



main street project

SUMMARY

STRATEGIC PLAN

Autumn 2021 - Summer 2026

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This is a summary version of Main Street Project’s 5 year strategic plan. The comprehensive version outlining the detailed tasks associated with the goals and objectives is available on MSP’s website.





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Main Street Project is located on Treaty One Territory, the homeland of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota, Dene, and Oji-Cree Peoples, and the homeland of the Metis Nation. Main Street Project approaches work with humility and in hopes of contributing to an agenda of reconciliation. We acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples of this land whose footsteps have marked this land for time immemorial. We acknowledge ourselves as visitors living and working in this territory.

AUTHORSHIP

Main Street Project Board and Management were responsible for the development of the Strategic Plan in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders.

OrgCode Consulting Inc. and Narratives facilitated content development for this strategic plan from a broad cross section of stakeholders.

Narratives facilitated the development of “Towards Reconciliation and Anti-Oppression”, a supplementary document to the strategic plan which informed all sections pertaining to Indigenous Peoples, and which included the formation of the Indigenous Leadership Circle. OrgCode Consulting Inc. facilitated the development of all other parts of the strategic plan.



Designed by:

bounce



METHODOLOGY

To create the strategic plan, engagement occurred with:

- 28 people with living experience, currently using Main Street Project services, using a structured interview guide;
- 18 key informants from other service providers, non-profits, government and business interests using a semi-structured interview guide;
- 99 respondents to an external SWOT survey;
- 34 respondents to an internal SWOT survey;
- Participants in six focus groups;
- Engagement with the Indigenous Leadership Circle formed to help inform the work on culturally appropriate practice, reconciliation and de-colonization;
- The Main Street Project Board of Directors, led by the strategic planning committee



SUMMARY

The Main Street Project 5 Year Strategic Plan was developed with considerable internal and external input. It identifies a renewed mission and vision, and identifies core values to guide our work over the next five years. It further identifies specific objectives and goals that we are committed to acting upon during this period of time.



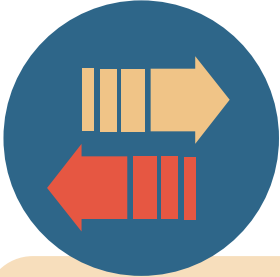
OUR MISSION: To provide safe and welcoming places of respite and healing with services that aim to reduce harm for people experiencing homelessness, substance use and/or mental health challenges, while working collaboratively to achieve measurable success in the journey to end homelessness.

OUR VISION: A community in which everyone has access to a safe space where dignity, respect and self-determination are supported

OUR CORE VALUES: Reducing harm, trauma-informed, reconciliation and anti-oppression.



We aim to address four key objectives, with specific goals and tasks for each objective, over the next five years:



OBJECTIVE ONE: ADVANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HARM REDUCTION

Goals for Objective One:

1. Continue low-barrier services, with an eye to continuous improvement
2. Continue peer-led services with an eye to continuous improvement
3. Develop training materials, educate and implement standardized harm reduction resources and materials across all Main Street Project service areas, and continue to train and reinforce harm reduction theory and practice with staff teams
4. Develop training materials, educate and implement Motivational Interviewing, Trauma-informed Care, and Strengths-Based Approach across all Main Street Project service areas, to assist with life changes associated with reducing harm.
5. Expand access to primary care services
6. Work with community stakeholders to transform and reimagine safer sobering
7. Support or lead the design of an approach to safer consumption, request permission to implement a safer consumption site from all orders of government, and implement if possible
8. Support or lead the development, approval and implementation of a Managed Alcohol Program
9. Make people experiencing homelessness the prioritized population to be served through voluntary withdrawal management
10. Consult, train and implement culturally appropriate modifications to services and supports
11. Decrease demands on emergency services and provide an alternative to emergency services whenever possible
12. Support legal, community access to safer drug supply, and implement if possible



OBJECTIVE TWO: PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS

Goals for Objective Two:

1. Enhance the housing focus of our work
2. Increase supports to people exiting homelessness
3. Expand supportive housing options
4. Work to expand safety for women and 2SLGBTQ+ people – both those that are literally homeless as well as those experiencing hidden homelessness





OBJECTIVE THREE: FURTHER EMBRACE AND SUPPORT TRUTH & RECONCILIATION, DECOLONIZATION AND ANTI-OPPRESSION

Goals for Objective Three:

1. Strengthen the role of Main Street Project as a support, resource and connection to Indigenous-led cultural supports and services
2. Improve the feeling of cultural safety for Indigenous people that work at Main Street Project or use Main Street Project programs or services
3. Support Indigenous businesses and service providers in the City of Winnipeg
4. Collaborate meaningfully with Indigenous partners and community members in developing policies, practices and activities
5. Actively seek to dismantle and diminish racism, misconceptions, homophobia and stereotypes against any person or group of persons
6. Identify and work to remove all forms of oppression both internally at MSP and externally as they affect the community we serve




OBJECTIVE FOUR: STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATION BY IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE, TECHNOLOGY AND PROCESSES

Goals for Objective Four:

1. Further develop the staff team in all main street project program areas
2. Review existing internal policies and procedures: update and create, as necessary
3. Develop a comprehensive maintenance and replacement strategy for equipment and assets
4. Develop a capital plan for Main Street Project
5. Improve documentation, data collection, data management and outcomes reporting
6. Develop and implement a Main Street Project file management system with file standards for each type of file (paper and electronic) across Main Street Project
7. Sustain and expand partnerships and collaboration





We believe that with our renewed mission and vision, and living our core values, we can advance our work of engaging and serving people that use substances, have compromised mental wellness, and experience homelessness to assist with reducing harm, experiencing improved wellness, and meet immediate needs, while keeping an eye towards assisting people with integrating into housing and community. We believe that we can take direct action and support reconciliation, decolonization and anti-oppression work within our own organization and in the community. We also believe we can undertake work “behind the scenes” over the next five years to improve and strengthen our overall organization. We maintain optimism with the work and challenges ahead of us over the next five years, and shall endeavor to be worthy of the highest esteem of each person we serve, community partners, and our funders.



WHO WE ARE & WHERE WE ARE HEADED

During the time period of this strategic plan, Main Street Project will realize its 50th anniversary of service. We have been a mainstay in the community throughout our history, augmenting and growing our services based upon community needs. Our roots were anchored in harm reduction before the phrase or concept was made popular, meeting vulnerable people wherever they are at literally and circumstantially. We have been providing services and programs that meet immediate needs, connect people to solutions to their homelessness, and assisting people living with compromised mental wellness, substance use, and a litany of other health conditions from brain injuries to chronic disease. Our job is not to heal or fix people; it is to serve people without judgment, meet immediate needs, and provide hope so that people can realize a self-determined, autonomous version of who they are and who they want to be. It is our privilege to serve others, not their privilege to be served by us.

In the beginning, we provided a safe space for people who used alcohol, experienced housing instability, and needed a place to come inside, during Winnipeg weather events. While our programs and services have evolved, and the population of people we serve has expanded in diversity and volume, the core of our existence remains strong. We are a harm reducing, multi-service agency and we are proud of the many lives we have had the honour to positively impact, and

are humbled to have provided witness to the resiliency and strengths of thousands of people in need. We don't see homelessness, substance use or mental illness as a problem to be solved; we see people with potential.

We acknowledge that we have been imperfect as an organization. We have work to do to build trust, improve the implementation of evidence-informed and evidence-based services, effectively measure what we do, and grow and expand partnerships with other organizations in the community. We need to diversify our staff and board further. We need to be critical of what we do to make necessary improvements, and be open to change. There is no shortage of work we know needs to be done, from updating and creating internal policies and procedures to asset management; from supporting access to primary care to decreasing demands on emergency services in the community through our outreach programming and overdose response. We are ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities of strengthening our organization and improving our service outcomes.

One of our biggest shortcomings has been our work with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous organizations. We are not, and have no plans to be an Indigenous organization. However, we acknowledge and embrace that the vast majority of people that use our services have Indigenous identity. Some are well connected



WHO WE ARE & WHERE WE ARE HEADED (continued)

to culture and a home community, while others are not. To strengthen our role as allies, it is incumbent upon us to ensure all of our services are culturally appropriate, that our staff and board has more Indigenous representation, and that we are sufficiently trained and implementing culturally appropriate practices. We accept that we need to be more trauma-informed to better meet the needs and form meaningful relationships and rapport with Indigenous Peoples that have been impacted by colonial history and settlement, Residential Schools, the 60s Scoop, at times inadequate or unsafe housing and water and food security, and intergenerational trauma. We need to be better supporters and advocates for Indigenous issues that impact the people we serve. We need to be better partners with Indigenous organizations that excel in their service orientation and service delivery. We need to apologize for past wrongs, learn from those mistakes so as to never repeat them again, and advance the practices of reconciliation, decolonization and anti-oppression.

The majority of our programs and services are oriented to meet the needs of people who are, or who recently have, experienced homelessness. We accept the responsibility of contributing to preventing, reducing and ending homelessness in our community. It is no longer acceptable to try to manage homelessness. We simply will run out of capacity if there is constant inflow into homelessness without suitable attention to outflow. More importantly, perhaps, we are contributing to wasted human potential and exacerbating costs of managing homelessness without focusing on ending it, one person at a time. We believe in person-centred,

customized approaches to meet housing instability needs that are aligned to evidence-based and evidence-informed practice. Our shelter and outreach services need to be more oriented to housing solutions in addition to meeting immediate needs. We need to be supportive of expanding housing and support options for people to exit homelessness successfully. We need to ensure our detox services maintain a preference for people experiencing homelessness or recently accessed housing.

Brave and bold changes are expected to be initiated in some of our programs and services over the next five years. In addition to being more culturally appropriate and evidence-informed throughout all of our services, we intend to pursue the following over the next five years:

1. We will collaborate with our stakeholders to transform the Intoxicated Persons Detention Act to an alternate form of safer sobering;
2. We will support or lead the design, approvals and implementation of a Managed Alcohol Program;
3. We will support or lead the design, approvals and implementation a Safer Consumption Service

We look forward to the challenges and opportunities over the next five years. We will stay true to our harm reduction roots. We will improve our services and engagement with Indigenous Peoples and the Indigenous community. We will prevent and contribute to ending homelessness in our community. And we will strengthen our organization and better manage and protect our assets.



WHO WE ARE & WHERE WE ARE HEADED (continued)

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

As we prepare for our next five years of services, policy, advocacy and impact, we have worked with our staff, board, and people that use Main Street Project, an Indigenous Leadership Circle, and the broader community to examine what our mission, vision and values should be. In this time of renewal, we have asked ourselves: What is our central aim? Where are we headed? What are our core beliefs?

MAIN STREET PROJECT MISSION

To provide safe and welcoming places of respite and healing with services that aim to reduce harm for people experiencing homelessness, substance use and/or mental health challenges, while working collaboratively to achieve measurable success in the journey to end homelessness.

To understand our commitment to this mission and how we will turn it into action, we want to move from assumptions in interpretation to explaining what this means to us.

“Safe and welcoming places” means that we are committed to the emotional and physical safety of everyone where people of different cultures, ages, gender identities, sexual orientation, history of housing instability, mental wellness, substance use and/or illness feel accepted, honoured and supported.

“Respite and healing” means that we are committed to create an environment and offer services that allow people to take a break, experience aspects of recovery, rest, sleep, eat, and get better. We want to encourage emotional, spiritual, psychological and physical healing through cultural, therapeutic and medical services.

“Reduce harm” means the individual process of achieving an improvement over one’s baseline. We look at the reduction of harm holistically. It means outreach, education and access to resources and supplies. It means providing a safe place to recover and come down by choice. It means accessing other resources as necessary to assist with harm reduction. We embrace the individual nature of reducing harm in one’s life and are supportive of autonomy and self-determination in the quest to reduce harm. Furthermore, to reduce harm requires us to be accepting and supporting the potential of all people that use Main Street Project services regardless of potentially harmful behaviour the person is engaged with.

“Working collaboratively” means we do not feel that Main Street Project needs to “go it alone” in the pursuit of serving people. We embrace the opportunity to work with other organizations, the Indigenous community, the faith-based community, government and business. We will bring our expertise and resources to the table to pair and supplement the expertise and resources of others. We will listen to critical feedback to get better. We will help support other organizations in their delivery or expansion of services when it is aligned to our core values.

“Achieve measurable success” means that data is important to us. We want to centre our work activities towards achieving outcomes (the difference those services provided make), not just outputs (the volume of services provided). We need to prove that what we do is making a difference in people’s lives in measurable ways. When success is achieved it is a force multiplier: people that use our services feel more confident we can assist them too; other organizations can trust that working alongside Main Street Project will yield results; and, funders and donors can feel confident that an investment in Main Street Project is an investment in making a difference.

“Journey to end homelessness” means that we see our role not as managing homelessness, but as actively contributing towards preventing and reducing homelessness in our community, supporting the broader community aim to end homelessness. This means that we want to help people avoid homelessness whenever it is safe and appropriate to do so. If homelessness does occur, we want it to be of a short a duration as possible, and help people reconnect to safe, appropriate, permanent accommodation.



MAIN STREET PROJECT VISION

A community in which everyone has access to a safe space where dignity, respect and self-determination are supported.

“Community”, to us, denotes both an association between people that share common bonds, as well as physical spaces. The diverse nature of the people we serve means that people who make use of our services may self-identify as belonging to more than one community: the community of people experiencing homelessness; the community of people that live with compromised mental health; the community of people that use alcohol or other substances; the community of trauma survivors; etc.

“Everyone”, to us, means that we are inclusive. We welcome and celebrate diversity. We embrace the opportunity to see each person as unique, with strengths and potential. We value the dignity and worth of every human life. We do not discriminate. We work to ensure that, whenever possible, restricted access to our buildings or services are reserved for the most serious of situations that cannot be resolved in any other way, and are never permanent in nature.

“Access” is an important part of our vision. Respecting personal autonomy, we can and will offer safe, inclusive and welcoming spaces, but, moving forward, we will work to ensure that taking part in any or all of our programs and services is an individual, voluntary choice. We will be there for everyone. We do not want anybody to be forced or mandated to use any of our programs or services, even temporarily. Self-determination and autonomy of the individual are important to us.

“Dignity”, to us, means each person we serve is worthy of our highest esteem. We strive to honour the existence and worth of each person served through Main Street Project. We know that many of the people we serve have been subject to stigmatization and “other-ing”, being marginalized in mainstream access to services and supports whether that be income, housing or healthcare. We need to make an extra effort to acknowledge each person; to let them know they are seen and their humanity and personhood is acknowledged.

“Respect”, to us, means acknowledging and admiring each person’s qualities, while maintaining due regard for each person’s feelings, wishes, rights and traditions. Our job is not to change the essence of who each person is, but rather to help that essence shine through and be seen. We appreciate the values, knowledge and feelings that each person we serve has, while also appreciating that each person has strengths and worthiness.

“Self-determination” is supported by Main Street Project because we believe each person has the right to a future that is not dictated by their past. Many vulnerable people are prevented from making decisions on their own by systems of support and care, incarceration and/or requirements of other systems like corrections or child welfare. We respect people’s autonomy. We see people as masters of their own life and future. We empower people to make informed decisions about what they want relative to their current needs and future goals. We support people in making decisions about their own life aligned to their own values and beliefs.



WHO WE ARE & WHERE WE ARE HEADED (continued)

MAIN STREET PROJECT VALUES

We have identified four core, essential values to guide the organization throughout the next five years in implementing this strategic planning. Those values are: reducing harm, reconciliation, anti-oppression, and being trauma-informed.

REDUCING HARM

We believe in evidence-informed policies and programs that help decrease the harmful impacts of homelessness, substance use, mental health and trauma, and promote person-centred, strengths-based, and self-determined wellness.

RECONCILIATION

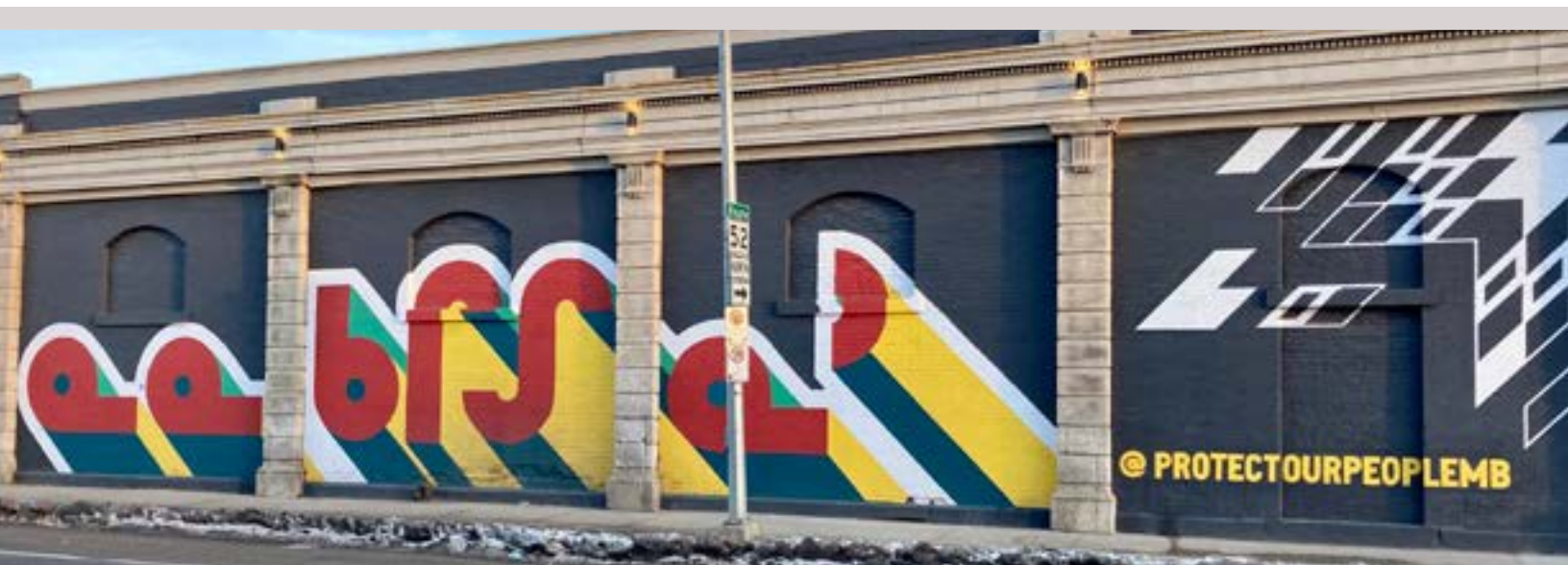
We believe in actively engaging in amending historical relationships with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous organizations, creating safe spaces for healing, integrating culturally appropriate perspectives, programming and staffing, and promoting access to culturally appropriate resources.

ANTI-OPPRESSION

We believe in actively working against oppression, so that we can create safe spaces for all population groups served that are historically marginalized, “otherized”, or oppressed.

TRAUMA-INFORMED

We believe that given the widespread nature of trauma, and the daily impacts of historical traumas on the people served, that embracing a trauma-informed approach is critically necessary to create feelings of emotional and physical safety, support mutuality and collaboration, build trust through transparency, leverage the expertise of peers with lived experience, empower people to make decisions about their own care and life, and appreciate the impacts of historical, cultural and gender issues on people’s experience(s) of trauma.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We are accountable to the people we serve. We will execute the strategic plan to the best of our ability to improve: service delivery, consistency, and outcomes; emotional, physical and cultural safety; staff knowledge and daily practice; our ability to meet the needs of people living with substance use, mental health concerns, physical health needs, and/or, homelessness. The Lived Experience Circle is critical for providing ongoing insights, feedback and ideas from the end user perspective.

We are accountable to each other within Main Street Project. This is our strategic plan. Collectively we need to support and challenge each other respectfully to live the values and realize the mission and vision. We need to work as a team to realize many of the pursuits identified in the strategic plan.

We are accountable to the Indigenous community. We are consciously and deliberately, with the assistance of the Indigenous Leadership Circle, aiming to make all of our service delivery more culturally appropriate and improve cultural safety and cultural humility. We are aiming to improve our training and understanding of the cultures and needs of diverse Indigenous Peoples in order to ensure our services are most appropriate for Indigenous Peoples. We are aiming to improve our Indigenous representation on our Board and workforce, both direct service and management positions. We are not an Indigenous organization, but we aim to be a strong Indigenous ally.

We are accountable to other service providers. Our strategic plan, in several instances, points to the need to partner with and support other service providers. We believe there is a need to be transparent in our approach to service delivery, the way we partner with other providers, how we engage in joint initiatives, and how we work together to improve outcomes for people served.

We are accountable to government. As the primary funder of Main Street Project services, and respecting the role of government in establishing policy and frameworks for service delivery, we want government to understand both the volume of services we provide and the impact of the services we provide. We need to remain good stewards of the public funding made available to us to achieve our mission and vision while living our core values.

We are accountable to the general public. We are neighbours. We engage in both facilities that are in proximity to other businesses and residents, as well as in the broader community through the likes of our street outreach services. We have trust placed into us to achieve good results in meeting the immediate service needs and basic needs of people we serve, while focusing on permanent solutions to homelessness. The public deserves to know our progress and results in achieving our stated aims.



CONCLUSION

Main Street Project embraces the opportunities and challenges for the upcoming year to further our work in reducing harm, preventing and ending homelessness, advancing reconciliation, decolonization and anti-oppression, and, strengthening the organization. Our five decades of experience, combined with main currents of thought and best practice in the field, will propel our organization forward in practice to improve outputs and outcomes. Our renewed dedication to work more effectively with community partners, especially Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous organizations, and to create more culturally appropriate practices is important for framing and informing our work moving forward. Our renewed values make reconciliation, anti-oppression, trauma-informed care and harm reduction at the forefront of all that we do and the decisions we make about engagement, supports, policy, and processes.

The 5 Year Strategic Plan would not be possible without the contributions of people that use our services, our staff, and a broad range of community partners and government that provided input. We are very grateful to the Indigenous Leadership Circle for its contributions and guidance in this process. We trust that our 5 Year Strategic Plan reflects and honours those contributions, acknowledging that there were, at times, different perspectives on the role of Main Street Project and the role of our organization moving forward. What is certain to us is that we cannot and should not do it alone. We need a range of inputs and perspectives to challenge us to be the best practitioners we can be in the space of harm reduction, and, preventing and ending homelessness. We need true partners in the space of program design, policy development, culturally appropriate practice, training, and advancing shared interests in the community to reduce harm, and make the experience of homelessness rare, and if it does occur, brief and non-recurring.

We acknowledge we have work to do in order to improve our services and supports to Indigenous Peoples, and we also have work to do in order to strengthen our relationship with Indigenous organizations. We are not, nor do we have plans to be, an Indigenous organization. Nonetheless, we

acknowledge that the majority of people that make use of our programs and services are Indigenous. It is necessary for us to reflect on our practices and policies and amend them to be more culturally appropriate. We need to think about culture in the context of our physical space. We need to equip our staff with additional training on culturally appropriate practice, and ensure that which is learned is put into practice. We need to keep listening, reflecting and amending practice based upon input from Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous organizations, and the Indigenous Leadership Circle.

We see these next five years as the opportunity to strengthen our organization as well. As a large organization with many diverse programs and services, our internal infrastructure will benefit from reexamining, improving and creating policies and processes for our operations, business practices, technology and assets where necessary. We are committed to improving our data collection and reporting. We want to enhance the knowledge and service excellence of our staff. We want our buildings and equipment to last as long as operationally possible, and better plan for maintenance, updates, improvements and replacement through longer-term planning.

We will hold ourselves accountable implementing the objectives and realizing the goals of the plan. We hope and trust that our staff, community partners, government funders, and people that use our programs and services will also hold us accountable as well. We shall embrace continuous improvement over the next 5 years to realize our stated objectives, realize our goals, and stay true to our values. We believe that if we do so, our mission and vision can be realized. We can reduce harm. We can help prevent and end homelessness. We can improve our work in reconciliation, decolonization, and, anti-oppression. We can strengthen our organization's infrastructure, technology and processes. We can be a meaningful and impactful part of a community response system that truly makes a difference in the lives of people experiencing homelessness, helps reduce harm amongst people that use substances, and does so in a culturally appropriate manner.



