



**STRONGER TOGETHER - BUILDING COMMUNITY**

# ROUNDTABLE

**ABORIGINAL COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS**



**September 28, 2018**



On September 28th 2018, the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) invited local Victoria organizations and service providers to gather at the Esquimalt Nation Long House. The gathering was an opportunity for the ACEH to update the local community organizations about its projects, research, and lessons learned. The goal of the session was to explore ways to network and align services where appropriate.

We acknowledge this event took place on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen speaking people of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

***Thank you to Joseph and Liz Thomas from SXIMEŁEŁ (Esquimalt) Nation for opening the gathering with a welcome and prayer song.***



# ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

- Victoria Cool Aid Society (VCAS)
- Beacon Community Services
- AIDS Vancouver Island (AVI)
- Peers Victoria Resources Society
- Portland Hotel Society (PHS)
- Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH)
- Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)
- First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

- United Way, Greater Victoria
- City of Victoria, Town Council
- Métis Nation of Greater Victoria
- 713 Outreach Team
- Capital Regional District (CRD)
- Victoria Police Department
- Threshold Housing Society
- PhD Student, University of Alberta
- Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH)





# PRESENTATIONS

## **Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi - ACEH, Executive Director**

Opened with an overview of the history, lessons learned, and current projects/initiatives of the ACEH, including its goal to develop culturally-supportive housing for Indigenous women experiencing homelessness and develop pathways to healing and recovery through an Indigenous lens.

## **Victoria Cool Aid Society (VCAS) - Priority One Pilot Program**

Described their partnership with ACEH whereby they piloted culturally-supportive housing for some of the most at-risk members of the ISC in Victoria. The panel expressed the benefits of an Indigenous model of care because the mainstream models have not worked for many. They also raised concerns of the lack of urban Indigenous support services, especially for those returning from detox and treatment. The manager on the panel reflected on her personal experience regarding the transformative nature of this pilot, not only for the Cohort, but for VCAS staff.

## **Chief of Police - Del Manak**

Highlighted Vic PD's partnership with the ACEH and their work towards reconciliation through relationship building - Vic PD officers and the Indigenous Street Community (ISC). Del emphasized the importance of trust-building and long-term relationships.



### **Sarah Littlechild - ACEH, Projects & Outreach Worker**

Presented on the findings of the ACEH Health and Wellness Research Project. The study surveyed 90 Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness in Victoria. Results highlighted a need for holistic, trauma informed, culturally-specific healthcare practices, as well as Indigenous transitional spaces, urban healing centers, and culturally-supportive housing. Sarah also noted the Managed Alcohol Program (MAP) Feasibility Study and a goal for decolonized harm reduction practice.

### **Coreen Child - ACEH, Researcher for MAP Feasibility Study**

Shared the MAP Feasibility Study findings. This report was based on surveys and focus groups with 58 individuals from the ISC as well as local service providers, with a focus on chronic non-beverage alcoholism. These findings will be incorporated into the ACEH long-range planning for an Indigenous framework to address decolonized harm reduction practice.



**Four questions were posed to the participants who broke into four small working groups. The following highlights a sample of the overarching responses from participants/organizations:**

# QUESTION 1

## HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S GOALS ALIGNING WITH ACEH'S?



In general, the organizations support streamlined access to housing, prevention strategies, and advocacy for Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness.

# QUESTION 2

## ARE THERE ADDITIONAL GAPS IN SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES THAT THE ACEH DID NOT IDENTIFY?

### A NEED FOR:

- Indigenous voices at the table - including those with lived experience and peer support within future working groups
  - Free or low-cost culturally-appropriate counselling for Indigenous individuals
  - Streamlined access to services
  - An Elder, Indigenous Navigator, Indigenous Social Worker, and/or Indigenous peers available in every emergency room to ensure access, appropriate navigation, advocacy and support upon arrival and release
  - Indigenous languages and ceremony in support services
- 
- Support for Indigenous youth
  - Relationships with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders in our communities
  - More Indigenous support workers and support for Indigenous staff working within this field
  - Couples and family transitional housing
  - More research on pathways to recovery
  - Training for organizations and staff to learn the significance of Indigenous identity

# QUESTION 3

## a) APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE PEOPLE YOU SERVE ARE INDIGENOUS?

- All organizations reported that a large proportion of the individuals they serve are Indigenous, but exact numbers were unknown

## b) WHAT 'INDIGENOUS' APPROACHES ARE INCORPORATED INTO YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SUPPORTS?

- Following protocols and acknowledgement of the territories
- Providing cultural-sensitivity training for employees & culturally-safe practices
- Encouraging gatherings and knowledge transmission with Indigenous peoples, and incorporating that learning into a philosophy of care
- Supporting people to determine their own paths in life
- **Metis Nation** incorporates ways to connect with all cultural groups through forming partnerships within the community and helping individuals to transition into Elder roles



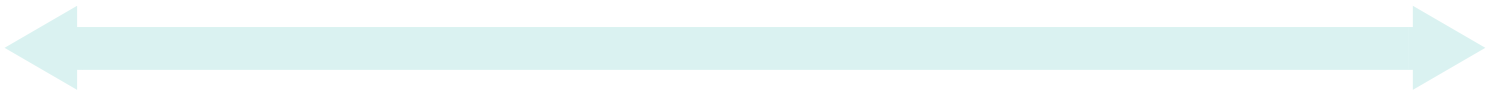


# QUESTION 4

## WHAT SHOULD A PARTNERSHIP LOOK LIKE?

A partnership...

- Begins by identifying each other's capacities, strengths, and gaps
- Develops a clear plan which outlines what each partner will bring to the relationship
- Holds a degree of honesty, transparency, and accountability among partners
- Works together by sharing information, reports, and lessons learned



# RECOMMENDATIONS

**The following recommendations have been drafted based on the results of the small group discussions:**

1. That the ACEH support local organizations to build on existing programs to incorporate Indigenous worldview and cultural approaches.
2. Training for organizations and staff to learn the significance of Indigenous identity.
3. Determine how organizations can learn cultural knowledge from Elders and Knowledge Keepers but not at the expense of Elders.
4. Create an Indigenous working group for Victoria City Hall/Council to share initiatives and leading practices.
5. Take a proactive versus reactive approach to prevention by aligning strategic priorities.
6. Ensure Indigenous voices, youth, and peer support are represented at decision-making tables.
7. Discuss ways that the Priority One Pilot Project's Lessons Learned report can be used to raise awareness locally about culturally-supportive housing.

8. Advance the support for Indigenous women experiencing homelessness and violence, as well as the de-stigmatization of Indigenous women in the sex trade.
9. Seek ways to align western and traditional models of care, specific to pathways of healing and recovery.
10. Discuss and prepare a briefing note on ways to streamline access to services for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness.
11. Establish an Indigenous Navigator position that provides a bridge between hospital emergency rooms and release back to the streets and/or transitional housing.
12. Support for Indigenous youth.

---

## MOVING FORWARD...

**The Roundtable discussions pointed to challenges but also highlighted potential networking opportunities requiring further discussion. Therefore, the second Roundtable scheduled for March 8th, 2019 will establish three priorities, strategic directions and actions, and a working committee(s) to formalize broader networking opportunities.**



## STRONGER TOGETHER – BUILDING COMMUNITY

# ROUNDTABLE UPDATE

In September 2018, the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society (ACEH) invited local Victoria organizations and service providers to gather and explore ways to network and align services where appropriate. 17 organizations attended the initial gathering and 12 recommendations were developed. The same group met in March 2019 to review the 12 recommendations and prioritize actions moving forward.

**The following three priorities were identified:**

- 1** That the ACEH support local organizations to build on existing programs to incorporate Indigenous worldview and cultural approaches
- 2** Ensure Indigenous voices, youth and peer supports are represented at decision-making tables
- 3** Support for Indigenous youth

**The ACEH's new Associate Director & Community Strategist, Sally Hunter, will be taking the lead to coordinate the next meeting and to organize a small working group to begin to create an action plan for 2019-2020.**

**[associatedirector@ACEHsociety.com](mailto:associatedirector@ACEHsociety.com)**

