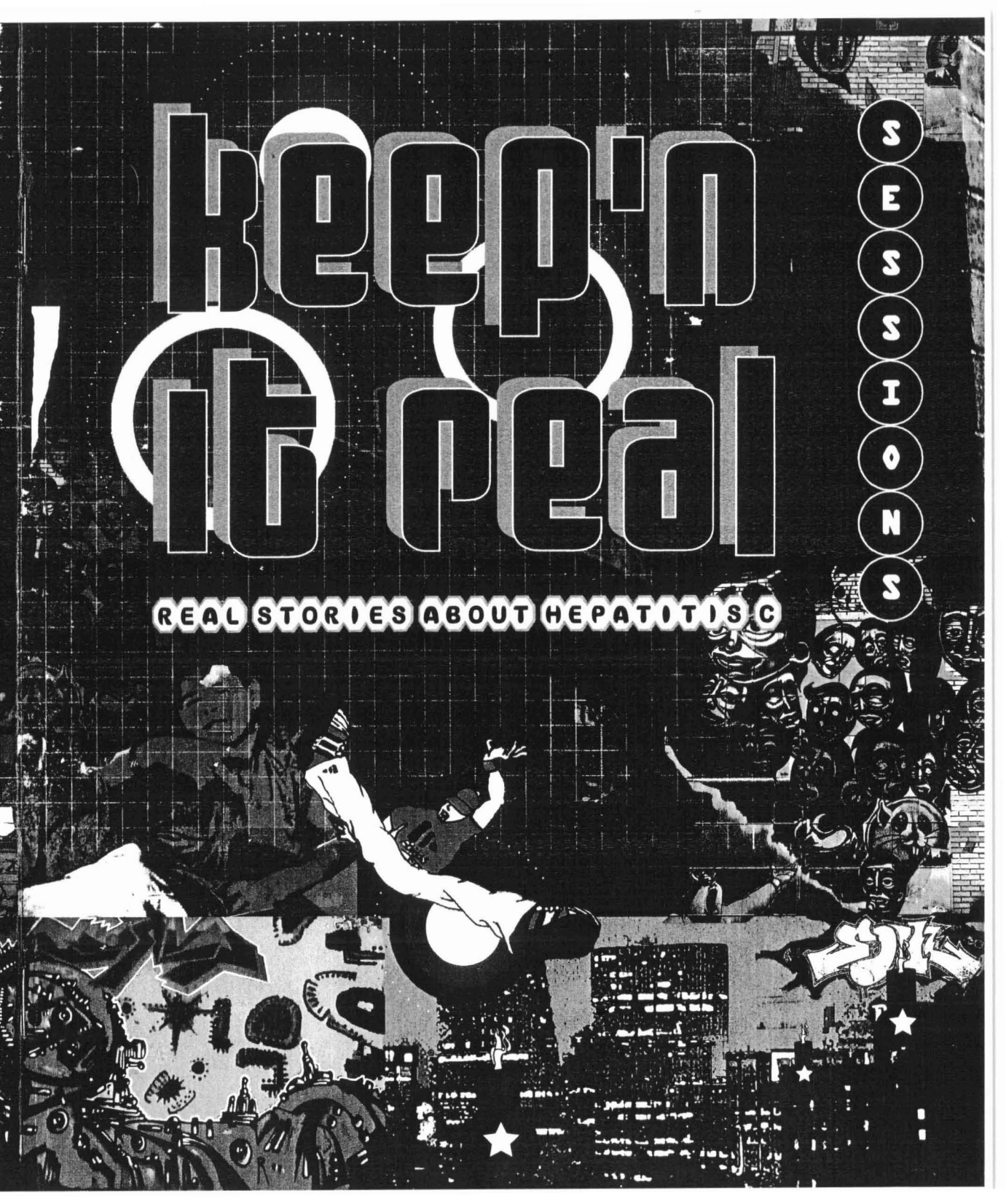


keep'in it real

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REAL STORIES ABOUT HEPATITIS C



keep'n it real

REAL STORIES ABOUT HEPATITIS C

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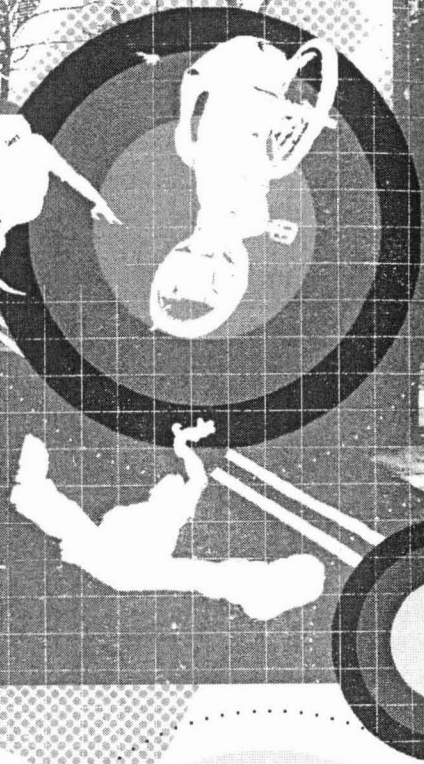
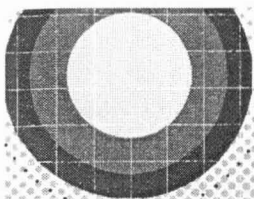
Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de santé
publique du Canada



*Planned Parenthood Regina
Sexual Health Centre*





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A publication of Planned Parenthood Regina's Youth Educating About Health
with the assistance of the Public Health Agency of Canada, 2005

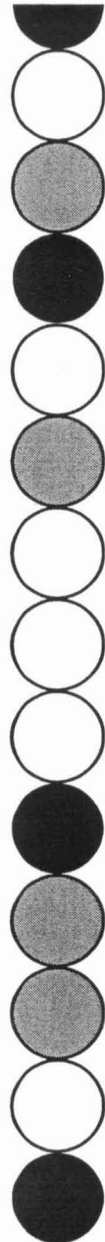
Design and artwork by Jeannie Straub with contributions by Daniel Pinacie-Scott and others.



table of contents

03

keep'n it real	04
needle disposal on the streets	09
a quick guide to hepatitis c	30
hep c story sharing sessions	
1 Addictions	06
2 Family	08
3 Knowledge	10
4 Support	13
5 Life Blood	14
6 Piercings	17
7 HIV	18
8 Friends	20
youth representin'	23
drama chronicles	24
websites: check out more!	32



keep'n it real



Stories, since time began, have been a means for sharing wisdom, healing and encouraging hope. For many decades prior to 1989, the virus, then called non A and non B Hepatitis, plagued individuals. In 1989, Hepatitis C was founded and named and since has affected many lives. There are many people committed to helping prevent the spread of the virus and assisting people infected with Hep C to optimize living through support and education. Yet there is still much work to be done. Canada has 5000 new cases of Hep C a year. It is estimated that 300,000 people in Canada are currently aware of being infected with Hep C and each year this virus kills around 1000 people. That's a 1000 brothers, sisters, daughters, grandmas, grandpas, sons, mothers and fathers to many.

This booklet speaks to journeys of courage, hope, resilience, illness, love, kinship and vulnerability, as it relates to the Hep C virus and its effects. It is real people sharing very real things. Everybody has a mistake they have learned from and a story to teach another of their lesson. This booklet was put together with the openness of many hearts. The Hepatitis C virus affects our communities, our neighbours, co-workers, friends, and family. Please take the time to learn and teach others how they can protect themselves and others from spreading or contracting this virus.

This booklet was created with the support, encouragement and efforts of Planned Parenthood Regina's Y.E.A.H (Youth Educating About Health) group, Public Health Agency of Canada and many committed individuals. Enjoy the stories, learn from them and appreciate that everyone who has shared their experience is working toward solutions and health.



brothers :: keepin' it real ::
:: share & protect :: fathers
grandparents :: sons ::

daughters
:: educatin' action ::
mothers

Find all the Smokin' Stacks! Total found on page 32. ➔

Session 01: Addictions

06

Everybody has their first love, the one they'd do anything for. The one you forget about anything and anyone for. I met my love when I was thirteen. I fell in love instantly. His name was Ryan*. He was my friend's older brother. Ryan* was the 'coolest'. Everybody loved him. He always had lots of booze and lots of drugs.

We moved in together when I was 17. Everything was so 'perfect' in my mind. Ryan* sold drugs. I was a waitress in a nice restaurant, I owned a good car and our apartment was awesome. I thought I was living the coolest life.

That all changed one evening when I came home from work early and Ryan* and his buddies were doing needles right in my living room. I flipped out. I kicked everyone out and demanded an explanation from Ryan*. He told me it was coke and he had been hiding it from me for years. I was shocked, disgusted and most of all, really sad. Both Ryan's parents and mine had used needles while we were growing up and we hated them for doing it and taking so much away from our childhood. I thought, "How could he do that?" So he led me to believe he quit needles and only smoked crack from then on and he wouldn't stop that. So I accepted it because I loved him. Sooner or later he had me smoking it too!

It became an everyday thing for the two of us and a lot of our money went to drugs, so we took on roommates to share the bills; Kristin* and Steve*, a couple that were a bit older than us. They were awesome. Kristin* was so pretty and sweet and Steve* was so funny and cool. They always had a ton of cash and I never knew how they got it. They bought us all sorts of clothes and gifts. We all became really close. I soon found out they were fraud artists and wired on morphine and were heavy needle users. When I saw a woman like Kristin* using needles, they didn't seem so dirty anymore. I thought if someone like her used a needle then it must be pretty normal. Ryan* and I started using morphine. I didn't use a needle right off the top. I started by eating a pill. Then one day Ryan* convinced me to use a needle and Kristin* said she would fix me, so I agreed.

Note: * asterisks behind names are there to indicate name changes.



I closed my eyes, held my arm out and before I knew it had begun. It was done and I was instantly in heaven. Any pain or problem I had was gone. I loved it! I started using needles all the time with everyone else in the house and when I would run out of my own, I would use Ryan's* needles because I trusted him and loved him.

Things got really bad. I lost my job. Ryan* wasn't selling because he did all his drugs. Kristin* and Steve* barely had any money anymore and what money they did have went to drugs. The bills piled up, we got cut off, we all got evicted and I sold my car for drugs. We had literally lost everything. Ryan's heart no longer belonged to me, it belonged to drugs and the same with my heart. My family had finally convinced me to go to a dry-out center in Middlesville*, where I found out two very important things which changed my life forever; one, I was pregnant and two, I was infected with the Hepatitis C virus. I was devastated, confused and lost. I knew nothing about the virus or if my baby would be born with it.

I found myself an excellent support person who also had the virus – my Mom! She had done needles for 13 years and now has been clean for seven years. From my life experience I have come to terms with one thing; diseases don't care whose mom you are or how pretty or cool you are, if you're not safe while using, you're 99.9% likely to become infected with a

disease. So if you are using...

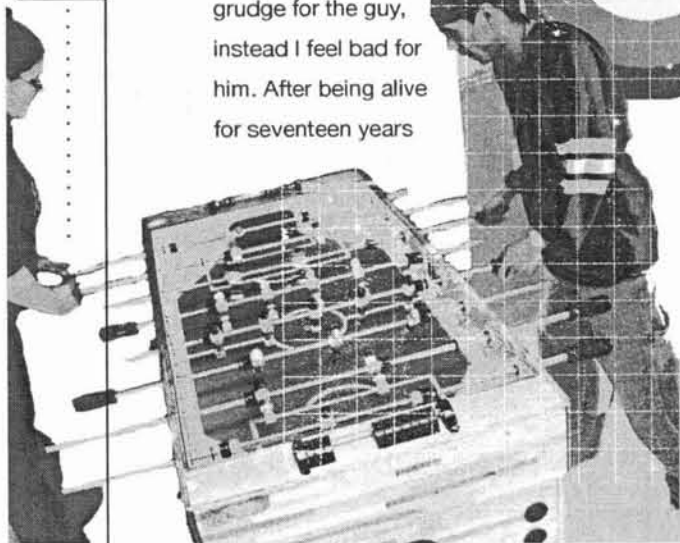
**PLEASE USE
SAFELY!**



Session 2: Family

When my mom first told me that she had Hepatitis C, I was worried and scared for her. I had never heard of the disease before. She explained to me what the disease was and how it affects her and she told me that she could die from the disease because there is no cure for it. I wasn't sure how to react. Everything I was being told was new to me. She told me that she got the disease from an injection drug-user injecting his blood into her arm. He knew he was passing on the disease. I couldn't quite understand how someone could do something so cruel and heartless to the person that they are supposed to love. I don't even hold a grudge for the guy, instead I feel bad for him. After being alive for seventeen years

and knowing this for five or six years, it doesn't worry me as much now as it did in the beginning. I know that my mom is strong. It is going to take a whole lot more than a disease to bring my mom down. My mom has accomplished many great challenges that have changed the lives of all her children. Since my mom has been infected she has changed into a different person: a better person. She knows to cherish life and all the little things about it. She has changed and set the journey on the road she is meant to be on. People say that a person can only be so lucky. I consider myself to be extremely lucky. I have a one of a kind mom who will never be able to be replaced. Since we have found out that my mom has Hepatitis C, I consider her to be more than just my mother, she is gift that was send to me from God to watch over me, but now I can watch over her too.



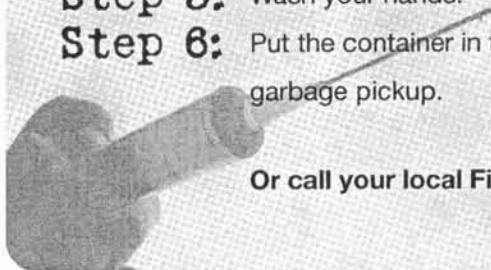
needle safety on the streets

- ⚡ Used needles are often found in the streets and in public parks.
- ⚡ A used needle has blood inside of it and that blood can contain bacteria and viruses and sometimes carry dangerous diseases such as AIDS or hepatitis. If a child or adult is poked by the needle, he/she can be infected with the disease.
- ⚡ If you are poked by a needle...clean the area with soap and warm water, then immediately go to the emergency department at nearest hospital.
- ⚡ If you see a used needle...tell an adult.

09

How to Dispose of a Needle:

- Step 1:** Get an empty hard-sided container that needles can not poke through. The container must have a lid. You can use an empty bleach bottle or coffee tin.
- Step 2:** Put the container on a flat surface.
- Step 3:** Pick the syringe up by the barrel end and keep the pointed end away from you. DO NOT try to put the cap back on the needle, many injuries happen this way.
- Step 4:** Put the needle in the container. Put the lid on tightly and tape the lid on.
- Step 5:** Wash your hands.
- Step 6:** Put the container in the outdoor garbage on the day of garbage pickup.



Or call your local Fire Department in Regina (306) 777-7846

Session 03: Knowledge

I am a single parent of four children. Two girls and two boys, aged 19, 18, 11 and 6 years old. As you can see I started my family at a very young age. I was 15 years old to be exact. I was looking for love and clung onto the first person that told me they "loved" me. Back then and at that age, we didn't know what love was. By the time I was 17 and in grade 10, I already had my two girls. My daughters gave me my inspiration to get my grade 12. I thought if I could finish grade 12 with two children, they can finish with none. I graduated with a B average in 1988. I spent most of the next 10 years just trying to raise my children the best way I knew how, with what little I had. I was with them for 10 years.

I began a job in 1995. Then about 4 months into my job my ex-partner broke into the facility (while I slept) and ripped it off using my work key/code. When my boss asked me where I was, I told him at home sleeping because I had to be up early to open the center. He showed me the fax stating the building had been opened at 2 a.m. with my access code. I knew who it was immediately. That was the beginning of the end for us. Needless to say we broke up. When I told him to get out, he told me that I couldn't make it on my own and I should get out and leave him the kids. So I left. I never did go back to him either. I did take my son who was only 2 years old at the time. My girls wanted to stay with their Dad.

I spent that summer making up for "lost time". I partied a fair bit, drinking and smoking weed but somehow managed to make it work. I met up with a childhood boyfriend and we hooked up by total accident and guess where he was when he found me? He called me from jail. Yep if you ever meet someone in jail, be very careful. They are in there for a reason. I thought I had met Prince Charming. I received wonderful letters, money orders and lots of artwork for free. Or at least I thought it was free. He got out of prison and we moved in together. He was cheating on me from the start and eventually I found out what he meant when he told me that he "loved" me too. I had suffered my first real beating within the first month.



The sun is
always shining
somewhere.

So here I am "in love" and being physically abused. The pain only got worse. The abusive relationship intensified and became more violent. Within one year, he had moved me to Calgary with big promises. His real intentions were to isolate me. I was beaten again. I am happy to say my daughters stayed with their Dad throughout this time. I had my son with me but he was very small. My daughters and I stayed in touch through letters. I remember the letters made me so happy but at the same time so sad because I had never been apart from my daughters and I missed them both dearly. One day, February 27, 1996 to be exact, I got one of those letters and I was in my room crying. My (abusive) partner came in with a syringe full of Morphine and asked, "Do you want to try some?" I replied, "No, you know I don't do needles." Unfortunately I'm one of those people who thought well I could try it once and no one would ever know. So I asked, "Is that a clean needle?" He replied, "Brand spanking new, are you sure you want to try this?" I thought I was sure but really I only wanted to escape the loneliness I felt so he injected me.

I became very sick and could not move from the bed. About an hour later he came into the room with another needle and I remember thinking, ok, he is going to take away this feeling (I was so sick).

continued on next page

He said, "Give me your arm." I did, he took blood out of his arm and injected into my vein and waited for a few minutes (he knew exactly what he was doing) then took blood from my arm and put it in his arm and told me, "now remember if you are ever with anyone else, I'll always be with you."

He was true to his word. He would haunt me from that day on because he gave me Hepatitis C that day. I did not get it from carelessness or from sharing needles. The virus was literally given to me. Since then I have had many battles to overcome. I decided to turn a negative energy (me being infected with Hep C) into a positive one. I managed to leave the abusive relationship. I've arrested my addiction. Yes, I became addicted to morphine and cleaned up my life. I had another baby, who is very healthy and does not have Hepatitis C.

I have a wonderful job where I've been given the opportunity to help people. I have a home with my children. I just finished paying off a small used car. The best news is I am a candidate for the Hepatitis C treatment. I am one of the lucky ones. I guess I'm supposed to say that because on the day of my first injection I could have died twice. First, when my ex injected me with a lethal dose of morphine and then I could have died a second time when he injected me with his blood; fortunately his blood was compatible with mine.

All of my children are doing well. My oldest has graduated grade 12 and is continuing on with a trade. My other daughter is completing her grade 12 this year and my sons are in school and are very healthy. I am fortunate to I have wonderful children who love me unconditionally and support me through everything. I know that is where I get my strength. My children are well mannered and smart. I hope they can learn from my mistakes. I would gladly take any pain for them if I could.

My message to people is this: be careful. If you think you know someone, think again. (After all I knew this man my whole life and he still hurt me), protect yourself; don't ever put you life in someone else's hands. Ask yourself this: it's your life, how are you going to live it?

The virus that was given to me was not a curse but a gift. I ha helped me change my life and become the woman I am today. I am happy and have grown. The way I see it is that the Creator has blessed me with so many gifts that I am humbled to have been so fortunate.

In the end, I found someone who loves me – my children.





session 04: support

One of my cousins is has been diagnosed with Hepatitis C. She was sharing needles with other people. She didn't know that she had Hep C until she went for a test and that time she was pregnant. A couple of weeks later they phoned her and told her she had Hep C. My cousin told me all about this. I was shocked and grossed out but most of all I was worried about her health. I didn't ever think that she would get Hep C. I thought she was smart enough to know, but I guess I thought wrong.

I just wish shed didn't do drugs with needles involved because that how she got Hep C, by sharing needles with other people. My cousin needs help. I think she needs to go to treatment so she can realize what's she doing and how she's reacting. She can get treated. I heard of other people being treated for Hep C, but I think it all depends on which stage she is in. Luckily her baby doesn't have Hep C. Well that's it.

Session 05: life blood

Well, it all started when I was in Grade 2. My dad had to go to the hospital for a blood transfusion. The doctors had put dirty blood into his system and that's how he got Hepatitis C. He was in the hospital for a couple of weeks. We went to visit him there. I was scared. I didn't know what to think. I didn't understand; I was so little. He came home and he was still kinda sick but he got over it. I'm still mad at those doctors; they should have known what kind of blood they were putting into my dad's system. He got high a lot "so he wouldn't feel the pain." That's what he told me. Those doctors put all of us at risk because we didn't know what Hep C was. I'm still upset about that. My dad started going to sweats and to talk to the

Elders about his problem. They helped him a lot. He went to sweats every time he had a chance and those people cured him. To this day, they pray for him but he stopped

going to sweats. I went to the doctor to

get tested. It was a blood test and

they told me I didn't have it. I

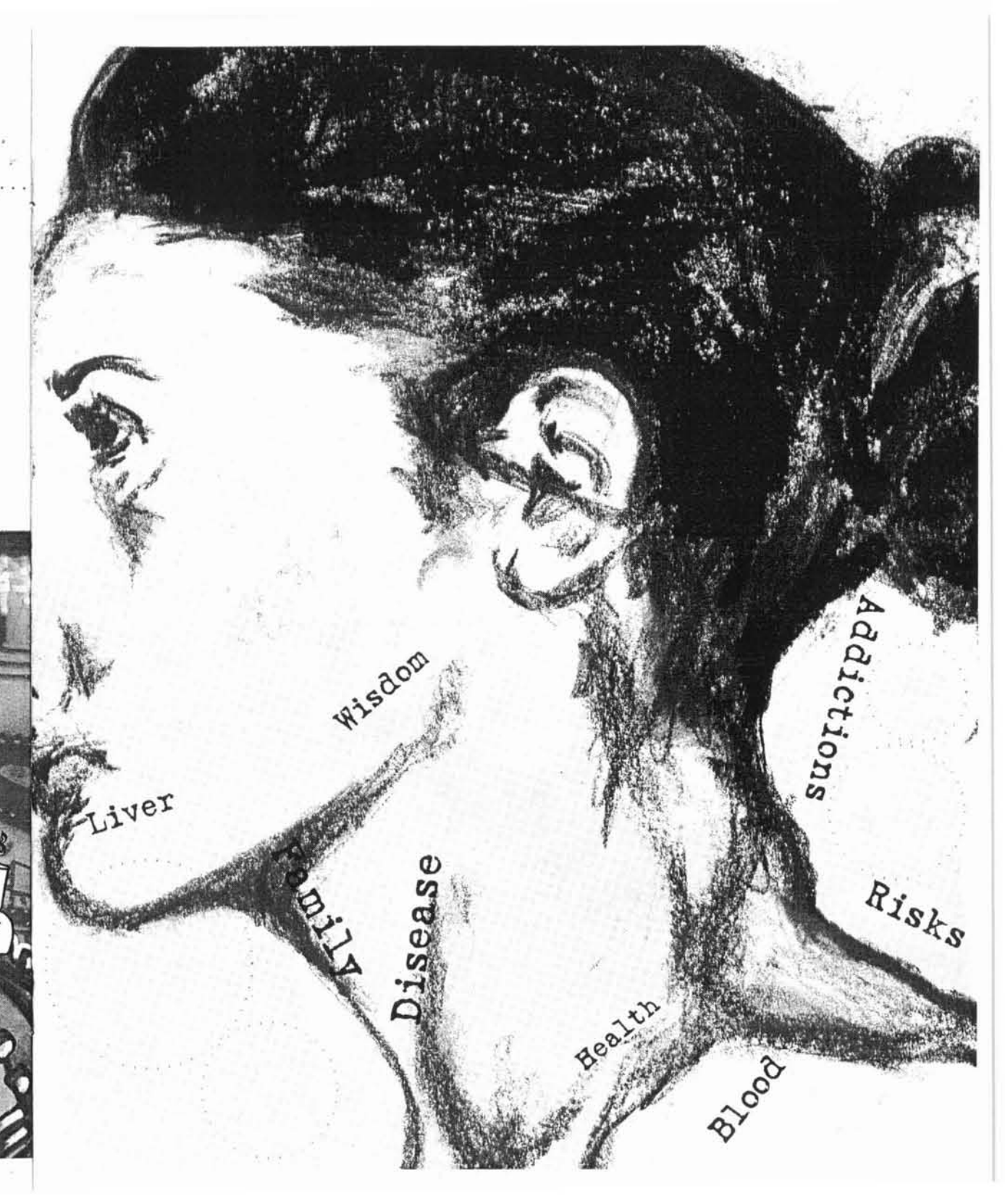
was happy to know that

I didn't have it. But

that's part of his

story.





Wisdom

Addictions

Risks

Liver

Family

Disease

Health

Blood

It takes courage
To breathe
inhale deep
exhale deep
breathe again...

beautiful

... represent and assist in
the prevention of further
condemnation of youth

This is my ode to you!
and you and you
and you.

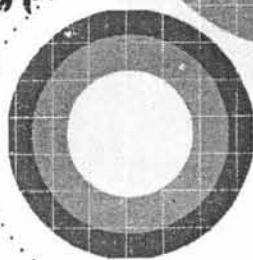
I believe the power you
have now is always yours
to keep. the only way to lose
it is by giving it away.

So try. Try your best
to keep your power because
it is beautiful and part
of who you are and you don't
have to give it to anyone.

power



PIERCING





SESSION 06: PIERCING

During the belly-button piercing fad of 2000/2001, I was trying desperately to fit in with the popular girls at my elementary school. Three girls, including myself, expressed the desire to give into said trend.

Wanting to prove myself to be as popular and as 'cool' as I acted, I found a way for us to acquire these ever-so-fashionable piercings without needing the consent of our parents. A friend of mine told me that her friend who ran his 'shop' of sorts out of his home did all her piercings.

The three of us gathered our \$50 (a fortune at that time in our lives) and under the guise of going to the mall, we met up with my friend and this infamous piercer friend of hers.

Still not think of the long and short term consequences, we hopped into the back seat of his car and drove across the city to his home. We headed down into his basement and there he pieced us one by one, sterilizing his supplies in between each one of us, and opening a new needle package every time. He gave us two bottles of incense oil to smell to help us relax...eucalyptus and sandalwood if I remember correctly. I was the last to go. We emptied our pockets and then he drove us to the mall to buy some cleaner, and then we went shopping.



To this day, I do not know how our parents found out but at the end of school the next day, there they were angrily taking us home. They made us take the rings out and get tested for any disease we could have picked up if the needles and supplies had not been sterile. Lucky for us, they were.

I'm glad that the man who did our piercings knew what he was doing and did it properly. Imagine that, even before I had had any sexual encounters, I could have ended up with HIV or AIDS by making a dumb decision over wanting to be popular.

17



session 07: hiv

On this date, December 20, eleven years ago, I visited the office of Dr. Mark Smith* to discuss the results of a battery of tests he ordered for me. I was mysteriously ill for several days/weeks prior and thought to myself, "Hmmm, what are the chances that I was infected with HIV?" Though I convinced myself that HIV simply was NOT a part of my being, I asked for the test and was shocked beyond description when Dr. Smith* showed me the red word "REACTIVE" on the lab print-out. And so for me, it began.

I'll never forget returning to my office in a state of shock. Dr. Smith* in a most professional and compassionate way advised me that the time had come for me to put my affairs in order. His best estimate indicated that I wouldn't likely see my 30th birthday and though he would do everything he could for me, there just wasn't a whole lot available at the time. My best friend Cathy* worked with me then and she was in the main reception waiting for my return from the Doctor's office that day. She followed me to my office and held me while I cried like a baby and looked squarely in the face of my own (imminent) mortality. That was then.

Now, eleven years later I know that I was infected sometime in 1989 or early 1990 by a man who knew he was positive and was hell-bent to take the world with him. He didn't tell me he was positive, and I spent nearly four years as his partner. Our relationship was long over before I received my own diagnosis, so I had no clue. His name was Mark*. Mark* died just days before I visited the Bigcity* Hospital this year to discuss options with the

clinical staff given the trip south that HIV seemed to be taking me on. My Aunt Claire* and I attended Mark's funeral so that I might find comfort in some much needed closure, and to prepare for the road ahead. As you all know, I found myself looking back at 15 years of relative good health, and looking forward to a future that would be radically different. It was time for me to fight back and to regain control. Once again, I reminded myself, "I don't live with HIV. HIV lives with me. It's in my body so it's on my terms!"

For all these years, there were two days during which I would pause and reflect: World AIDS Day and today, December 20. This year was so different and today marks an incredible exception. Today, I am on a triple combination drug regimen that is meant to suppress the aggressive nature of my own infection: AND IT IS WORKING!!! After just four weeks of treatment, I am celebrating incredible success and (though slowly) returning to good health, both physically and mentally. Recent blood work indicated that my viral load has gone from some 10,000 copies/ml to less than 300! The short-term side effects are minimal with only mild discomfort and the drug schedule by which I must live is far less invasive than I anticipated. I still struggle to find and maintain energy but I'm sleeping less and am beginning to rediscover the vitality that defines me. Christmas came early for me this year and I am grateful!

Note: * asterisks behind names are there to indicate name changes. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of our authors, third parties and locations.



Session 08: friends

Where to start? Ya know one of my closest, dearest friends asked me if I wanted to write or explain about how I lived my life in the last 35 years and I must say, I could probably write three books on my fucked up life. But I'll make it as short as possible.

Ok, this is where I can remember where it began. I was 13 years old; my friends were skipping out of school to hang out at the arcade. Me, I was skipping out to go bang dope. Don't really remember my first hit. Fuck, I can't even remember my last. Anyway, I was hanging out on this farm with people older than my parents. All I really remember about that is 20 units of speed would last me three days. And then I was 87 pounds, lost all my friends from high school, living out of a car at the age of 20. I finally threw in the towel for the first time then broke down told my mom I was a needle junkie and I had to leave for a while to get cleaned up so I went out to stay with my brother in Largecity*. Oh, I was in Largeprovince*. Anyway, I stayed at my bro's for a month then shackled up with a girlfriend of theirs. Well, she introduced me to the wonderful world of crack cocaine. Oh yeah, her and I spent our rent on dope so we had to find other ways of making money. So she decided to go try and sell our asses on the street. She was like almost 300 pounds and I was about 110 pounds at that time. She was to hookup 6 for me. Well, she was supposed to. This real cute Italian with a hot car picked me up. I was thinking this ain't too bad until he told me he was a player, you know a pimp and I was to be one of his girls now. He took me to his house and kicked the shit out of me and broke my arm, cheekbone, gave me two black eyes and threw me out on the street and he said for me to be back down on that corner in two weeks, long enough to heal my bruises. Well, I woke up in the hospital that night.

When I finally got home, I packed up my shit and moved back to Largeprovince*. I met a guy there. Settled down, had a baby boy, quit everything. No drugs, no drinking, nothing for a few years until my baby's father and I broke up. I was living with my son and I met this other guy. He got me back into drugs and ended up stealing my rent money. So, my son and I moved into my mom and dad's. I was still dabbling once in a while, never ever around my son. I was a 24-hour mom. I just love my son.

Note: * asterisks behind names are there to indicate name changes. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of our authors and third parties and locations.

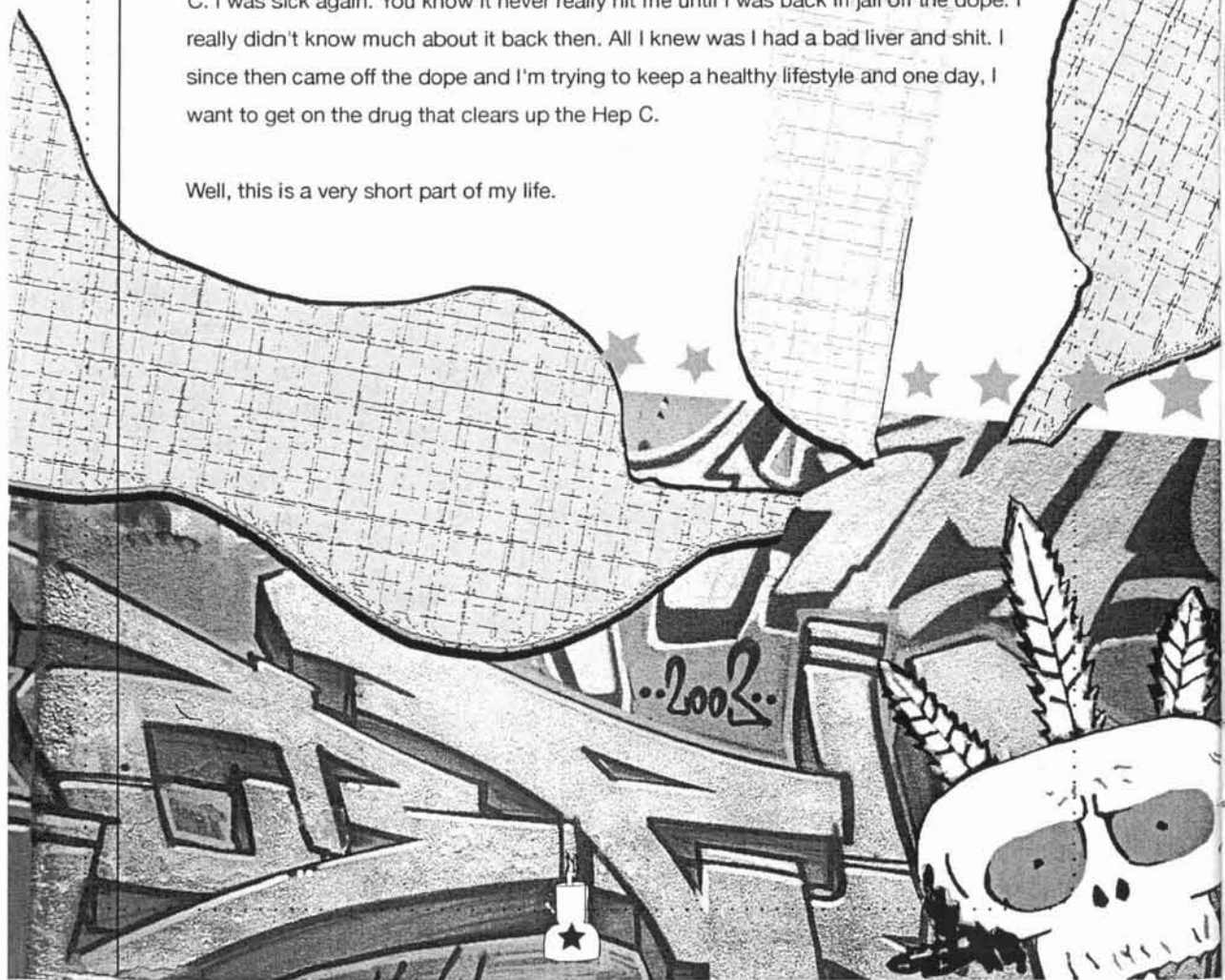




Anyway, one of the guys that I first met when I started banging dope lived a block down from my parents. He asked me to do him a favor. He was going to jail and he wanted me to take over the house and his clientele till he got out. Yeah, this is where it all went real bad. I was dealing dope a block away from my parents and the guy that was bringing me the dope, we hated each other. I knew he was heat. I told him time after time just to call me when he was coming to town to do a drop. I'd meet him somewhere but, oh no, he had to come to the house and bring all his heroin. Low and behold, I got busted. The pigs were following him so I took beef, 17 pouches, 32 hundred dollars and a trip to Vancouver. I pled guilty to the charges in Largeprovince* and put off the sentencing. I then took off to Largecity* and waived all my charges out there. Well, once I got out of jail I was back at again. You see when I took off to Largecity*, I signed over custody of my son to his dad and once I did that it was like I signed over my life. I just lost it. I knew Largecity* would only do a third of that time that they would give me in Largeprovince* and they did. I got a year and half. Anyway I fucking lost it without my son. He was my stability, my life, my everything and I lost him, well, not lost him but I sure didn't have him with me. So when I was released the first time out of jail I was a heroin addict.

I remember very few things in this part of my life. I OD'ed over 17 times, a few brain cells burnt out. I do remember I was swimming at a lake and no one knew this but a septic tank broke under water and 198 people contracted Hepatitis A. Yeah, I almost died. I was put in the hospital for 3 weeks and on my way, I continued on a self-destructive path. I was doing bank fraud to support my habit and I was in and out of jail. I never shared a needle or had unprotected sex but I shared a spoon one time and I contracted Hepatitis C. I was sick again. You know it never really hit me until I was back in jail off the dope. I really didn't know much about it back then. All I knew was I had a bad liver and shit. I since then came off the dope and I'm trying to keep a healthy lifestyle and one day, I want to get on the drug that clears up the Hep C.

Well, this is a very short part of my life.





YOUTH REPRESENTATION ACTION

At a conference hosted by Planned Parenthood Regina, youth were given the task of outlining their concerns and solutions for those concerns related to Hepatitis C and at-risk behaviours. Youth identified 4 topics which they believe contribute to at-risk behaviors and the transmission of HEP C:

:: **Education** ::

:: **Addiction** ::

:: **Peer to Peer Mentoring** ::

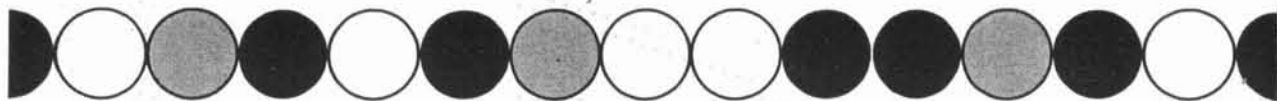
:: **Safe Affordable Housing** ::

Below are highlights of their recommendations:

- :: Educate educators to allow youth perspectives to influence curriculums,
- :: Address addiction with a much quicker response time than is currently available in all communities represented, and have youth specific treatment centers
- :: Actively invite, engage & retain youth in processes & programs that deal directly with youth (board, committees, new programs),
- :: Consider innovative ways to connect and compensate youth at levels of policy development and as participating (vs. tokenism) active contributors on committees, boards & 'working groups'.
- :: Support peer to peer education and harm reduction programs
- :: create/provide appropriate, safe, affordable housing (which also includes healthy family members and non-traditional families in the house),

The above recommendations are a result of a roundtable discussion, held by youth from Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, and Nunavut, at a PEER to PEER Gathering in March 2005.



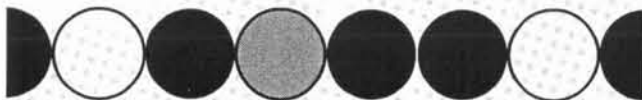


drama chronicles

Theatre/drama and education together are an empowering combination. It is a simple tool to deliver messages surrounding; Hep C awareness, sexual health, and harm reduction education.

The activities described in this section encourage learning through role playing, improvisation and symbolism. The personal growth and skills gained by a drama education workshop include the following: the negotiation of negative social or peer pressure experiences, the discovery of self-empowerment through the "play" situations and as a method to learn and communicate powerful and emotional messages through symbolism. The overall skills and self-confidence gained from a drama experience provides tools for life and positive choices.

It is a good idea to start the session with a circle. A question is an excellent way to start a circle off. For example; tell us something unique about yourself or share with us a highlight of your day, or a low of your day. It is also good to end the session with a circle to allow a moment for debriefing, reflecting and to share highs and lows of the workshop.



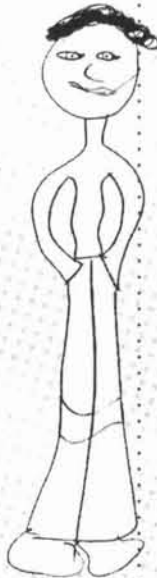
WHERE'S WOODY

This is a great activity to use to develop the group dynamic. It resembles the childhood games 'What Time is it Mister Wolf' and 'Red Light Green Light'.

Play space required: a large cleared out area

Props required: one wooden penis or any other object

Where's
Woody?



The leader of workshop is at one end of play space with their back turned to group. The group assembles in a line shoulder to shoulder with hands behind their backs. The group collectively moves in line passing Woody along behind their backs. The leader at any given time will turn around. The group must freeze and not give any clue as to where Woody is. The leader tries to guess the location of Woody, staring people down and intimidating the group adds an extra flare to the game! If Woody is located, the whole group begins again. If the game makes it to the leader without Woody's location being detected, the leader will get poked in the back with woody.

To add extra challenges pass out condoms to various people in the line to be placed on Woody as he is getting passed along.

This game can be varied so all participants are in competition with each other. First person to poke the leader with Woody wins! Same rules apply the leader can turn around at any given time to catch people moving. If they are caught they get sent back to beginning or are eliminated from game.

Allow the group get creative encouraging other variations that may evolve organically out of the play process.



HOUSE PARTY the adapted version

This is a very common improv game. However, this is an adapted version to test knowledge of STI's, Hepatitis C, HIV, transmission and their symptoms. This improvisational activity would best fit into a workshop after the group has received some education about the above topics. This activity is to encourage the use of terminology and growing comfortable with the knowledge received by educator.

Play Space required: an open area, classroom with desks cleared

Players needed: this will depend on the number of infections/diseases you choose to use

One player is chosen to be the host of a party. It is going to be their job to guess the infection or disease each of the guests have based on the clues they are given by the guests.

Each guest is assigned a disease or infection. Give the players a little time to review symptoms. One at a time each guest knocks on the door of party. They share a short exchange with the host and are allowed in. Once the "house" has filled up the host goes around mingling with the guests as the guests drop clues about how their infection, disease or virus, the host guesses the infection, virus or disease of each guest. If the host guesses correctly, the guest is excused from party.

26

The game can be enhanced by assigning everyone character traits to play with as well, for example; nervous, aggressive, intimidated, or flirtatious.

To intensify the game, give the party guests a stage of the psychological acceptance of disease, virus or infection, for example; in denial, acceptance or grieving their new reality.

The house party is a suggested structure but it could be any setting, for example a doctors office and the host is a nurse. The objective is to help participants grow comfortable with new terminology and educate.

TABLEAU

A very effective way to communicate feeling and emotion around an issue is through testimonials. A great story will stay with us as a reminder when we are presented with life choices. By using the technique common to drama of tableau, a story can come to life through a simple process that can be rich with emotion and symbolism.

Tableau is a story told through freeze frames. The key to a solid story is a beginning, middle and end. The structure for the tableau derives from this. This process is very flexible and the techniques are only suggested ones. The first choice to be made is what story to use? The decision could be made prior to the workshop or as a group exercise during the workshop. Some testimonials from this book are a possible choice, or perhaps the tableau is intended to be symbolic. For example; the emotions one goes through when going for an antibody test.

Split the participants into small groups of five to six individuals. Whatever story was chosen have the group break it up into the three distinct moments, beginning, middle, and end. Then have the group choose for each moment the key message, image, or emotion they want to communicate. Have the group work out how they can communicate that choice in a freeze frame. The key to making this exercise very interesting is how creatively they move in and out of the freeze frames. For example; moving in slow motion or using over exaggerated movements to change from one frame to another. A narrator could also be used. Have the group perform their creations for one another. Debrief about the experience and the process, encourage a discussion about people's skills gained through the creative journey.



keep'n it real



Stories, since time began, have been a means for sharing wisdom, healing and encouraging hope. For many decades prior to 1989, the virus, then called non A and non B Hepatitis, plagued individuals. In 1989, Hepatitis C was founded and named and since has affected many lives. There are many people committed to helping prevent the spread of the virus and assisting people infected with Hep C to optimize living through support and education. Yet there is still much work to be done. Canada has 5000 new cases of Hep C a year. It is estimated that 300,000 people in Canada are currently aware of being infected with Hep C and each year this virus kills around 1000 people. That's a 1000 brothers, sisters, daughters, grandmas, grandpas, sons, mothers and fathers to many.

This booklet speaks to journeys of courage, hope, resilience, illness, love, kinship and vulnerability, as it relates to the Hep C virus and its effects. It is real people sharing very real things. Everybody has a mistake they have learned from and a story to teach another of their lesson. This booklet was put together with the openness of many hearts. The Hepatitis C virus affects our communities, our neighbours, co-workers, friends, and family. Please take the time to learn and teach others how they can protect themselves and others from spreading or contracting this virus.

This booklet was created with the support, encouragement and efforts of Planned Parenthood Regina's Y.E.A.H (Youth Educating About Health) group, Public Health Agency of Canada and many committed individuals. Enjoy the stories, learn from them and appreciate that everyone who has shared their experience is working toward solutions and health.



HARM REDUCTION THEATRE

This style of theatre has folk roots. It has been used around the globe to aid individuals in empowering themselves, learning negotiation skills through doing. A common title for this form is "Theatre of the Oppressed" which was made popular by its guru Augusto Boal. The theatre form is full of theory and philosophy. For the purpose of simplicity, this form of theatre works great for education in the community with non-performers, and/or workshop participants.

Play space required: An open space or classroom with desks pushed aside.

The workshop participants need to be broken down into small groups. Five to six people to a group usually works well. Have the group choose a topic, or have a predetermined topic. It is the group's objective to create a scene with a strong beginning, middle and end about the topic. The intention of the scene is to explore cause and effect. The scenes are to be created out of the worst case scenario about the topic. For example; a needle dropped in the park, and picked up by an injection drug user to be used again.

Each group takes turns performing the scenes. The scene is played through once, then begun a second time. It is now the audiences turn to take over. To change the fate of the scene to something positive, audience members can step up and step into the action by replacing one of the players at a time. This is done by clapping or using a word (chosen in advance) to freeze the scene. The spectator who steps up will replace an actor and take control of the scene. It is the audience's job to initiate the change of events from the worst case scenario into an empowering scene focused on harm reduction. Allow the scene to play out, encouraging more spectators to step up and step into the scene.

When all the scenes have been played out, it is an excellent idea to debrief about the emotions that arose through the experience and the skills the participants discovered within themselves.

a quick read on hepatitis c

Your liver – What does it do?

- :: Your liver is the largest organ in your body and is very, very important.
- :: Your liver acts like a filter. It helps your body get rid of harmful things such as drugs and alcohol.
- :: Your liver stores vitamins, minerals, fats, sugar and blood, so when your body needs any of these things, your liver lets out what is needed to keep your body healthy.
- :: If your liver is damaged, and you start taking good care of yourself, your liver will start repairing itself.

What is Hepatitis?

- :: When a person's liver is hurt or swollen, it is called hepatitis (hepat = liver, it is = inflamed). This means your liver must work a lot harder to do what it needs to do.
- :: Many things can cause hepatitis including alcohol, some drugs, bacteria and viruses (germs).
- :: Hepatitis can cause inflammation and scarring of the liver that may lead to cirrhosis (healthy liver cells are replaced by scar tissue).

What is Hep. C?

- :: You will see this disease called Hepatitis C, Hep. C or HCV. It's all the same thing.
- :: It lives in the blood and is spread by blood-to-blood contact.
- :: There is no vaccine (medicine) that will protect you from getting Hep. C.
- :: 15% to 20% of the people who have Hep. C will just get rid of it. They have not had any treatment (medicines). They completely recover.
- :: Chronic Hep. C is when a person has had Hep. C for longer than 6 months.
- :: You can have Hep. C for many years and not know it because you do not feel sick. People do not look different when they have Hep. C.

Hep. C is not spread by:

- :: Everyday casual contact, including living in the same house with someone who has Hep. C.
- :: Hugging or holding someone who has Hep. C or shaking hands or sharing eating utensils or drinking glasses.
- :: Sneezing/coughing.
- :: Sitting on a toilet seat.

How do I know if I have Hep. C?

- :: The only way you will know if you have Hep. C is through a blood test called a Hep. C or HCV antibody test.
- :: Hep. C can take as long as 3 months before it shows up in a blood test. It is important to wait 3 months from the day that you think you may have been infected, before you go to get tested or your test results may not be true.
- :: Any doctor can test you for Hep. C. You can also go to a STD Clinic.

How do you get Hep. C?

Blood is the infection source, so anything you use that could have someone's blood on it puts you at risk. Follow this list to protect yourself or others.

- :: Injection drug use is a common way of getting Hep C. Use a new needle every time you shoot up.
- :: Don't share, lend or borrow spoons (cookers), water or filters.
- :: Don't share straws used to snort drugs like cocaine or pipes to smoke drugs.
- :: Warning: Bleach will not kill Hep. C unless the bleach stays in the needle for at least 10 minutes. If you can't get to a needle exchange or you live in a community where there isn't one, wash and soak all of your works in bleach for over 10 minutes. NEVER share any works.
- :: Don't share needles for body piercing or tattooing with anyone. Don't share tattooing ink or dip directly into ink.
- :: Don't share personal items such as nail clippers, razors, toothbrushes or anything else that could have a bit of blood on it.
- :: Sex is low risk for Hep. C but use a condom every time to reduce your risk of other sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) or HIV.
- :: Put a Band-Aid on any cuts or sores until they are healed.
- :: Blood on any surfaces or clothes, sheets, and towels with blood on them should be washed with bleach and cold water first, then wash them again in hot water and soap.
- :: Put anything with blood on it like tissues, paper towels, tampons, pads, razors in a plastic bag before you put them in the garbage.
- :: There is a 5% to 10% chance of a Hep. C mother infecting her baby at birth.
- :: Breast-feeding does not appear to spread Hep. C. If nipples become cracked and bleed, it is wise to stop breast-feeding until they are healed.

What are the symptoms/signs of Hep. C?

- :: The most common symptom is feeling like you have no energy. You feel very tired all the time, even after you have had a good night's sleep.
- :: Pain on your right side, just below your ribs.
- :: Feeling tired (fatigue). Trouble sleeping.
- :: Feeling sick to your stomach and vomiting.
- :: Loss of appetite and losing weight.
- :: Your joints and muscles ache. Your skin is itchy.
- :: Can't remember things, feeling confused and can't seem to stay focused on what you are doing. This is often called "Brain Fog".
- :: Yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes (jaundice). Dark colored urine (pee).
- :: Some people may have no symptoms, some may have symptoms and some people may have long-term health problems.

Living with Hep. C

Having Hep. C does not mean your life is over. You can live a very long time without ever getting sick. It is important to take care of yourself:

- :: Try not to use any alcohol or street drugs. They are very hard on your liver.
- :: If you want to have a baby or think you might be pregnant, talk to a doctor or nurse.
- :: If you have never had Hep. A or B, get shots (vaccine) to protect yourself from getting them.
- :: There are medicines used to treat Hep. C.
- :: Some over the counter drugs, Tylenol included, can hurt your liver. Ask your doctor or the pharmacist if it is okay to take any drug before you buy it.
- :: Taking Vitamin E is very good for your liver. It helps to fix the scarring on your liver.
- :: Drink lots and lots of water every day. Water helps your body to get rid of harmful things like drugs and alcohol.

websites: check it out!

32

Anemia Institute

www.anemiainstitute.org/patient/anemia_and_hepatitis_c

Canadian Liver Foundation

www.liver.ca/english/liverdisease/hepatitis_c.html

Health Canada

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/diseases/hepatitis.html#c

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh/diseases/hepc.html

Public Health Agency of Canada

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hepc/hepatitis_c/index.html

Canadian Hemophilia Society

www.hemophilia.ca/en/5.0.php

Hepatitis C Society of Canada

www.hepatitiscsociety.com/english/HepCHome.html

Canadian AIDS Society

www.cdnaids.ca

Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver

www.hepatology.ca/cm

The Canadian Harm Reduction Network

www.canadianharmreduction.com

National Center for Infectious Disease

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/index.html

Hepatitis Foundation International

www.hepfi.org

Hepatitis Magazine

www.hepatitismag.com

HepNet

www.hepnet.com/liver/index.html

HIV and Hepatitis.com

www.hivandhepatitis.com

Medline Plus

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hepatitisc.html



*There are 13 Smokin'
Stacks in this booklet!
(Including this one!)*

