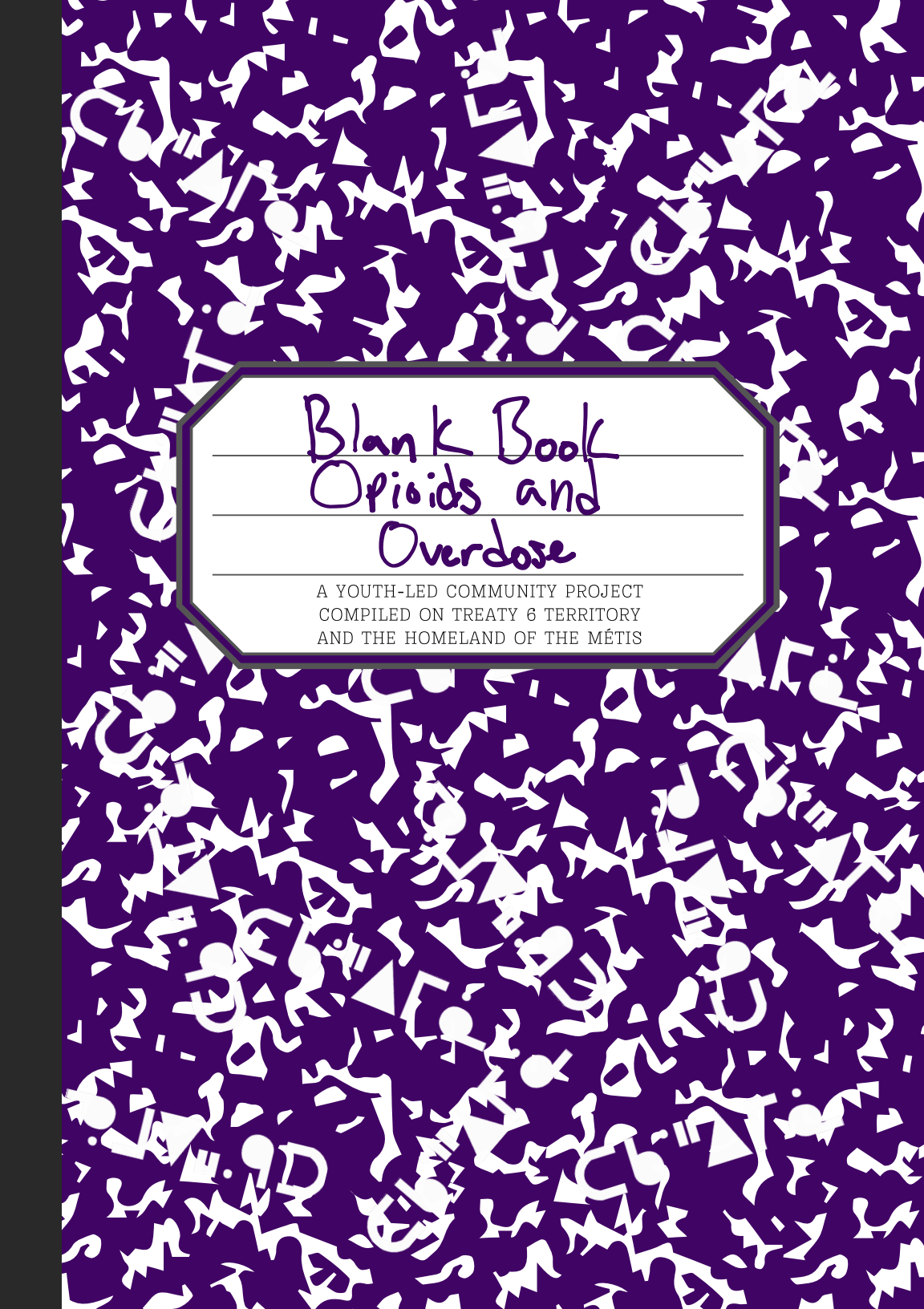




Blank Book Opioids and Overdose

A YOUTH-LED COMMUNITY PROJECT
COMPILED ON TREATY 6 TERRITORY
AND THE HOMELAND OF THE MÉTIS



This Blank Book is dedicated to:

*All youth who have lost
someone that they love
to an overdose
or drug poisoning.*

We see you.
We believe in you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chokecherry Studios is a youth-founded nonprofit located in inner-city Saskatoon, on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. At Chokecherry, youth access inclusive programming and services to creatively tell their stories and mobilize their communities. Chokecherry's primary operations seek to have impact in four main areas: Arts-Based Programming; Support Services; Community Mobilization and; Culture.

This project would not have been possible without the relationships we have built and continue to build.

Our biggest acknowledgement goes to the youth that attend and/or follow Chokecherry Studios on social media! You guys really made this project something special.

Finally, we want to acknowledge our organizational partners. Your contributions, guidance, and commitment to including youth voices in the areas of harm reduction is critical and we are forever grateful. Thank you:

- The City of Saskatoon
- Prairie Harm Reduction
- Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Students for Harm Reduction & Informed Policy
- Westside Community Clinic

**THE BLANK BOOK:
OPIOIDS AND OVERDOSE**

INTRODUCTION

The Blank Book is a youth-led initiative, in partnership with the City of Saskatoon and Chokecherry Studios.

This is the second volume of The Blank Book series. The Blank Books seek to humanize, destigmatize, and educate people on the real lived/living experiences of people who are stigmatized. In this case, people who have lived and/or are living experiences with opioids, as well as overdose and drug poisoning.

As of July 10, 2023, there have been 1,373 confirmed and suspected "drug toxicity" deaths. A total of 212 of the 1,109 confirmed deaths are youth under the age of 29.

Our friends, our families, our lovers, ourselves are dying. We, us youth, are dying. Most, if not all, of these deaths are preventable. We have waited years upon years for the provincial and federal government to acknowledge that substance use is a medical issue, not a moral issue. Education is critical in prevention but also in humanizing people who use substances.

This book is heavy and all of the stories are very much real. We have stories of grief, stories of anger, stories of happiness and sadness. Stories in all sorts of mediums from photos to lyrics, poems to drawings. Every word in this book is written by someone who cares about people who use drugs. Reading with an open mind and considering what these folks have been through will give you the best experience.

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

substance user - weed, smokes + alcohol -
I am support person for 10 family members,
all of them have passed away

substance user - weed, smokes + alcohol - I am support
person for 10 family members, all of them have passed
away.

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

Lost 10 family members. It's been really hard.
I have a lot of pain but I don't show it.
I don't cry. You could ask all of my
friends - they haven't seen me cry once.

Lost 10 family members. It's been really hard. I have a
lot of pain but I don't show it. I don't cry. You could ask
all of my friends - they haven't seen me cry once.

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

I notice that ~~that~~ once you get that
feeling of being high, you just keep
trying to get that feeling again

I notice that once you get that feeling of being high, you
just keep trying to get that feeling again.

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

stop as soon as possible before it ruins your life even more. Deaths from overdose makes other family members want to take their own life and end the pain.

Stop as soon as possible before it ruins your life even more. Deaths from overdose makes other family members want to take their own life and end the pain.

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

It honestly makes me sad because I've seen too many overdoses.

It honestly makes me sad because I've seen too many overdoses.

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

More supervised consumption sites.

More supervised consumption sites.

14 years old, Nephew, Uncle, Trouble maker.

14 nephew uncle trouble maker

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

Its become stronger. ~~But~~ I've seen fentanyl with meth and other drugs - I've seen things I shouldn't have. Its more dangerous now.

Its become stronger. I've seen fentanyl with meth and other drugs - I've seen things I shouldn't have. It's more dangerous now.

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

Stop...because it will bring pain to all their family.

Stop... because it will bring pain to all their family.

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

Once I overdosed because my weed was mixed with fentanyl. I woke up to the ambulance. Everything went black.

Once I overdosed because my weed was mixed with fentanyl. I woke up to the ambulance. Everything went black.

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I am a substance user and I have supported others in the past & present who are just using for the first time or such.

I am a substance user and I have supported others in the past and present who are just using for the first time or such

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

It has affected me by tricking my mind that I need it on a daily basic every single day.

It has affected me by tricking my mind that I need it on a daily basic every single day.

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

It's expensive & Addicting

It's expensive and Addicting

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

I do it on a daily basic

I do it on a daily basic

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

I would tell them that you make your own choices in life but remember that once you use you'll have a hard time to stop or even ~~quit~~ quit.

I would tell them that you make you own choices in life but remember that once you use you will have a hard time to stop or even quit.

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I Just lost my Second oldest brother to fenty

I just lost my second oldest brother to fenty

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

Nothing really cause they knew better if anything.

Nothing really cause they knew better if anything.

28 years old, I am a father of two beautiful daughters
age [REDACTED], As for school I have to go back for
my grade 12 as I only have my grade 10

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

no I haven't But I lost my
brother fabian to a overdose,
no I haven't But I lost my brother [REDACTED] to a
overdose

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

that it is unhealthy and very
controlling meaning it takes over
that it is unhealthy and very controlling meaning it
takes over

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

To show them that you do care
and not make them look or feel
selfish
To show them that you do care and not make them
look or feel selfish

Overdose.

wed. Nov. 16 2008

Well idk wat to really write about but my story of overdose is kinda simple i overdosed 2 times. Well the first time wasn't a full overdose it was pretty close tho i was here at check cherry actually i ended up relapsing on fentanyl it got out of hand i ended up feeling like everything was going black around me. My legs were trying to give out i tried running inside when i did i dragged myself up the steps throw myself into couch and tried yelling for help and ~~anyways~~ anyways or heard me i told him what happened well tried cos i couldn't really talk i purel alot i mean Alot idk i was scared actually felt like i was coming in and out of blackouts. i ended up in the hospital ~~stayed~~ stayed w/ me.

But 2nd time i was at home few weeks ago i was sad felt lost idk i wanted to overdose it but i was scared idk i took a big boat all i remember is puking and then boom everything went black. My boyfriend actually narcaned me that time. i woke up cold but really hot at the same time was shaking alot idk personally overdosing traumatized me theres alot of times i had to narcan my man. Maybe way more than anyone should but he dose it on purpose. but idk my experience with overdosing and overdoses are the worst thing i swear.

"Overdose - wed. Nov 16 2022

Well idk what to really write about but my story of overdose is kinda simple, overdosed 2 times. Well the first time wasnt a full overdose it was pretty close tho i was here at chokecherry actually i ended up relapsing on fenty it got out of hand i ended up feeling like everything was going black around me My legs were trying to give out i triend running inside wen i did i dragged myself up the steps threw myself in the couch and tried yelling for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] anyways [REDACTED] heard me i told him what happened well tried cos i couldnt really talk i puked a LOT i mean ALOT idk i was scared actually felt like i was coming in and out of blackouts. i ended up in the hospital, [REDACTED] stayed wi me.

But 2nd time i was at home few weeks ago i was sad felt lost idk i wanted to over do it but i was scared idk i took a big hoot all i rmr is puking then boom everything went black. My boyfriend actually narcaned me that time. i woke up cold but really hot at the same time was shaking allot idk personally overdosing traumatized me theres a lot of time i had to narcane my man. maybe more than anyone should but he dose it on purpose. but idk my expeirance with overdosing and overdoses. are the worst thing i swear."

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

IVE USED BEFORE AND WAS SCARED
BECAUSE I LIKED IT SO MUCH

IVE USED BEFORE AND WAS SCARED BECAUSE I
LIKED IT SO MUCH

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

~~THE EFFECTS~~ PEOPLE
INDIRECTLY & DIRECTLY

THE EFFECTS PEOPLE INDIRECTLY & DIRECTLY

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

KEEP YO HEAD UP

KEEP YO HEAD UP

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

YEP I FELT LOST

YEP, I FELT LOST.

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

*MORE PROGRAMS FOR AFTER
BEING LET OUT OF THE SYSTEM*

MORE PROGRAMS FOR AFTER BEING LET OUT
OF THE SYSTEM

23 years old, BOYFRIEND, BROTHER, FRIEND,
COUSIN.

23

BOYFRIEND, BROTHER, FRIEND, COUSIN

I GREW UP IN FOSTER CARE
~~THEN~~ THEN WENT THROUGH THE
SYSTEM RIGHT TO THE PENN
AND DIDNT HAVE A LIFE
BEFORE AND WAS THROWN INTO
A WORLD OF NEW STRUGGLES
I HAD TO LEARN TO OVERCOME.
IT'S BEEN HARD BUT GOTTA'S
BETTER

I GREW UP IN FOSTER CARE THEN WENT
THROUGH THE SYSTEM RIGHT TO THE PENN AND
DIDNT HAVE A LIFE BEFORE AND WAS THROWN
INTO A WORLD OF NEW STRUGGLES I HAD TO
LEARN TO OVERCOME. IT'S BEEN HARD BUT
GETTING BETTER

**I GREW UP IN FOSTER
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THROUGH THE
SYSTEM RIGHT TO
THE PENN AND DIDNT
HAVE A LIFE BEFORE
AND WAS THROWN
INTO A WORLD OF
NEW STRUGGLES I
HAD TO LEARN TO
OVERCOME.**

As a young person growing up in the hood,
I never understood what addictions were and
how they affected that person.
I never understood why drugs changed someone.
Until my loved ones fell into addiction.

I seen some of my closest friends and family
slowly change. I spent so many nights in
tears because I knew I couldn't save
everyone, and that was the hard part to accept.

There is so much people that love that person.

I already lost a few of my close friends to meth.
It's hard to accept. Most times I wish
I could take them home and give them
the help they need.

Sometimes I wonder if they are okay,
if they have somewhere to go, if they
are atleast trying to stay sober.
Sometimes it gets hard cuz they are
so far into that life.

My brother told me "you can't save everyone
but you can still love them"

I hope they know I pray for them almost
every day.



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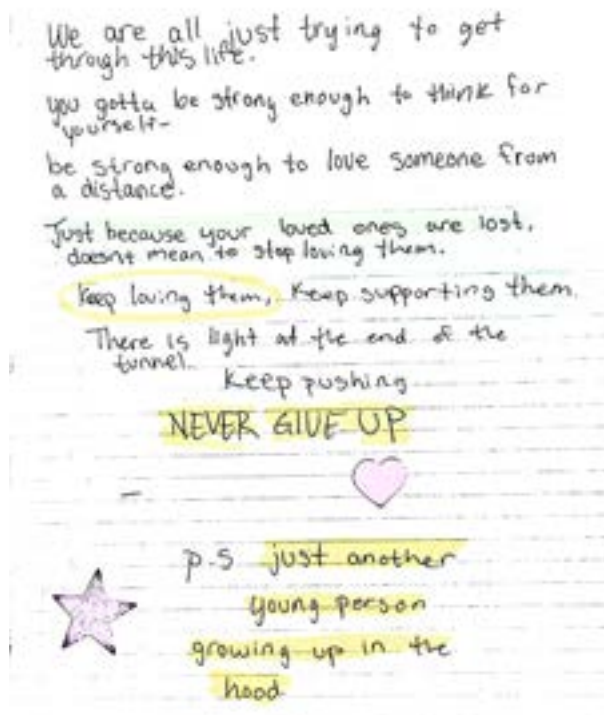
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Sometimes I wonder if they are okay, if they have somewhere to go, if they are at least trying to stay sober. Sometimes it gets hard cuz they are so far into that life.

My brother told me "you can't save everyone, but you can still love them"

I hope they know I pray for them almost every day.

19 years old. daughter, Aunty, poet, sister



We are all just trying to get through this life. you gotta
be strong enough to think for yourself.
be strong enough to love someone from a distance.
Just because your loved ones are lost, doesn't mean to
stop loving them.
Keep loving them, Keep supporting them.
There is a light at the end of the tunnel.
Keep pushing
NEVER GIVE UP
-[REDACTED]

p.s. just another young person growing up in the hood.

You took my love and you
took my friends, third eye woke
~~me~~ a glance through my lens
Meth addiction i seen it, moms
out about i mean it, dads locked up
cause he didnt beat it, family
on the pipe tryna see love but
all i get are drugs, looking for clat
daug i look for love, and im
sent from above so ill preach the
truth, meth addictions whack lens
take it back to the root.

anonymous

you took my love and you took my friends,
third eye woke
a glance through my lens
meth addiction i seen it, moms out about i
mean it, dads locked up cause he didn't
beat it, family on the pipe tryna see love
but all i get are drugs, looking for clout
dawg i look for love, and im sent from
above so i'll preach the truth, meth
addictions whack let's take it back to the
root.

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I am a loved one supporting a family member who uses drugs.

I am a loved one supporting a family member who uses drugs.

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

It has broken my family, caused A LOT of deaths too. It has come from a long time of generational headache & trauma.

It has broken my family, caused A LOT of deaths too. It has come from a long time of generational headache and trauma

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

I would try to support them as best to my capabilities.

I would try to support them as best to my capabilities

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I feel like the people who are abusing, don't realize all the trauma & lives they are affecting.

I feel like the people who are abusing, don't realize all the trauma & lives they are affecting

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

The mental health awareness, I don't think people think about it, and how people are affected

The mental health awareness, I don't think people think about it, and how people are affected

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

I wish they had more supports especially for ones who have family...

I wish they had more supports especially for ones who have family...

20 years old, mom, daughter

20 Mom daughter

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

There have been a change in puritee of the drugs & are being mixed with everything harmful

There have been a change in puritee of the drugs & are being mixed with everything harmful.

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

I can't control how you live your life or what you're doing, but I can warn you & hope that you know there is places you can go to get help with your addictions

I can't control how you live your life or what your doing, but I can warn you & hope that you know there is places you can go to get help with your addictions.

anonymous



A journey out beyond I have found my ROCK &
solice

**I can't control how
you live your life or
what your doing,
but I can warn you &
hope that you know
there is places you
can go to get help
with your
addictions.**

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I am recovering drug addict and alcoholic.

I am a recovering drug addict and alcoholic

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

It has taken lives from my family that I wish never happened.

It has taken lives from my family that I wish never happened

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

The world will turn into a zombie apocalypse. Its evil, like a gateway to hell on Earth.

The world will turn into a zombie apocalypse. Its evil, like
a gateway to hell on Earth.

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

If nobody told you today I love you,
you're a good person and you deserve
better. I believe in you.

If nobody told you today I love you, you're a good person and you deserve better. I believe in you.

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

The waitlist to treatment could be fatal to some
when in reality their spot to be filled.
#underfunded. :(

Homelessness contributes to the problem.

The waitlist to treatment could be fatal to some when
in reality their spots to be filled #underfunded #:(
Homelessness contributes to the problem.

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

It's devastating

It's devastating

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

more outreach workers, housing options and job opportunities. <3

More outreach workers, housing options, and job opportunities. <3

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

The drugs were laced and most of the time you never knew what you smoked. It's fucked.

The drugs were laced and most of the time you never knew what you smoked. It's fucked.

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

"I learned in NA one is too many and a 1000 is never enough." Can you imagine that? !

Love yourself today.

I learned in NA one is too many and 1000 is never enough. Can you imagine that? Love yourself today.

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

I've felt several times when my heart raced, seen things and died on the inside. Even ended up on the heart unit, unfortunately. 22 years young :(

I've felt several times when my heart raced, seen things, and died on the inside. Even ended up on the heart unit, unfortunately. 22 years young :(

22 years old. mother, daughter, lilchet

I am 22 years old. I am a mother, daughter, lilchet,

"You're just cookt"
No Im not, Im a recovering drug addict.
Im a good person.

"I am strong/ I am brave I am courageous
I am gorgeous I am powerful"

The day/ I found out I am powerless
over this drug I was speechless. xo

Take your power back ♡

①

...

"You're just cookt" No Im not, Im a recovering drug
addict. Im a good person. I am strong I am brave I am
courageous I am gorgeous I am powerful

The day I found out I am powerless over this drug I was
speechless. xo

Take your power back <3

-[REDACTED]"

**"You're just cookt" No
Im not, Im a recovering
drug addict.**

**"Im a good person. I am
strong I am brave I am
courageous I am
gorgeous I am
powerful"**

My experience with opioids and overdose

When I was experiencing opioid addiction in the past it lead me to continued use daily from the very beginning or at least as much use as often as able as I could. I have overdosed multiple times. & opioids ~~to~~ ^{to} were a key factor along with other drug usage. You never know when drug usage with opioids will have adverse effects that lead to you being in a bad position where you have very little control ~~of~~ ^{of} over ~~you~~ ^{your} yourself and ~~your~~ ^{your} decision making ~~of~~ ^{of} course using ~~discrepancy~~ ^{discrepancy} your idea and capability of harnessing less usage or controlled usage.

anonymous

My experience with opioids and overdose

When I was experiencing opioid addiction in the past It lead me to continued use daily from the beggining or at least as much use as often as able as I could. I have overdosed multiple times. & opioids I believe were a key factor along with other drug usage. You never know when drug usage with opioids will have adverse affects that lead you to being in a bad position where you have very little control of youre descisions & control of youre using discepatng youre idea and [unlegible] of harnessing less usage or controlled usage

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I used and have over dosed on opioids. im not a user no more but i support those who use.

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

it affected on my wellbeing and mental health , i was careless , hopeless. less sleep and barley ate.

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

it can be uncontrollable, lonely, scary but you gotta push thru it and dont it get to your head , its hard to slow down once u get started.

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

your not alone, dont be afraid of asking for help, your not the only one going through this

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

not much but other then the deaths like the ammount iof fdeath from opioids

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

i feel a mix of emotion about my substance use. i feel like i have take opioids to numb the pain that is numbing my feeling.. if that makes sense.

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

wanna see mroe support in the area n community nmore availablity to others n more knowledge on that their are support

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

the resources are more available , opioids are stronger then before, otber then thats not so much has changed about opioid use over the past years.

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

Be smart, re think your choices, know that their are people there for you, your not alone.

22 years old. brother, friend, supporter, listener,

i started using opioids when i was depressed, i always knew i would go to drugs n opioids when i was younger cause it was always around me n my family growing up, when i started using opioids it felt like i had feeling i didnt have for a while, i was trying to numb the feeling thats already numb. when i noticed it wasnt working like the amount i was using so i switched to something stronger and more potent, ive always had addiction issue, i always thought i was alone or thought it was useless to get help sso didnt bother trying, when u tell ut self thesde things u believe them n i did , but when i was told i wasnt alone n saw that others could actually relate to what im going thru and understand,

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I use substances and support many others who use substances.

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

opioid use took away the only bathroom in the house for hours at a time as my dad nodded out. opioid use took away so many important milestones between myself and my father. opioid use, ultimately, took my father in the end. And now between intentional and unintentional opioid use, it is now trying to take all of the people I love. very slowly and methodically, making sure that it drags my heart and soul through miles of discarded syringes with every close call, every overdose that whispers "something's not right" in my ear at night before I find out the next day threatens to take the lives and opportunities away from all of the amazing people that I love.

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

What you see as someone "not trying" might actually be someone not receiving adequate support, or they're receiving support in a way that doesn't resonate with them so of course it won't work. Abstinence is not the only way, though it works for some. USING SUBSTANCES IS NOT A FUCKING MORAL FAILING. USING SUBSTANCES IS NOT A DEFECT OF CHARACTER. USING SUBSTANCES DOES NOT MAKE A PERSON BAD. My dad was not bad. Just a little confused. I am not bad, my mom is not bad. We are not bad.

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

Take it day by day. Try gently lengthening the amount of time you go between use if that feels appropriate for you. Try reducing the dose a little. Find and know where your window of tolerance is, outside of the one that's been manufactured by your stresses and usage. Stick to your true window of tolerance as often as you can, and you're reducing way way WAY more harms than you might ever believe because of the way society has trained us to see any substance use as "bad". It's so fucking hard, especially when you've got traumas and stressors. So seek as much support as you can from healthy sources, let people support you on this journey. It's really rank difficult to do this alone, and it's even harder when you're around people who encourage your use even if it isn't openly. Things that trigger me are when people talk about how nice a high was, or how cheap they got it, it can be so many things. You gotta keep your self safe, and in turn, your self will keep you safe..

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

The side effects and comorbid disorders that can affect people, like wrist drop, injuries to your neck, infections from injecting unsafely, et cetera. As well, the fact that opioids aren't evil and most people are using them because they are in pain. Including the people who are prescribed opioids.

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I've accepted that recovery isn't necessarily complete sobriety. Recovery for myself and my family is going from an ounce and a half of mushrooms every week to an ounce every month, from 3.5 grams of crystal meth every day to 3.5 grams every 2-3 weeks. It's about rebuilding my relationship with that substance if that is the direction I want to go in, and being able to use it for maintenance. Not to get so fucked up that I put myself into psychosis because I want to escape my emotions. Once again, using substances is not a moral failing. So long as I am reducing as many harms as I can by testing drugs, using with people, carrying naloxone, et cetera, I am doing what I can to keep myself safe.

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

I want to see the city/province fund the safe consumption site. I want to see government, social workers, police, fucking everyone, I want them to see the value in the frontline workers we have working their fingers to the bone to support people. Instead we are met with intense criticism, and are told "not in my backyard!". I want to see respect for substance users as the fucking PEOPLE that they are. I want to see empathy, rather than disgust. I want to see support, rather than shunning. I NEED to see education on substances and substance use for everyone in the community in my lifetime,.

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

Not even just opioids, but everything has become purer. It makes it simpler to import, cheaper to manufacture, all that fun stuff. What this means though is that the dope is way stronger and therefore way more likely to induce dopesickness were you to need more after running out.

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

Never, ever use alone. There are resources for you if you to call if you have questions, and we have a safe consumption site with people in it that won't judge you and just want to ensure that you are safe. Please, at least let someone know you're using and that if you don't reply in x amount of time that you're in trouble. Stay safe out there, the drugs aren't safe. The dope has fentanyl in it, and the fenty has benzos in it, and if you don't know, whoever tries to save you with NARCAN won't either. (regardless if you aren't waking up they should put you on oxygen, which will help. You can still survive. But it's risky.)

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

Nah, and I'm lucky. For the longest time, I didn't test my shit. Even now I forget to sometimes. It's a risk I shouldn't be willing to take.

Man, my dad either had his drugs poisoned or got hotshotted back during July of 2020. Middle of the pandemic, so we didn't even think anything of it when he didn't show up for a few days to pick up some stuff from my place with my mom. He was also a bit flaky, he was basically a 35 year old teenager so I don't blame him. It was Monday when he died. It was Wednesday when we found him, in the middle of a massive heat wave. His little cat was in the house, terrified. It took years for her to stop being so skittish around people.

And you know what the police did? FUCKING FUCK ALL. THEY DID JACK SHIT, BECAUSE HE WAS A FUCKING "ADDICT" AND HE HAD FENTANYL IN HIS SYSTEM AND IT'S EASIER TO WRITE OFF AS AN ACCIDENTAL DEATH THAN TO INVESTIGATE A POTENTIAL HOMICIDE. That's fucked up if you ask me.

21 years old. warm, lover, protector, stubborn, sharp.

Not only that, my whole family hated my dad. I get no fucking empathy from them, I say it's hard around Father's Day, and I get ""Yeah, well. Happens."" I mention that my dad would be proud of me and everyone looks away to avoid eye contact. It's disgusting, the stigma that not only he gets, but that I get as his step-child. I didn't do fuck all to deserve this, and now I am going to fight the entire system until people are getting the support that they need, like my mom can't. Like my dad tried to, and never did. Not successfully. And now, never fucking will.

We are people who deserve to have their needs met too.

**USING SUBSTANCES
IS NOT A FUCKING
MORAL FAILING.**

**USING SUBSTANCES
IS NOT A DEFECT OF
CHARACTER. USING
SUBSTANCES DOES
NOT MAKE A PERSON
BAD.**

anonymous

"This Is goodbye"

You took some close people I love
Some I won't get back
A drug so strong
one hit got attached
Pain so real
When I breathe you
I relax
I don't know how to feel
In real life it's quite sad
everytime I get high
all my feelings they pass
Feel I'm losing my mind
Why they come down so bad
It's time to say goodbye
cause I can't have you back

This Is Goodbye

You took some close people I love
Some I won't get back
a drug so strong
one hit got you attached
Pain so real when I breathe you
I relax
I don't know how to feel
In real life it's quite sad
everytime I get high
all my feelings they pass
Feel I'm losing my mind
Why they come down so bad
It's time to say goodbye
cause I can't have you back

**Its time to say goodbye
cause I cant have you
back**

LEARN^{The}
ABOUT^{Good And The Bad}

OPIONS

Too Better

Avoid Overdose

DROP Knowledge

Before Ignorance drops

OUR POPULATION

23 years old. Addict, hoonigan, hustla

Learn the good and the bad about opioids too better
avoid overdose
Drop knowledge before ignorance drops our population

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

use opioids & support other ones too
also some love me and support
me though I am an addict

use opioids & support other ones too, also some love
me and support me though I am an addict

**How has opioid use affected you or the lives
of the ones you love?**

Yes it affects me and
my loved ones because as much
as the drugs we love take
away the pain

Yes it affects me and my loved ones
because as much as the drugs we
love take away the pain it still brings
pain

**What do you want people to know about an
opioid addiction that they may not know?**

The addiction backfires
on me & others

The addiction backfires on me & others

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

Never think you are
nothing or less you are
beautiful

Never think you are nothing or less you are beautiful

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

Did you want time & energy closely
close to when you started to
really get the truth about
it

Did you want time and energy closely close to when you started to really get the truth about opioids

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I want to heal & sober up

I want to heal & sober up

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

More awareness about it
educationally

More awareness about it educationally

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

more I think than
before.

[There's] more I think than before

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

You don't have to do it I
felt like I did but
you never know you're
being you might
better

You don't have to do it I felt like I did but you never know you're being you might better

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

Yes, as though my body
from the drugs wasn't on
par I was
hanging
on the
thread

Yes, as though my body from the drugs wasn't on par I was hanging on the thread

24 years old. sister, daughter, aunty

24 sister daughter aunty

at 13 I began the gateway
& slamming & 13 years later
I am still using up & down,

at 13 I began the gateway & slamming & 13 years
later I am still using up & down

**Never
think you
are nothing
or less
you are
beautiful**

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I can say I identify as both, And I honestly do, and wish better for myself and others.

I can say I identify as both, and I honestly do, and wish better for myself and others.

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

- Seperation
- depression
- loss
- Beginning

- Seperation - depression - loss - Beginning

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

It, not only hurts you but everyone who cares. (You're not alone)

It not only hurts you but everyone who cares (your not alone)

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

Only you can choose your choice.
I can only be here as much as can.

Only you can choose your choice. I can only be here as much as can.

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

- Effects
- Trauma it causes.
- How it can be this from that.

- Effects - Trauma it causes - How it can be this from that.

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

(Everyone Has Choice)

(Everyone Has Choice)

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

Were~~ka~~ all in this together we need to realise we only got one life and sucks without you.

Were all in this together, we need to realise we only got one life and sucks without you

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

It gets weaker and weaker then you lose. (But don't give up it gets better if you want it to)

It gets weaker and weaker then you lose. (But don't give up it gets better if you want it to)

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

- You're better than that and you know it, you can be whatever you want to don't let addiction ruin your life.

you're better than that and you know it, you can be whatever you want to don't let addiction ruin your life.

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

I cant remember alot of things, drinking many times, I only know I fucked up but for most likely for a reason. I remember up until I do and people act but Ill live with it because I love.

I cant remember alot of things, drinking many times, I only know I fucked up but for most likely for a reason. I remember up until I do an people act but Ill live with it because I love.

I .

28

born

have
lived a tragic and worthless life.
I can say so much but I won't
because ~~so~~ things are better left
un-said. Today I still smile even do
~~if~~ there's no reason too, A smile goes
a long way. I encouraged alot of people
to do better and always will.
If you want to know more you can
ask me yourself. Guaranteed your
life is worth living ☺

28 years old. motivated, ambitious, independent, truthful,
sociable

Im 28 years old but sometimes feel older
then alot of people twice my age.

Im 28 years old but sometimes feel older then alot
of people twice my age.

motivated, ambitious, independent,
truthful, sociable.

I [REDACTED] 28 born in [REDACTED], have lived a
tragic and worthless life. I can say so much but I
won't because things are better left unsaid. Today I
still smile even doe theirs no reason too, a smile
goes a long way. I encouraged alot of people to do
better and always will. If you want to know more you
can ask me yourself. Guaranteed your life is worth
living

The Rose That Grew From Cement

Knowing you were hurting and had to choose this substance in order to numb your pain aches my heart. Its something I grew up seeing you do and that was the most painful part. As I was growing up you were partially there as you were on the streets everyday looking for your next fix or even just money for it. It happened to be a endless thought on why you were never home? as I was alone waiting on your safe arrival home waiting... and waiting till I couldnt no more. Sometimes you wouldnt make it back till the next day and those nights I would have to make noodles for supper as the fridge would be empty, wake me and my little brother up for school so we wouldnt get taken. Late nights, alone cold, hungry with empty food cupboards in a dirty unclean house with random knocks of CPS at the doors so I wouldnt open them, so I was forced to learn how to mature at such a young age. But that wasnt my fault even though I seemed to always blame myself for you never coming back home. I dont blame you no more MOM I LOVE YOU always even if you HURT ME I am your rose that grew from cement.

NO. 1

anonymous.

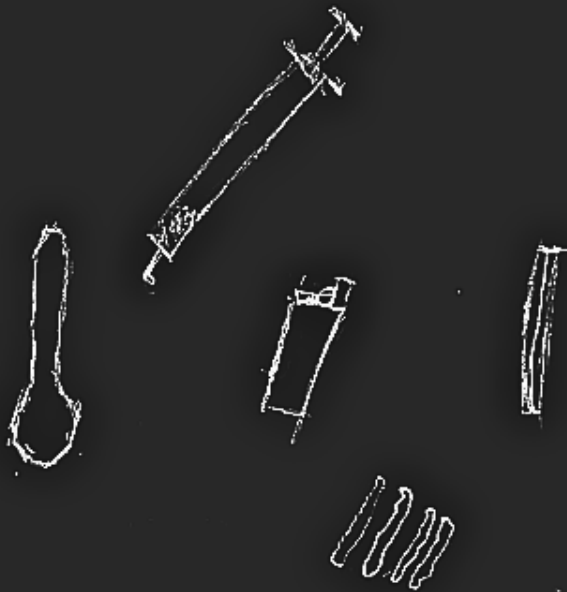
"The Rose That Grew from Cement

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I am your rose that grew from cement."

14 years old. Brother.

ADDICTION: The disease that makes you too selfish to see the havoc you created or care about the people whose lives you have shattered.



ADDICTION: The disease that makes you too selfish to see the havoc you created or care about the people whose lives you have shattered.

I LOVE YOU
always
even if you
HURT ME.

**STAY AWAKE. STAY
WITH ME.**

**i am not going to let
you die behind a
dumpster 4 days
before Christmas
we wait
& steadily, he
returns.**

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I have loved ones who are substance users and live in a community that is heavily impacted by substances.

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

Opioid use has saved the life of one of my loved ones. I have also seen it cause incredible harm. The experiences and stories of substance users is diverse!

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

That a lot of opioid addiction begins in hospitals - when people become injured, sometimes the only way to manage the pain is through opioid usage. This can lead to dependency and addiction.

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

More harm reduction practices and Naloxone training readily available in neighbourhoods that have high substance use rates

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

Fentanyl has become a huge problem in the drug supply - testing your drugs is important to avoid accidental overdose

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

Learn about Harm Reduction practices and safe usage!

Community Care

we were celebrating Yule,
a simmer pot on the stove,
& making beeswax candles.

we went out to pickup Chinese food

start the car turn up the dark alleyway headlights illuminate

a body lying still on the snow

brake hazard lights get out of car check around "hello?"
hand claps body taps my fingers their neck
pray you find a pulse

slow, quiet, still here.

woven between veils of fleeting consciousness,
he whispered his name.

he had taken fentanyl.

he had a young Daughter

& they went to see Santa today at the mall.

cell phone call the ambulance, don't send the police an overdose Bowness
Nalaxone - get the Nalaxone! needle leg blanket

STAY AWAKE, STAY WITH ME.

I am not going to let you die behind a dumpster 4 days before Christmas

we wait

& steadily, he returns.

28 years old. Queer, Woman, Activist, Daughter, Artist

Community Care

we were celebrating Yule.

a simmer pot on the stove,

& making beeswax candles.

we went out to pickup Chinese food

start the car turn up the dark alleyway headlights illuminate

a body lying still on the snow

brake hazard lights get out of car check around “hello!?”

hand claps body taps my fingers their neck

pray you find a pulse

slow. quiet. still here.

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cell phone call the ambulance, don't send the police an

overdose Bowness

Nalaxone - get the Nalaxone! needle leg blanket

STAY AWAKE. STAY WITH ME.

i am not going to let you die behind a dumpster 4 days

before Christmas

we wait

& steadily, he returns.

**Opioid use has
saved the life
of one of my
loved ones. I
have also seen
it cause
incredible
harm.**

Take a hit
have a smoke
Feel the smoke
hit that smoke
Inhale the
smoke
cigarettes
(got smoked)
drugs
(got smoked)
you
(Got smoked)



There's
those who

who smoke to smoke
and many ways to
get smoke

anonymous

take a hit
have a toké
feel the [unlegible]
Inhale the soke
cigarettes (got smoked)
drugs (got smoked)
YOU (Got smoked)

There's those who smoke to smoke, and many ways
to get smoke

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

i am a substance user and have supported [others] have used substances

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

it took me along time to get done school and find the bath i was ment to be on. i have had struggels with my mental health beauce of my drugs use

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

its not a one time use and your gonna be okay you can say that and be an addict for years

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

it does get better and recovery is impoortent whatever that looks like your you

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

all of it its a problem we need to talk about more cus most ppl just see us as bums who use drugss for no reason and i think we should talk about why we started to [begin] with

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

i was hiding it from everyone till i got hit bottem

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

i have seen my friends get [sober] too and some who have died

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

hey i am in recovery now

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

if your willing ill take them to meetings myself and helpo them find better support systems then thay have now

"Dear past self

Your journey of addiction and recovery is yours. It does get better and you do find sobriety, it will be hard and you will relapse but you find enough strength to find your recovery. You have to find the strength to let your friends who use out of your life. Some come back in your life after years and some die. You have seen a lot of heart break that has led you to your addiction, but you do find the way to recovery. Meeting and rehab and hospital stays to find it but you do. With all that you have been thrown in your addiction and recovery you better yourself for the better. "

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I used opioids & overdosed 3 times

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

It changed me, and made my family worried

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

It's powerful & addicting but it slowly kills you

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

One day at a time

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

More opioid community groups and presentations.

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

Around the city its terrible but with myself I've been clean for months

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

Find a way out before it's too late.

15 years old. Artist, Indigenous, Outgoing, Positive

Opioids how I wish I didn't meet you.

I've been taking pills everyday, hoping that you'll take me away.

It's a never ending cycle, I take it night & day
I can feel my mind starting to slowly float away

Will I survive? Or will I die?

Your world is so dark, but yet so beautiful

If only I could go back to the start
Maybe I wouldn't have fallen apart

To me you're the worst drug in mankind

I hope the lost ones find their way, you took innocent
souls
& left them in the dark

How I wish I never met you, it's a different kind of pain.

Opioids you're a nightmare that'll never go away

-[REDACTED]

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I am neither [someone who has used opioids/overdosed nor a person who uses substances and supports others who also use substances], but I care about this topic.

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

Though opioid use has not directly impacted my familial or friend relationships; it is a foundational principal of my education and experience working as an Addictions Counsellor

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

As a counsellor who works front-line in Addictions Services, watching individuals withdraw from opioids can be quite horrifying. The physical pain is often compared to severe bone cancer. Many times, opioid users were once prescribed these medications for pain reduction or management. When they stopped, they found themselves experiencing withdrawal which can lead to someone seeking out “street substances” which pose a higher risk of being “cut” or laced with other opioids such as Fentanyl which increases likelihood of overdose. I think the most important thing to look at when addressing opioid addiction or addiction in general is that substances serve a purpose in that individuals life. Creating new mechanisms of change for that individual is a part of recovery. Have compassion for those you may see struggling with addiction, something led them to that point whether it be trauma, choice, generational, or really whatever, they are still human. As humans, we need to stop judging people at their worst if we ever plan to help them achieve greatness

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

Healing is possible, recovery is possible. I've seen it, I do every day. There are people here to help you, recovery is about finding those who give you wings and letting go of people who are only serving you as anchors. Recovery is about learning to be comfortable in the uncomfortable, triggers will happen, know what you can do, who you can talk to in order to keep yourself safe. You are not alone, and the world is lucky to have such an incredible example of resiliency.

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

How we can help people recover. It isn't easy enough to say "here go to detox or treatment and you'll be cured". Healing from anything takes time; and there is no way to determine how long recovery takes. In my opinion, recovery is a part of health because as humans, we are constantly hurt whether that be physically, emotionally, spiritually or mentally and to "fix this" we need to continue practicing healing for ourselves. I think there needs to be a greater focus on what to do after you go to treatment or detox, how can we as a community support those early in recovery to maintain a sense of wellness. Relapse is common, and it can be a part of healing, but with support at a micro level, it would be easier for those to regain control over their addictions.

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

Even if I have no one actively using opioids within my inner circle, I feel prepared and have the privilege of being aware of the dangers of substances and am able to use my education and voice to raise awareness and pre-intervention to people in my community.

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

access to more addictions counsellors, better funding for addictions and mental health services, community involvement in recovery, more accessibility to Naloxone and training, pre-intervention in schools, better access to housing and food security, peer support workers for those early in recovery, re-integration of SMART recovery meetings into the city, honestly the list could always go on. We live in a progressive world, the demand for change will always be there. There just needs to be those who stand up for oppressed and marginalized groups.

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

I think the most concerning difference in the way opioids have changed in the last few years is that street substances are becoming dirtier. By that I mean, stimulant drugs such as methamphetamine or opioids such as hydrocodone are being combined with stronger substances such as fentanyl or carfentanil which is increasing likelihood of overdose. The pandemic has also played a huge factor in overdose, people were isolated therefore they used alone and this can be dangerous when using any substance. While there is an increased attention being made to the distribution of opioids, they are also much harder to be prescribed and alternates such as Methadone or Suboxone aren't readily available. Treatment and detox facilities are difficult to get into due to long wait times. Privatized centres cost thousands of dollars, which rarely anyone has who is battling addiction. And the overall lack of community support and stigmatization has allowed substance use to continue killing our people. If opioids are being changed for the worse, we need to look at a micro and macro level to make changes to the systems we deliver and offer people, because addiction is the problem, not the person, and we can never determine how someone will be affected and what they may need to recover.

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

Use only as directed, speak with your doctor or pharmacist to understand what you are taking. If for medical reasons, follow your dosage, do not take more than you need, seek a doctor who listens and advocates for your health. When you are ready, stop taking the medication. If needed, seek alternatives or work with your doctor to figure out a plan to ensure you are safe in reducing/stopping your opioid usage. Also, I would tell the person to seek education on Naloxone and help them find access to where it is available. If you are comfortable or trained, show a person how to use Naloxone. There is many videos on social media.

Oxycodone is just
another

Everyday The Notorious BxIG Struggle

I know how it feels to wake up behind lap
pockets, broke as hell, another debt to sell
your selling drugs to all the users, your buyers,
mad addict abuser, but they don't know
about your stressed filled day 2

anonymous

Overdose is just another

Everyday Struggle

The Notorious B.I.G

I know how it feels to wake up fucked up
pockets broke as hell, another rock to sell
your selling drugs to all the users, your abusers,
mad addict abuser, but they don't know
about your stressed filled dayz

20 years old. Sister, mom, auntie, student



REcovery
Must come
First so that
every thing you love
in life does Not have to
come last



Recovery
must come
first so that
every thing you love
in life does not have to
come last.

**Healing from
anything takes
time; and there is
no way to
determine how
long recovery
takes.**

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I smoke weed for stress and anxiety, and to calm down my ADHD

I smoke weed for stress and anxiety and to calm down my ADHD

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

way too much
way too much

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

its Fucked up you are throwing a good life away, And it will Always get better

its fucked up you are throwing a good life away, and it will Always get better

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

It will get better soon

It will get better soon

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

-safe usage

-And throw away your needles

- safe usage - and throw away your needles

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

it hurts to think about my
passed family

it hurts to think about my passed family

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

start using less and less!

Start using Less and Less!

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

it's more potent so more toxic
which means more people
that overdose

it's more potent so more toxic which means more people
that overdose

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

I wouldn't do that you could
overdose so easily it's not
worth it

I wouldn't do that you could overdose so easily it's not
worth it

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

I have not overdosed off
any thing

I have not overdosed off any thing

16 years old. Son, Brother, Nephew, Cousin, Uncle

I AM 16 years old

-son -cousin
-Brother ~~-uncle~~
-Nephew -uncle

my uncle and late sister in-law passed away because of a overdose. my uncle was given a substance in prison and passed before he could get the help he needed. my late sister in-law overdosed while my brother was in prison. it hurt him, me, and our families.

my uncle and late sister in-law passed away because of a overdose. my uncle was given a substance in prison, and passed before he could get the help he needed. my late sister in-law overdosed while my brother was in prison, it hurt him, me, and our families.

anonymous



1 Local opioid addict DIES Everyday

**my uncle was
given a substance
in prison, and
passed before he
could get the help
he needed.**

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I am a casual substance user

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

Its been a huge struggle personally. And it causes problems in my relationship

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

Not everyone with an opioid addition is on the streets or homeless. Sometimes its who you least expect.

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

There are far better things ahead then any we leave behind.

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

I think the struggles and factors as to how the addition developed over time.

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I feel really shitty about it. I feel like I am hiding something in plain sight.

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

Less stigma. Better supports.

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

I am finding it more common. Or maybe the longer you use the more you can tell when others use too.

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

It may seem cool and fun now, until one day it's not.

27 years old. bestie, auntie, lover.

When the developing coke problem you joked about in your early twenties is real life now. It started out as no big deal and I use to tell myself it's fine since I am not the one buying it. Fast forward seven years later and I crave it. Now I am paying for it in more ways than one.

**It started out as no
big deal and I use to
tell myself it's fine
since I am not the
one buying it. Fast
forward seven
years later and I
crave it. Now I am
paying for it in more
ways than one.**

We can
all do
IT!



15 years old. sister, outgoing, works hard, creative.

We all can do it to. No drugs

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I am a substance user and I have never overdosed before

I am a substance user and I have never overdosed before

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

I've never really been addicted to opioids to the point where I thought I had a problem with it.

I've never really been addicted to opioids to the point where I thought I had a problem with it.

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

drugs are bad in general

drugs are bad in general

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

To stay strong and to overcome their addiction

To stay strong and to overcome their addiction

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

That it's a bad addiction in any language or culture

That it's a bad addiction in any language or culture

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I feel like my addiction is under control as to where things could be worse.... then again things could be better but I'm okay

I feel like my addiction is under control as to where things could be worse.... then again things could be better but I'm okay

28 years old. Uncle, friend, Leader.

28

uncle friend Leader

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

I'm not entirely sure

I'm not entirely sure

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

I'd tell em to think otherwise before it becomes a bad addiction

I'd tell em to think otherwise before it becomes a bad addiction

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

No I havent and I dont plan on it but Lifes crazy

No I havent and I dont plan on it but Lifes crazy

**Not everyone
with an opioid
addiction is on
the streets or
homeless.**

**Sometimes its
who you least
expect.**

Drug awareness

- you don't get over an addiction by stopping using you recover by creating a new life where it is easier to not use.. If you don't create a new life, then all the factors that brought you to your addiction will catch up with you again.. Smh but again I know your tired I know you feel like giving but your not going too because you have the strength and potential to stay strong ~~in~~ you in your storm and when you survived through it all the shit your addiction has put you through you can always survive recovery... but put god first then you never come last...



Drugs will Fuck you
up more then love 

Drug awareness

You dont get over an addiction by stopping using you recover by creating a new life where it is Easier to not use.. If you dont create a new life, then all the factors that brought you to your addictions will catch up with you again... smh but again I know your tired

I know you feel like giving [up] but your not going too because you have the strength and potenial to stay strong in your storm and when you survived through it all the shit your addiction has put you through you can always survive recovery... but put god first then youl never come last...

Drugs will fuck you up more than love :(

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I'm a recovering addict who wants to help others to recover

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

I got kicked out of my place, family stopped coming around, took me forever to get done school

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

It only takes one time

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

Drugs are there and gone in a blink of an eye but real bros who wanna help u throw it are there for life

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

Why people use them to begin with and that no one knows how hard it is to stay sober till they try

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I'm glad I'm in recovery better for it just got a job and I'm 259 days sober

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

More free recovering centers and shorter lists to gwt into them

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

There are more mixed with stuff that will make the trip or high bad

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

It gets better one day at a time

22 years old. Brother, son, uncle, poet

Alone in the dark
Bent and burnt
Flickering of light to heat me up

One more hit
Takes the pain away
One wrong move
It could all be over

Running throw like red river
Flying in the clouds
Never again touching the dirt

Hard hit of reality
Benders and abuse
Pain is numb

Alone in the dark
Burnt and bent
Flicker of light goes out.

**Drugs are there
and gone in a
blink of an eye
but real bros
who wanna help
u [through] it
are there for
life**

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I am a loved one who uses
as well as supporting a user
I love

I am a loved one who uses as well as supporting a user
I love.

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

I'm not sure But I witness
people die inside and become
A shell of a ~~person~~ person

Im not sure But I witness people die inside and become
a shell of a person

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

It destroys lives and people

It destroys lives and people

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

get clean while you
still ~~can~~ feel free, like
you have a choice in the
addiction

get clean while you still feel free, like you have a choice in the addiction.

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

how it changes every thing
In your life

how it changes every thing In your life

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

shitty, scared, anxious, mad

Shitty, scared, anxious, mad

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

more understanding and
compassion and less judgement
more outreach programs

more understanding and compassion and less
Judgement more outreach programs.

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

I care and will be here
to help you out but I
cant Be hurt right now

I care and will be here to help you but I cant Be hurt right
now

19 years old. Sister, girlfriend, freind.

19 sister, girlfriend, freind

me and this person hang out
and use together and It
gets harder With every time
we use.

Me and this person hang out and use together and it
gets harder with every time we use.

**more
understanding
and compassion
and less
judgement more
outreach
programs.**

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

Im A Recovering Avdict
AN I overdosed befor

Im a recovering avdict an I overdosed befor

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

~~to~~ Lots of people Died in my
Family opioids

Lots of people Died in my Family opioids

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

you CAN Die From IT

you can Die From it

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

get Help TALK to some one

get Help talk to someone

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

More ppl CAN TALKED
About it IT HELPS

More ppl can talked about it It Helps

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I stoped I wish my FAMILY
wood not DO it

I stoped I wish my Family wood not Do it

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

Help them Talk to
them

Help them Talk to them

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

more bad

more bad

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

Dont do it

Dont Do it

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

yes I hev overdosed Dats
y I stoped

yes I hev overdosed Dats y I stoped

26 years old. Father, community, cousin

26 Father community cousin

my DAD give me A Hoot
when I was 7 my DAD Died
when I was 12 in A CAR
accident Dunk Drive

My dad give me a hoot when I was 7 my dad died when I
was 12 in a car accident Dunk drive

**I changed a tire
by myself, and I
cried because
you weren't
there. You were
supposed to be
there.**

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

~~I am~~ I lost my Grandma To Lung
Cancer Caused By drugs FROM
cigarette and
more..idk

I lost my grandma to lung cancer caused by drugs from cigarette and more..idk

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

Well my Brother and Mom have
drug problems, My mom has been
to rehab several times, My Brother has
bad mental health because of drugs

Well my brother and mom have drug problems, my mom has been to rehab several times, my brother has bad mental health because of drugs

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

IT makes you delusional and highly aggressive.

It makes you delusional and highly aggressive.

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

Remember it's NEVER too late to ask for help.

Remember it's never too late to ask for help.

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

Mental health, how to deal with the addiction.

Mental health, how to deal with the addiction.

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I feel like I don't know who they really truly are, I feel nervous about buying gifts, I feel they will sell them just to buy drugs.

I feel like I don't know who they truly are, I feel nervous about buying gifts, I feel they will sell them just to buy drugs.

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

more help, and group sessions, service animals, group pickups for needles.

more help, and group sessions, service animals, group pickups for needles.

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

drugs make the wrong people
rich ~~and~~ the good people
and miserable.

Drugs make the wrong people rich and the good people miserable

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

Don't start now, don't
start ever! Can you see the
future?

Don't start now, don't start ever! can you see the future!

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

no.

no.



15 years old. sister, outgoing, works hard, creative.

"I don't do drugs! I do drugs
Im not addicted Im Addicted"

anonymous

I hope and pray for guidance
to stop this opiod crises
and end the violence
Its no more staying
"Silent"

Im sick of ambulance
and police sirens

Free my people
still addicted with closed
eyelids

I hope and pray for guidance
to stop this opiod crises
and end the violence
Its no more staying
"silent"

Im sick of ambulance and police sirens

Free my people
still addicted with closed eyelids

**It's no more
staying
"silent",
I'm sick of
ambulance and
police sirens**



dear there some things
I wish I couldve told you when you
was alive But you wasnt around your Success
was beautiful you were such a talented artist
but you was so lost into heavy drugs. I know we
All have our own addictions but now Im
Trying to Stop mine. drinking alchol really
took me down hill even a few drugs I took
Sometimes But i wish you was here to talk
to me about it. Im TRying to Stop the addiction
for my self and for my family and son...
But i wish you couldve Stopped Before
Leaving this earth too early at a young age
21 was way to young bro now Im 21 really
Trying to turn my life around for the
better and to succeed... ♡ 999 for life bro



21 years old.

dear [REDACTED] there some things I wish I couldve told you when you was alive. But you wasnt around your success was beautiful you were such a talented artist but you was so lost into heavy drugs. I know we All have our own addictions but now Im Trying to stop mine. drinking alcohol really took me down hill even a few drugs I took sometimes But i wish you was here to talk to me about it. Im TRYing to stop the addiction for myself and for my family and son... But i wish you couldve stopped before leaving this earth too early at a young age 21 was way to young bro now Im 21 really TRYing to turn my life around for the better and to Succeed... <3 999 for life bro

Do you identify as someone who uses substances or as a support person for someone who uses substances?

I have friends that use opioids

I have friends that use opioids

How has opioid use affected you or the lives of the ones you love?

I lost friends trust and opportunities

I lost friends trust and opportunities

What do you want people to know about an opioid addiction that they may not know?

You become a monster

You become a monster

What advice would you give to someone going through an opioid addiction?

Its mind over matter
You the greatest

Its mind over matter you the greatest

What isn't talked about enough in conversations about opioid addiction?

The fact Addiction isnt chasing
a high but avoiding the lows

The fact Addiction isnt chasing a high but avoiding the lows

How do you feel about your substance use or your loved ones' substance use?

I cant stop it or them
Its our choice

I cant stop it or them Its our choice

What changes do you want to see in the community to better support those with opioid addiction/family members of those with opioid addiction?

focus on you other people
arent in control of you

focus on you other people arent in control of you

How has opioid use changed over the past few years?

It became stronger

It became stronger

What would you tell someone who has just started to use opioids?

use less before it makes you
become useless

use less before it makes you become useless

Have you ever overdosed? How did you feel during/after the event?

never

never

I've used drugs as a fake like
haha but then it was doing
them so I wouldn't feel dope sick
and the dosage kept increasing
soon as I knew it everyone
around me was using after
that it became non stop
best advise don't start
Cause once you do the
Marathon Continues

23 years old. Addict, hoonigan, hustla.

Ive used drugs as a joke like haha but then it was doing them so I wouldn't feel dopesick and the doseage kept increasing soon as I knew it everyone around me was using after that it became nonestop best advise dont start Cause once you do the marathon continues

**focus on you
other
people
arent in
control of
you**

Sept. 4, 2022

Opioids and overdose

In my opinion, Taking fentanyl is like killing yourself, injecting the world's most dangerous drug is lethal and can cause harm to your body and potentially ruin or end your life.

I've had no experiences with overdose before as im not the drug type but I've had alcohol poisoning long ago when I drank too much, and a seizure from going hard on smoking.

Just taking a single hit of a drug even once can change a person forever. With Fentanyl, the smallest amount the size of a grain of rice can overdose or even kill you.

Once you start, it's hard to go back.

Everyone has a voice to say no to drugs and stop the overdoses from happening in our world.

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Everyone has a voice to say no to drugs and stop the overdoses from happening in our world.

14 years old. Brother.



420 OVERDOSE DEATHS SINCE 2020 [In Saskatchewan] (1373 confirmed/suspected at the time of publication)

Don't do drugs, stay in school

To this day

Don't drown in those pills

I heard that they Kill

A local daily addict dies everyday

I heard they were broken as they say

They eat the pills like candy

It really hurts them badly

I'm sorry you feel this way

I watch you in a casket as you lay

I LOVE YOU MOM Every day

Even if I can't get you to stay

I hope you made it home safe

I will always Think about you to this day.

anonymous

To this day
Dont drown in those pills
I heard that they kill
A local daily addict dies everyday
I heard they were broken as they say
They eat the pills like candy
It really hurts them badly
Im sorry you feel this way
I watch you in a casket as you lay
I LOVE YOU MOM Every day
Even if I cant get you to stay
I hope you made it home safe
I will always Think about you to this day

Hey dad.

It's been almost exactly 3 years now. So much has happened for me and the kids since you passed. You'd be so proud of all of us. People say so all the time. Sometimes I wonder if we ever get talking for you to express that to me, because we were fighting when you died.

I tried to apologize I promise. I sent it the day you died. The coroner says I was probably a bit after hours too late. That is utterly fucking crushing, and I'm so sorry dad. I hope you somehow know that.

I carry you with me everywhere, be it your medical pouch from rehab, your clothes, or your ashes. Having you with me helps me do the seemingly impossible work I do.

I've done so much, I went to Australia! you would have loved to hear about it. I've had my heart broken twice, and I'd have loved to hear your true opinion about these partners. It would've been healing. I changed a fire by myself, and I cried because you weren't there. You were supposed to be there. I've been to so much therapy that I am functional. I will be okay, and you'll not be there to see it.

I don't blame you anymore. Not for things that were out of your control.

Man, our relationship was really rocky but this isn't what I meant when I said I didn't want to talk to you ever again because you fucked me up so much to myself. I didn't mean that. I wanted you to get pissed at me way you did.

I haven't been to the cemetery to see you, it's too far, or I'd come a few times a year.

Hey dad,

It's been almost exactly 3 years now. So much has happened for me and the kids since you passed. You'd be so proud of all of us. People say that all the time. Sometimes I wonder if we'd even be talking for you to express that to me, because we were fighting when you died.

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I've done so much, I went to Australia! You would have loved to hear about it. I've had my heart broken twice, and I'd have loved to hear your true opinions about those partners. It would've been healing.

I changed a tire by myself, and I cried because you weren't there. You were supposed to be there. I've been to so much therapy that I am functional. I will be okay, and you'll not be there to see it. I don't blame you anymore, not for things that out of your control.

Man, our relationship was rocky but this isn't what I meant when I said I didn't "want to talk to you ever again because you fucked me up so much" to myself. I didn't mean that I wanted you to get poisoned the way you did.

I haven't been to the cemetery to see you, it's too far, or I'd come a few times a year.



Everything I do now is to help people like you and mom, who didn't get the education on substances soon enough like I did by watching you guys experience it and finding real people to talk to about them.

~~Thank you~~ I miss you, and wish I could message you all the time. I'm moving out soon, and having you here to talk me through it would be nice. I'll be able to do it without you, just like I've done everything else, it just sucks.

I hope your injuries aren't hurting you anymore, and you're not forced into using like, alcohol or something.

I love you, even though I didn't act like it.

Talk to you later dad,

love, ~~xxxxxx~~

21 years old. perseverant, bold, tired, harm reductionist,
brave.

Everything I do not is to help people like you and mom, who didn't get the education on substances soon enough like I did by watching you guys experience it and finding real people to talk to about them.

I miss you, and wish I could message you all the time. I'm moving out soon, and having you here to talk me through it would be nice. I'll be able to do it without you, just like I've done everything else, it just sucks. I hope your injuries aren't paining you anymore, and you aren't forced into using like, afterlife dope or something.

I love you, even though I didn't act like it.

Talk to you later dad,

love,

[REDACTED]

**WE ARE ALL
HUMANS WHO
DESERVE
COMPASSION AND
CARE. WE LOVE
YOU. STAY SAFE.**

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING OPIOID ADDICTION, OR
JUST CASUALLY USING.

Brief and Social Detox Unit

The Brief Detox Unit (DBU) is a 15 bed unit which provides a safe place to sleep for individuals under the influence of alcohol or drugs where they can be monitored until no longer intoxicated from their alcohol or substance use.

The Social Detox Unit Is a recovery based inpatient unit where clients often begin or reconnect with their recovery process.

**201 Avenue O South,
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 2R6
(306) 655-4195**

Calder Centre

Calder Centre Adult Program is a 38 bed inpatient program providing a safe supportive environment to help individuals with substance use/abuse through the stabilization tasks of recovery. It uses the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual understanding of addiction and recovery.

**2003 Arlington Avenue,
Saskatoon, SK
S7J 2H6
(306) 655-4500**

Calder Residential Treatment – Youth

Calder Centre Youth Program is a 12 bed residential treatment program providing residential treatment services to adolescents and families with substance use/abuse issues. Calder Centre is a safe, inviting facility. It affords youth and families an opportunity to evaluate the impact substance/abuse, identify their strengths and begin implementing changes that will contribute to a positive recovery lifestyle in the community.

**2003 Arlington Avenue,
Saskatoon, SK
S7J 2H6
(306) 655-4500**

Central Saskatchewan Area of Narcotics Anonymous

Narcotics Anonymous is a global, community-based organization with a multilingual and multicultural membership. NA was founded in 1953, and members hold nearly 76,000 meetings weekly in 143 countries today. Find NA meetings online and in-person at a number of different locations in the city or call the phone line which is monitored by NA members. Leave a message.

csana.ca
(306) 652-5261

COAST – Community Outreach And Support Team

Assist in stabilizing individuals with mental health and substance use disorders in the community. Assist with food and shelter concerns. Assist with medical transportation. Home withdrawal program.

315 Avenue M South
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 0Y9
(306) 652-5261

Community Addiction Services – Adult

Mental health and addictions services. Other services in the Saskatchewan Health Region (Saskatoon Area

Sturdy Stone Centre
122 3rd Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK
S7K 2H6
(306) 655-7777

Community Adult Recovery Services

This service is for people who have been diagnosed with a mental illness as defined in the DSM-V (major diagnosis) by a psychiatrist and are actively involved with a psychiatrist, people who have suffered a significant loss of social functioning as a result of a mental health disorder, and Individuals at risk of becoming chronically disabled by a mental health disorder, including persons who are acutely ill or traumatized.

314 Duchess Street
Saskatoon, SK
S7K 0R1
(306) 844-4200

EDAC – Emergency Department Addiction Counselors

EDAC is a program that allows an addiction counsellor to be accessed *short term* from the emergency room of St. Paul's Hospital during the hours of 7am to 11pm, 7 days a week. EDAC is meant for people over the age of 18 who are admitted to the emergency room for substance-related reasons, or patients who need support for someone else's substance use. EDAC does brief intervention, safety planning, advocacy, education, and connection to Mental Health and Addiction Services community supports.

**St. Paul's Emergency
Department
1702 20th St West
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 0Z9
(306) 514-8935
(306) 514-8945**

McLeod House – CUMFI

On April of 2004, the McLeod House was opened. It is a 12 suite apartment building and can house 16 single men at a time. McLeod House offers safe and supportive housing for men who are struggling with various addictions. The apartment building is monitored and staffed 24/7.

**101 Avenue T South
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 3A7
(306) 665-0425**

Metis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan – MACSI

Metis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (MACSI) is a provincial community based addictions agency with locations in three cities across the province, Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert. We welcome Metis, First Nations and Non Aboriginal people who are seeking support to live safer, healthier lives free of the harmful effects of addictions. MACSI's programs and services are unique. They are informed by a broad spectrum of influences. This includes knowledge of our Metis heritage, traditional Aboriginal teachings, the 12 step recovery model, Saskatchewan's Clinical Principles for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Services in Saskatchewan, up-to-date research and emerging trends in the field of addictions.

**335 Avenue G South
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 1V2
(306) 652-8951**

Metis Nation – SK Mental Health and Addictions Program

Metis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) is offering Metis in Saskatchewan access to Metis culturally specific mental health and addiction supports for adults, youth and families. A toll-free line for help navigating mental health and addiction supports is available at 1-855-671-5638 from 8am to 4pm central time Monday to Friday. For crisis situations, a 24 hr Crisis Line is available at 1-877-767-7572.

1-855-671-5638
1-877-767-7572

Overdose Outreach Team (OOT)

The Overdose Outreach Team is comprised of a Counsellor from Mental Health Addictions Services, Saskatchewan Health Authority and Primary Care Paramedics from the Saskatoon Fire Department. The OOT connects with clients who have recently experienced an overdose.

The team will help individuals access programs and services to reduce their risk of overdose and other drug related harms.

Mon-Fri
9AM-5:30PM
(639) 471-8335

Prairie Harm Reduction

Their mission is to improve the quality of life for all members of our community through gold standards in harm reduction; emphasizing local action with national impact. And their mandate is to serve people at-risk and affected by HIV and Hepatitis C by reducing discrimination and deaths, removing barriers, pursuing innovation and demonstrating evidence-based outcomes.

In October 2019, Prairie Harm Reduction was proud to announce that Saskatchewan's first Safe Consumption Site would open. The SCS provides a safe and judgment free environment for individuals to consume their substances. The PHR team continues to work tirelessly to ensure that the site remains open and available to those who need a safe place to go, all in absence of provincial funding.

1516 20th St W
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 0Z6
(306) 979-4156

Saskatoon Community Clinic – Westside

The Saskatoon Community Clinic is a primary health care service provider. As well, they provide dental services, Chronic Disease Management, and sexual and reproductive health services.

**1528 20th St W,
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 0Z6
(306) 664-4310**

OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Mobile Crisis Saskatoon

(306) 933-6200

Youth Community Counseling

(306) 655- 7777

**Healthline (Non-emergency questions
and concerns)**

8-1-1

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

Hope For Wellness Helpline

**(Available 24/7 to all Indigenous people across
Canada)**

1-855-242-3310

**National Overdose Response Service
(Call if you're using alone)**

1-888-688-6677

