

Scanning and Mapping Culturally Responsive Harm Reduction Services

Prepared for
Substance Overdose Prevention and
Education Network (SOPEN)

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Key Terms

To support a shared understanding of this report's findings and analysis, the following key terms are defined in the context of harm reduction services for ethnoculturally diverse communities in Canada:

Culturally Responsive Care	Purposefully designing and delivering services that recognize and incorporate individuals' cultural identities, while building two-way, respectful relationships that value collaboration and shared understanding (Muñoz, 2007).
Harm Reduction (HR) for Substance Use	A client-centered approach that emphasizes reducing the negative consequences of drug or alcohol use rather than insisting on abstinence. It supports practical steps that align with the individual's own goals and readiness to change, recognizing any improvement as therapeutic progress (Logan & Marlatt, 2010).
Cultural Competency	The ability of organizations and service providers to deliver care that respects and responds to patients' diverse cultural beliefs, values, and communication needs (Betancourt, 2002).

Introduction

The Substance Overdose Prevention and Education Network (SOPEN) is a volunteer-driven organization in Hamilton addressing the toxic drug crisis in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) through harm reduction (HR) education, and advocacy. They advocate with and for marginalized communities, specifically people who use drugs. They work to challenge stigma, discrimination, and oppressive structures while fostering compassionate collective care. SOPEN distributes naloxone kits, provides fentanyl testing strips, and offers naloxone training. They also host workshops on drug poisoning prevention and response.

SOPEN reached out with this request motivated by a recent qualitative study by Godkhindi et al. (2022), which explored racialized people's experiences with accessing HR resources. This paper highlights that current Canadian HR services and supports predominantly operate from a framework centered on cisgender and non-racialized individuals who may not be responsive to the unique needs of various ethnic and cultural identities (Godkhindi et al., 2022).

As research indicates higher mortality rates among racialized people who use drugs, SOPEN is interested in a comprehensive scan of existing models of culturally responsive HR services across Canada to inform service development and knowledge mobilization.

By mapping these organizations and understanding their approaches, SOPEN seeks to facilitate inter-organizational learning and collaboration within the HR sector. This resource aims to benefit multiple stakeholders, including SOPEN's volunteers and leadership, HR service providers, advocacy organizations, and community groups seeking to enhance their cultural responsiveness.

The McMaster Research Shop has agreed to support this project by answering the following primary and secondary research questions:

- 1. What organizations across Canada are currently implementing or piloting culturally responsive HR programs that serve ethnoculturally diverse communities, including racialized populations, newcomers, immigrants, and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals?*
- 2. What are the key features, strategies, and best practices characterizing culturally responsive HR models within these organizations?*

The report summarizes the research team's 1) approach to the scan and 2) the findings, including an overview of ethnoculturally diverse services in 9 major Canadian municipalities and 3 case studies highlighting exemplary services.

Background

What is the drug poisoning crisis in Canada?

The drug poisoning crisis refers to the rising rates of opioid-related morbidity and mortality in Canada, driven by the increased availability of prescription and synthetic opioids. From 2016-2024, opioid toxicity has caused over 50,000 deaths, 46,000 hospitalizations, and 193,000 emergency department visits across Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada [PHAC], 2025). The crisis has worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic, due to changes in the illegal drug supply, increased use of substances as a stress reliever, and inaccessible supports and services for People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) (PHAC, 2024).

The absence of regulation in the drug supply is a critical factor driving opioid-related harms (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction [CCSA], 2022). The unregulated market lacks quality control, resulting in unpredictable contents, strength, and quality of available substances. This unpredictability significantly elevates the risk of poisoning (overdose) and death for individuals who use drugs because they can never be sure of what they are ingesting (CCSA, 2022).

Critically, the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network found that there was an increased rate of opioid-related deaths occurring within communities with higher concentrations of recent immigrants and/or racialized people during the pandemic. Godkhindi et al. (2022) attribute this to systemic and political drug policy driven by xenophobia that led to ethnic disparities in access to HR services and social and health outcomes across North America.

Why does substance use criminalization disproportionately affect racialized communities?

The criminalization of substances in North America has historically been used as a tool for white supremacy and colonialism, based on anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Chinese racism. Policies such as The Indian Act (1884), Opium Act (1908), Harrison Narcotics Act (1914), and National Drug Strategy (1987) were developed to legally target and repress racialized communities by linking them with crime, danger, and drugs. These policies have embedded systemic racism in the social perception of drug use, resulting in underfunded addictions and mental health support, invasive policing, mass incarceration, and state violence that disproportionately impacts Indigenous and Black Canadians. Although white Canadians are more likely to engage in drug use, Indigenous people and Black Canadians are overrepresented by over 600% and 300% in Canadian federal prisons respectively (Public Safety Canada, 2020; Khenti, 2014).

With an emphasis on punitive measures, support services for PWUD are limited and precarious, especially those that are equipped with the cultural sensitivity to serve racialized PWUD.

What is Harm Reduction (HR)?

Harm reduction (HR) is an approach focused on minimizing the negative consequences of high-risk behaviours, with an emphasis on substance use and its wider health and social impacts (Logan & Marlatt, 2010). It does not require abstinence (while it may be the ultimate goal for some) but supports practical strategies that prioritize safety, personal choice, and autonomy. Any positive change is seen as progress. HR encourages informed, compassionate care, where practitioners support individuals in pursuing their own goals rather than enforcing control (Logan & Marlatt, 2010).

In our review, HR was often connected not just to substance use but to broader social and health issues, including HIV prevention, safe sex education, and homelessness. These links reflect the ripple effects of substance use, where one risky behaviour can lead to compounding harm. Many programs addressed these overlapping challenges by focusing on marginalized and intersectional communities, offering tailored services that recognized the interconnected nature of these issues (e.g., HR services for individuals with HIV or facing homelessness).

How does racism impact HR accessibility?

HR was spearheaded by racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ community peers and activists in the late 1980s as a compassionate, evidence-based approach to addiction. However, as white victims became centered in the drug poisoning crisis in the 1990s, the racial experience of drug use and criminalization separated from mainstream HR practices. According to Godkhindi et al. (2022), this shift is reflected in “colour-blind” HR, which is unable to address structural racism and inequities in HR organizations. Key themes from the qualitative study revealed that:

- **The whiteness of HR poses a barrier to accessing services:** HR spaces predominantly staff and service white people, creating a lack of cultural competency; a sense of tokenization of Black, Indigenous, and people of colour; and an unaccommodating environment for racialized PWUD.
- **Diversifying HR workers builds up trust in HR spaces:** Employing ethnically diverse HR workers fosters trust and connection between service users.
- **Drop-in spaces specific to BIPOC are facilitators to accessing HR:** Virtual and drop-in spaces promote social support between racialized service users and aid in protecting transient at-risk community members.

- **Lack of representation in HR-related promotional and educational campaigns impedes participation in HR:** Diverse representation in campaigns is needed to extend their reach, overcome the cultural stigma of substance use, and better encourage racialized PWUDs to seek support.
- **HR is feared as a frontier for policing:** Police presence around HR organizations functions to arrest and harass service users through racist policing practices, creating a hostile environment for service users and providers that deters access to the space.

Recognizing the gaps and disparities in racialized and culturally competent HR services, the research team sought to identify and compile an inventory of existing culturally competent HR services across Canada. SOPEN aims to use this information to learn about best practices and protocols for developing culturally competent HR services and to mobilize that knowledge across the Hamilton HR service landscape.

Methods

We conducted an environmental scan to identify and analyze the culturally responsive HR programs that exist across Canada's major municipalities. We scanned resources across 9 major municipalities in Western, Central, and Eastern Canada, including Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Kitchener-Waterloo. The research team reviewed publicly available information, including online directories, organizational websites, official documents, and social media accounts.

We developed a list of keywords to guide the search strategy (Appendix 1) and used Boolean operators to conduct targeted searches within relevant municipalities.

Each municipality was assigned to a single member of the research team for an initial scan. To ensure thoroughness, a second team member independently conducted a repeat scan of the same municipality to verify findings and minimize the risk of overlooking relevant services.

The research team extracted and documented the following details for all services:

- **Service Name:** The full name of the service
- **Location:** The city and province where the service is offered
- **Hours of Operation:** The days and times the service is available
- **Program Description and Target Population:** A brief (1-2 sentence) overview of the program and identification of specific groups for whom services are designed
- **HR Services Provided:** A list of services provided

- **Other General Services Provided:** A list of additional services provided
- **Cultural Competency Features:** Practices or features that demonstrate cultural competency, such as multilingual services or staff with lived experience relevant to the service population
- **Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process:** An outline of how individuals access services, including any screening or intake processes and steps from initial contact to completion
- **Program Duration:** Indication of whether the program is ongoing or time-limited
- **Cost:** Indication of whether services are free or fee-based
- **Outreach Strategies:** Description of outreach and promotional methods, including accessibility of information, partnerships, events, or other initiative

We used the following inclusion and exclusion criteria to screen services for relevancy:

Included	Excluded
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, or Kitchener-Waterloo • Inclusive of or specifically targeted toward racialized, newcomers, or immigrant populations • Focus on HR and include one or more of the following: supervised consumption sites, needle exchange programs, Naloxone distribution, substance use counseling, peer support initiatives, opioid agonist therapy, managed alcohol programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusively abstinence-based (e.g., Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)) and focus on stopping substance use rather than HR • State they are inclusive and/ or culturally competent but do not display any information on the features that make it so (e.g., are indistinguishable from traditional HR approaches) • Targets equity-seeking groups that are not explicitly racialized or newcomers (e.g., services exclusively for individuals experiencing homelessness or involved in sex work)

The research team identified 3 exemplary services and conducted an in-depth analysis of each, including an overview of the organization, an overview of the program (purpose, services offered, duration and hours, and target population), a description of cultural competency features that make the service exemplary, and a service access workflow detailing eligibility and how clients engage with the service.

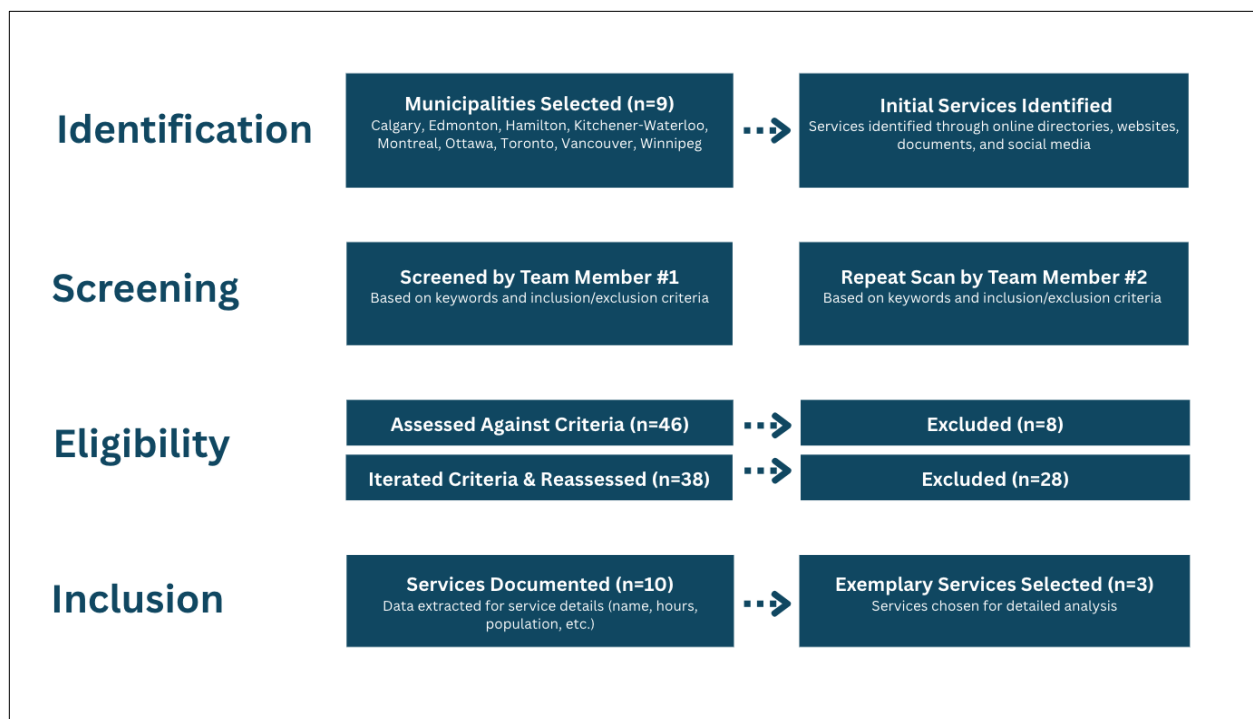


Figure 1: PRISMA-inspired flow chart outlining the scan process

Limitations

The primary limitation of this research was related to the search strategy. Although we made significant efforts to identify relevant keywords, locating services was often challenging. In many cases, we relied on centralized directories or listings of HR services within each municipality to guide our search. As a result, it is possible that some relevant services were not captured.

This limitation was evident in the case of Montreal, where many organizations' websites were available only in French. Our search terms were primarily in English, which may have limited our ability to identify French-language services. To address this, we conducted supplemental searches using the French terms “réduction des méfaits” and “sécurisation culturelle,” and consulted centralized lists of HR services in Montreal. However, some relevant programs may still have been overlooked due to language barriers.

Findings

Ethnoculturally Tailored Services in Major Municipalities

A total of 46 services were initially identified. This was reduced to 38 based on general relevance to the research. As the review progressed, a new exclusion criterion was introduced. Services were excluded if they target equity-seeking groups that are not explicitly racialized or newcomers/immigrants, such as individuals experiencing homelessness or those involved in sex work. These groups are often linked to substance use and deserve special consideration for HR service design but were not the focus of this review. The final list includes 10 services developed specifically for racialized or newcomer/immigrant communities. Some of these also included considerations for racialized or newcomer/immigrant 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

While the initial 38 programs included representation from all 9 municipalities, the final 10 are in only 6. We did not identify any ethnoculturally tailored services that met our criteria in Vancouver, Calgary, or Kitchener-Waterloo.

Table 1 below summarizes 10 services that best met our inclusion criteria across 6 municipalities: Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Hamilton, Ottawa, and Montreal. One service, the AMANI Mental Health and Substance Use Program, operates across 8 locations in Canada, including Toronto, Hamilton, and Ottawa. The table includes key details such as the service name, location, program description and target population, HR services provided, cultural competency features, eligibility criteria, and screening process. This is a concise summary of the information collected. Full details for each of the 10 services can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 1: Summary of ethnoculturally tailored services in major municipalities (n=10; Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Hamilton, Ottawa, and Montreal).

Service Name	Location	Program Description and Target Population	HR Services Provided	Cultural Competency Features	Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process
<u>Equitable Action for Change</u>	220 Yonge St, Toronto, ON, M5B 2H0	A Black created, led, focused and served not-for-profit, multi-service agency that provides culturally responsive supports to Black-identifying communities, including Afro-Indigenous, Black-Indigenous, biracial, multiracial, African, Caribbean, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ communities.	Direct peer support services; access to HR services and supports 4 days a week through Toronto Downtown East (DTE) outreach services; third party service referral; de-escalation; education on safe use/buddy use to mitigate further harms.	Staffed with persons with lived experience (black led and created); considers intersectional identities and impact on the experience; interpreters available for other languages (not specified), and accessibility upon request.	Individuals and families in Black-Identifying communities including Afro-Indigenous, Black-Indigenous, biracial, multiracial, African, Caribbean, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Must call or email. Self, agency or another referral.
<u>Across Boundaries</u>	51 Clarkson Ave, Toronto, ON, M6E 2T5	Equitable and holistic mental health and addiction services for racialized people in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), providing person-centered, trauma-informed care. It is targeted toward racialized individuals (ages 16 and up) with mental illness and/or addictions who need support, including immigrants and refugees.	Substance use counselling; peer-led HR programs; <i>Addiction, Wellness and You</i> (7-week peer-led HR group); naloxone training.	Programs are based on anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-Black racism frameworks; take strength-based approaches that foster cultural inclusion; offer services in multiple languages (Latin, Caribbean, African, Central Asian, South Asian Southeast Asian); staffed with individuals from racialized communities with lived experiences.	Racialized individuals aged 16 and up experiencing mental health and/or addiction challenges. Call (416) 787-3007 or apply online by filling out an Access Point Form and indicating "Across Boundaries" as the preferred service provider. Self-referral or referral by family member, health professional, social service or community agency, diversion program, religious institution or social organization.
<u>Sherbourne Health</u>	333 Sherbourne St, Toronto, ON, M5A 2S5	Provides integrated health services, community programs, and capacity-building initiatives to support wellness for diverse communities, focusing on under-served populations like newcomers to Canada and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.	Take-home naloxone kit and training program (sprays and injectables); HR cabinet with supplies available 24/7 located outside of the location's front doors; HR peer navigator program; STASH (HR support space offering supplies, resources, snacks, hygiene items, and essential health care); kit packing group.	Newcomer Connector connects clients to services based on intersectional identities; multilingual newcomer resource packages (Amharic, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Farsi, Tamil, Spanish and Urdu); community groups (e.g., STASH) are tailored for newcomer needs.	New mental health clients not currently accepted. To register with the Family Health Team, call (416) 324-4100 and ask for an Intake application appointment. Community groups are accessible on a drop-in basis (see website for times). No specific process listed for connecting with the Newcomer Connector.

<u>Southern Chief's Organization Inc.</u>	On-Reserve Head Office: Swan Lake First Nation 195-300 Alpine Way, Headingley, Manitoba R4H 0E1	The program is rooted in Anishinaabe and Dakota approaches to HR, which emphasize the seven sacred teachings: truth, love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, and humility. The program is strengths-based, trauma-informed, and offers education and delivers HR supplies for members of the 32 Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations located in southern Manitoba.	Distribution of HR supplies (fentanyl test strips, nasal naloxone kits, safer inhalation kits, clean needles, safer sex supplies); presentations on reducing harm to First Nations in community and in urban areas; educational programming to raise awareness of HR practices; a land-based healing fund (\$25,000) that supports SCO Nations in delivering healing activities for individuals who use drugs.	Rooted in Anishinaabe and Dakota HR; led by members of the Anishinaabe and Dakota nations; campaigns and educational materials are shaped by First Nations people with lived experience; SCO works with communities to build local capacity for HR, providing training and resources; trauma-informed (considers the role of trauma and colonial history in substance use).	To request education or for supplies, call the HR Help Line at (431) 294-6022 (available from Mon - Fri, 8:30am to 4:30pm).
<u>Four Arrows Regional Health Authority</u>	Head Office: Wasagamack Health Authority, General Delivery, Wasagamack, MB, R0B Z0 Winnipeg Office: 500-338 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB	The HR Program delivers culturally grounded, strengths-based, nonjudgmental HR education, supplies, and nursing services to promote safer substance use and reduce stigma. The program is tailored for and delivered by members of the four Island Lake First Nations-Garden Hill, St. Theresa Point, Red Sucker Lake, and Wasagamack-serving youth and community members in these northern Manitoba communities.	Community education workshops and presentations; school visits and educational outreach; distribution of HR resources and pamphlets; HR booths at community health fairs; training for frontline health workers and community health representatives; HR nursing services; local HR support from Community Health Representatives.	Indigenous-led and governed; culturally tailored education and outreach; Indigenous health workers; trained Community Health Representatives (CHRs) from and for each of the 4 Island Lake First Nations; collaboration with Elders.	Contact via email or by calling office numbers. No specific information provided.
<u>Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre of Winnipeg Inc.</u>	Suite 215-181 Higgins Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 3G1	An Indigenous Community Health Agency, providing holistic, culturally informed health and social services for urban Indigenous people in Winnipeg, including First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and 2SLGBTQQ+ community members and their families. The centre provides HR support through both its Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) main clinic and a dedicated mobile healthcare and wellness van, ensuring	HR supplies including naloxone; opioid agonist therapy and addictions medicine through walk-in Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) clinic and mobile unit; mental health counselling; referrals to specialized services; STBBI and HIV testing and treatment.	Indigenous-led and governed; services grounded in Indigenous worldviews and the medicine wheel; trauma-informed and relationship-based care; integration of traditional healing practices (smudging, drumming, singing, traditional medicines); culturally safe environment prioritizing dignity, respect, and empowerment.	No formal screening process; walk-in clinic; adults with non-emergency substance use concerns are eligible; most services are drop-in.

		accessible, nonjudgmental care for those who are homeless, at risk, or facing barriers to mainstream health systems.			
<u>Tawâw Outreach Collective (TOC)</u>	Treaty 6, Edmonton, Alberta (address not specified)	An Indigenous-led HR organization offering culturally grounded services through street outreach and community education. TOC addresses systemic inequities by combining street outreach, advocacy, and Indigenous-informed practices to support marginalized communities, particularly Indigenous people with substance use challenges and intergenerational trauma.	Community-based street outreach; educational workshops on Indigenous HR; naloxone training; distribution of HR supplies (sterile injection kits, smoking kits, drug test strips).	Indigenous-led and operated; all programs are guided by Indigenous values and lived experiences; supplies and education are grounded in Indigenous cultural practices, including the provision of sage and smudging materials, and the integration of spiritual and cultural supports; advocacy for Indigenous self-determination in service delivery.	No formal eligibility criteria or screening; services are provided on a drop-in, community-responsive basis.
<u>AMANI Mental Health and Substance Use Program</u>	<u>Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)</u> - 80 Workman Way, Toronto, ON, M6J 1H4 <u>Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre</u> - 181 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON, L8P 4Y4 <u>Upstream Ottawa Mental Health Community Support</u> - 204-100 Craig Henry Drive, Nepean, ON, K2G 5W3	AMANI (formerly SAPACCY) is a culturally responsive, Afrocentric mental health and substance use program for Black, African, and Caribbean youth ages 12-29 and their families/caregivers in Ottawa. The program provides a safe, affirming space to discuss mental health and substance use, recognizing the unique experiences and systemic barriers faced by Black, African, and Caribbean youth. AMANI's approach is healing-centered and strength-based.	Assessment and treatment planning; group therapy.	Rooted in Afrocentricity and aims at embracing and empowering people of African descent with dignity, self-determination, and resilience; community based clinical teams work on an Afrocentric, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, intersectional, and feminist, lens; Black-identifying staff; services provided by Black clinicians and focus on affirming cultural identity and self-determination.	Youth that identify as African, Caribbean, and/or Black, and are between the ages of 12-29 may self-refer or be referred by health and social service providers.

<u>Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health</u>	299 Montréal Road, Ottawa, ON, K1L 6B8	An Indigenous-led health centre offering wholistic primary care, mental health, and cultural services for Ottawa's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis community members.	Sisters in Recovery (HR healing circle for Indigenous women); The Journey to Freedom Challenge (tobacco HR therapy group)	Indigenous led; combines traditional healing (ceremonies, Medicine Wheel) with western approaches.	First Nation, Inuit and Métis community members only. Online form for registration.
<u>Native Women's Shelter of Montreal (NWSM)</u>	Montréal, Quebec (confidential address for safety)	An Indigenous-led organization dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, and culturally informed environment for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women and children in Montreal. The shelter addresses systemic inequities and supports healing, empowerment, and independence through a holistic approach that blends traditional Indigenous practices with contemporary support services.	Drug and alcohol counseling and support; HR education and outreach; intake, assessment, and individualized treatment planning; therapeutic activities and workshops; medicine wheel and 12-step program-based support; referrals to external addiction treatment programs.	Indigenous-led and operated; incorporates First Nations, Inuit, and Métis teachings; combines traditional healing (ceremonies, medicine wheel) with western approaches; programs shaped by Indigenous women's lived experiences.	Primarily for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women and their children (shelter residents); addictions Program also open to First Nations and Inuit women and men in the broader community. Self-referral or referral from community resources accepted. Intake and assessment required for participation.

Service Landscape

Toronto emerged as a leader in accessible and diverse culturally competent HR services. Resources such as the Toronto Health and Social Services Directory and CAMH's Culturally Competent Services guide were easily discoverable and comprehensive, reflecting the city's size and demographic diversity.

A review of the selected services across jurisdictions revealed several recurring themes. These are summarized below:

- **Populations Served:** Many of the services reviewed were designed specifically for Indigenous communities and Black Canadians. Others offered broader support to immigrants, newcomers, and individuals who identify as part of racialized populations. These general services were not tailored to a single ethnocultural group but aimed to serve anyone from a racialized background seeking culturally competent HR. Some programs also included supports for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Cultural Competency Approaches:** Common themes across services included trauma-informed and strengths-based care, anti-racism practices, and the affirmation of cultural identity. Some integrated traditional practices directly into HR programming, while others combined cultural elements with western care models.
- **Accessibility and Entry Points:** All services were free of charge. Access pathways included walk-in options, self-referral, and referrals from healthcare or community providers.
- **Scope of Support Provided:** While centered on HR, many programs also addressed related social and health concerns such as housing, sexual health, and mental wellness. These additional concerns were not prerequisites for service use but were included due to their frequent intersection with substance use.

Exemplary Services

Tawâw Outreach Collective (TOC)

Overview of the Organization

Tawâw Outreach Collective is a grassroots mutual-aid Indigenous and queer-led HR organization in Edmonton, Alberta. TOC practices HR through an Indigenous lens, which extends beyond substance use and involves undoing the harms of colonialism by re-connecting people to their culture.

Overview of the Program

TOC is dedicated to fostering culturally safe, inclusive, and compassionate support for vulnerable populations on the street. Informed by Indigenous knowledge and lived experience, the organization strives to build connections and provide necessities to promote the health, safety, and visibility of Indigenous and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, especially those experiencing homelessness and poverty. Primarily, they provide:

- Community street outreach
- Donated supplies: Sterile injection kits smoking kits, safe sex supplies, pregnancy tests, forensic drug test strips, food, snacks, bottled water, clothing, hygiene, camping gear, sage, smudging
- Educational training: Naloxone and Drug Poisoning Response, Indigenous Awareness and HR, workshops

On their Instagram ([@tawaw.horizons.outreach](https://www.instagram.com/tawaw.horizons.outreach)), TOC regularly advocates for and provides education on local and global politics affecting vulnerable populations, acting as a news and resource hub. TOC's current outreach occurs weekly on Mondays at 5:30pm and weekly pop-ups also take place during the warmer months.

Cultural Competency

TOC is founded and led by Indigenous and queer individuals, guided by cultural knowledge and lived experience with homelessness. Aligned with Indigenous perspectives and priorities, TOC is a grassroots and mutual-aid organization, relying on community donations and fundraising that is independent of governmental funding. Within their street outreach, TOC recognizes that Indigenous HR must undo colonialism and aims to reconnect people to their culture through community building and providing cultural supplies (e.g., sage for smudging). Additionally, the organization's political advocacy provides a culturally competent Indigenous lens, fighting against policies that uphold colonialism and oppression of Indigenous folks.

Service Access Workflow

As a street outreach organization, clients are met where they are within the city. Weekly on Monday evenings, TOC volunteers visit Edmonton's inner city, Downtown Core, Whyte Avenue, encampments, LRT stations, and bus terminals with outreach backpacks. Information on how clients use the service (aside from the above) is limited. Volunteers simply visit areas where people who need their services are.

For educational training, TOC provides private and public group naloxone training. Private workshops can be requested on their website through a Google form. The training covers Indigenous HR; Indigenous awareness and colonial impacts; intersections between substance use and colonialism; social justice issues and racial

inequities; drug policy, safe consumption, decriminalization of substance use; safer substance use; gender diversity and the unhoused community; and more. Public workshops in community centers with accessible transit are also announced on their Instagram account, with clients registering through Eventbrite.

Equitable Action for Change (EAC)

Overview of the Organization

Equitable Action for Change (EAC) is a Black-created, Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving non-profit organization based in Toronto, Ontario. EAC was founded to address systemic inequities by providing culturally responsive HR, peer support, outreach, and advocacy services. The organization is deeply rooted in the principle of community self-support, emphasizing shared culture, lived experience, and collective empowerment. EAC is committed to healing, empowerment, and reconciliation within Black and other marginalized communities, including Afro-Indigenous, Black-Indigenous, biracial, multiracial, African, Caribbean, and 2SLGBTQ+ populations.

Overview of the Program

EAC offers a comprehensive HR and peer support program that addresses not only substance use but also the broader systemic harms faced by Black-identifying communities, especially those with intersecting identities. The program is grounded in traditional Black peer support practices, where community members support one another from a place of shared cultural understanding and lived experience.

Key services include direct peer support, access to HR supplies (such as safer drug use kits, naloxone, and safer sex supplies), crisis peer counselling and de-escalation, HR education (including safe use and buddy systems), and referrals to food, medical, housing, legal, and counselling services. EAC also provides HR training to other service users and congregate settings, focusing on culturally appropriate approaches to prevent further harm.

EAC's frontline HR outreach team operates four days a week in Toronto's Downtown Eastside, providing in-field support and supplies directly to individuals in the community. Service hours are flexible to meet the needs of those they serve.

EAC serves Black-identifying individuals and families, including Afro-Indigenous, Black-Indigenous, biracial, multiracial, African, Caribbean, and Black 2SLGBTQ+ communities. The organization also supports sex workers, drug users, people who are intermittently housed or homeless, survivors of human trafficking, and those facing intersecting oppressions related to race, gender, sexuality, or migration status. Allies and community partners are engaged to support this work.

Cultural Competency

EAC exemplifies cultural competency through its Black-led and Black-serving structure, ensuring that all services are informed by the lived experiences and cultural realities of the communities served. Peer support workers are recruited from within these communities and receive training to provide empathetic, trauma-informed, and culturally safe care. Language interpretation and accessibility accommodations are available upon request. The organization's approach is anti-racist and rooted in social justice, with a strong emphasis on arts-based programming and advocacy that reflect the diverse cultural heritages of Black communities.

EAC's model addresses the complex interplay of systemic racism, substance use, homelessness, and social marginalization by centering Black voices and experiences. Its peer-led, culturally grounded approach fosters trust and community empowerment, helping to reduce harm and improve health outcomes. By meeting people where they are – whether on the street, in community spaces, or through phone support – EAC reduces barriers and stigma, creating a safer and more inclusive environment for some of Toronto's most vulnerable populations.

Service Access Workflow

EAC's services are designed to be accessible and responsive to community needs. Individuals can access support through multiple avenues:

- **Community Outreach:** The frontline HR outreach team works directly in Toronto's Downtown East, connecting with individuals in their environments to provide supplies, support, and referrals. Community members can reach the team by phone at (416) 518-4824 or by emailing harmreduction@equitablenow.ca. As the outreach team is often working in the field, responses to calls or emails may not be immediate.
- **Telephone and Email Support:** EAC offers general information and crisis support lines (437) 221-9582 and (437) 239-6487, respectively) and can be contacted via email at contact@equitablenow.ca for assistance or referrals.
- **Referrals:** Services are accessible via self-referral, agency referral, or peer referral. No documentation or identification is required, reducing barriers to access.

The client journey typically begins with outreach or initial contact, followed by engagement with peer support workers who assess needs and provide HR supplies, crisis counselling, education, and referrals. Ongoing support is available, and clients are

empowered to make their own decisions in a confidential and non-judgmental environment.

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal (NWSM) Addictions Program

Overview of the Organization

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal (NWSM) is an Indigenous-led organization that serves First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women and children. Its mission is to provide a safe, supportive, and culturally informed environment where women and children can begin to rebuild their lives. NWSM addresses immediate needs and fosters opportunities for healing, growth, and empowerment, blending traditional Indigenous healing with contemporary support methods.

Overview of the Program

The Addictions Program at NWSM offers compassionate, culturally relevant care for those struggling with substance use. The program provides counseling, education, and support to women residing at the shelter, as well as to First Nations and Inuit women and men in the broader Montreal community. Services are accessible through both individual sessions and group programs, and self-referrals are welcome. The program includes drug and alcohol counseling, educational outreach to promote healthy choices, intake assessments, and personalized treatment planning. Therapeutic activities and workshops are offered to support recovery and personal growth, and support is rooted in Indigenous cultural and spiritual practices, including the Medicine Wheel and Twelve-Step models. The program also collaborates with community health resources and assists clients with referrals to external addiction treatment programs, ensuring comprehensive and coordinated care. All services are delivered using a holistic and HR-based approach, emphasizing compassion and nonjudgmental support.

The shelter itself operates 24/7, providing round-the-clock support for residents. Addictions Program services are available both in-house and through outreach, with flexible scheduling to meet the needs of clients.

Cultural Competency

NWSM's Addictions Program is exemplary in cultural competency due to its Indigenous-led and guided approach. All services are rooted in Indigenous values, lived experiences, and traditional teachings. The program incorporates ceremonies, healing practices, and a holistic, trauma-informed care model that addresses physical, emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs. This approach not only provides immediate support but also strengthens Indigenous cultural identity, self-esteem, and empowerment through education and community connection.

Service Access Workflow

Clients can access the Addictions Program by reaching out directly to the shelter, participating in outreach activities, or through self-referral and agency referrals. The process typically begins with an intake and assessment, followed by individualized counseling or group support, therapeutic activities, and collaborative treatment planning. If needed, clients are connected to external addiction treatment programs or other community resources. Ongoing support is available, and the shelter's outreach ensures that services are accessible to those who may not reside at the shelter itself. For more information to access the program, individuals are encouraged to contact the addictions worker directly by email.

Conclusion

This report explored culturally responsive HR services across Canada to support SOPEN's goal of fostering more inclusive and effective support for racialized and newcomer/immigrant populations. Through an environmental scan of 9 municipalities, the team identified 10 services tailored to racialized and newcomer/immigrant communities, with 3 exemplary services examined in depth.

Effective services exhibit several key features: they are peer-led, culturally grounded, and rooted in lived experience. These programs consistently apply trauma-informed and strength-based approaches that affirm cultural identity, foster trust, and promote holistic well-being. They prioritize accessibility and community connection, often integrating traditional practices and addressing broader social determinants of health alongside HR. While centered on HR, many programs also addressed related social and health concerns such as housing, sexual health, and mental wellness due to their frequent intersection with substance use.

However, challenges remain, including limited visibility of some services, underrepresentation of non-English resources, and the continued effects of systemic racism on HR access.

This report offers a foundational resource for inter-organizational learning and collaboration across the HR sector. By documenting key features of culturally competent HR models, it provides SOPEN and other stakeholders with actionable insights to guide the development of new services, adapt existing programs, and advocate for culturally safe, community-driven approaches.

Moving forward, this work can support strategic planning and inform staff training and outreach efforts. It also lays the groundwork for continued research and dialogue aimed at closing systemic gaps and advancing equity in HR across Canada.

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Appendix 1

The following keywords were combined with Boolean operators and the name of the relevant municipality to conduct targeted searches:

1. Culturally responsive HR
2. Culturally specific drug use support
3. Culturally responsive safe injection support
4. Racialized communities and HR
5. Racialized communities and opioid use
6. Marginalized communities and HR
7. Intersectional HR
8. Ethnocultural health services in HR
9. Diversity in supervised consumption services
10. Culturally competent substance use treatment
11. Inclusive HR services in Canada
12. Newcomer-focused HR programs
13. HR and racial equity
14. Peer-led HR for diverse communities
15. Opioid-related morbidity and mortality among racialized communities
16. Drug policy crisis
17. Intersectionality of drug use and access to treatment
18. Racialized services
19. Low-barrier care
20. Grassroots activism
21. Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS)
22. Culturally competent consumption and treatment services
23. Digital Services (pop-in places as referenced in the study)

Appendix 2

The following section provides detailed descriptions of each service, organized by jurisdiction.

Toronto (n=3)

1. Equitable Action for Change (EAC)

Location: 220 Yonge St, Toronto, ON, M5B 2H0

Contact Information:

- General Inquiries: (437) 221-9582
- Crisis/Hotline: (437) 239-6487
- Email: contact@equitablenow.ca / executivedirector@equitablenow.ca

Hours of Operation: Fri 12:00pm - 4:00pm

Program Description and Target Population: Black created, led, focused and served not-for-profit, multi-service agency that provides culturally responsive supports to Black-identifying communities, including Afro-Indigenous, Black-Indigenous, biracial, multiracial, African, Caribbean, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

HR Services Provided: Direct peer support services; access to HR services and supports 4 days a week through Toronto Downtown East (DTE) outreach services; third party service referral; de-escalation; education on safe use/buddy use to mitigate further harms.

Other General Services Provided: Referrals to food, medical, housing, legal and counselling services; crisis peer support counselling; arts and recreation seminars and events; advocacy and assistance for sexually abused/physically abused; immigration/settlement services; employment assistance; community outreach services; training.

Cultural Competency Features: Staffed with persons with lived experience (black led and created); considers intersectional identities and impact on the experience; interpreters available for other languages (not specified), and accessibility upon request.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: Individuals and families in Black-Identifying communities including Afro-Indigenous, Black-Indigenous, biracial, multiracial, African, Caribbean, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Must call or email. Self, agency or another referral.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Direct work with communities through on-the-ground HR and peer support. Provision of HR training to community partner agencies. Active on Instagram, Facebook YouTube, and X.

2. Across Boundaries

Location: 51 Clarkson Ave, Toronto, ON, M6E 2T5

Contact Information:

- General Inquiries: (416) 787-3007 ext. 297
- Intake & Program Info: (416) 787-3007 ext. 222
- Email: info@acrossboundaries.ca

Hours of Operation:

- Mon - Fri: 8:00am - 8:00pm
- Sat: 10:00am - 6:00pm

Program Description and Target Population: Equitable and holistic mental health and addiction services for racialized people in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), providing person-centered, trauma-informed care. It is targeted toward racialized individuals (ages 16 and up) with mental illness and/or addictions who need support, including immigrants and refugees.

HR Services Provided: Substance use counselling; peer-led HR programs; *Addiction, Wellness and You* (7-week peer-led HR group); naloxone training.

Other General Services Provided: Individual and community support; case management (including for 2SLGBTQ+ and youth); family support; drop-in; psychosocial rehabilitation; life skills development; community kitchen; psychiatric consultation; art and music therapy; leadership and advocacy training; employment preparation; computer training; literacy and ESL classes; housing support.

Cultural Competency Features: Programs are based on anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-Black racism frameworks; take strength-based approaches that foster cultural inclusion; offer services in multiple languages (Latin, Caribbean, African, Central Asian, South Asian, SouthEast Asian); staffed with individuals from racialized communities with lived experiences.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: Racialized individuals aged 16 and up experiencing mental health and/or addiction challenges. Call (416) 787-3007 or apply online by filling out an Access Point Form and indicating “Across Boundaries” as the preferred service provider. Self-referral or referral by family member, health

professional, social service or community agency, diversion program, religious institution or social organization.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Active on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Partnerships with community organizations (e.g., Black Creek Community Health Centre for youth case management services).

3. Sherbourne Health

Location: 333 Sherbourne St, Toronto, ON, M5A 2S5

Contact Information:

- Phone: (416) 324-4100
- Email: info@sherbourne.on.ca

Hours of Operation:

- Mon - Wed: 9:00am - 8:00pm
- Thurs: 9:00am - 1:00pm and 4:00pm - 8:00pm
- Fri: 9:00am - 5:00pm
- Sat: 9:00am - 12:00pm
- **Saturday operates as a walk-in clinic for registered clients of Sherbourne Health only. The last appointment of the day is at noon.

STASH Space Hours:

- Mon, Tues, Wed: 1:00pm - 4:00pm
- Thurs: 9:30am - 12:00pm
- Fri: 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Program Description and Target Population: Provides integrated health services, community programs, and capacity-building initiatives to support wellness for diverse communities, focusing on under-served populations like newcomers to Canada and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

HR Services Provided: Take-home naloxone kit and training program (sprays and injectables); HR cabinet with supplies available 24/7 located outside of the location's front doors; HR peer navigator program; STASH (HR support space offering supplies, resources, snacks, hygiene items, and essential health care); kit packing group.

Other General Services Provided: Newcomer services including low-barrier primary care; mental health services (note: new clients currently not accepted); community

groups focused on newcomer needs; settlement services; diabetes education; access to the Newcomer Connector (intersectional support for newcomers).

Cultural Competency Features: Newcomer Connector connects clients to services based on intersectional identities; multilingual newcomer resource packages (Amharic, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Farsi, Tamil, Spanish and Urdu); community groups (e.g., STASH) are tailored for newcomer needs.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: New mental health clients not currently accepted. To register with the Family Health Team, call (416) 324-4100 and ask for an Intake application appointment. Community groups are accessible on a drop-in basis (see website for times/locations). No specific process listed for connecting with the Newcomer Connector.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Active on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Partnerships with community organizations (e.g., The Corner / St. James Town Community Corner at 200 Wellesley).

Winnipeg (n=3)

4. Southern Chief's Organization Inc.

Locations:

- On-Reserve Head Office
 - Swan Lake First Nation 195-300 Alpine Way, Headingley, Manitoba R4H 0E1
- Winnipeg Sub-Offices
 - 202-600 Empress Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0R5
 - 1572 Dublin Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 0L4
 - 105-1555 St. James Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0L2
- Brandon Sub-Office
 - 2B 136-11th Street, Brandon, Manitoba R7A 4J4
- Dauphin Sub-Office
 - #D016 - 1450 Main Street, Dauphin, Manitoba R7N 3H4

Contact information:

- Phone: (204) 946-1869
- Toll Free: 1-866-876-9701
- Email: receptionist@scoinc.mb.ca

Hours of Operation: Mon - Fri: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Program Description and Target Population: The HR Program is rooted in Anishinaabe and Dakota approaches to HR, which emphasize the seven sacred teachings: truth, love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, and humility. The program is strengths-based, trauma-informed, and offers education and delivers HR supplies for members of the 32 Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations located in southern Manitoba.

HR Services Provided: Distribution of HR supplies (fentanyl test strips, nasal naloxone kits, safer inhalation kits, clean needles, safer sex supplies); presentations on reducing harm to First Nations in community and in urban areas; educational programming to raise awareness of HR practices; a land-based healing fund (\$25,000) that supports SCO Nations in delivering healing activities for individuals who use drugs.

Other General Services Provided: Child and Family Services Program; protecting Our Sacred Water Program; health promotion and healthy living resources; justice programs and services (including Community Justice Workers, First Nation Court Workers, Youth Justice Project, Gladue Report Pilot Project, Restorative Justice Digital Wellness Program); First Nations Disability Program; Jordan's Principle Program; Traditional Healers Program; First Nations Veterans Program.

Cultural Competency Features: Rooted in Anishinaabe and Dakota HR; led by members of the Anishinaabe and Dakota nations; campaigns and educational materials are shaped by First Nations people with lived experience; SCO works with communities to build local capacity for HR, providing training and resources so that health care providers in member Nations; trauma-informed (considers the role of trauma and colonial history in substance use).

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: To request education or for supplies, call the HR Help Line at (431) 294-6022 (available Mon - Fri, 8:30am - 4:30pm).

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Collaboration with the 32 Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations. Annual HR outreach campaigns on billboards, bus boards, ad space, printed materials, and through social media. Active on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube.

[5. Four Arrows Regional Health Authority](#)

Locations:

- Head Office: Wasagamack Health Authority, General Delivery, Wasagamack, MB, R0B Z0
- Winnipeg Office: 500-338 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB

Contact Information:

- Email: info@fourarrowsrha.org
- Head Office Phone: (204) 457-9600
- Winnipeg Office Phone: (204) 947-2397
- Toll Free: 1-866-653-3441
- Contact information for specific personnel (HR nurses and workers) can be found at the bottom of this [webpage](#).

Hours of Operation: Mon - Fri, 9:00am - 12:00pm and 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Program Description and Target Population: The HR Program delivers culturally grounded, strengths-based, nonjudgmental HR education, supplies, and nursing services to promote safer substance use and reduce stigma. The program is tailored for and delivered by members of the four Island Lake First Nations-Garden Hill, St. Theresa Point, Red Sucker Lake, and Wasagamack-serving youth and community members in these northern Manitoba communities.

HR Services Provided: Community education workshops and presentations; school visits and educational outreach; distribution of HR resources and pamphlets; HR booths at community health fairs; training for frontline health workers and community health representatives; HR nursing services; local HR support from Community Health Representatives.

Other General Services Provided: Home and community care; foot care; oral health; wellness programs; crisis response; food security; renal health programs; Jordan's Principle Program.

Cultural Competency Feature: Indigenous-led and governed; culturally tailored education and outreach; Indigenous health workers; trained Community Health Representatives (CHRs) from and for each of the 4 Island Lake First Nations; collaboration with Elders.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: Contact via email or by calling office numbers. No specific information provided.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Partner with the communities, schools, wellness programs, Manitoba Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) network, HR group, Dr. Issac, Melissa Cook (Methamphetamine) and Elders. Active on Facebook.

6. Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre of Winnipeg Inc.

Location: Suite 215-181 Higgins Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 3G1

Contact Information:

- Phone: (204) 925-3700
- RAAM Email: ccyr@ahwc.ca
- General email: executiveassistant@ahwc.ca

Hours of Operation:

RAAM Clinic

- Tues and Thurs: registration begins at 11:15am and ends at 3:00pm
- Physician is on site from 1:00pm - 5:00pm

RAAM Mobile Clinic

- Sat: 10:00am - 3:00pm

Program Description and Target Population: An Indigenous Community Health Agency, providing holistic, culturally informed health and social services for urban Indigenous people in Winnipeg, including First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and 2SLGBTQQ+ community members and their families. Services are trauma-informed and nonjudgmental. The centre provides HR support through both its Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) main clinic and a dedicated mobile healthcare and wellness van, ensuring accessible, nonjudgmental care for those who are homeless, at risk, or facing barriers to mainstream health systems.

HR Services Provided: HR supplies including naloxone; opioid agonist therapy and addictions medicine through walk-in Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) clinic and mobile unit; mental health counselling; referrals to specialized services; STBBI and HIV testing and treatment.

Other General Services Provided: Primary care clinic with culturally safe, holistic care; mentorship and healthy living programs; residential school and housing support (Ni-Apin Housing First program); case management; cultural programs for men, children, and families; food security supports.

Cultural Competency Features: Indigenous-led and governed; services grounded in Indigenous worldviews and the medicine wheel; trauma-informed and relationship-

based care; integration of traditional healing practices (smudging, drumming, singing, traditional medicines); culturally safe environment prioritizing dignity, respect, and empowerment.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: No formal screening process; walk-in clinic; adults with non-emergency substance use concerns are eligible; most services are drop-in.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Mobile Clinic and leadership in developing Manitoba's first Indigenous-led supervised consumption site. Active on Instagram and Facebook.

Edmonton (n=1)

7. Tawâw Outreach Collective (TOC)

Location: Treaty 6, Edmonton, Alberta (address not specified)

Contact Information:

- Email: TawawOutreachCollective@gmail.com

Hours of Operation: Not specified; services available upon request or at local events.

Program Description and Target Population: An Indigenous-led HR organization offering culturally grounded services through street outreach and community education. TOC addresses systemic inequities by combining street outreach, advocacy, and Indigenous-informed practices to support marginalized communities, particularly Indigenous people substance use challenges and intergenerational trauma.

HR Services Provided: Community-based street outreach; educational workshops on Indigenous HR; naloxone training; distribution of HR supplies (sterile injection kits, smoking kits, drug test strips).

Other General Services Provided: Distribution of other supplies like pregnancy tests, safer sex supplies, donated food, water and hygiene products, clothing, sage and smudging materials.

Cultural Competency Features: Indigenous-led and operated; all programs are guided by Indigenous values and lived experiences; supplies and education are grounded in Indigenous cultural practices, including the provision of sage and smudging materials, and the integration of spiritual and cultural supports; advocacy for Indigenous self-determination in service delivery and criticism of tokenistic cultural add-ons in mainstream systems.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: No formal eligibility criteria or screening; services are provided on a drop-in, community-responsive basis.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Partnerships with Blondie Presents (local concert organizer), Alberta Health Services, Streetworks, and AAWEAR. Active on Instagram and Facebook.

Hamilton, Ottawa, and Toronto (n=1)

8. AMANI Mental Health and Substance Use Program

Location:

- Hamilton: Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre - 181 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON, L8P 4Y4
- Ottawa: Upstream Ottawa Mental Health Community Support - 204-100 Craig Henry Drive, Nepean, ON, K2G 5W3
- Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) - 80 Workman Way, Toronto, ON, M6J 1H4

Contact Information:

Hamilton

- Phone: (905) 522-3233

Ottawa

- Phone: (613) 248-3330
- Email: sapaccy@upstreamottawa.ca

Toronto

- Phone: (416) 535-8501 ext. 30655
- Email: sapaccy@camh.ca

Hours of Operation:

Hamilton

- Mon, Tues, and Thurs: 9:00am – 8:00pm
- Wed: 1:00pm - 5:00pm
- Fri: from 9:00am – 5:00pm

Ottawa

- Mon - Fri: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Toronto

- Mon - Fri: 9:00am - 5:00pm

(Appointments required for most services.)

Program Description and Target Population: AMANI (formerly SAPACCY) is a culturally responsive, Afrocentric mental health and substance use program for Black, African, and Caribbean youth ages 12-29 and their families/caregivers in Ottawa. The program provides a safe, affirming space to discuss mental health and substance use, recognizing the unique experiences and systemic barriers faced by Black, African, and Caribbean youth. AMANI's approach is healing-centered and strength-based.

HR Services Provided: Assessment and treatment planning; group therapy.

Other General Services Provided: Counselling; psychiatry; caregivers support groups; case management; mental health promotion.

Cultural Competency Features: Rooted in Afrocentricity and aims at embracing and empowering people of African descent with dignity, self-determination, and resilience; community based clinical teams work with an Afrocentric, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, intersectional, and feminist, lens; Black-identifying staff; services provided by Black clinicians and focus on affirming cultural identity and self-determination.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: Youth that identify as African, Caribbean, and/or Black, and are between the ages of 12-29 may self-refer or be referred by health and social service providers.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Social Media toolkit and graphics. Active on Instagram, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, YouTube.

Ottawa (n=1)

[9. Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health](#)

Location: 299 Montréal Road, Ottawa, ON, K1L 6B8

Contact Information:

- General call: (613) 748-0657 or (613) 748-9364

- Email: info@wabano.com

Hours of Operation: Mon - Fri: 9:00am - 5:30pm

Program Description: An Indigenous-led health centre offering wholistic primary care, mental health, and cultural services for Ottawa's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis community members.

HR Services Provided: Sisters in Recovery (HR healing circle for Indigenous women); The Journey to Freedom Challenge (tobacco HR therapy group)

Other General Services Provided: Youth programs; family services; therapy; housing support; cultural classes (beading, language, cooking); medical services (dental, maternity, addictions, autism); mental health services.

Cultural Competency Features: Indigenous led; combines traditional healing (ceremonies, Medicine Wheel) with western approaches.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: First Nation, Inuit and Métis community members only. Online form for registration.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Community outreach workers; organizes health fairs, wellness workshops and community meals. Active on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X.

Montreal (n=1)

[10. Native Women's Shelter of Montreal \(NWSM\)](#)

Location: Shelter and program located in Montréal, Quebec (confidential address for safety)

Contact Information:

- Phone: (514) 933-4688
- Toll Free: 1-866-403-4688
- General Email: contactus@nwsm.info
- Addiction Program Email: Isis Gumbs: isis.gumbs@nwsm.info

Hours of Operation: Hours are flexible Mon - Fri. Contact to make an appointment.

Program Description and Target Population: An Indigenous-led organization dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, and culturally informed environment for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women and children in Montreal. The shelter addresses

systemic inequities and supports healing, empowerment, and independence through a holistic approach that blends traditional Indigenous practices with contemporary support services.

HR Services Provided: Drug and alcohol counseling and support; HR education and outreach; intake, assessment, and individualized treatment planning; therapeutic activities and workshops; medicine wheel and 12-step program-based support; referrals to external addiction treatment programs.

General Services Provided: Shelter, food, clothing, and hygiene for residents; culturally informed workshops and traditional teachings; support groups and well-being follow-up; listening, advocacy, and referrals to community health resources; outreach to Indigenous women and children in the community.

Cultural Competency Features: Indigenous-led and operated; incorporates First Nations, Inuit, and Métis teachings; combines traditional healing (ceremonies, medicine wheel) with western approaches; programs shaped by Indigenous women's lived experiences.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening Process: Primarily for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women and their children (shelter residents); addictions program also open to First Nations and Inuit women and men in the broader community. Self-referral or referral from community resources accepted. Intake and assessment required for participation.

Program Duration: Ongoing

Cost: Free of Charge

Outreach Strategies: Public education and advocacy campaigns. Active on Facebook and Instagram.