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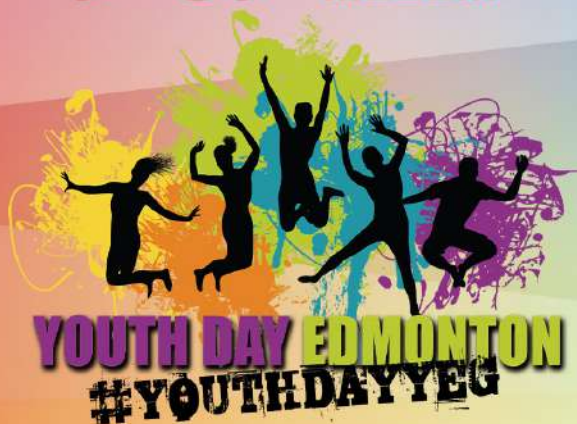
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# UKRAINIAN VILLAGE DAY CAMP CELEBRATES 35TH YEAR

The Friends of the Ukrainian Village Society (FoUVS) is proud to present our Historical Children's Program (HCP) Day Camp for the 35th summer! Our camp allows children to become "little villagers" as they experience the life of Ukrainians who settled in east central Alberta in the early 1900s. Our HCP invites children ages 6-12 to join us from Monday-Friday for select weeks in July and August at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (UCHV).

Children in our camp will get the chance to discover the UCHV in an immersive, fun, and historical setting. Playing games along the way, children get to experience cultural traditions, explore the outdoors, create crafts, participate in cooking, interact with farm animals, and more.

During 5 separate weeklong instalments of our cultural enrichment camp, campers will participate in a number of historically relevant educational activities aimed at familiarizing them with key aspects of early Ukrainian settler ways of life in east central Alberta. Tours in the historical village form a central component of the camp, as participants gain the opportunity to explore the Village, interact with in-character historical interpreters, and engage in various demonstrations through each of the buildings where an interpreter is present. The two-room school, the police station, and the blacksmith shop rank among the children's most requested places to visit. Hands-on projects comprise the rest of the camp's main activities. Participants forage for native plants in the forest behind the lumber mill and fashion them into traditional Ukrainian wreaths and grass ropes; mix, roll, and construct traditional pyrohy (perogies); complete a simplified version of pysanka egg decorating; and assemble the wooden structure for a model burdei (log & sod home) typical of those first built by the settlers upon arriving in Canada. Campers also have the option to dress in period costuming for a portion of the week—something many of the children greatly enjoy.

Participants are provided daily transportation to and from the UCHV for the course of each five-day camp week. This year, we are running our camp on the dates and pickup locations listed below. While transportation via school bus is included, it is optional. Children from any location are welcome to attend any week of our camp with their own transportation arrangements. Please see our bussing information for more details.

Week 1: July 10th–14th (Bussing from North Edmonton & Sherwood Park)

Week 2: July 17th–21st (Bussing from South Edmonton & Sherwood Park)

Week 3: July 24th–28th (Bussing from North Edmonton & Sherwood Park)

Week 4: July 31st–August 4th (Bussing from Fort Saskatchewan & Lamont)

Week 5: August 14th–18th (Bussing from Vegreville & Lamont)

Some additional information about our camp:

Our camp is English speaking but children may learn Ukrainian vocabu-

lary.

Our camp runs from 9am–3pm, from Monday–Friday and if your child takes our bus, pick-up and drop off times will be before 9am and after 3pm.

Historical costumes are included in our camp, but completely optional, and add a fun aspect when helping the children gain a grasp on what it was like to live in the early 1900s in east central Alberta.

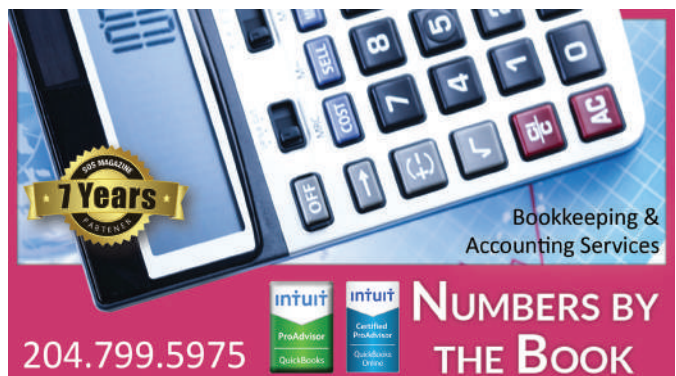
Lunch is not provided; however, we do provide snacks and accommodate for any and all food allergies.

A unique aspect of our camp in 2022 was the inclusion of Ukrainian newcomers. Facilitated by native Ukrainian speakers as guides to help bridge the language barrier, Ukrainian campers participated right alongside Canadian youth as they worked to forge intercultural connections while also delving into the history of how their fellow Ukrainians originally settled the prairies. In 2023, we are pleased to offer one week of camp in the Ukrainian language for children who have recently arrived in Canada from Ukraine or who are fluent in Ukrainian. Please contact our office if this opportunity interests you, if you wish to sponsor a camper from Ukraine, or sponsor a child from a low-income environment.

The Friends of the Ukrainian Village Society is a not-for-profit charitable organization formed in 1984. The Friends plan and execute educational and cultural programming which advances an appreciation of Ukrainian Canadian heritage of east central Alberta, operate services at the UCHV and raise funds to ensure that the museum can complete its mandate. Through this camp, and other programming that includes Ukrainian-themed food concession, a museum store, and our annual music festival (July 16th, 2023), we are able to share the wonders of this amazing open-air museum. Anyone can become a member of our organization and receive discounts on our products and services. As a registered charity, we are able to accept monetary donations and issue tax receipts.

We hope to see you at the Ukrainian Village this summer, whether at our summer day camp or a regular visit on a beautiful day!

More information about our HCP day camp is available at [www.fouvs.ca/summer-camps](http://www.fouvs.ca/summer-camps)



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# SEXUAL TRAUMA AND ADDICTION

Experiencing any form of sexualized violence, including sexual abuse and sexual assault (whether violent or not) can be traumatic and cause very uncomfortable reactions and responses. Sexual trauma can have a very powerful impact on a person's brain, body, emotions, behavior and attitude. Normal and common responses a person may experience after a sexual traumatic event include:

Problems with thinking and concentration such as confusion, not being able to make a decision, unwanted memories and memory loss.

Emotional responses such as shock, fear, nervousness and anxiety ("feeling like something bad is going to happen"), feeling overwhelmed or lost, feeling numb or not sure how you feel, feeling "dirty", intense sadness, feelings of shame, self-blame and guilt (like you have done something wrong), fear of harm to self or others, feeling alone and like no one can relate to what you are going through, re-experiencing the event over and over, experience thoughts of suicide, .

Physical responses such as nausea or feeling "sick to your stomach", feeling lightheaded or dizzy, increased heart rate or racing heart, shakiness, jumpy or easily startled, headaches, feeling tired, and grinding teeth.

Behavioral responses such as irritability ("moody"), wanting to be alone and withdrawing from friends and family, sleeping more or sleeping less, eating more or eating less, increased alcohol and/or drug use, not wanting to be touched in any way, and changes in sexual behavior.

So what is the connection between sexual trauma and addiction – let's take a look.

From the list above you can see that sexual trauma can have a powerful impact on a person and how they think, feel and act. Many of the normal responses to sexual trauma can be very uncomfortable and make a person feel terrible or "abnormal". It is "normal" to feel "abnormal" after a traumatic event. In order to feel "normal" or "better" a person may seek out ways to reduce the discomfort they are experiencing. Some people will try to self-medicate with substances such as alcohol, and/or prescription and "street" drugs. Getting a "buzz" can provide a sense of relief or escape from the uncomfortable feelings and help a person feel "normal" or better. Who wouldn't want relief from intense negative feelings like fear, shame, guilt, and feeling "dirty". Unfortunately the relief a person experiences is temporary and does not last long, unless you keep doing it. This is how a person can develop a dependency or addiction to alcohol and/or drugs.

Simply put, when a person is feeling "bad" they want to feel better and they seem to feel better or to cope when they use alcohol or drugs. The downside of self-medicating with alcohol or drugs to cope with uncomfortable feelings is a person can develop an emotional and physical dependency where they "need" it more and more. A person who uses alcohol and/or drugs to cope can find themselves in a cycle where they use alcohol or drugs to feel better, and then when the effects wear off they feel worse and then they have to use again to cope with feeling worse. This can become a very dangerous downward spiral where a person develops a dependency and need to have alcohol and/or drugs regularly to feel "normal". Now a person is not only dealing with the impact of trauma but also the effects of dependency and addiction. There is support, resources and help available to anyone who has experienced the trauma of sexualized violence. "Trauma creates change you don't choose. Healing is about creating change you do choose" (Michelle Rosenthal). "Life is very interesting... in the end, some of your greatest pains become your greatest strengths." (Drew Barrymore)

If you have experienced sexualized violence, sexual abuse or sexual assault please know it was not your fault, you are not alone and there are non-judgemental people out there who sincerely want to help and support you. You do not have to carry this alone. Talk with someone you trust and feel safe with about what you are going through and dealing with. For more information on sexualized violence please visit our website at [colchestersac.ca](http://colchestersac.ca).

**Courage, strength & hope.**

**Margaret Mauger**

**Executive Director and Counselling Therapist**

**Colchester Sexual Assault Centre**





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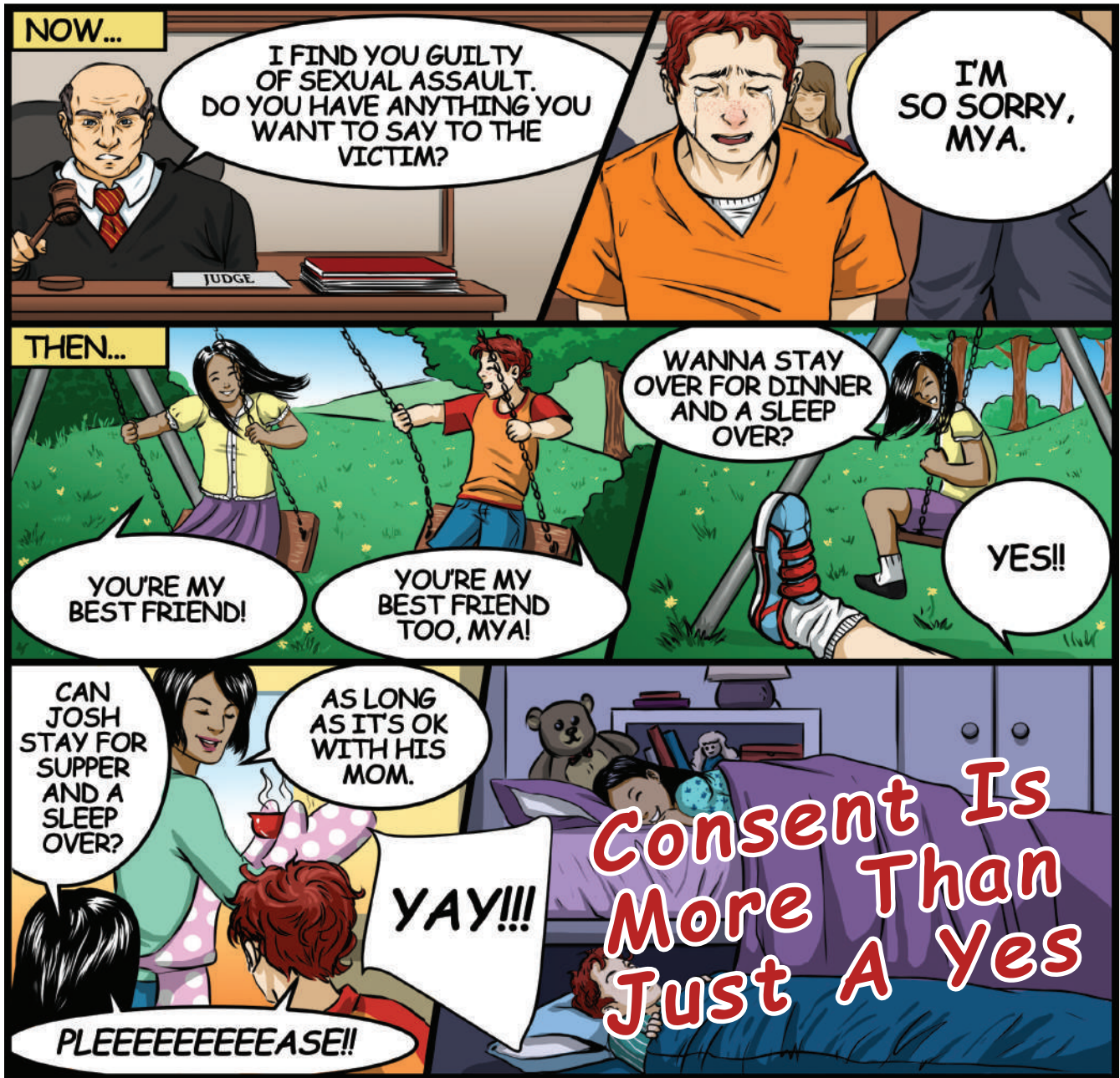
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 [cpfn.ca/departments/health-services](http://cpfn.ca/departments/health-services)

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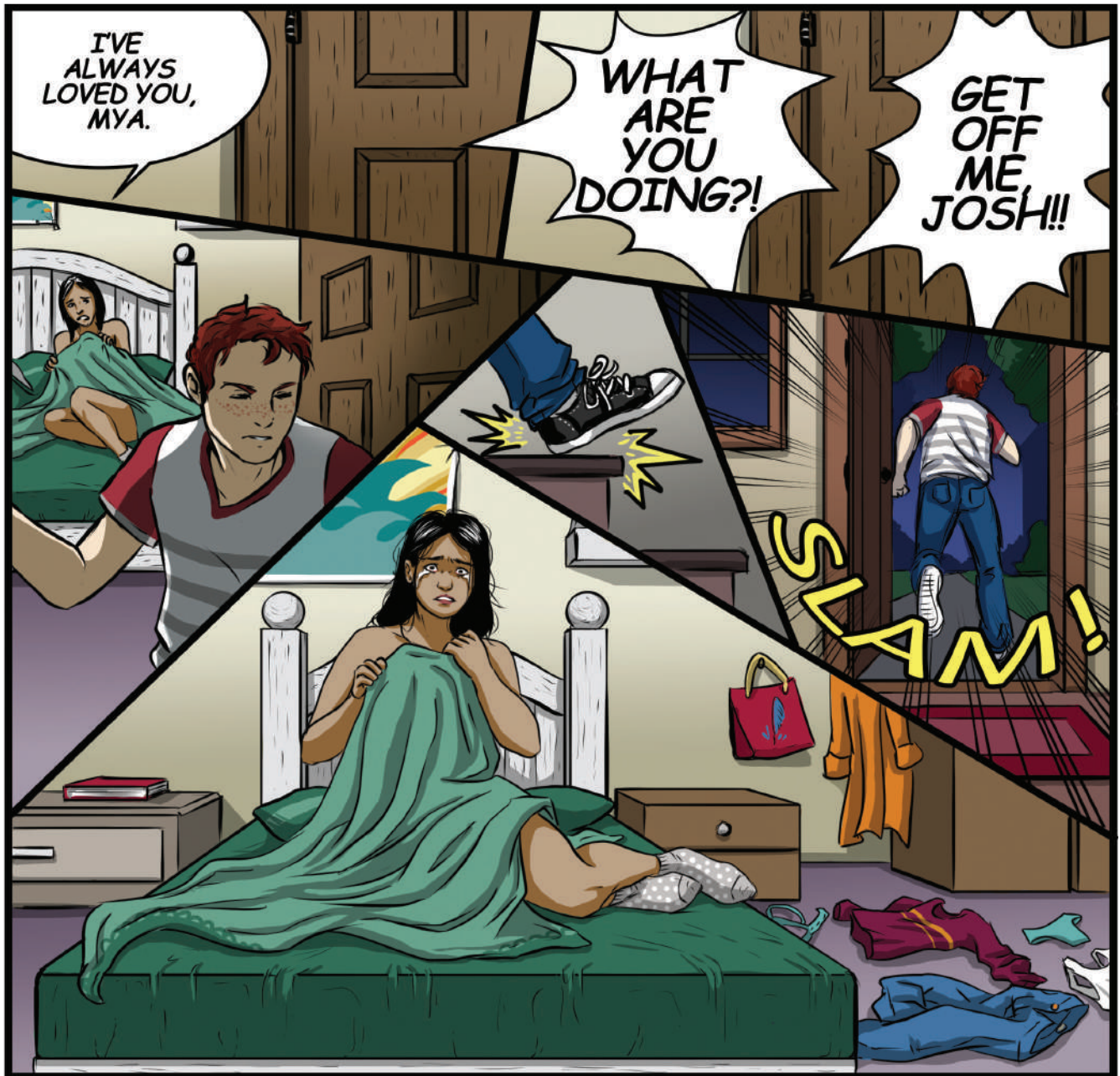
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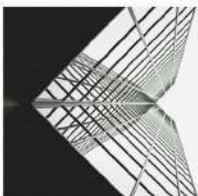
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# SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CONSENT

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You've heard about the #MeToo movement. You know that it's about sexual assault and consent, but what does consent actually mean? What does it mean to give consent? When has the sexual assault 'line' been crossed?

**Simply put, consent is giving permission to someone else to engage in sexual contact or penetration (intercourse) with you.** Consent is a boundary we set for ourselves between what we want and do not want, or what we're comfortable with and not comfortable with.

## Giving Consent

The phrase "no means no" is commonly heard when people talk about consent. This is a misconception. People think that if you do not verbally say no then you have given consent. So by this definition, if you do not say anything at all you are consenting. This is not the case! Of course, no means no, but so can staying silent.

So let's break this down to what it means for you and your partner. Ensure that you follow your partner's verbal and nonverbal cues. For example asking, "Is this okay?" or "I want to try..." This gives your partner the opportunity to tell you what they want or don't want. As for nonverbal cues, be aware of negative facial expressions or body language like pulling or pushing away, tensing up, or facing/leaning away. If your partner is showing any of these signals, you may want to check in with them and ask if what you're doing is okay.

Furthermore, if you have sex with one person one time, it doesn't mean that you have to do it again. You can always change your mind and stop at any time; there is never a "point of no return." If you are in the middle of any kind of sexual interaction and you feel uncomfortable with how things are going, you have the right to ask the other person to stop and have your wishes respected.

## When is it assault?

Now, if you do say no to something, and your partner keeps going, they are acting against your will and therefore you are being assaulted. Also, if you are doing something because you feel pressured to, you are not consenting and this would also be assault. For example, if a person in a position of authority such as a doctor, teacher, religious figure, or employer pressures you for any kind of sexual act, you may not be consenting. The key here is that if you are feeling pressure, feeling hesitant, or being abused, you are being assaulted.

## Victim Blaming

It's become commonplace in society today to use victim blaming to excuse sexual assault. Common phrases that victims hear are: "Well, why were you out so late?" "Why were you drinking/using?" "Why were you out with that person?" "What were you wearing?" "You shouldn't have been walking alone." All of these questions imply that the victim is to blame or that they were "asking for it." Even if you are asking these questions from the point of view of caring for the victim, at their core, these statements imply that the victim has somehow done something wrong and has caused what happened. Some things you could say to a victim of sexual assault to support them would be, "How can I help you?" "I'm sorry that happened to you," or "What that person did was not right."

In all, if you are not sure that you want to do something with another person, you are allowed to say no at any point. Remember that if you are doing something with someone and you feel the least bit uncomfortable, say something, don't just let things continue. You have the power.

If you've experienced sexual assault, you're not alone. To speak with someone who is trained to help, contact your local rape crisis centre or the nearest emergency department.

**Amber deRaaf, MACP, CCC**

**Chelsea Trist, BA**



## Tłıchō Community Services Agency



The Purpose of the TCSA: The purpose of the Tłıchō Community Services Agency (TCSA) is to improve the health, wellness and education of the people in Tłıchō communities by providing a range of easily accessible, integrated programs and services. The Agency manages the delivery of education, health, wellness and social programs and services for the NWT communities of Behchokq (Rae-Edzo), Gametı (Rae Lakes), Wekweeti (Snare Lake) and Whatı (Lac La Martre).

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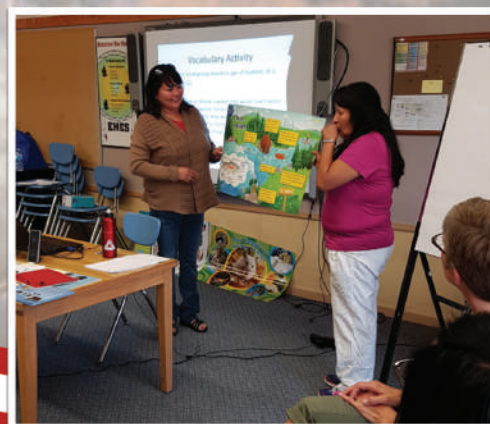
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# BECOMING A LATERAL KINDNESS WARRIOR (OKIHTCITAW): KENT BROWN'S STORY

BY KENT BROWN, VICE PRESIDENT OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT, LEGACY BOWES

A Lateral Kindness Warrior is a person who fights for kindness. It is a person who chooses to be kind even when people and the world can be unkind, someone who always keeps the sacred teaching of Love in their forethought, they always care about others, and are ferociously compassionate. A Lateral Kindness Warrior never tolerates lateral violence, intimidation or disrespect, and always stands up for those who don't have a voice.

I don't know about you, but that sounds like somebody I'd definitely want in my corner. Better yet, that sounds like someone I want to be. While the idea is straightforward, earning the honour of "Lateral Kindness Warrior" is not a simple journey; it involves reflection and introspection, as well as dedication to being kind. Before becoming a Lateral Kindness Warrior, we must first understand what lateral violence is and learn how to deal with it.

Many of our people know of or have experienced lateral violence in our workplaces, within our families, and in our communities. If you are not familiar with the concept of lateral violence, let me explain: all of the trauma Indigenous Peoples have experienced has resulted in ongoing generational trauma, pent-up anger, resentment (and many other emotions). In turn, we take it out on each other.

This trauma comes as a direct result of colonialism, residential and day schools, cultural genocide, the child welfare system, and Canada's Justice System, as well as injustices against Missing and Murdered Women and Girls (MMIWG) and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This trauma has expressed itself amongst our communities in various ways, such as bullying, shaming, blaming, demeaning, physical and verbal abuse, excluding, undermining, passive-aggressive behaviours, spreading rumours, gossip, withholding information, breaking confidences, creating chaos, and the list goes on.

Does any of this sound familiar? If so, you may have been witnessing lateral violence without even knowing it.

Well, I am here to share with you a bit of my story on how Lateral Violence has affected me and how I changed the narrative to become a "Lateral Kindness Warrior."

My earliest experience with Lateral Violence

I want to paint a picture for you: When I was around eight or nine years old, I remember a big family gathering with many cousins, aunts, uncles, and great ones too, including my grandpa, mother, and brother. It could have been my age, but it

felt like a huge gathering and we were all sitting around a fire in the yard, listening to laughter, stories, and the noise of cousins playing.

Out of nowhere, one of my elder relatives speaks up, points at me and says, "I don't like this one." Even though I am a very proud band member of Fisher River Cree Nation (Ochekwi-Sipi), it's important to note that I am fair-skinned with blue eyes. I do not look like most of my family members and I am sure this was the reason my relative pointed me out in this way. It's a moment I remember as clear as day and those words made me feel worthless and unwanted.

As I got up, tears pouring out my eyes, ready to run and hide, my eldest auntie stood up and scolded my relative. "How can you say that to a young boy?" I remember her saying. "That was not nice and you better apologize."

I felt vindicated and it warmed my heart because it must have taken a lot for her to stand up to her elder. What she said must have really tugged at his heartstrings and made him feel remorse because he then called me over, handed me five bucks, and said, "I am sorry, my boy."

Our relationship from that day forever changed and we became very close. Plus, five bucks to a nine-year-old back in the '70s was a lot of money!

This is just one example of lateral violence from my childhood. I could fill pages with the laundry list of examples that I have encountered in my life since then. But instead of allowing lateral violence to define my story, I flipped it on its head instead and pursued becoming a Lateral Kindness Warrior.

What is lateral kindness?

Instead of coming from a place of trauma, lateral kindness is based on one of our Seven Sacred Teachings: love. One of my best memories of this teaching of love happened when I was a young boy. I was spending the summer at my Granny's place on the reserve for the first time with my cousins and I remember feeling scared of staying somewhere strange. My Granny had such a kind and loving soul. She was also a well-known baker in the community, which definitely had its perks as a youngster spending my summer with her.

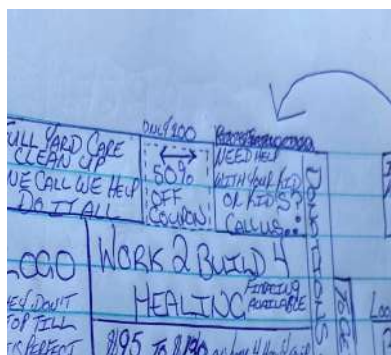
A couple of days into summer, I recall sitting in my Granny's kitchen while she was baking some goodies. "Come over here my

boy,” she called me over from the kitchen table, motioning like she wanted to whisper something into my ear. Leaning over, she said, “You are my favourite.” Well boy, did that ever change my mood knowing that I was her favourite over my other cousins! I didn’t realize it then, but I recall my cousins also walked a bit taller and more confidently the rest of our time there. I bet she said the same thing to them!

In that moment, my Granny was showing us all kindness, the same kindness that has been in our First Nations communities since time immemorial because of our teachings. Even though our people have been through so much trauma, hurt, and pain, this kindness has made us resilient and is why I believe we can change lateral violence into lateral kindness!

This innate kindness helped me on my healing journey and is why my Granny visited me in a dream, pointed at me and said, “Okihcitaw (Warrior),” when I was on a fasting/vision quest.

It was after this experience about 18 months ago when I decided to leave a position as Director of Human Resources and join the team at Legacy Bowes. Through the meaningful work I do now, including facilitating the “Lateral Violence to Lateral Kindness” workshop, I have answered my calling. I have always enjoyed coaching others and facilitating, but it was not until I started researching the lateral kindness in particular and the science behind it, that I really embraced my mission—changing the narrative to get back to that place of kindness (love) in all of us. THIS is why my Granny was pointing at me and saying warrior!





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# SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND WHAT TO DO

TRIGGER WARNING: SUICIDALITY, SUICIDE, SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

The experience of a loved one expressing suicidal thoughts has impacted many Canadian families. Suicidal ideation – defined as having thoughts to harm oneself or end one's life – is often related to mental health challenges such as Anxiety and Depression. According to the Government of Canada, suicide is the second-leading cause of death amongst youth and young adults (15-34 years).

For many, the thought of suicide can be overwhelming and so turning a deaf ear helps them to feel safe. For those who experience these thoughts, however, turning away from negativity may not be so easy. This is where we must remember to hold compassionate space for those who are facing the internal battle of wanting to leave this world.

Here are some ways you can support others through dark moments such as these:

**1. Ask** – Often people worry that if they bring up the topic of suicide, they are going to add fire to the situation and increase the risk of a person acting on it. This is not true. When we talk about suicide and ask our loved one if this is something they are going through, then we normalize the experience and release the tension of the situation. Simply asking “Are you having thoughts to harm yourself?” can help guide us to the next step.

**2. Listen with compassion** – Not everyone feels safe to share their suicidal thoughts, so holding compassionate, non-judgmental space will help ease the person's anxiety. Tell them that you are here to listen, and offer to hold space without needing to fix anything. Then allow the conversation to flow. As listening to thoughts about self harm can be activating for many people, you only need to do what you feel comfortable with. You do not have to play therapist here, just offer a listening ear and reflect what you hear from heart space.

**3. Seek help together** – Having someone to walk alongside you can bring a lightness to difficult experiences. The same goes with someone having suicidal thoughts. To support, offer to seek out the necessary connections to take the next steps towards healing. Together we can walk this path to wellness and reduce the stigma towards mental health. Help may look like seeking out a support group, a therapist or coach, or connecting with a healing community. It is up to each person what they wish to identify as help.

Of course, the above steps may not always be appropriate depending on the intensity of thoughts, if someone has a complex mental health or trauma history, or if there is risk of immediate physical harm. Together though, we can help destigmatize suicide and suicidal ideations. If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, you can reach out to your local Suicide (Crisis) Support Line for other guidance.

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Written by Fola Veritas with Deep Mind Squared



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*The T.A. Health will strive to provide and assist in the development of the "health" services to toward the education and promotion of living a healthy lifestyle by involving community members and combining resources in the program.*



*The Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve (formerly known as the Valley River Treaty Band #292) is a signatory to Treaty #4, which was signed in 1874. The Reserve, whose Anishinabe people originally spoke Ojibway, has a Land Base of 11,535 acres. It is located seventy-seven (77) kilometers west of Dauphin, Manitoba; twenty-four (24) kilometers west of Grandview, Manitoba; thirty-eight (38) kilometers east of Roblin, Manitoba; and three hundred ninety nine (399) kilometers northwest of Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

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# WHAT IS GROUNDING AND HOW IS IT HELPFUL?

WRITTEN BY SPENCER-ALEXZANDER WALLENBERG

## What is grounding?

In the wake of everything going on in the last few years mental health has been on the roster of topics for a lot of people. People have been affected in new ways for the first time in the past few years so it's no surprise that as a society going through such big changes that mental health would be talked about. One of the big topics being talked about now is anxiety and how to combat it. For people who suffer from anxiety, it is very common to have something called panic attacks; according to the Mayo Clinic, a panic attack is a sudden episode of intense fear that triggers severe physical reactions when there is no real danger or apparent cause. With things like anxiety and panic attacks being talked about so much, people often look for an answer on how to help combat these symptoms, one of which is grounding. According to an article written by Galina Hitching in Science of People "Grounding yourself is when you stay connected to the present. Instead of getting lost in anxiety and reviewing a made-up version of reality in your head, grounding allows you to experience the moment you are in. It requires being connected to yourself and provides stability and calm even in challenging situations". Grounding can look different to everyone, what may work for one person may not work for

another. That's why it is important to find different grounding exercises that work well for you. Grounding can be as simple or as complex as you need it to be for you. Some people like having lots of steps to help distract them like in the 5-4-3-2-1 method and some people much prefer just taking in slow deep breaths through the nose and out the mouth to help regulate themselves. Regardless of what method you use to ground yourself the main goal is to come down from a heightened state back to a calm one. Grounding techniques are the coping strategies that bring yourself back to reality and back down from that heightened straight. Lots of grounding techniques involve breathing which helps to control the central nervous system and encourages the body to relax.

## What is Earthing?

According to Earthing Canada earthing is refined as "simply making a physical connection between the electrical frequencies of the human body with that of Earth's". Lots of people think of something like earthing (like walking bare-foot) something that spiritual people do and not something that your average person could do to help improve certain aspects of their life (such as anxiety). The earth's surface has a very slight charge to it from electrons, when we





put our bare feet on the grass of the earth, the earth has a negative charge to it and when we put our feet on the ground it displaces static electricity. When you put your feet on the ground you also receive a charge of electrons in free form, this causes us to synchronize with the earth. There are different ways to do earthing such as walking barefoot in the grass or laying on the grass while you watch the clouds.

### **How are grounding and earthing beneficial?**

Grounding (earthing) not only helps bring one down from a heightened state and regulates but according to a study done by James L Oschman, Gaétan Chevalier, and Richard Brown from the National Center for Biotechnology Information where patients experimented with a form of earthing where they found that “Grounding appears to improve sleep, normalize the day–night cortisol rhythm, reduce pain, reduce stress, shift the autonomic nervous system from sympathetic toward parasympathetic activation, increase heart rate variability, speed wound healing, and reduce blood viscosity”. There is still not a whole lot of research done on earthing and its benefits but there are some resources saying how there may be health links related to earthing. In the same study that was done by James L Oschman, Gaétan Chevalier, and Richard Brown it is believed that grounding (earthing) affects the living matrix which is the central connector between living cells, electrical conductivity exists within the matrix that functions as an immune system defense and works like an antioxidant. Though studies are still needing to be done on earthing and grounding, people who have used grounding as a coping strategy can report on the effect it has on panic attacks. Though grounding techniques like breathing and the 5-4-3-2-1 method (Which is saying out loud five things you can see, four things you can touch around you, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste) help at the moment it is important to remember to talk to a mental health professional.

### **What kind of grounding and earthing exercises are there?**

While there are many different kinds of grounding and earthing exercises to do, it's important to keep in mind that what will work for someone else may not work for you, so give yourself time to try different ones to see which exercise best helps you.

#### **Walking Barefoot**

Walking barefoot is as simple as it sounds, take off your shoes and walk around barefoot outside and notice how it feels to be connected with the earth. It is important to remember where you are walking to keep an eye out for any possible hazards such as broken glass or garbage that may have something harmful buried in it or any other dangerous objects.

#### **Submerging yourself in water**

Some advocates for grounding believe that submerging yourself in water has the same effect as walking barefoot or laying on the grass. The act of submerging yourself in water can be in a lake, river or ocean. Just remember to use the proper precautions when in water.

### **5-4-3-2-1 Method**

This method is a grounding method which involves using the five senses, this method is a more traditional grounding method used in such practices as talk therapy. The 5-4-3-2-1 method involves focusing on five things you can see, four things you can touch within arms reach (this can include the items of clothes you are wearing too), 3 things you can hear such as your voice when you speak or any other noises in the space you are in, 2 things you can smell even if its something like coffee brewing or even the air in the room and finally one thing you can taste such as the leftover coffee taste from the morning. This grounding skill helps with centring in on the present moment and not everything going on around you.

### **Box breathing**

Box breathing is the practice of breathing in and out in a box pattern. Someone who may be going through some hard feelings may find this grounding tool useful. Box breathing is when you breathe into the count of four, you hold your breath for four seconds, breathe out for four seconds and then hold for four seconds before repeating the process over again. Some people may find that four seconds is too long and may need to go down to three seconds or even up to five seconds if it is not long enough for them. Some people will count in their heads for the time or use their fingers to count. Alternatively, you can also count while drawing a box with your finger in the air.

### **Cloud watching**

While some people think of cloud watching as a fun and relaxing pass time on a warm summer day this can also work as a method of earthing as well. On a day when it is nice out and there are light clouds in the sky, this can be a good option to use earthing practices. You can do this by laying the grass in a safe and quiet area while looking up at the sky. See if you can find any kind of shapes in the clouds that you see, and notice how the grass feels when you lie on it. It is important to remember that if you plan on being in the sun for long periods of time to use proper sun protection. It is equally as important to remember to not look directly at the sun as it can cause permanent damage to the eyes if prolonged exposure persists.

While some people think of cloud watching as a fun and relaxing pass time on a warm summer day this can also work as a method of earthing as well. On a day when it is nice out and there are light clouds in the sky, this can be a good option to use earthing practices. You can do this by laying the grass in a safe and quiet area while looking up at the sky. See if you can find any kind of shapes in the clouds that you see, and notice how the grass feels when you lie on it. It is important to remember that if you plan on being in the sun for long periods of time to use proper sun protection. It is equally as important to remember to not look directly at the sun as it can cause permanent damage to the eyes if prolonged exposure persists.



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# HOW THAT WALK FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MAY BE BETTER

WRITTEN BY SPENCER-ALEXZANDER WALLENBERG

We have all heard in the circles of the mental health world how taking a walk for your mental health can be a very useful thing and if you are like a lot of people myself included anytime you heard that you would roll your eyes. How could going outside for a walk around the block fix what's going on inside, the thought of even crawling out of bed sounds like a daunting task not to mention going for an actual walk outside. Whenever this was offered as an idea to me I figured it was some kind of misunderstanding. I never realized how useful of a tool it is.

When I was told for the first time that I should try and go for a mental health walk I thought my therapist was crazy. I had scheduled an appointment with her after coming out of a depression hibernation for the first time in months. I was mad, I was supposed to be getting help and the one thing I'm offered as a tool was a walk. I thought it was absurd and I told her such. It wasn't until she broke it down for me that I truly decided to give it a try. She told me that a walk for my mental health will not fix everything, it will not cure my depression but it will get me active. She then went on to explain how the fact of getting my body moving and being outside was a change of scenery that would trick my brain into thinking of other things like what I was looking at on said walk. The trees and how they looked, how the weather was and anything else that was going on around me as opposed to the things going on inside me. Not only was this a grounding tool but getting active instead of lying around or watching Netflix all day gave my brain a dose of serotonin or the happy chemical. She told me that by going for a walk around the block I would be able to get in touch with the outside feelings I was experiencing not just the inside. She gave me a list of things to keep in mind while on my walk (once I finally agreed to go for one begrudgingly). How were my hands? Where by my sides, where they clenched into fists? Was I breathing? How was I breathing? How did the sun feel on my skin? All of these feelings that I should keep in mind also happened to be grounding body scan techniques. She also told me to keep an eye out for certain things on my walk like dogs or fire hydrants, to give my brain something else to focus on.

Once I had finally decided to go on my walk, it felt like the small five-minute journey around my block would never end. It felt like I was going to be walking forever, but once I had truly dedicated my mind to this walk I started to take in how my body was feeling on the outside as opposed to how the inside (my brain) was feeling. Soon after I made sure to keep an eye out for a dog because at the time I only could remember one thing on the list. By the time I got home, I was no doubt tired, that was the most activity I had done in months. I promptly parked myself back in front of the TV shortly after arriving home but I did notice one thing other than being tired. I felt just a tiny bit better.

I brought this up with her at our next appointment the following week and told her that I had been going on another a few days later. She praised me telling me how that was a huge accomplishment and how good that was to hear. We spoke a little more about walks and exercise and how truly good it is for depression and other mental health concerns. We talked about how I would make the effort to go for at least one ten-minute walk a week. Throughout the summer I did follow through with that plan. It was hard at first there was no doubt about that at all, but by month or so in I found myself going for a bit longer walks to the point that I would go for walks twice a week for fifteen minutes. Before it was time to go back to school we talked about how much better I felt just by getting the activity in my schedule and how I did look forward to having some time to turn off the world and get in touch with my body and how I was feeling. I had even told her about how I was sort of looking forward to going back to school soon. Things slowly were starting to look up for me.

So I did learn a lot about little walks for my mental health that summer and though yes it will not fix it with one or two walks instead taking the time to find the motivation in me to take time for myself I would start to feel better. I know it may still sound crazy when I say this but going for a walk for my mental health did make a great impact on my mental health.



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# EMBRACE LIFE COUNCIL

If you live in the North, you may have heard of Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit, also known as Embrace Life Council – however, you may not be familiar with our mandate, and the many resources we provide. In this article, we will introduce the organization and give a brief overview of what it is that we do to contribute to mental wellness across Nunavut.

IIKELC is primarily focused on suicide prevention and life promotion. We serve the entire territory of Nunavut and currently have offices located in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, alongside lots of collaboration from community members in the territory's other 23 hamlets. We have a small but dedicated team with a range of different strengths and lived experience, who all contribute to make sure we are able to reach as many Nunavummiut as possible.

Our main goal is to provide opportunities for community members to better their mental health and maintain a positive outlook on life, whether that be through education, cultural programs, healing workshops, annual Embrace Life Week activities, or competitions.

Over the past year, a lot of communities have reached out to us wanting to understand the link between trauma and mental health. We were lucky enough to travel to 8 communities in 2022 to deliver our Trauma-Informed Practice training, a one-day workshop which explains how trauma affects the brain, the effects it can have on a person's emotions and behaviour, and ways that we can all be more understanding towards individuals who are experiencing trauma. This workshop teams up well with the Our Children, Our Responsibility training, which helps adults learn about preventing child sexual abuse and how best to help and respond when a child discloses.

Other educational workshops we offer include Reach Out, a suicide prevention training for youth and adults ages 14 and up, and ASIST, a suicide intervention training for adults. We are also in the process of developing a Mindfulness workshop, which will focus on different relaxation and breathing techniques to better practice self-care, especially in stressful situations.

We have also run a number of cultural and artistic programs over the past year. Some of these, like the char preservation program we ran in partnership with Polar Outfitting over the summer, allow youth to spend time out on the land, reconnecting with the environment and learning valuable traditional skills they can pass on to others. Others, like our hand sewing programs, provide an opportunity for youth and adults to spend time in a social setting learning to make a range of items using traditional materials, such as sealskin mitts and fur trapper hats. Participants in our machine sewing programs learned to make cushions and ski pants, while youth and adults who take part in our beading programs have come away with beautiful earrings. Another kind of program that is very popular, especially with youth, is anything arts-and-crafts based; we have had youth here creating amazing artworks using mediums including linocut and painting.

Every year in September, IIKELC organizes activities and a suicide prevention walk in honour of Embrace Life Day on September 10th, World Suicide Prevention Day. Many communities host walks, tea and bannock stalls, or community barbecues on September 10th – in Iqaluit last year, we organized a community feast and games for the occasion. While it is a heavy day, having these events provides a great opportunity to bring people together and remind ourselves that we are never alone.

As we all readjust to life post-pandemic, it can be difficult to shake off the feeling of isolation that came with spending so much time apart. All of our programs, workshops and events have the same goal: to make sure that we can help foster connections between community members, and give each other ideas on how to stay mentally healthy. Getting creative, learning more about ourselves as people, and simply spending time with each other are all great ways to keep our spirits up and stay connected; this is what IIKELC hopes to achieve, this year and every year.

If you think you or your organization could benefit from any of the services we offer, or if you would like to know more about us, please visit our website at [www.inuusiq.com](http://www.inuusiq.com), or follow us on Facebook and Instagram at @EmbraceLifeNU.

Qujannamiik and have a great 2023!

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# DRUG-INDUCED SCHIZOPHRENIA: WHAT IS IT AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT SOMEONE?

WRITTEN BY SPENCER-ALEXZANDER WALLENBERG

Schizophrenia is talked about a lot nowadays with mental health being a big topic of discussion as we become more open about talking about mental health matters as a society. Though the word Schizophrenia can be a scary word to those uninformed about the disorder it's important to remember that educating ourselves on these kinds of topics is important to reduce stigma and prevent future harm.

## What is schizophrenia?

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada "Schizophrenia is a psychotic disorder that can affect the way a person interacts with and understands the world". The most common symptoms of Schizophrenia are delusions (believing one has unnatural abilities or fame), and hallucinations (Visual: seeing things that are not there. Auditory: Hearing things that are not there such as music, people talking, and one's name being called. Tactile: Feeling things that are not there such as bugs crawling on one's skin), disorganized speech and/or behaviour and an impaired cognitive ability. Schizophrenia is a lifelong disorder with no known cure at this time, though there are support systems for people who are suffering from this mental disorder.

## What causes Schizophrenia?

The causes of schizophrenia are still unknown though according to the UK National Health Service it is a combination of genetic, psychological and environmental influences Schizophrenia tends to be genetic but there is no evidence that a single gene is a sole cause. Other physiological factors that may lead to schizophrenia are a low birth rate, premature labour or a lack of oxygen at the time of or before birth. Overall Brain development is thought to be a factor as well as studies of people with schizophrenia tend to show subtle differences in brain structure. These factors do not show up in every person with schizophrenia and some people without any mental illness may have this structure too. However, it is thought by some resources at the UK National Health Service that schizophrenia may partly be a disorder of the brain. Other factors may also trigger schizophrenia in people who are at risk. Such as stress (losing a job, house or loved one, abuse or the end of a relationship). According to the UK National Health Service, another factor that is thought to have links to the development of schizophrenia is drugs such as cannabis, cocaine, LSD, or amphetamines. Though drugs do not cause schizophrenia according to an article done in 2010 by the Canadian Center on Substance Abuse that the abuse and improper use of drugs can increase the risk of schizophrenia or similar illnesses.

## What is Drug-induced Psychosis?

Psychosis is defined by the Canadian Mental Health Association as a "loss

of reality or a break from reality". This is because psychosis makes you believe or experience things that aren't real. Psychosis can be very scary and confusing for a lot of people as some people believe things like "My partner is trying to poison me" or "Everyone at work is conspiring against me to get me fired". According to the World Health Organization psychosis is the third-most disabling medical condition in the world. Psychosis is a short-term episode that should last a short amount of time. It will normally develop over 2 weeks or less and someone will likely make a full recovery within a few months, weeks or days. Drug-induced psychosis however is slightly different. Drug-induced psychosis, which may cause hallucinations or delusions (similar to that of schizophrenia) is a direct link to a psychotic episode caused by the improper use or abuse of drugs. Drug-induced psychosis only lasts as long as the drugs are in the system or whilst someone is going through the acute withdrawal phase. If the individual still suffers from hallucinations or delusions afterwards, probably, the psychotic episode is not drug-induced. Drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines and cannabis can increase the likelihood of drug-induced psychosis, and those who are at a predisposition to suffering from psychosis or have suffered from episodes of psychosis are warned to stay away from drugs.

## What is drug-induced schizophrenia?

Drug-induced schizophrenia though different from Drug-induced Psychosis still shares some similarities such as hallucinations and delusions. In an article published by Healthline in October 2022 by Alexandra Perez PharmD, MBA, BCGP it states that Drug induced schizophrenia is not directly caused by the use of drugs. However, drug-induced schizophrenia is referred to when a person who already has schizophrenia takes drugs and it then causes a schizophrenic episode. Drugs do not cause schizophrenia but the misuse or abuse of drugs (for example methamphetamines) may experience the common side effect of paranoia but this only classifies as drug-induced schizophrenia if the person has an underlying case of schizophrenia. For people being treated and recovering from earlier episodes of schizophrenia this drug-induced psychosis may cause a relapse in those with schizophrenia. This can happen to someone whether they know or not that they have schizophrenia which is why some people experiencing drug-induced schizophrenia symptoms seem to develop the mental illness as a result of said drug use. However, it is that the person already had a pre-existing case of schizophrenia and may have already been showing symptoms.

## Preventive Tips:

Though it is not known for certain what causes schizophrenia for certain, it is hard to prevent it entirely but knowing what you can do to help prevent drug-induced schizophrenic episodes can be helpful.



- look into family history. If there is a history of schizophrenia in your family you may be at a predisposition for being diagnosed later in life. Learning about the mental health history of the family may be a helpful step in knowing whether or not this may be a concern for you.

- Abstain from mind-altering substances like Cocaine, Cannabis, Amphetamines and other hard drugs. Though drugs there is no known link between the direct link of using drugs -and getting diagnosed with schizophrenia if you are in a predisposition for schizophrenia it is in your best interest to avoid these substances and substances similar.

- Talk to a mental health provider. If you think you may be suffering from psychosis, excessive anxiety or any form of hallucination it is possibly a good idea to speak to a mental health care professional. If you suffer from an existing or recurring substance abuse issue you should reach out to an addiction support professional or group such as NA (Narcotics Anonymous).

- Search treatment options in your area. If you are actively suffering from a substance abuse issue and feel as though you can not stop on your own you may want to look into going to a treatment program such as a sober living, detox or even a treatment center in your area.

#### Conclusion:

In conclusion, Drug-induced schizophrenia is not schizophrenia that happens when you do drugs but rather a schizophrenic episode caused by the use of drugs by someone with a pre-existing case of schizophrenia (whether known or unknown to the user). Drug-induced psychosis however is a psychotic episode caused by the direct use of drugs. Schizophrenia on its own is a chronic mental health condition that has no known factors that cause it but there are speculations. Schizophrenia is a lifelong mental health condition with no known cure, however, there is treatment available to help manage symptoms. If you or someone you know is suffering from mental health issues please reach out to a professional in your area or call 911 if it is an emergency and someone is an immediate danger to themselves or others.

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# DAY SCHOOL SURVIVOR, CHRIS STRANGER



Healthy human contact, the ability to love and comfort one another, especially our children.

How did we lose it? How did it affect me as a human being?

Government policies, Residential school, Day school, and CFS just to name a few.

My own personal experience with day school started the belief that abuse was discipline! The very first day of school the teacher asked me, "Chris, come up here." I went to her desk, was told to pull down my pants and was strapped for no reason. Even if there was a reason, I didn't deserve that. I figure I was used as an example to place fear in all of us! I became silent and separated from the other children, with no friends. Became suicidal at the age of 6, and it was the aloneness that caused me to think that way. Only reason I'm alive today is because I didn't know how to end my life at that time.

I also came from a family that beat us when we made a mistake as a child because that's how they were taught. We were allowed to play as children, but not allowed to make mistakes without consequences. Sometimes we were even beaten for hurting ourselves or others by accident. Nobody comforted me when I needed it as a child, not because they didn't love me, but because they didn't know how to show me.

There were many times as a child I needed comfort with just a hug, or to be asked, "What's wrong?" It didn't happen because nobody knew how to provide a hug. I say, "Just a hug" but that hug would have made such a difference in my life, especially as a father!

I only knew to beat my boys for any mistakes they made and believed it was discipline! I was beating them for being children, and a lot of times even worse than I had been beaten! I'll call it mistreatment as children, because that's what it was. No child deserved what we got, and none of my children deserved what I gave them!

As a father I couldn't even hold my son in my arms. I could only feed him and change him, never hold him, talk to him, or even look into his eyes. I had 2 boys and I never held them in their lives. I didn't play with them when they asked and didn't comfort them when they needed it. All I knew was physical, mental and emotional abuse and it wasn't because I wanted to be that way, it was the only way I knew. I thought it was discipline! That was unhealthy human contact. When they were 8 and 10 years old, I would go to bed every night with these thoughts, "I wish I could have treated my boys better today, or I wish I could have told them I loved them!" It was such a lonely feeling. I wasn't only making them suffer, I was suffering myself.

I have since learned to hug and say, "I love you!" My son was 15 years old when I finally gave him a hug and told him I loved him. Without hesitation, he hugged me back and said, "I love you too dad!" It felt so good to finally have healthy human contact with him. I do not have to suffer anymore, and my family does not have to suffer because of me. There is nothing better than giving and receiving a hug from the ones we love.

**Healthy human contact needs to start at birth!**

Chris Stranger | NNADAP Co-Ordinator |

Peguis First Nation National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse  
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# THE TRUE ART OF SELF CARE

WRITTEN BY SPENCER-ALEXZANDER WALLENBERG

When I first heard about self-care I figured it was something along the lines of taking a bubble bath or doing a yoga class at the rec center with friends. I figured all self-care was cut and dry. These are the things you do and these are the things you don't do when it comes to taking care of yourself. I never realized there was an art to all of it.

I finally started talking to my therapist about self-care one day when I told her I was still feeling "off" even though I had tried some self-care. She had asked me what kind of self-care I had been doing and I just kind of looked at her. What I can only imagine is a look of bewilderment on my face because she followed up with another question. "What did you know about self-care?" I replied, "Well you take a bubble bath and light a candle isn't that self-care?" She smiled at me and then proceeded to explain that there are different kinds of self-care. Physical, taking care of my physical needs like eating, exercise and sleep. Emotional, learning stress management tricks that I could use, journaling, and talking to a trusted safe person. Social, taking care of my social life like meeting up with friends for coffee or going out shopping with my mom. Spiritual, getting in touch with whatever spiritualism meant to me, may it be praying, doing meditation, being in nature or even building a safe space for me. Finally personally getting in touch with things that mean a lot to me like being creative, indulging in hobbies or working on goals. Up until this point, I had no idea there were different ways to do self-care, not to mention different forms of it. It truly was a shift in mentality for me and how I viewed taking care of myself. Maybe I didn't need to have a bath to do self-care this time, maybe it was something like I needed to go and spend time with friends, or get creative and pick up my guitar or go for a walk. We started to work out a plan for how I could work out different ideas for different feelings and what kind of self-care would be the most beneficial for me.

In the following weeks, I would check the cheat sheet I had made and would try to find the best methods for me and how different situations like work stress may require different self-care than relationship or school stress. When we revisited I told her the truth, that self-care was hard for me because it still isn't working how I thought it should. Sometimes my school stress could be fixed by being with friends and other times it could be helped if I did something creative instead. Maybe I still wasn't understanding how self-care truly worked for me. She told me something that still sticks with me to this day. "Self-care is a lot like art, sometimes you have to try again and again to get it right". Truthfully she was right, self care truly is a fine art skill that takes practice. It takes not only finding things to help me that are truly engaging but also listening to my body and trying to understand what my body is telling me and what it needs. We talked through some scenarios and different ways I would handle them, like if I was stressed out because school was hard that day what would be the best way for me to let myself feel better? That's really what it boiled down to, what would help me feel better is if I truly listened to myself and tried not to focus on what I thought the "right" answer should be?

Self-care can be intimidating to some folks, especially if you don't know what all the different ways you may need to help yourself out are. So when I say self-care is an art form don't feel discouraged if you feel like maybe it's not working out as smoothly as it should. It may take time, some it'll take longer than others. It took me just under four months to finally be able to listen to what my body needed for me to take care of it. That is ok, what matters is that you trust the process, Rome wasn't built in a day. So please be patient with yourself as you learn the fine art of self-care.



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