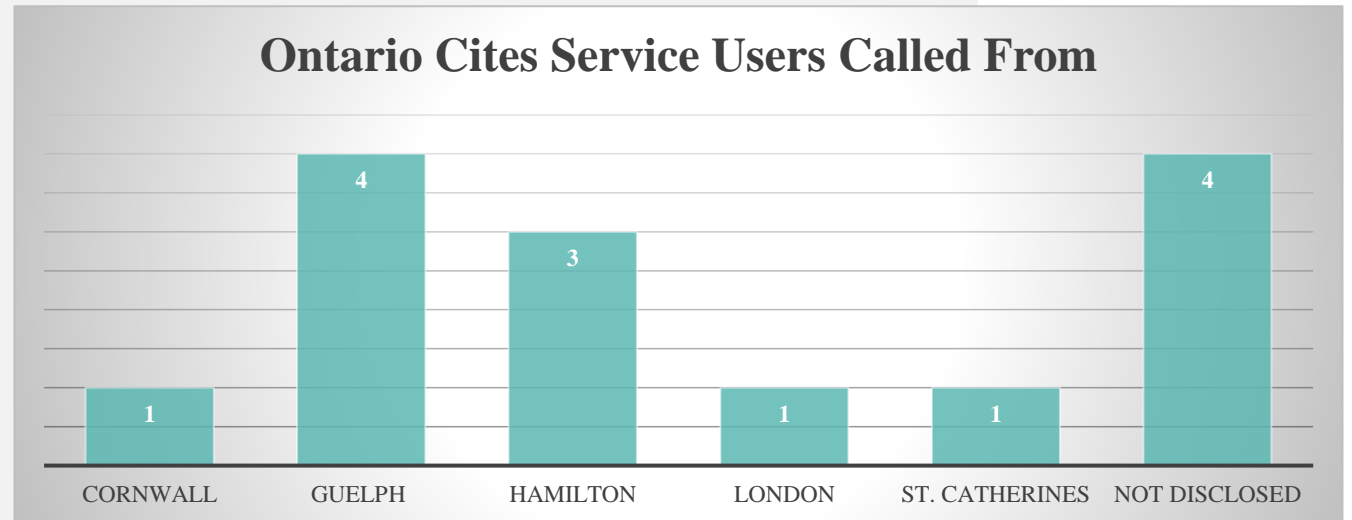
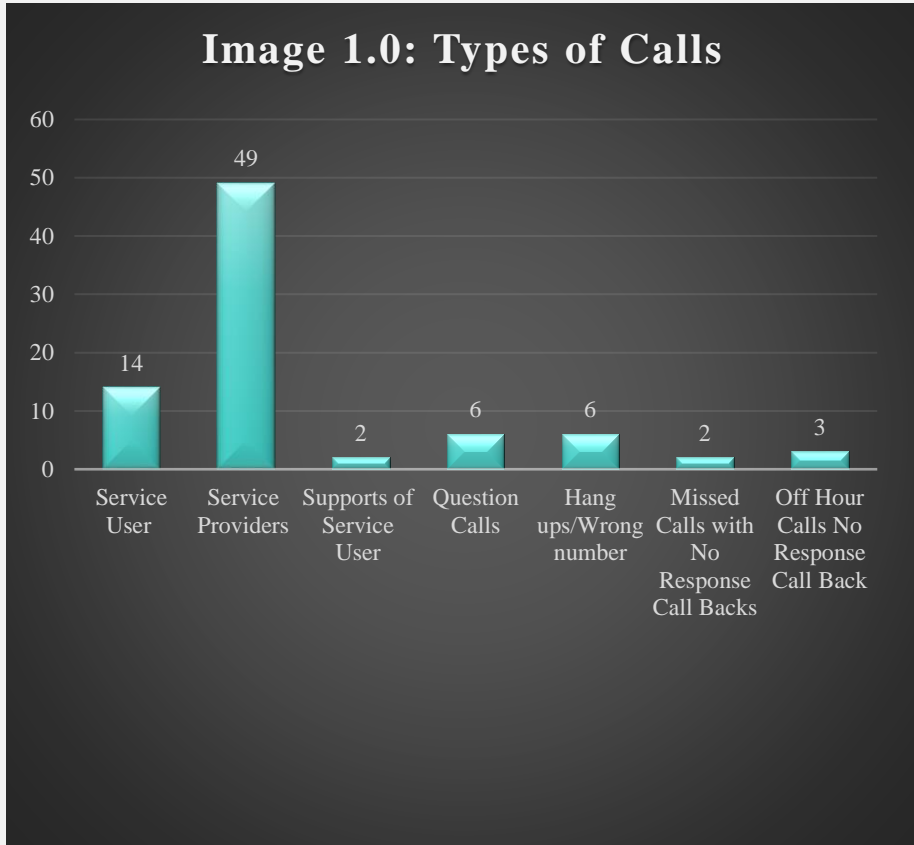
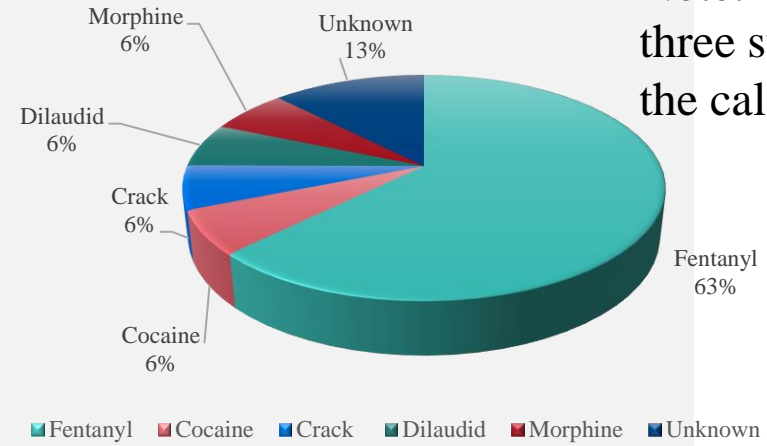
PILOT PROJECT

*Our original pilot
project and findings*

WHAT THE DATA SHOWED US

Our Data from February 1, 2020 until April 25, 2020

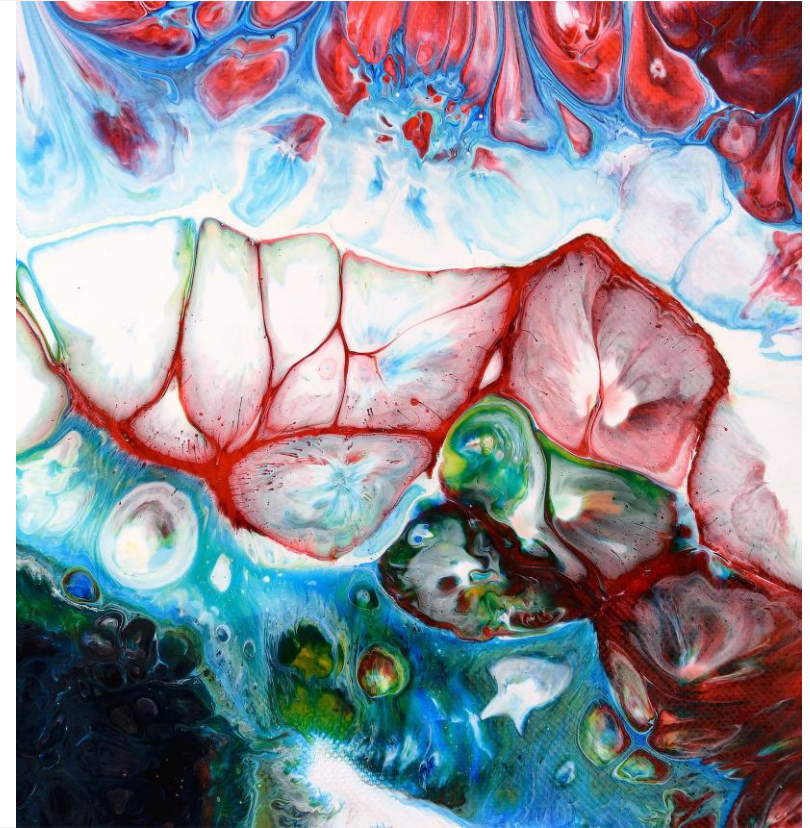
Note: One caller used three substances during the call. All were opioids



WHAT WE DO WELL

What we do really well

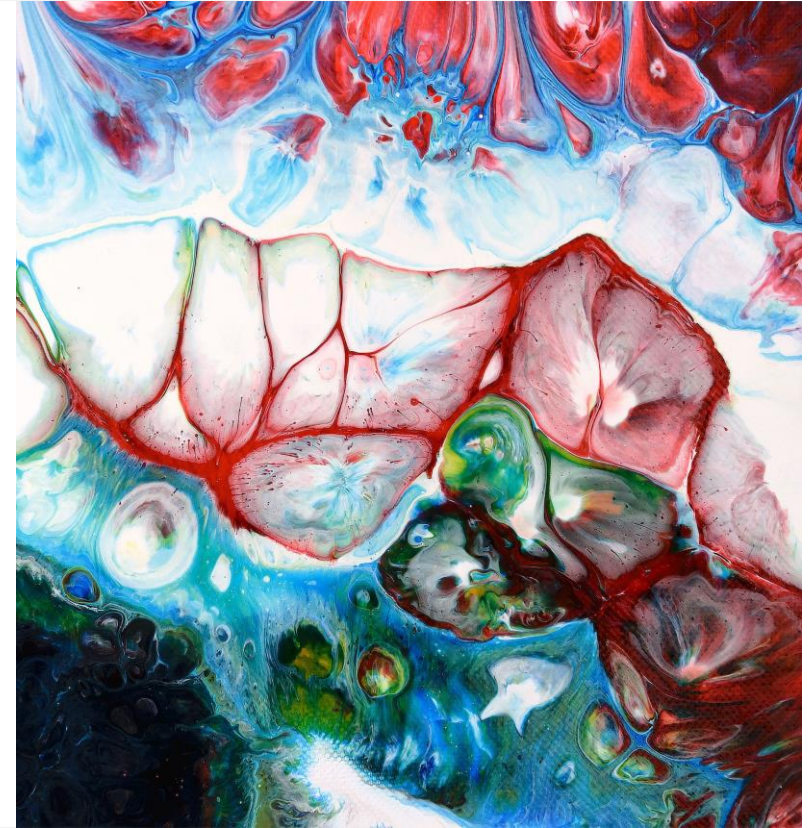
- Support our volunteers
- Online training modules
- Continuous education around substance use
- Connecting with the community
- Seeing the big picture of each unique individual



HOW WE COULD BE BETTER

What pieces would make us better

- 24 hour services
- Paid peer support employees
- National Strategy
- Ability to take multiple calls
- Peer support ongoing training courses



THANK YOU

Grenfell Ministries



1-866-212-4575



info@grenfellministries.org



http://www.grenfellministries.org

REFERENCES

Rehm, J., & Probst, C. (2018). Decreases of Life Expectancy Despite Decreases in Non-Communicable Disease Mortality: The Role of Substance Use and Socioeconomic Status. *European Addiction Research*, 24(2), 53-59. doi: 10.1159/000488328