



M'CHIGEENG FIRST NATION
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS DEPARTMENT

Presented by Mikhayla Patterson, MSW

Department Manager of Mental Health and Addictions

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a wooden staff with a bundle of dried sage tied to it. The sage is smoldering, with wisps of white smoke rising from it. The background is dark and out of focus.

CEREMONY

Everything needs to begin with ceremony

MARCH 2021 DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY

Opioid toxicity deaths were 10 times the Provincial
average



DRUG STRATEGY COORDINATOR

Task: Come up with a plan to address the crisis

PEER SUPPORT AND OUTREACH



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Peer Support & Outreach

Program design: For the people, By the people

Based on needs identified by those struggling with addictions

Lived Experience > Education

All after hours

UPCOMING
EVENTS

Reach the people, Serve the Nation.



- Love as the guiding principle
- Action Based

Peer Support & Outreach Early Days

Friends in Addictions

Building of trust

Identifying high risk users/homes

Training with naloxone

Boots on the road (consistent presence in community)

Reliable team

Harm reduction

Safe environment

Programming

Outreach

Team meetings / updates

Training





Early days continued

- Door to door
- Conversations
- Harm reduction/snack packs
- Identifying needs and or wellness checks
- Community within a community
- What does a wellbeing check look like?
- Suicide prevention
- Factual information vs gossip
- Dressed for extreme weather
- Blizzards, tornadoes we still show up
- E-bikes

- People were sleeping outside in the bushes.
- Homelessness being recognized, more people were willing to acknowledge it
- Couch surfing
- The question of 'Where else are our community members sleeping?'
 - What was different about our shelter?
 - Basic needs
 - Shelter and warmth
 - Advocacy

January 2022 – Emergency Low Barrier Shelter

Culture and Language

- We were missing the connection to the land and our language
- Missing the self-identity of being Anishinaabe
- Creating a safe environment for those seeking traditional healing

Systems Navigation

- Bridging the gaps
- “One stop Shop”
- Resource finder



Creation of a Stand-Alone Department

- Peer Support & Outreach
- Emergency Low-Barrier Shelter
- Systems Navigaton
- Culture and Language
- Mental Health Counselling & Education
- Prevention Services

A small green plant with several leaves is growing out of a crack in a concrete surface. The background is a dark, textured concrete wall with a prominent crack running diagonally across it.

A WHOLISTIC APPROACH

STRENGTHS BASED
PERSON CENTERED
TRAUMA INFORMED

*No amount of liability is worth the cost of someone's
life.*

Successes

31 Lives Saved

300+ Community Members accessing services

Five programs developed in 2 years

No deaths due to opioid toxicity since program start

M'Chigeeng
FIRST NATION

A 3D rendering of a puzzle with one red piece standing out among many white pieces. The puzzle pieces are arranged in a grid, and the red piece is positioned in the center-right area. The lighting creates soft shadows and highlights on the pieces, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

Challenges to the New Approach

- Funding: Insufficient and strict
- Required Commitment: Long Hours
- Moving from Professional Standards to Community Based: Decolonizing Approach

Jordan's Story

- 2018 lost my brother
- Land based Treatment/Incarceration
- 2020 Relapse
- Friendship/support
- Independence/rental agreement
- 2021 Peer support and Outreach worker
- Arrested (contract terminated)
- Continued support / Reaching for help
- 2022 Second Chance (Rehired)
- Building my bundle
- 2023 Outreach Team Lead
- 2024 Bimaadziwin

Miigwech!



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