



WORKING TOWARDS A SUBSTANCE USER NETWORK IN THE ATLANTIC REGION (SUNAR)



IMPETUS

- ◉ Halifax Area Network of Drug Users: the only formed drug user group in Atlantic Canada
- ◉ Limited representation from the Atlantic on the national front
- ◉ Stigma, lack of access to critical life saving harm reduction interventions and supports in small cities and smaller communities across the Atlantic Provinces
- ◉ Compensation for the expertise PWUS bring to the table
- ◉ Funding application submitted to Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program(SUAP)



SUPPORT & PARTNERSHIPS

- Halifax Area Network of Drug Users(HANDUP)
- Mainline Needle Exchange
- Alley Centre of Cape Breton, NS
- Northern Healthy Connections, Truro, NS
- Ensemble, Moncton, NB
- Avenue B, Saint John, NB
- AIDS SIDA, Fredericton, NB
- PEERS Alliance, Charlottetown, PEI
- AIDS Committee of NFL and Labrador
- Atlantic Interdisciplinary Research Network on Social and Behavioral Issues related to HIV and HCV(AIRN)
- Canadian Research Institute in Substance Misuse(CRISM)



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- To enhance the capacity of People Who Use Substances(PWUS) in the Atlantic Region
- To educate targeted stakeholders, including service providers, decision makers on the benefits of harm reduction, supervised consumption, safe supply and overdose prevention services

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- Reduce barriers and increase access to important harm reduction services
- help with efforts focused on reducing overdose related deaths in Atlantic Canada

KEY ACTIVITIES

- One-on-one meetings and focus groups in the seven communities
- Provide support and guidance related to safer drug consuming practices and identify local priorities via bi-weekly teleconference meetings

KEY ACTIVITIES

- HANDUP Coordinator, lead peer to visit the seven communities annually to:
 - provide peer mentorship training, presentation skills,
 - social media development and
 - support related to changes in drug using patterns, barriers and facilitators in each community
- SUNAR and HANDUP identify and invite academics/ researchers, key decision and policy makers in each province from municipal, provincial and federal governments, community-based organizations and health professionals for a ½ day symposium in Halifax.

OUTCOMES

- Researchers, policy and decision makers have access to an expert body of people with lived experience
- Gain a better understanding of the local context of substance use trends and barriers in each community
- Increased capacity among substance users to advocate for programs and services (peer researchers, research is informed by the experts)



WHAT WOULD SUNAR MEAN FOR INTERVENTION RESEARCH

- Members are compensated as consultants/advisors to substance use intervention projects from ensuring that a first voice perspective is included from concept, development, implementation and dissemination
- Linkages between the provinces among PWUS that builds capacity, promotes safer drug using interventions and increases awareness for pragmatic harm reduction services
- Strengthened collaboration between AIRN, CRISM and PWUS, building the body of knowledge and experience among PWUS

These safe injection sites and overdose prevention sites now are no longer controversial in terms of a healthcare service. They're really the standard of care when it comes to caring for this community that's marginalized and exuded and at really high risk of death," said Dr. Tommy Brothers, a Halifax-based physician.

