

HARM REDUCTION

SPRING 2023

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MEET



THE TEAM

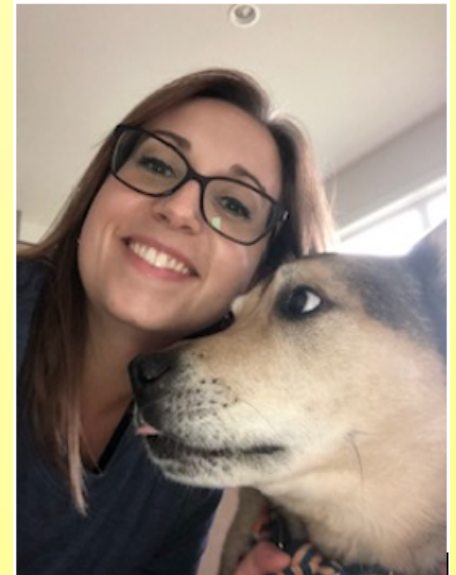
welcome to the team

The Harm Reduction Program is please to announce that Dani Moretto and Samantha Kulai have accepted the positions of Lead, Health & Housing.

Sam has been working within IH for six years as a clinician on various MHSU teams (1-2 yrs SCS & SU Outreach); most recently almost 4 yrs as MHSU Team Lead (SCS/OAT/iOAT). Prior to joining IH Sam worked in non-profit and managing various programs; housing/corrections contracts for six years. Sam loves being outdoors and spending time with my spouse and pets, pictured here with Buster.

Sam is originally from Vancouver Island, moved to Kelowna in 2016. So excited to be joining this team. She is passionate about this work and look forward to bringing that enthusiasm to this new position!

**SAMANTHA
KULAI**



**DANI
MORETTO**

Dani holds both a Bachelor of Social Work from University of Victoria and a Masters of Social Work from University of Waterloo. After 15 years of living and working in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside with a non-profit developing and delivering low barrier supportive housing programs, as well as years with VCH on ACT and ICM teams, Dani returned to her home community of Kelowna to the non-profit sector, being instrumental in the opening of many supportive housing programs in the community since 2018. With a period as Team Lead of IH's Special Populations portfolio, Dani most recently was Director of Programs and Services with CMHA Kelowna before making the transition back to IH in the Lead, Health & Housing role. With over 17 years experience on the frontline delivering services to vulnerable populations, as well as more than a decade of progressive leadership, Dani believes strongly that services should be designed to meet the unique needs of all individuals, rather than expecting a one-size-fits-all approach to be effective.





WELCOME TOBACCO VAPOUR REDUCTION TEAM

ITS OFFICIAL! THE TOBACCO VAPOUR REDUCTION TEAM IS NOW
UNDER THE HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM


The Tobacco & Vapour Reduction Team work alongside various community stakeholders and municipalities to protect the public from the harms of tobacco use, vaping, second- and third-hand smoke, and vaping aerosols. They help to facilitate and create healthy environments that support children and youth to remain smoke and vape free, and support tobacco/vape users to quit or reduce their use. The Team also assists in the development, implementation and evaluation of tobacco and vapour reduction programs and policies by reviewing current research and best practices, in order to reduce the burden of tobacco and vapour related disease for IH communities and its' members.

We are so pleased to welcome Jeff, Jered and Nicole to our team:

Jeff is a clinical social worker & prevention practitioner who has spent the bulk of his career in the area of MHSU. He is the father of two maturing offspring & has a special interest in men's health & psychedelics.

Jered has held various clinical roles in the Mental Health and Substance Use program and has also worked as a residential licensing officer. Jered is an experienced group and educational facilitator and participates regularly in a variety of community forums. Jered grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan and was employed with the Regina Public School Board prior to his move to the BC Interior. Jered has a degree in Social Work and his career as a clinical counsellor spans 25 years. In Jered's spare time he enjoys sharing experiences and creating memories with family and friends, going to the gym and walking his dog.

Nikki completed her Masters of Science in Health Promotion in 2019 where her thesis focused on the relationship between physical activity and social support among high-risk adolescent girls in the Central Okanagan region. Since completing school, she has been working with various non-governmental organizations to develop, coordinate, implement and evaluate programs for marginalized youth and adults in supportive housing, community and outreach program settings. Nikki enjoys being active; particularly while being outdoors with her fiancé, Bernese Mountain and Great Pyrenees dogs. She enjoys hiking and camping in warmer months, and snowboarding in the snowy ones.





The 'Forever Remembered' Lanyard

Outpouring of personal loss touches the hearts of the harm reduction team

The 'Forever Remembered' Lanyard was created for IH staff who have lost a loved one to psychoactive substance use. At the onset of the forever remembered lanyard campaign, IH featured the story of Maggie, a social worker in Vernon who had lost two loved ones to substances use. Since her story, the harm reduction inbox has been filled with requests for the lanyard and personal stories of loved ones tragically lost.

Each story touched the hearts of the harm reduction team and we have all been deeply moved by the breadth of the emails, and the depth and vulnerability of each story. We wanted to acknowledge each and everyone of you impacted by this crisis. Our team has also experienced loss of our loved ones and stand in solidarity with all staff in this ongoing crisis.



THE MEDICINE SHOPPE SETS UP SHOP FOR DRUG CHECKING SERVICES IN VERNON!



As IH expands access to drug checking, Vernon is now getting their own service. Previously Vernon received service from the UBCO Harm Reduction team who travelled up from Kelowna each week. This is the second pharmacy in Canada to host drug checking services! Adding drug checking at the pharmacy provides opportunity to increase access to the wider community; harm reduction supplies and advice will also be available. The Vernon Medicine Shoppe already works closely with MHSU providing OAT medications and delivering to many of Vernon's supportive housing and shelters. A pharmacy technician is currently training to provide FTIR drug checking and the service will likely be open by the end of May.

Want to learn more? Check out drugchecking.ca

DRUG POLICY THE BASICS

Welcome to our new content on drug policy. This newsletter we are introducing the basics of drug policy through sharing facts on these important topics. Drug policy is any policy that pertains to the control and regulation of psychoactive substances, particularly those that are addictive or cause some form of dependence. We will be running a regular series on drug policy learnings so you can expand your knowledge in this area! Here are some 'drug policy - did you know?' facts for part I.

DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 Globally, drug policy is largely set through the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The two UN treaties, established in 1961 and 1971 take a prohibition approach and do not meet human right standards or public health needs. All UN members are expected to ensure their countries policies align with these treaties.
- 2 Drug policy is not developed from science and evidence, but from historical context and culture.
- 3 Drugs are classified in four categories. Schedule I is where our illegal drugs are placed (i.e cocaine, meth, or heroin). Pleasure from psychoactive substances counts as a negative, often referred to as 'if it's fun, it's schedule one'.
- 4 Canada is in violation of these treaties having chosen sound, evidence based public policy over upholding outdated laws when it comes to cannabis regulation; which is currently still considered a drug that should remain illegal at the UN treaty level.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BASIC DRUG POLICY FOUNDATIONS CHECK OUT THE GLOBAL DRUG POLICY COMMISSION REPORT, CLASSIFICATION OF PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES. WHEN SCIENCE WAS LEFT BEHIND. NEXT TIME, STAY TUNED FOR 'DID YOU KNOW - FACTS ON CRIMINALIZATION AND DRUG POLICY.'



DECRIM IN BC DOES IT APPLY TO YOU?



YES

- You are over 18
- In BC (and not crossing a domestic or international border)
- You possess less than 2.5 grams TOTAL (combined) of: opioids, cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy)

NO

- You are under 18
- You possess any amount of any drug not listed above
- You are selling, sharing, or transporting drugs to another person
- You are engaged in another criminal activity beside possession for personal use
- You are in any vehicle operated by someone under 18
- You are in any vehicle and your drugs are within reach of the driver



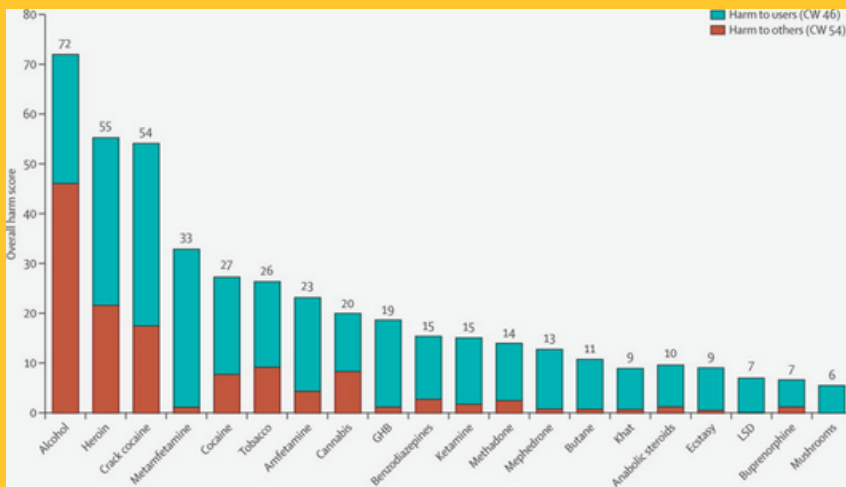
PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES, HARMS & THE LAW

A common perspective that people use to justify stigma is that people who use illegal substances are breaking the law; and a common misconception is that these laws are based on Harm to self and community

The Provincial Health Officer's 'Stopping the Harm' Report states that the prohibition laws cause more harm than the actual drugs to both the individual and society. If the intention of the law is to reduce harm, it has failed

HARMS CAUSED BY PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

A British study researched the harm caused by drugs to the user and to others. The study showed that the legal substance alcohol caused the greatest harm in general whereas some illicit substances result in very little harm at all. With the onset of fentanyl, this chart would currently look different but the study illustrates that laws on psychoactive substances are not based on harms caused by the substance.



Harms

- Lucrative illegal drug market: drugs are the largest illegal commodity in the world
- Illegal drug market-related crimes and risks to community: gangs and gang violence
- Unsafe and unregulated psychoactive substances
- Incarceration-in BC between 2008-2017 there was 244,715 offences under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and 81% were non-violent offenses for simple possession
- Health Harms: although stigma is also a key factor, worries about the law and enforcement drive people to use substances in isolation and/or not obtain new harm reduction equipment
- Laws on drug use reinforce external stigma (the public) and internal stigma (individual feelings towards self)

A harm reduction approach to drug policy means that rather than measuring success based on drug use going down, the primary measure of effectiveness would be the reduction of drug-related harm, such as fewer toxic drug deaths, less drug dependence, less transmission of infections such as HIV/ AIDS and Hepatitis C, reduction of discrimination and racial disparities, increased access to mental health resources, and fewer people in prison.

References: David J Nutt, Leslie A King, Lawrence D Phillips, Drug harms in the UK: a multicriteria decision analysis, The Lancet, Volume 376, Issue 9752, 2010.

THE TOBACCO VAPOUR REDUCTION TEAM

We are excited to welcome the Tobacco & Vapour Reduction team into our program! The TVR team includes three coordinators dedicated to looking at reducing harms specifically related to tobacco and vapour products. See below for some great program highlights.

QUASH PROGRAM

New in-person youth smoking cessation program set to begin May 18, facilitated by one of our very own IH Tobacco & Vapour Reduction Coordinators in the Central Okanagan region. Quash is a smoking and vaping cessation app, powered by the Lung Health Foundation and funded by Health Canada. It's specifically designed to help youth (age 14-19) quit and quit for good. The program is either available as an app to help users quit on their own timeline, or can be facilitated by an adult mentor. The adult-facilitated version is delivered over a series of in-person sessions, and equips youth with the tools and strategies they need to successfully stop smoking or vaping. Find more information [here](#).

SMOKE-FREE CURIOUS CAMPAIGN

Officially launched during the 2022 National Non-Smoking week, the Smoke free Curious campaign is a smoking cessation campaign funded by Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions program. The campaign connects with those who are curious about becoming smoke-free for good and help them build healthier habits. The campaign aims to motivate adult tobacco users aged 35-64 in Canada to quit or reduce their commercial tobacco use by connecting them with evidence-based support services. More information can be found [here](#).



Clearing the Air

In 2019, members of the McCreary Centre Society's Youth Advisory Council and Youth Research Academy came together to create [Clearing the Air](#) - a youth-led research project about youth experiences with vaping. It highlights what makes youth more or less likely to vape and identifies actions youth want to see taken to address vaping. Click [here](#) for the full report.

Like a Dream Catcher...

- Let's protect you from the negative
- Let's get you through the night
- We want tomorrow's positive dreams to guide you

HARM REDUCTION
SUPPLIES AVAILABLE
HERE

INDIGENOUS ART

"When you admit, publicly, that you struggle with addictions one of two things happen.

People change how they look at addiction, or they change how they look at you".

In the winter of 2022 the Interior Health Aboriginal Drug Poisoning Response Working Group recommended the development of culturally reflective harm reduction and overdose prevention promotional material. To meet this request Danielle Kreutzer, Project Lead for opioid agonist treatment in rural communities and Jen Driscoll, Regional Harm Reduction Coordinator reached out to Indigenous networks across the region asking for Indigenous artists to support the images for this endeavor. We were able to support eight images for this particular project and while we received many beautiful images the selection committee (made up of members from the above working group and Indigenous People with Lived and/or Living Experience of substance use) chose the eight images that they believed would resonate most strongly with people accessing harm reduction services.



13 in person sessions on IH's new Harm Reduction Policy and decrim have been hosted across the region for educators, knowledge coordinators, social workers, team leads, managers, directors and other interested IH staff or contracted partners

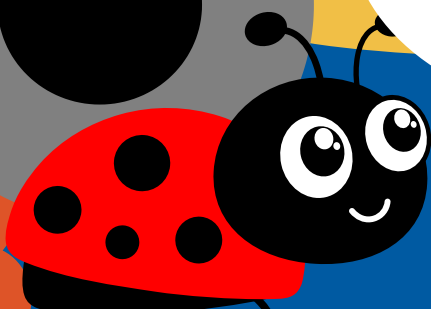
My co-lead Nelson and I present on Decriminalization and what this exemption looks like in health care. Look in the Decriminalization toolkit on the InsideNet to learn more.



We present on the policy and the Harm Reduction Policy Educator Handbook. The handbook explains the policy purpose and key concepts. The book is designed so educators can use it to teach their team about the policy (but anyone can use it). Check it out in the Harm Reduction Toolkit under the policy section.

Harm Reduction Policy Roadshow

More sessions to come in Kamloops and Kelowna!
To learn more email the harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca



FIVE TYPES OF STIGMA

The new Harm Reduction Policy and BC's Decriminalization are both initiatives aimed at reducing stigma around substance use. Below is some information about different types of stigma, and how they might show up in the health system.

She's here for drugs- this pain story doesn't fly

She's here again?? bet she's here cause she has nowhere else to go

INTERSECTIONAL STIGMA



Yes, he's homeless but he also uses illegal substances. Our policies do not permit residents who use illegal substances to stay at our facility. Nor is there even funded positions for MHSU supports

STRUCTURAL OR INSTITUTIONAL STIGMA



There is no way I'm telling anyone about my addiction, I know they'd treat me differently, and might even stop coming to my house

Both patients in room 10 use drugs; ugh, I hate going in there & don't feel safe

ENACTED STIGMA



I'm a worthless junkie

INTERNALIZED STIGMA



PERCIEVED STIGMA



PEOPLE USE PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS

1 Alter their current experience

People use licit and illicit substances for recreation, pleasure, to increase focus, and/or relaxation



2 Mental & Physical Health

People who have experienced trauma, or have underlying anxiety, depression or related mental health concerns may use psychoactive substances to regulate or decrease distressing and/or alarming feelings and experiences of reality. People also use substances for pain management.

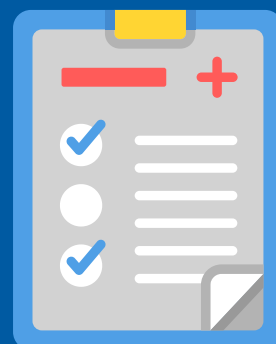


3 Environment

People may use substances to cope with stressful life situations; unsafe and abusive relationships; racism, discrimination and stigma; and unsafe living situations such as homelessness

4 Substance Dependence

People use substances because they have a Substance Use Disorder



Substance Use Education

The Interior Health Youth Harm Reduction Team supports the people and systems that provide services to youth (under age 24) to incorporate harm reduction services and principals into their work.

This information provides an overview of some of their services. Send them an email to connect! They would love to chat with you!

Workbook: Safer Partying

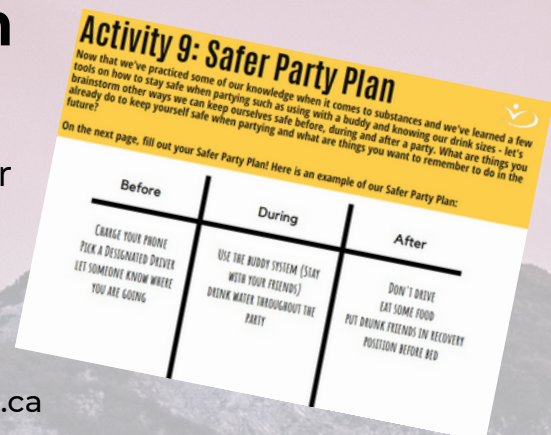
Safer Partying is a workbook originally developed by youth for youth by the amazing people at [BYTE Empowering Youth](#) in Whitehorse, Yukon! They gave us permission to adapt it for use in Interior Health. It's full of cool activities that can be used individually or as a full program. It includes great activities such as:

- Exploring values
- Identifying which substance matches the fact.
- What is a standard drink?
- Recognizing and responding to opioid overdoses
- "What would you do" scenarios
- Safer party planning
- Locating supports in your area

You can get a copy of the workbook on our [website](#).

Looking for more education resources?

Check out our [Youth Harm Reduction Toolkit](#) for more recommended programs!



harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca

Substance Use Education cont'd

The Interior Health Youth Harm Reduction Team is available to consult with schools and youth service providers about evidence-based substance use education programs and resources. Here is another one of their favourites!



Curriculum: Safety First

The **Safety First: Real Drug Education for Teens** curriculum was developed by the US Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) in 2017 to provide teens with honest and scientifically accurate information, and empower them to reduce drug-related harms. It has since been adopted by the Department of Pediatrics at Stanford University's School of Medicine. In 2022, Interior Health's Youth Harm Reduction Program was given permission to adapt the curriculum for use in British Columbia.

Highlights

- 15 lessons containing slide decks, educator guide and student worksheets.
- Relevant information for youth on BC/Canadian substance use topics like cannabis legalization, decriminalization as well as drug policy history.
- Learning objectives that align with BC's Physical Education Curricular Competencies for Social and Community Health and Well-being (Grade 9/10).

The curriculum will help students:

- Use critical thinking skills to access and evaluate information about alcohol and other drugs.
- Learn decision-making and goal-setting skills that support healthy and informed choices related to substance use.
- Develop personal and social strategies to manage the risks, benefits and harms of alcohol and other drug use.
- Understand the impact of drug policies on personal and community health.
- Learn how to advocate for restorative drug policies and practices.

Find out more about the curriculum and access the materials in the [Safety First Educators Guide](#).



harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca



Harm Reduction News Flash with Chloe

Chloe Sage has a wealth of knowledge and we are lucky to have her as a Regional Harm Reduction Coordinator. Below you will learn more about Chloe's favorite Harm Reduction focused resources.

[Canadian Association of People
Who Use Drugs](#)

[Click here](#) to view their great
resources!

CAPUD wrote an incredible Safe
Supply concept document. [Click here](#)
to read more.

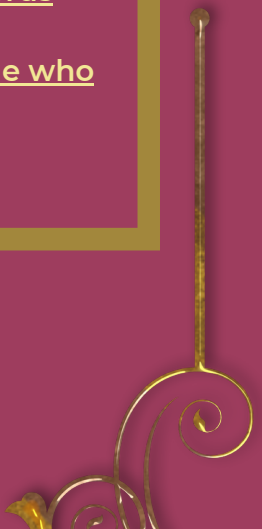
[Click here](#) to read what CAPUD wrote
an introductory guide for assessing
and understanding wounds with
people who inject drugs

[Click here](#) for Stimulus connect Safer
Bathrooms

[International Network of People who
use drugs](#)

[Click here](#) for a great resource on
reducing stigma by just listening

Chloe's favorite guide is the [words
matter language guide](#) from
[International Network of People who
use drugs](#)



Safer substance use during extreme heat may help prevent heat illness

Some substances can make you more sensitive to heat illness:



Stimulants

cocaine, crack, meth

Stimulants can increase your body temperature and make it harder for your body to cool off.



Opioids

heroin, fentanyl

Opioids can make it hard to feel the effects of heat and take action to protect yourself.



Alcohol

Alcohol is dehydrating. Large amounts of alcohol can lower blood pressure making it harder to cool your body down during extreme heat.

Try these harm reduction tips during extreme heat:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware of how different substances affect your body during extreme heat.• Find a friend so you can take care of each other.• Close window coverings during the day and open windows at night.• Do not stay inside if it is very hot (above 31°C). Move to a cool, shaded area.• Find a nearby cooling centre, overdose prevention site, shaded park, pool, or beach to cool off. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carry naloxone.• Stagger use. Take some time between doses.• If you are drinking alcohol:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose drinks with lower alcohol content (beer or coolers).• Mix hard liquor, like vodka or whiskey, with a hydrating fluid (Gatorade, orange juice, cola).• Drink non-alcoholic fluids (water or juice) between alcohol beverages. |
|--|--|

You may not be able to follow all of these tips. Do what you can and reach out for support.

Resources & Apps

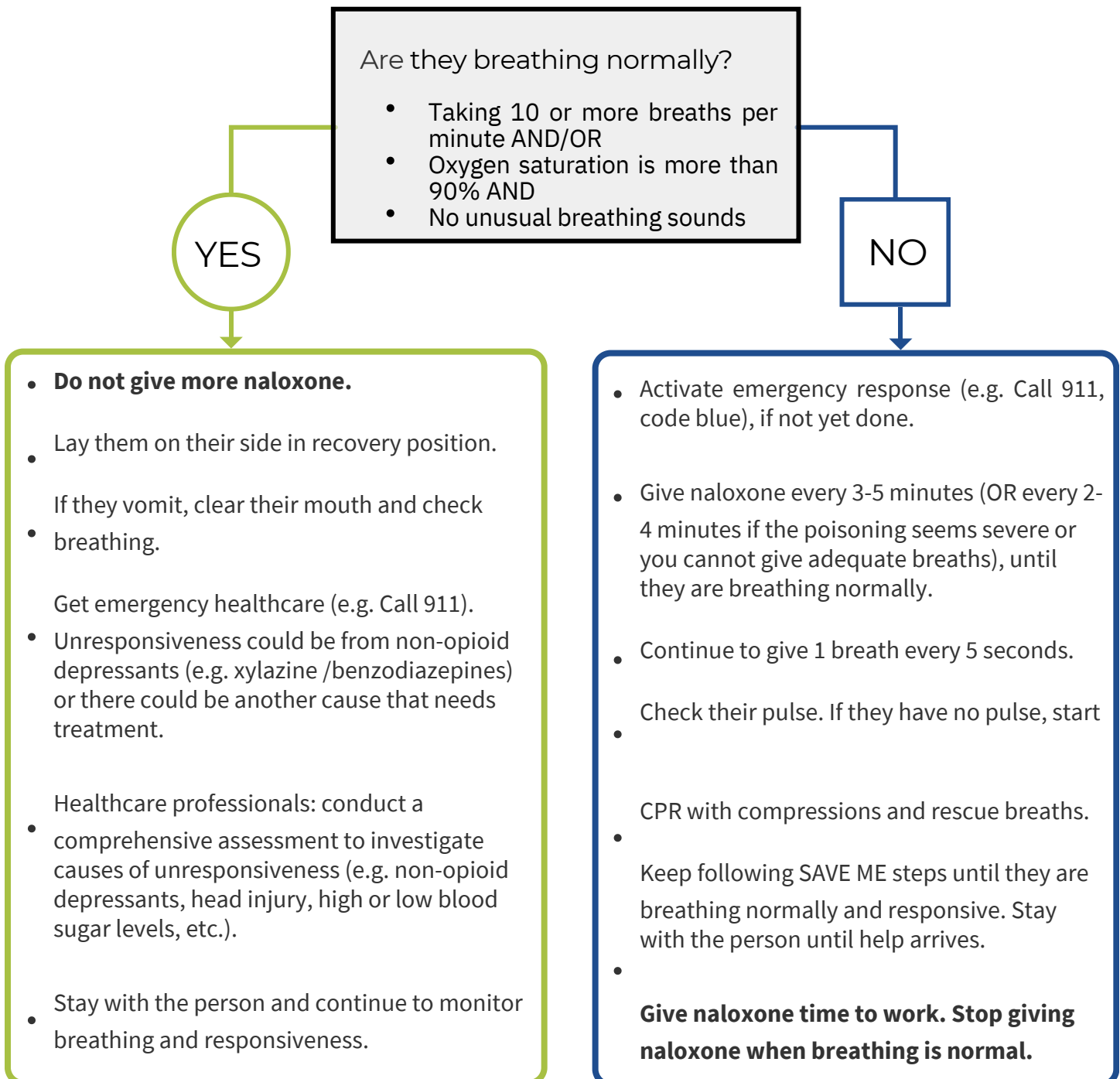
Toward the Heart: prepare for extreme heat for people who use substances
BC Heat Impacts Prediction System (BCHIPS)
Public Weather Alerts for British Columbia
WeatherCAN

For more information visit: www.towardtheheart.com

Last updated: 12-May-2023

Responding to Opioid Poisoning with Prolonged Sedation

If the person is still unresponsive after doing the SAVE ME steps:



Responsive means (1) they are awake and alert, (2) they can respond to questions, or (3) they are no longer or remain only mildly sedated.

FINDING HARM REDUCTION INFO ON INTERIOR HEALTH'S NEW WEBSITE

Change can be hard even when that change is good. Interior Health has a swanky new website that looks great and is easier to navigate. But if you were used to finding harm reduction info on the old website, you may be feeling a little lost with the new one. Here are a few tips to help you find what you are looking for.

HARM REDUCTION INFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

This is where you can find all the info that our external partner agencies need about naloxone, harm reduction supplies, overdose prevention and drug checking guides, peer engagement tools, courses like Harm Reduction 101 and the fentanyl test strip online course and more.

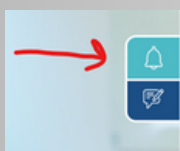
How to get there from the home page? Click the ["Information For"](#) button at the top and select community partners and look for the harm reduction button.

HARM REDUCTION

This page is where you will find high level information for the general public on harm reduction as it applies to substance use - what is harm reduction and why is it important; a brief description of the key harm reduction services and all the sharps information is here too. To get here from the home page click the Health Wellness button then pick Substance Use and Addiction, and find the [Harm Reduction button](#).

DRUG AND OVERDOSE ALERTS

The most current drug and overdose alerts are here. To see all the alerts in the region click on the little bell on the home screen then choose from COVID-19, Environmental or Toxic Drugs.



SEXUAL HEALTH

Here you can find information on STIs, HIV, HCV, gender identity and sexual health resources, Aboriginal sexual health resources and more. To get here from the home page click the Health and Wellness button then pick [Sexual Health](#).

OVERDOSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

This page is for the general public. There is information here on how to identify and respond to an overdose, overdose response services, overdose and substance use related news and surveillance (Coroners reports and BCCDC dashboards). To get here from the home page click the Health & Wellness button then pick Substance Use and Addiction and click on the [Overdose button](#).

