

Making it Work

Supporting Indigenous Community Approaches to Integrated Service Models for People Living with HIV, Hepatitis C, Ill Mental Health, and/or Problematic Substance Use



What is Making it Work?

Making it Work is an Indigenous focused community-based research study that is looking at what services work well for people living with HIV, hepatitis C, and/or challenges with mental health and/or substance use. This project is looking to understand why, when and how certain services work, with a specific interest in the following program models:

1

Indigenous service delivery models:

Programs that approach service delivery with an Indigenous worldview of health and/or provide services within a *culturally safe framework**. While Indigenous cultures are diverse, there are often commonalities in their worldviews being holistic in nature, highlighting the importance of physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual parts of a person, and connection to land, and relationships.³

2

Case management:

Client-centered support that helps clients navigate complex systems of care, and links them with health care, psychosocial, and other services. This could include housing, food, income, medical treatment, harm reduction, employment services etc.

3

Community Development

Strategies designed to build strong social networks, inclusion and support, creating and mobilizing resources within the community to engage and support individuals, groups and organizations. Examples of these types of programs may include peer mentorship models, talking circles, cultural outings, or community events.

The study is looking to understand how these types of programs are linked to improve outcomes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients. We will be working with four community organizations as case study sites to answer these questions and showcase their work in these areas. We will also be developing an evaluation tool that organizations can use to highlight the value in their own work.

* *Cultural safety is about creating an environment where all individuals feel respected and safe, free from racism or discrimination.^{1,2} This requires acknowledging and respecting the unique history of Indigenous peoples in order to provide appropriate care and services in an equitable and safe way.¹*

1. Provincial Health Services Authority. (n.d). San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training – About us. Retrieved from <http://www.sanyas.ca/about-us>

2. Northern Health. (2019). Cultural Safety. Retrieved from <https://www.indigenoushealthnh.ca/initiatives/cultural-safety>

3. Cull, I., Hancock, R.L.A., McKeown, S., Pidgeon, M., & Vedanis, A. Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors. Retrieved from <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/chapter/indigenous-ways-of-knowing-and-being/>

How did this project start?

Following a provincial needs assessment in 2008, an advisory committee of front-line service providers and people with lived experience(s) started meeting to talk about the gaps in services for people with multiple diagnoses and the challenges of helping people navigate complex and often fragmented systems of care. A working group was then formed in 2010 that met monthly to discuss ways to improve the system of care. This group decided to initiate a research project to expand knowledge about models of care that are working for people living with HIV and/or hepatitis C, that may be experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges.

Within these conversations emerged the question of how organizations ensure their services are culturally safe and support positive outcomes for Indigenous clients. Recognizing the high proportion of Indigenous people accessing these services, this question became a high priority for the research team.

Making it Work emerged from these initial questions.

Who is involved?

The Making it Work Study is co-led by J. Evin Jones and Janice Duddy of the Pacific AIDS Network, Sherri Pooyak from the Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research Collaborative (AHA Centre) and Dr. Nancy Clark at the University of Victoria. The study team is made up of service providers from community-based organizations across British Columbia, people with lived experience(s) and community-based researchers.

The study will be working in partnership with four community organization case study sites to interview clients and service providers to help answer the research questions of *when*, *how* and *why* these programs work for clients. People from these communities will be part of the research team to help inform and guide the research and knowledge exchange in their communities.



The Making it Work logo was designed by Clayton Gauthier. You can read more about our logo here: pacificaidnetwork.org/check-it-out-new-making-it-work-study-logo/

Research approach

The community-based research team will work in partnership with local communities to find ways to decolonize our research process and work on a foundation of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, *two-eyed seeing** and cultural safety.

What is community-based research?

Community-based research (CBR) is a type of research that places community partnerships at the forefront. CBR approaches are marked by the following principles:

Collaborative:

The communities in which the research is taking place are full partners in all stages of the process. Community partners and academic researchers work together to develop questions that are responsive to community needs, determine appropriate data collection methods, and develop effective knowledge sharing strategies.

Inclusive:

Community-based research seeks to democratize knowledge by recognizing and valuing the unique strengths and perspectives of all members involved in the research process. CBR projects often use multiple and innovative data collection strategies and analysis methods that reflect the diverse expertise and experiences of the research team.

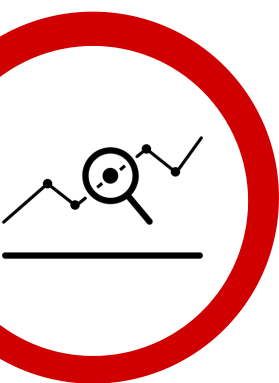
Change-oriented:

Although community-based research can make important contributions to knowledge, its ultimate objective is to promote positive social change. Community-based research seeks to empower communities and effect policy changes.

You can read more about community-based research and how we undertake research on the PAN site: pacificaidnetwork.org/what-is-cbr/

Realist evaluation

The Making it Work study is using an approach called realist evaluation to help answer the research questions. Realist evaluation is particularly good at helping understand complex programs, and is designed to not only ask 'if' a program works, but *how, why, when, and for whom*. To undertake this approach, we will develop a theory of why these programs work. Next, we will test this theory in the four case study sites. Then we will develop an evaluation tool that other organizations can use themselves to showcase the value in the work they do, and *how, why, when and for whom* their services work.



**Two-eyed seeing is a guiding principle from Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall that honours both Indigenous ways of knowing and western knowledge systems. Both types of knowledge are used together, with equal value placed on both, to strengthen the way we do work and the understanding we gain from our research.*

How you can be involved

1 Community organizations

Does your organization provide case management type services and also community building programs?

Do you work within an Indigenous worldview of health and wellness and/or within a culturally safe framework?

We are looking to partner with organizations that provide these types of services for people living with HIV, hepatitis C, and/or mental health and/or substance use challenges. Four community organizations will act as case study sites to help showcase what about these programs works well. If you are interested in this work, as an individual or an organization, please get in touch.

Participation from organizations will be determined collaboratively to arrange what works best but may include some of the following:

- Attending monthly teleconferences with the study team and additional teleconferences as necessary
- Supporting the Making it Work study with their local knowledge and expertise, informing the development of research protocols that are appropriate for their local context
- Being the local contact for Peer Research Associates if applicable (training and support will also be provided by the Pacific AIDS Network and the CBR team)
- With the Research Coordinator's help, staying informed about the Making it Work study in order to better inform other community members who might have questions (particularly potential participants who want to know about the study)
- Support hosting community information and/or knowledge exchange events (event planning and expenses will be supported by the Making it Work study)
- Assisting with recruitment and interview participants by distributing/posting recruitment information and/or referring interested participants to the research team

Organizations will be compensated for their time commitment in supporting this work.

2 Students

Are you, or do you know someone, who is a student and interested in community-based research and/or evaluation?

We are looking for a graduate student to join the project. Preference will be given to Indigenous students and funding is available for student participation.

3 People with lived experience(s)

Do you have lived experience of HIV, hepatitis C, drug use or mental health challenges?

Are you interested in being involved with community based research?

We will be looking for people with lived experience(s) to join our research team across the province. If this type of work interests you please get in touch! You will be compensated for the time you spend on this project.

Please get in touch with our Study Coordinator Joanna Mendell if any of these opportunities interest you, or if you want more information about the study: joanna@pacificaidnetwork.org
pacificaidnetwork.org/making-work-project/