

Team Lead/ Harm Reduction Program/ Polly Sutherland/ANKORS East Kootenay

Resiliency, hard work, compassion, grief, and loss are themes that have been woven into the year of COVID and our Overdose, drug poisoning emergency. I cannot express my respect and admiration for all those who have made such an impact on supporting those most vulnerable, those seeking education and support, those looking to our Team in the East Kootenay for harm reduction supplies, our expertise, our advocacy, and our presence in the hardest moments as we face the deaths of so many community members due to illicit drug contamination. We grieve and remember those brave soldiers who have been taken by this drug war and we honor those who are fighting on as they support one another and stand up to protect their peers and save lives every day. I am honored to be a part of the ANKORS team, and I have the deepest respect for the folks who we offer service to that are doing this heartfelt work in the fight against stigma and discrimination.

The harm reduction program has remained steadfast in the numbers of harm reduction supplies distributed, and the folks that we continue offer services to. Community partnerships and collaborations have had an extra layer of respect and admiration added to them as they look to ANKORS staff for expertise and guidance in harm reduction best practice. We have made headway within the city to begin the process of addressing the community stigma that exists against those who use drugs within structures and municipality. We will continue through the guidance and first voice of the People with lived or living experience to push through this crisis and create a climate that supports harm reduction best practice, community connectivity and that supports the beautiful people that we offer service to.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Chery Dowden, executive Director who remains our rock, supports our team and helps make each day through this crisis a little brighter. We need light and love right now, and we have surely had this from Cheryl throughout this challenging year. Thank you, Cheryl. In ending, I remain in awe of the staff at ANKORS, and it is a privilege to be walking along side all of you as we tackle what is in front of us. I find strength in Your dedication, and I thank you for this!

Yearly Counts from the harm reduction program, 2020/2021

Active clients on current Harm Reduction data base: 280

Of male visits this year (individuals may access several times): 840

Of female visits this year (individuals may access several times): 489

Of others visits this year (LGBTQI, individuals may access several times): 233

Total visits for folks accessing supplies= 1842

Supply distribution

Straight pipes: 3076 Bubble pipes :4343

Needles out: 48,297 needles in: 35,017

(please note, the yearly stats are completed June ending 2021, so numbers are note totaled as of yet)