



A Healing Culture: Aboriginal Cancer Warriors Respond to Cancer

at
Vancouver Native Health Society

Presented by: Linda Day
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Aboriginal Mother Centre Society

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Overview

- Background of the Aboriginal Cancer Care Program
- Results of Community Dialogue
- Sample of the programs activities
- Screening Program – Transit Shelter Ads

Background to the ACCP

- Created in response to unmet need for culturally specific Indigenous cancer resources and care;
- Based on results from environmental scan on Aboriginal Cancer resources;
- Informed by the February 2013 Cancer Awareness Dialogue for Aboriginal People and Communities;
- Informed by qualitative surveys collected at National Aboriginal Day 2014 and AGM of National Association of Friendship Centres 2014.

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Community Dialogue Session

- Invited community members to come and share their vision for Aboriginal cancer care, prevention, education, awareness and much more;
- Café forum and open ended questions allowed for rich feedback “in their own words”;
- Included multiple stakeholders such as the BC Cancer Agency, Inspire Health Integrative Cancer Care, Prostate Cancer Foundation, Breast Cancer Foundation and traditional healers;
- Report informed the first ACCP.

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Healing



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What Did The People Say?

Q.1 “What can we do to support the children and family members of the Cancer Patient?”

- Traditional healings, songs, ceremonies, prayer, drumming and feasts.
- Cancer education for children, traditional storytelling, DVDs, CDs, books and workshops.
- Art therapy, expression through fine-arts, theatre for the whole family.
- Nutrition and involve children in the preparation of healthy meals.
- Celebrate the life of the person seeking treatment.

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What Did the People Say?

Q.2 “What kind of treatments and supports are necessary for Aboriginal people with cancer?”

- Traditional medicine, traditional food and traditional healing.
- Alternative healing (reflexology, massage, acupuncture).
- Financial support for travel/access to and from treatment facilities throughout the province.
- Yoga and Laughing Yoga.
- Support Groups.

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What Did the People Say?

Q3. “What can friends and family do to support the Aboriginal person with cancer?”

- Support cultural activities and events, feasts, traditional medicines and ceremony.
- Provide traditional and healthy foods for the cancer patient.
- Accompany to appointments/treatment.
- Provide meals.
- Provide child care.

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What Did the People Say?

Q4. “What does an Aboriginal Cancer Care program at VNHS look like?

- Long term, on-going support for people and their families.
- Spiritual advisory, sweat lodge, cultural ceremonies, drumming and singing.
- Physical resources such as wigs and other supports.
- Aboriginal hospice care.

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Aboriginal Cancer Care Logo

We launched a logo contest for the ACCP

- Heilstuk Artist Fred Anderson Jr. was the winner and his art is titled, “Strength Everlasting”
- This logo represents the strength of the eagle to guide Aboriginal people on their cancer journey.



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Healthy Kitchen

- Healthy cooking, safe tools and methods e.g. Safe plastics (BPA's), teflons and steaming vs. frying methods.
- Food is Medicine.
- Cancer causing/prevention nutrition.
- Maintaining BSLs, healthy digestion and inflammation.
- Take home meals.



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Healthy Kitchen

Angela Wright, Nutritionist – Inspire Health
Integrated Cancer Program



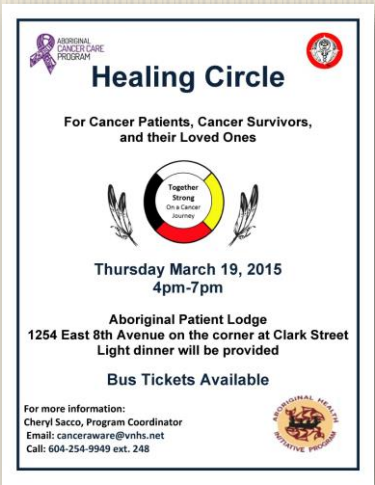
Healthy Kitchen participants enjoying the meal they prepared at the ACCP.



Angela Wright teaching the Healthy Kitchen participants about nutrition, diet and "Inflammation."

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Healing Circle



Occurs monthly
For Cancer Warriors and
their families

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Wellness Walks

Weekly walks around Vancouver city



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Tu'Wusht Garden

Planting seeds



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Indigenous Space



“Envision World Peas”



Yoga – Devon French



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Aboriginal Cancer Awareness Training

What did we learn? Cancer 101

- What is cancer?
- Cancer statistics
- Stages of cancer
- Different types of cancers and their symptoms
- Cancer prevention
- Screening
- Risks (genetics, lack of exercise, poor diet, controlled pollutants eg, Tobacco, chemical use, other exposures)

Traditional Teachings

- Sacred Traditional teachings of illness
- Cherokee Elder Dr. Lee Brown
- Storytelling (personal stories of experiences with cancer from an Aboriginal person's perspective)



Ciara John, ACCP assistant with
Traditional Teacher, Dr. Lee Brown

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Aboriginal Cancer Awareness Training



Angela Wright, (Nutritionist from, Inspire Health Integrative Cancer Care) delivering her presentation to Aboriginal Cancer Awareness Training Workshop participants – November 2014.

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Aboriginal Cancer Awareness Training Workshop

During the workshops we partnered with:

- BC Cancer Agency
- Prostate Cancer Foundation BC
- Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation BC/Yukon
- Inspire Health Integrative Cancer Care
- Traditional Teachers
- Wellness Instructors
- Peer Cancer Survivors



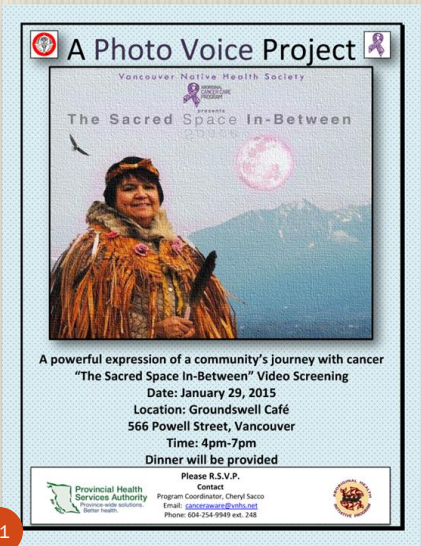
Group photo - June 2014 Training Workshops

Healing through Art Expression

A photo voice project- Sacred Space In-Between:



The Sacred Space In-Between A Photo Voice Project



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Visualising,
Breathing
Creating a sacred space
healing;

And voicing our personal
experience through the
power of photos

Video on Facebook page.

The Sacred Space In-Between- Video Evening



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Participants featured in
the video project
attended this intimate
screening event with
their friends and family
in January 2015.

The Sacred Space In-Between



We began with an opening prayer and a beautiful drum song prayer. Enjoyed the video with one another then shared a delicious meal, finishing off with a powerful healing circle and prayer.

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“Get Screened Campaign”

- 10 Vancouver bus stop locations during June 2014!
- Screening posters distributed provincially to service and health providers serving primarily Aboriginal people.
- Photo contest – people took photo at bus stop; posted FB.



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Musqueam Blessing of Mobile Mammography Program



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A Personal Journey Shared

The BC Cancer Agency featured me in the Spring edition of their survivorship magazine, "Forward" where I shared my personal cancer journey and vision for the Aboriginal Cancer Care Program.



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Summary

- ACCP was developed in response to unmet need for Aboriginal specific programs for people with Cancer.
- Our program was developed and implemented by the community with funding from Vancouver Coastal Health and Provincial Health Services Authority.
- Aboriginal community values are at the centre of the ACCP – culturally and community based.
- The ACCP continues in Vancouver with Aboriginal cancer warriors leading the way forward!

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CONTACT US

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