

Who we are

A community-based, not-for-profit organization that provides services, opportunities and programs to improve the lives and empower people living with, affected by or at risk of HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis C in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario.

Our services include HIV and hepatitis C and B testing and treatment, referrals, case management services, support groups, outreach services, needle exchange, education and community development, and more.



Contact Us

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Open Monday to Friday, 9am – 4pm
Closed for lunch between 12pm – 1pm



WHiSE, 2020

**Walking for Harm
Reduction through
Street Engagement**

Who are the 185 WHiSE participants?.....	1
Financial Difficulties	1
The Impact of Colonization.....	1
The Ellie Outreach Van.....	2
Using Naloxone	2
The Importance of Culture.....	3
Harm Reduction	4
Supervised Injection and Consumption sites.....	4
Impacts.....	5

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Impacts

Short-term



- Bring harm reduction services including resources and training to the communities of street-affected Indigenous people.
- Hire Indigenous persons to fill research and service positions to bridge the gap between community, and health access & research.

Medium-term



- Use WHiSE findings to make existing and future harm reduction services better.
- Identify ways Ellie can reach more street-affected Indigenous persons who use substances.
- Share WHiSE findings with local Indigenous service users and providers.

Long-term



- Create a project on the importance of Indigenous cultural service providers like Elders for substance users to get and stay in care.
- Use WHiSE findings to create a SCS or SIS.
- Evaluate the harm reduction services of Elevate NWO and see how they align with Indigenous organizations.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. It is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.

Out of 185 participants, ...

- 177 knew where to go for harm reduction services.
 - 40 of them said they did not access harm reduction services because of a lack of transportation, privacy and familiarity with the location.
- 42 participants didn't practice harm reduction and teachings together because they:
 - Had to wait four days before going into a sweat,
 - Couldn't use drugs in ceremony or find a cultural person willing to work with them.
- All participants said that to meet their harm reduction needs they wanted more accessible spaces, food, hygiene products, safer substance use kits, counselling, health services, and that the Ellie Van needed longer hours and more site visits.

Supervised Injection & Consumption Sites (SIS/SCS)

185 participants said ...

- A SIS or SCS inclusive of their needs and values must have a caring and supportive staff as well as support resources and services.
- They would go to a SIS or SCS that provides a space for safe drug use, housing support, one-on-one and group support, and support for ending drug use when needed.
- Expressions of Indigenous identity like sweats, Elders or Healers, circle activities, and Indigenous staff are needed in a SIS or SCS.

Who are the 185 WHiSE Participants?



- 89 were women and 95 were men and 184 persons self-identified as First Nations.
- 86 persons were from Treaty 9, 40 were from Robinson Superior and Huron, 31 were from Treaty 3, and 27 were from Treaties 1, 4, 5, 6 and other.

Financial Difficulties/Insecurity



In the last 3 months, out of 185 participants ...

- 55 persons slept in a house with family or friends, 43 in a shelter or rooming house, and 45 in an owned or rented apartment.
- 96 persons spent most of their time on the street when they were not sleeping.
- 12 women and 5 men had 1-2 sources of income, 29 women and 48 men had 3-5 sources, and 47 women and 42 men had 6-10 sources.

The Impact of Colonization



Out of 185 participants, ...

- 159 persons were residential school survivors, 123 persons were involved in the child welfare system as a child and 99 were involved as parents.
- 29 persons were taken during the sixties scoop and 19 persons had children taken from them during the sixties scoop.

The Ellie Outreach Van



103 participants used the Ellie Outreach Van. This is important since 98 injected drugs, 155 smoked drugs, and 132 took drugs orally in the last 3 months.

Using Naloxone



172 participants heard of naloxone and 11 asked for a refresher on naloxone.



111 participants had a naloxone kit, 13 needed another kit, and 33 wanted one.



95 participants with a naloxone kit were trained to use it, 5 needed a refresher on how to use it, and 5 persons wanted to be trained.



77 participants had used naloxone and 45 called an ambulance after using it.

89 persons were aware of the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act, and because of it 170 were willing to call 911 when they learned about it.

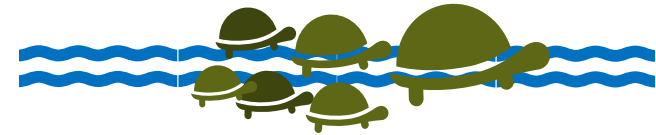
The Importance of Culture

Out of 185 participants, ...

- 116 persons practiced First Nations or Métis ceremonies for healing, celebration, or other purposes.
- 170 persons saw reflections of being Indigenous in people, organizations, advertisements, and restaurants for example.
- All of them found strength in their connection to culture & the land, creator, neighborhood, family or community for example.



Participants practiced ceremonies and some specific cultural activities included smudging, drumming, singing, pow wows, sweats, learning the language, visiting Elders, and fishing and hunting.



Some reasons for not practicing cultural activities included that they were either not available or affordable, the right cultural service providers weren't available, some aspects of culture clashed with other beliefs participants held, or participants had competing obligations.