

*Perspectives, Pathways, and Priorities of People
with lived and living experience of substance use:
Informing Policies (P5Project YXE)*

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Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse



Research Project: P5 Project YXE

No conflict of interest to declare.

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P5 Project YXE

Project aims to amplify and mobilize voices of experience to develop and enhance pathways of care for addressing harmful substance use in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

www.P5ProjectYXE.ca



P5 Project YXE

Advisory & Leadership:

- Ten-member advisory group of PWLLE
- Jo-Ann Saddleback (Guiding Elder/Knowledge Keeper)
- Marie Agioritis (Family Advisor, Moms Stop the Harm)
- Brandi Abele (Patient Advisor, CAPUD SK)
- Kayla DeMong (Decision maker, ED PHR)

Academic Leadership:

- Dr. Barb Fornssler (PI)
- Dr. Lori Hanson (Co-PI)
- Dr. Peter Butt (Health Care Provider)
- Dr. James Dixon (Co-App)
- Lindsey Vold (Co-App)
- Maryellen Gibson (Co-App)

Core Research Staff:

- Maggie Coupland (Coordinator & GRA)
- Natasha Istifo (GRA)
- Kacie Kushniruk (GRA)
- Multiple affiliates also noted on website.



P5 Project YXE: Questions



What do the **perspectives** of PWLLE reveal about the current nature of harm reduction, treatment and recovery services in Saskatoon?



What are the **pathways** of PWLLE as they navigate these services?



What are the **priorities** of PWLLE for programs, services, and policy change?



P5 Project YXE: Methods

Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) is a well-known research strategy for engaging community members as partners in the research design, collaborative knowledge creation, intervention development, and health policy to address health disparities.

Patient Oriented Research (POR) recognizes the important contribution of patients and patient-partners at all stages of the research process for improving patient outcomes. This approach means those directly affected by health services, policy, and research are meaningfully involved with the process of determining the aims and outcomes.

The P5 Project YXE team did not use the term ‘patient’ in this study because many of our partners and participants have never formally addressed their substance use as ‘patients’ in the health care system. The terminology most used in substance use research – people with lived and living experience – reflects the historical exclusion of these voices from formal systems of care.



P5 Project YXE: Conduct



The P5 team conducted **41 interviews** across three socioeconomic groupings (low [n=18], middle [n=13], high [n=10]) of **people who accessed or tried to access harm reduction, recovery, or treatment services** in Saskatoon Saskatchewan in the last five years.



Due to **COVID-19 restrictions**, additional training and study considerations were developed over the summer and fall of 2020. All **interviews were conducted by WebEx, Zoom, or telephone** from June 1, 2021 to November 30, 2021.



Interviews were facilitated by graduate research assistants (38 interviews) and the project PI (3 interviews conducted, 3 interviews observed). Interview length varies between 21 minutes to almost 3 hours, as determined by participant interest.



P5 Project YXE: Terms



Perspectives include personal definitions or expressions of ‘harm reduction,’ ‘treatment,’ and ‘recovery’ terminology. Perspectives are best characterized as the outcome of personal experiences with the healthcare system when seeking substance use services.



Pathways are most frequently described by participants through a narrative reflection about their personal journey to accessing services or meeting personal needs for healing. Narratives often reflected multiple barriers on a pathway to participant defined success (achieving personal goals). More frequently, narratives illustrated barriers and strategies for gaining access to resources and services despite system fragmentation.



Priorities are expressed as narratives about how participant journeys could be better facilitated and how needs could be better met through program and practice change. By identifying their priorities, participants also provided specific remedies for addressing barriers to care, indicating policy change is needed.



P5 Project YXE: Findings



Perspectives – Harm Reduction, Treatment, Recovery?

Summary: “Call it whatever you want” – When people need a service or support option it must be available.



Pathways – Navigating Health Systems?

Summary: “There is no pathway” – Stigma and discrimination impede almost every path to care, at each stage of care. A sense of belonging is the most important factor for engagement with services and supports.

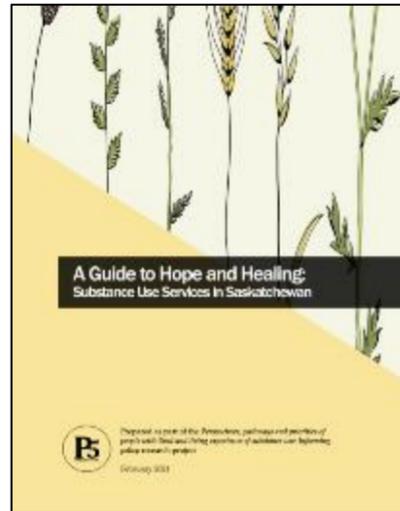


Priorities – Service Access & Improved Policy

Summary: Policy change is understood to improve service access, availability, and delivery of care. Housing, safe-supply, decriminalization, and peer-led services can assist.



P5 Project YXE: Integrated KT



Environmental Scan of Treatment, Harm Reduction, and Recovery Services. Resource utilized to provide a digital map for community access in partnership with Safe Community Action Alliance & Prairie Harm Reduction. Scan is available on project website, interactive map at www.reachoutsk.ca



Documentary video for curricular enhancement in the College of Medicine. The group - Students for Harm Reduction and Informed Policy (SHRIP) in the College of Medicine at Usask led this effort. The P5 Team supported this work. Curricular integration Fall 2023.

Municipal Decriminalization Options. Report by Drs Hanson & Fornssler - evidence-brief and full report for Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners & City Council + Regina Board of Police Commissioners & City Council. Paused until British Columbia pilot project evaluated.



P5 Project YXE: End of Grant KT

Completed:

Community Event: Traditional Knowledge Gathering at Prairie Harm Reduction. Hosted by Indigenous Elders Jo-Ann & Jerry Saddleback, September 19, 2022. Bringing intergenerational connection, traditional teachings and stories, food and gift bags for all attendees.

Coming Soon:

- Full Technical Report with Indigenous-led preface to contextualize knowledge
- Policy Briefs for Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and Mayors Caucus + Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Ministry
- Online escape room for general public to understand pathways for PWLLE in Saskatchewan
- Campaign – ‘I Support Harm Reduction’ messaging in similar style to signage displayed during elections.

Next Steps:

- Learning Health Systems Grant – tracking data & analysis in clinical public health system.
 - +Integration with community-based health organization data & development of trajectories analysis



P5 Project YXE

I 
**SOMEONE
WHO USES
DRUGS**

With gratitude to all who continue advocating
for evidence-based change to reduce harms

THANK YOU!

Image Credit: Manitoba Harm Reduction Network - www.MHRN.ca