



NORTHERN REGION

First Nations Health Authority



NORTHERN INDIGENOUS GUYS GATHERING

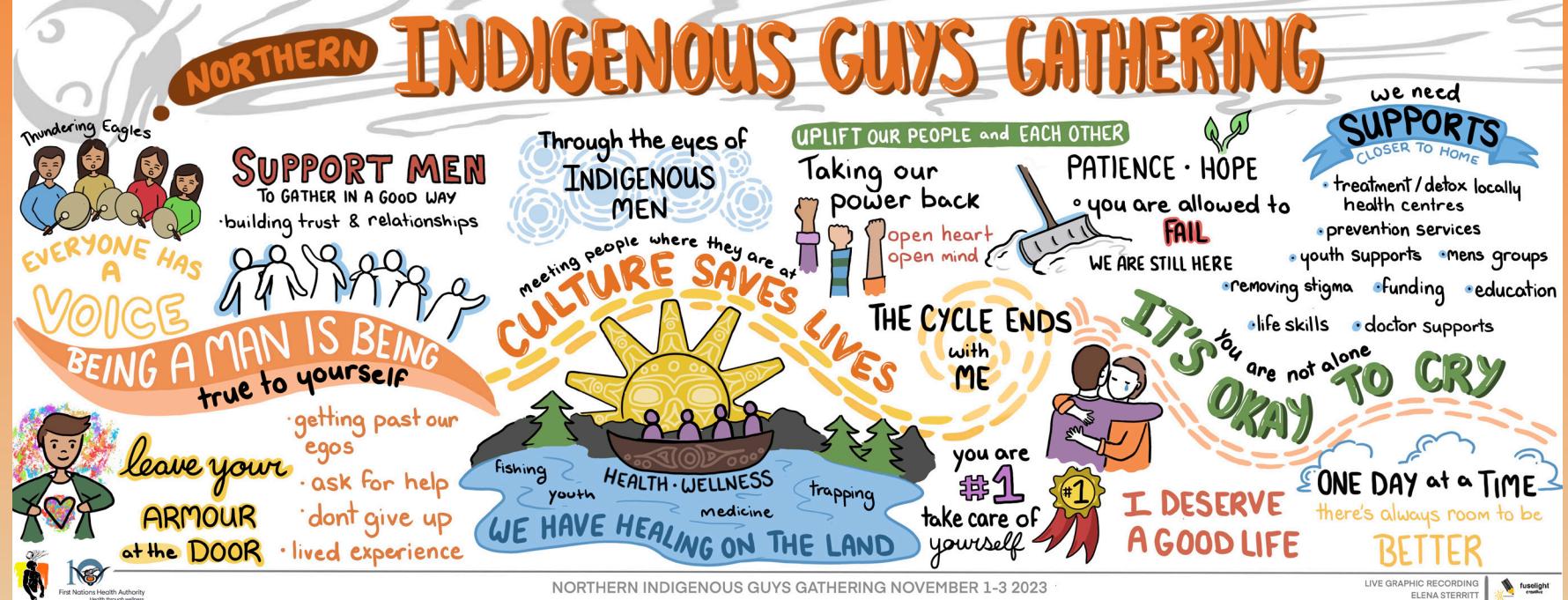
November 1-3, 2023

808 Canada Games Way

Prince George Civic Centre

Prince George, BC

Lheidli T'enneh Territory



"Our men are critical to our healing process and these men are an example to us all."

-Julie Morrison,
FNHA Vice President,
Regional Operations



We acknowledge that the Northern Indigenous Guys Gathering took place on the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation on whose land we gathered, shared, laughed and cried during this event.

TRIGGER WARNING

The information in this report may contain sensitive content and could be triggering. For crisis support please contact the KUU-US Crisis Line at 1-800-588-8717 or visit the FNHA's website for [additional support services](#).

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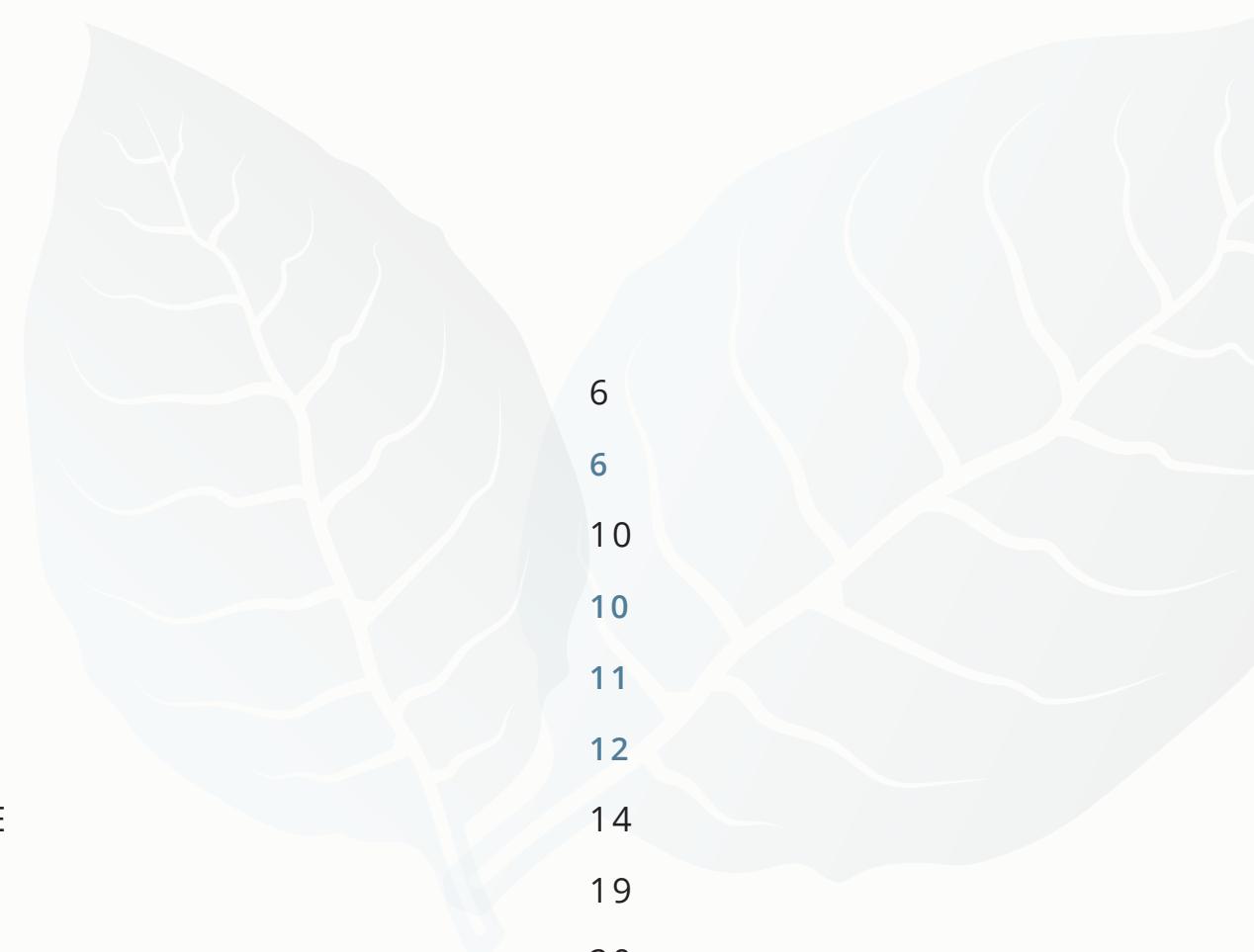
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FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

Key findings

309 Indigenous men gathered together for three days to share their opinions, challenges and solutions concerning men's access to healthcare, gaps in service provision and future-facing options.

This is what they had to say (from most frequently mentioned to least frequently):

CHALLENGES



Stigma that prevents men from reaching out



Limited health programs for men



Lack of long-term funding for solutions



Limited number of doctors and nurses in community



Lack of transportation



Lack of cultural safety when accessing health services



Intergenerational trauma



Lack of child care

WHAT MENS HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES ARE OFFERED?



Community prevention and awareness services



Land-based healing

WHAT ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES ARE NEEDED TO IMPROVE MEN'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS?



Increase and stabilize funding



Increase access to land-based healing and promising Indigenous or alternative healing services



Resources and supports to tackle stigma



Community wellness circles to share stories and experiences



Targeted prevention training and education for health teams

WHAT ARE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES YOUR COMMUNITY HAS FACED IN ITS RESPONSE TO THE TOXIC DRUG CRISIS?



Social components – education/protection services/social services



Lack of core or sustainable funding and/or long term supports and solutions



Limited human resources



Lack of aftercare



Stigma



Trauma



Lack of cultural safety in service provision



Too few detox beds in the North



Delays between detox and treatment



Limited number of doctors and nurses

HOW HAS YOUR COMMUNITY BEEN ABLE TO RESPOND TO THE TOXIC DRUG CRISIS?



Targeted community prevention and awareness programs



Health practitioner training and education



Love, compassion and empathy



Land-based healing



Men and men's groups coming together in a good way as Northern partners

WHAT ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS WOULD HELP YOUR COMMUNITY IN ITS RESPONSE TO THE TOXIC DRUG CRISIS.



Increase and/or stabilize funding



Increase access to land-based healing and promising Indigenous or alternative healing services



Form community wellness circles to share stories and experiences



Targeted prevention training and education for health teams



Resources and supports to reduce stigma

OVERVIEW

About the Gathering

Men from our Northern communities requested a health forum to discuss access to health and wellness programs as well as opportunities for improvement. They recognized a need for men to gather with our health partners in a good way to chart a way forward together.

In total, there were 309 delegates from across the region who came together.

**“WE NEED THIS CONFERENCE AROUND THE
NORTH SO MORE MEN CAN START HEALING.
WE ARE ALL ONE.”**

- said Robert, a participant who traveled from
Haida Gwaii to share his thoughts.

BY THE NUMBERS

309
FORUM
PARTICIPANTS



8
HEALERS



840
KEY POINTS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS
PROVIDED BY PARTICIPANTS



148
HEALER SESSIONS



Engagement

The six key questions participants considered:

1. What are the greatest challenges being faced by men as related to accessing health and wellness services?
2. What health and wellness services are community members aware of and / or access to support men's health and wellness?
3. What additional health and wellness services are needed in your community to support improving your men's health and wellness needs?
4. What are the greatest challenges your community has faced responding to the Addictions and Opioid Toxic Drug Crisis?
5. How has your community been able to overcome the challenges responding to the Addictions and Opioid Toxic Drug Crisis?
6. What additional services or supports would further benefit your community in responding to the Addictions and Toxic Drug Crisis?

BY THE NUMBERS:

There were 840 key points and recommendations from participants representing 69% of Northern First Nations communities, meticulously reviewed and categorized by FNHA staff.

NORTH WEST:

17 out of 26
communities attended

NORTH CENTRAL:

18 out of 22
communities attended

NORTH EAST:

3 out of 7
communities attended

TOTAL:

38 out of 55
communities participated.

WHAT WE HEARD - YOUR VOICE

The Major Challenges

These findings represent the top 8 most frequently mentioned challenges for men accessing health and wellness services by order of importance.

TOP 8 MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED CHALLENGES FOR MEN ACCESSING HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

1	Stigma and fear that prevent men reaching out.
2	Limited specific programming for men with inconsistent staffing
3	Lack of core and/or sustainable funding for long-term solutions
4	Limited number of nurse practitioners and doctors available to provide prescriptions
5	Transportation
6	Lack of cultural safety
7	Impacts of trauma
8	Limited child care for parents

"MEN WAIT TOO LONG TO
GET SERVICES OR WON'T
ACCESS SERVICES UNTIL
THERE IS A CRISIS"

- Participant

WHAT WE HEARD - YOUR VOICE

Lack of Available Supports

Participants identified just two areas of health and wellness services available to support men. Land-based healing was mentioned by just twelve participants.

AREAS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT MEN

1	Targeted community prevention and awareness programs
2	Land based-healing

"THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE WE FACE IS THAT THE ONES THAT SEEK HELP FOR THEIR ADDICTION TREATMENT, COUNSELING OR JUST MORAL SUPPORT FIND THERE IS NOTHING FOR THEM"

- Participant

WHAT WE HEARD - YOUR VOICE

Additional Services And Supports

These are the top 5 additional health and wellness services identified as essential for improving men's health and wellness outcomes in order of importance to participants.

(Increasing and stabilizing funding was mentioned more often than all other supports combined.)

TOP 5 ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES IDENTIFIED AS ESSENTIAL FOR IMPROVING MEN'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS OUTCOMES	
1	Increasing and stabilizing funding
2	Increase access to land-based healing and promising Indigenous or alternative healing services
3	Targeted supports to reduce stigma
4	Create community workshops and wellness circles to share stories and information
5	Targeted prevention training and education for health teams

"MORE SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN'T GET HOME."

- Participant

WHAT WE HEARD - YOUR VOICE

Participants identified 11 major challenges faced in responding to the Addictions and Opioid Toxic Drug Crisis. The most mentioned response was the lack of sufficient social supports from social, education and protection services.

Here they are in order of importance to participants.

11 MAJOR CHALLENGES FACED IN RESPONDING TO THE ADDICTIONS AND OPIOID TOXIC DRUG CRISIS	
1	Lack of sufficient social supports from social, education and protection services
2	Lack of core and sustainable funding to support long term solutions
3	Limited mental wellness and allied health resources
4	Stigma
5	Lack of aftercare
6	Trauma
7	Lack of cultural safety in service provision
8	Too few detox beds
9	Delays between detox and treatment
10	Limited number of nurse practitioners and doctors to provide necessary treatment
11	Limited transportation to detox and treatment

“IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE
DELEGATES CAME TOGETHER
TO BRING MEN’S VOICES
TO THE ISSUES FROM THEIR
COMMUNITIES.”

- Wilf Adam

WHAT WE HEARD - YOUR VOICE

These are the five responses communities are using to tackle the ongoing Addictions and Opioid Toxic Drug Crisis, targeted community prevention and awareness programs as the one receiving the most mentions.

FIVE RESPONSES COMMUNITIES ARE USING TO TACKLE THE ONGOING ADDICTIONS AND OPIOID TOXIC DRUG CRISIS

1	Targeted community prevention and awareness programs
2	Health practitioner training and education in addiction and crisis response
3	Love, compassion and empathy
4	Land-based healing
5	Coming together in a good way as northern partners

"EVENTS LIKE THIS THAT
EMPOWER MEN AND ALLOW
THEM TO LEARN FROM &
SHARE WITH NEIGHBORING
COMMUNITIES."

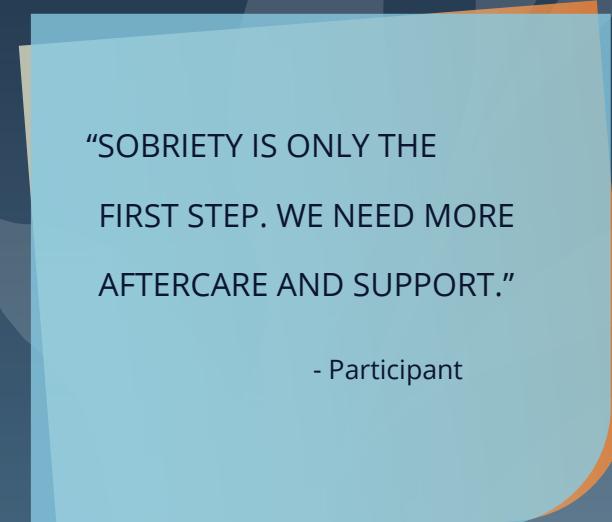
- Participant

WHAT WE HEARD - YOUR VOICE

These are the five additional services and supports that would benefit communities in responding to the Addictions and Opioid Toxic Drug Crisis. More than half the responses identified increasing and stabilizing funding.

Here they are in order of importance to participants.

FIVE ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THAT WOULD BENEFIT COMMUNITIES IN RESPONDING TO THE ADDICTIONS AND OPIOID TOXIC DRUG CRISIS	
1	Increase and stabilize funding
2	Increase access to land-based healing and promising Indigenous and alternative healing services
3	Form community workshops and wellness circles to share stories and information
4	Targeted prevention training and education for health teams
5	Targeted resources to support stigma



"SOBRIETY IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP. WE NEED MORE AFTERCARE AND SUPPORT."

- Participant

THE INDIGENOUS GUYS LOGO

The Artist

The Artist: Nathan Samuel is a 37 year old Gitxsan artist born in Hazelton, BC.

The Logo:

Vermillion is a symbol of men's biological instinct to protect women, especially the missing and murdered. Yellow is hope, energy and joy – symbolizing the Healing Journey. The assertive posture of the silhouette of the man symbolizes strength and resilience. The moving lines on top of the head are symbolic of a Healthy Mind. They represent moving forward in a healthy way. The Moon represents emotional balance.



PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Men's Health and Wellness in Community

Presenters

- Frank Cohn - Co-Director Dudes Club
- Jason Fitzpatrick
- Kyle Sam



- Northern Men have started to come together either through community initiatives or through the network of Dudes Clubs in communities.
- This stems from a growing demand for culturally-based healing and the need to address the impacts of trauma on men

The DUDES Club “way of being” is connection.

A healthy man is connected to:

- Himself
- His physical and mental wellbeing
- His family
- The land
- His culture
- His community
- His spirituality / ancestors

A brotherhood for men's wellness

DUDES

Why it matters

- Men in general pay insufficient attention to their emotional, physical and mental wellness as well as the physical aspect.
- Reaching out for help is hard for many men, who have been raised to believe they must always be strong.

“MY DREAM IS TO TEACH OUR YOUTH
OUR ORIGINAL LANGUAGE BECAUSE
IT DEFINES WHO WE ARE. RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL COULD NOT BEAT MY
LANGUAGE OUT OF ME SO NOW WE
NEED TO PASS ON THE LANGUAGE.”

-Kispiox Elder

Men's Health and Wellness Panel

Presenters

- **Warren Clarmont**
Executive Director Indigenous Health & Cultural Safety BC Cancer
- **Dr. Pierre Ducharme**
Retired Physician Central Interior Native Heal
- **Dr. Jeffrey Beselt**
Practicing Physician Tsay Keh Dene/ Kwadacha
- **Dr. Todd Alec**
FNHA Physician
- **Richard George**
FNHA Director Health Benefits & External Relations

Improving Men's Health Outcomes

- Importance of cancer screening – especially prostate, lung and colon cancers.
- A culturally safe doctor is always available through First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day – Call 1-855-344-3800
- The First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service for Addictions Medicine & Psychiatry – requires referral from a health and wellness provider. Call 1-833-456-7655.
- These options improve access, timeliness, and quality of culturally safe primary and specialty health care services closer to home and are available to all Indigenous people and their family members living in BC

"WE, AS MEN, NEED TO GO TO DOCTORS WHEN WE KNOW SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH OUR BODIES."

- Skidegate participant

Nation Downtown Eastside Program: My Wellness Journey

Presenter

- **James Harry**

Founder, All Nations Outreach Society

Presentation Highlights

- His story as an addict who founded an outreach project in Vancouver's Downtown East Side for Indigenous men and women who struggle with substance use, mental health issues and homelessness.
- Harry's approach is trauma-informed and respects where people are at in their healing journey without judgement.
- Provides support, unconditional love and care to those ready to heal.
- Provides assistance reconnecting people with their home community.

Video: [This man is helping Haisla members with opioid addiction - YouTube](#)

"EVERY TIME I HEAR YOU SPEAK YOU
INSPIRE ME TO BE BETTER. YOU ARE
ONE OF MY HEROES. ALL OUR STORIES
ARE DIFFERENT BUT AT THE SAME TIME
THE SAME."

-Participant

Aiming at Wellness Together

Presenter

- **Jordin Tootoo**

Jordin Tootoo presented the forum with personal insights into addiction and healing and the steps we can take together to transform our communities.

Tootoo is a Canadian former professional hockey player, who played for the Nashville Predators, Detroit Red Wings, New Jersey Devils and the Chicago Blackhawks. Of Inuit, Ukrainian and English descent, he is the first Inuk player to play in the NHL.

Improving Men's Health Outcomes

- When I hit rock bottom, I learned two things; the need to change and to let go of anger and grief.
- I cannot tell you how hard it was for me to admit that I had a problem. I was a tough guy, I was taught to never back down.
- Recovery heals that hole through connection, honesty, and hard work.

Tootoo Family Legacy



Tootoos dig through the trenches.

- we persevere
- we are not scared to fail
- we know it is never too late to change

We live with purpose to enable our children and grandchildren to be fulfilled.

- Independent, Kind, Humble, Generous, Selfless and Educated

We understand and respect our family roots (the good, the bad, and the ugly).

Tootoos do not judge.

- We have open and honest conversations in pursuit of truth

We respect the land and appreciate the outdoors.

We provide a beacon of hope for indigenous youth through education and engagement. The cycle stops with us.

"THERE IS A LOT THAT MEN
DON'T TALK ABOUT – THANK
YOU FOR SETTING A GOOD
EXAMPLE."

- Participant

Addictions and Mental Health Services Panel

Presenters

- Bareilly Sweet/ Cynthia Rondeau
Northern Health
- Anita Andreychuk/Jody Youb
FNHA
- Marianne Sorensen
Northern BC Therapeutic Community
- Tracy Day
Carrier Sekani Family Services

University Hospital of Northern BC Treatments and Pathways

- Access to 20-bed Psychiatry Inpatient Unit for acute and severe cases is through referrals from physicians, psychiatrists, emergency department
- Team uses a trauma-informed and harm reduction approach from psychologists, social workers, mental health support workers, nurses, clinicians and occupational therapists

FNHA – The Three Pathways to Treatment for Northern First Nations

- **Pathway 1**

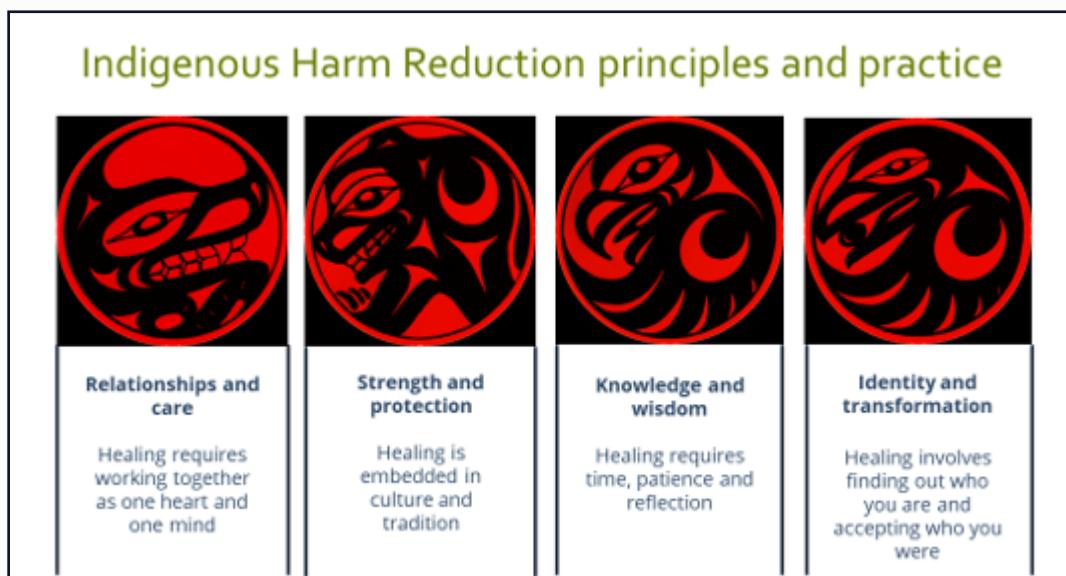
Ten First Nations Residential Treatment Centers in BC have 200 FNHA funded beds.

- **Pathway 2**

Financing also available for select non-FNHA funded treatment centers via referral from healthcare professional

- **Pathway 3**

Provincially-funded beds may also be available if there are no FNHA-funded beds available.



Lived Experience Panel

- Bruce Innes - Gitxaala Nation
- Joel West - Lake Babine Nation
- Rocky Jackson - Tahltan Nation
- Henry Morgan - Gitxsan Nation

SHARING EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE



From left to right – Keith Henry, Bruce Innis, Henry Morgan, Joel West, Rocky Jackson

*“I came to the first men’s gathering in 2017
and I’ve been sober ever since.”*

- Bruce Innes





First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

