PEER OUTREACH WORKERS

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HOW THE PROJECT CAME TO BE...

NWRCT staff and clients were invited to engage in a CIHR research study through the Women’s College Research Research Institute. Throughout the partnership, we became informed of the “HIV Epidemic” among Aboriginal women in Ontario. We also learned about the gaps in support and programs for Aboriginal women living with HIV as well as how little knowledge around HIV and STIs our women had. We were motivated to develop programs to support the research findings and to better service our clients.

The ‘Reclaiming our Sacredness’ project was developed based on research findings. We see the value of combining Traditional and Western practices when working with Aboriginal women.
OUR APPROACH

• Through the guidance of the Seven Grandfather and Medicine Wheel teachings, the ROS project strives to inform, support and empower Aboriginal women who are living with, or at risk of HIV/AIDS. The medicine wheel teachings remind us to following a holistic approach to healing an the mind body, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal Women who are at risk, have lived experience or are affected by HIV/AIDS. The project also works with community partners to provide safer and accessible spaces. Encourages and fosters

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**WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN TO BUILD HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES**

**Method**

I. Each session consist of a sharing circle and a meal

II. Peers conduct outreach in the community

III. Holistic approach to creating awareness and diminishing HIV stigma and supporting our women who are living with or affected by HIV

IV. Each session is guided by one of the Seven Grandfather Teachings where women will share their experiences and knowledge around HIV

**Goals for the women**

I. Creating a safe space and meeting women where they are at

II. Empowering women to reclaim their sacredness and learn more about women’s sexuality and health

III. Increasing HIV knowledge and decreasing HIV stigma in the community

**Goals with partners**

I. Increasing HIV awareness and learning more about the impact of the spread of HIV on the community

II. Identifying ways to fill the gaps in care for women living with HIV

III. Learning how to enhance the supportive services that are being provided
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS

Honesty  Bravery  Love
Truth  Humility  Respect
Wisdom
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS

Love
LOVE

Activity
I. Writing/drawing exercise
II. Silhouettes

Teachings
I. Focus on acceptance, self care, and self love
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS

Respect
RESPECT

Activity
I. Use skits to promote discussion

Teachings
• Address how stigma and discrimination affects our identity
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS

Bravery
Activity
I. Storytelling
II. Mask molding preparation for next session

Teachings
I. Respect participants right to disclose, and validate the bravery it takes to do so
II. Provide a safe and non-judgemental space
III. Respect confidentiality
IV. Meet people where they are at
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS

Honesty
HOVESTY

Activity

I. Mask making

Teachings

I. Connectivity
II. Honoring people’s truth
III. Importance of self-acceptance
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS

Humility
HUMILITY

Activity
I. Storytelling
II. Open Sharing Circle

Teachings
I. The participant is the expert
II. Each person’s individual experience must be honored and validated
III. It is important to remember that participants are people just as we are and it is imperative that they are honored and respected
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS
WISDOM

Activity

I. Demonstration and discussion on safer sex methods

Teachings

I. Participants are the experts
II. KTE – Knowledge, Translation and Exchange
III. Engage people in sharing their lived experience and validate that experience
IV. Meet people where they are at
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS

Truth
Activity
I. Color activity

Teachings
I. Getting to know ourselves, reclaiming ourselves as individuals
II. HIV/AIDS is a reality in our communities and it needs to be acknowledged
APPLYING THE TEACHINGS

Honesty
Bravery
Love
Truth
Humility
Wisdom
Respect
RECLAIMING OUR SACREDNESS

I. Meeting the participants where they are at
II. Acknowledging and validating lived experiences
III. Maintaining and respecting confidentiality
IV. Creating safe spaces and being non-judgemental
V. Working together with other service providers to address participants holistic needs to achieve the overall wellbeing of the individual
APPLYING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL PRACTICE TO RESEARCH