



# Community Action Team (CAT) Knowledge Exchange

## Recruitment & Retention Skill Sheet

### Recruitment

'Recruitment' is finding new people to join the CAT. Identify issues your CAT may have with recruitment, such as:

- Increasing community participation with groups that may not think the CAT is a place for them.
- Even well-attended CAT tables may have under-utilized community assets.

### Community Asset Mapping

- Assets in a community may be anyone that can positively influence the outcomes with the toxic drug crisis, such as reducing stigma and increasing access to harm reduction & treatment.
- Brainstorm different groups in your community and be curious about how they may be able to influence outcomes.
- Stigma can be targeted from different angles.
- Use *Recruitment Planning* to connect with potential contacts.

Associations <i>People, groups</i>	Descriptions <i>Specific types, roles</i>	Connection to the Toxic Drug Crisis <i>Describe how they may influence the toxic drug crisis</i>	Contacts <i>Who locally?</i>
Business	Chamber of Commerce Small business owners Agriculture organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders in a community's economy can reduce stigma against harm reduction programs.</li> <li>• Facilitate access to space for OPSs and other programs.</li> <li>• Support employees to access supports.</li> </ul>	
Indigenous	<i>First Nations, Métis, and Inuit</i> Elders and Knowledge Keepers Tribe members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous peoples are affected in distinct ways from the toxic drug crisis. They are over-represented with harmful outcomes.</li> <li>• Supporting Indigenous substance users requires participation of Indigenous communities &amp; associations with harm reduction.</li> </ul>	
Municipality	Bylaw officers City counsellors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal policies around zoning, housing, parks, and public drug consumption can directly affect PWUDs.</li> <li>• How those policies are developed and implemented can be influenced by city councilors and bylaw officers.</li> </ul>	

See **Appendix A** for a list of potential people and associations a CAT could engage to participate.

## Recruitment Planning

- [\[Diversity, Equity, Inclusion resource for patient partners\]](#) may be useful for engaging with a diverse range of community partners.

Who? <i>Asset map</i>	The Pitch <i>Why would they want to join?</i>	The Ask <i>What is expected of them?</i>	Recruitment <i>Strategies to connect</i>
Municipality, by-law officers	<p>Develop relationships with a broad group of community partners.</p> <p>Better define the problems they may face around community drug use and illicit toxic drug poisonings.</p> <p>Explore ideas to manage public consumption more effectively and to reduce harm &amp; stigma.</p>	<p>Come and listen during the monthly CAT meetings.</p> <p>Share ideas, experiences, needs and aspirations, to develop relationships.</p> <p>Have an open mind and be curious when faced with challenges.</p> <p>Provide ongoing feedback to the CAT Coordinator.</p>	<p>New recruits' first impressions may feel combative with a lack of trust.</p> <p>Meet 1:1 initially, <i>connection first!</i></p> <p>View <a href="#">[this webinar]</a> or <a href="#">[read this guide]</a> on engaging with municipalities.</p>
Police	<p><i>(May include the above)</i></p> <p>Foster relationships with people who use drugs to improve community outreach and reduce tension.</p>	<p><i>(May include the above)</i></p> <p>Have ongoing meetings with a CAT Coordinator or other member to facilitate ongoing engagement with the team.</p>	<p>Relationships with local police could be maintained 1 on 1.</p> <p>Develop a strategy to safely engage police and peers. You could host designated CAT meetings where peers are aware that police will be participating.</p> <p>Set expectations for an effective dialogue.</p>
<p>First Nations, Métis, and Inuit</p> <p><i>First Nations Health Authority</i></p> <p><i>BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres</i></p> <p><i>Métis Nation BC</i></p>	<p>Determine what the mutual goals of participation with the CAT would be (be aware not to be tokenistic).</p> <p>Better identify substance use supports that may be available.</p> <p>Inform equitable improvements to the cultural safety of those supports.</p> <p>Reduce the stigma of substance use &amp; harm reduction in local Indigenous communities.</p>	<p><i>(May include the above)</i></p> <p>Facilitate connections to local Indigenous people or organizations, including Elders and Knowledge Keepers, who could provide guidance to the CAT.</p>	<p>Are you prepared? Review the Indigenous Engagement and Cultural Safety Guidebook <a href="#">[Engaging &amp; Partnering with Indigenous Communities]</a></p> <p>Meet 1 on 1 initially, <i>connection first!</i></p> <p>Keep the door open and provide an ongoing invitation to engage.</p> <p>For team meetings, review the <a href="#">[Culturally Safe Engagement Guide]</a>.</p>



## Retention

'Retention' is maintaining a CAT member's attendance over time. They may become inconsistent or stop participating. Identify issues your CAT may have with retention, such as:

- Confusion during onboarding and what to expect with the CAT,
- Not all the meetings may seem relevant to all the members,
- The goals and activities of the CAT may no longer align with the member,
- Too many meetings or not enough time to fulfill duties,
- Meetings may not have effective collaboration.

## Ongoing Feedback Processes

- Different types of feedback processes can allow a CAT to identify retention issues for improvement.
- These processes need to make a Coordinator's job easier and more effective, while not increasing their overall burden.

Activity	Description	Resources
Organize a membership list	<p>Come up with your top goal(s) of keeping an updated membership list, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking attendance to check-in with members who have stopped coming.</li> <li>• Targeted invites for specific types of meetings. Group by intermittent members who may wish to attend for only specific topics.</li> <li>• Targeted information sharing in a newsletter.</li> </ul> <p>Develop simple ongoing steps to manage and share this work. For example, a peer could track and update an attendance spreadsheet. Check-in's can be done by experienced members in similar positions, not just by the Coordinator.</p> <p>Identify if certain members are over-burdened with meetings and if they can share attendance with a colleague or a similar partner.</p>	
Start of meeting/ End of meeting feedback	<p>Coordinators can stay around after the meetings and invite anyone who wants to share feedback, 1 on 1.</p> <p>Poll attendees at the end or the start of each meeting, anonymously. Questions could include (strongly agree to strongly disagree):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we collaborate effectively in meetings?</li> <li>• Is the CAT progressing on its goals?</li> <li>• Do you feel safe to participate?</li> <li>• Do you want a check-in with the CAT Coordinator? (Provide your email)</li> </ul>	<p>[<a href="#">Zoom Polls</a>]</p> <p>[<a href="#">Survey Monkey</a>]</p> <p>[<a href="#">Microsoft Forms</a>]</p> <p>[<a href="#">Checkbox Survey Tool</a>]</p> <p>Paper-copy 'Comments Box'</p>



<p>Mid-year survey</p>	<p>A mid-year survey can be used to get more detailed feedback on the progress towards the CAT's goals and the goals of its members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities have led to the most collaboration among CAT members?</li> <li>• What activities have produced the most value to the community?</li> <li>• What specific goals do you want the CAT to support?</li> <li>• How could the CAT improve its collaboration?</li> </ul> <p>Included with the survey could be a newsletter that provides an overview of the past six months of CAT achievements with stories from members.</p>	<p><a href="#">[Surrey CAT Survey Example]</a></p>
<p>Achievement recognition</p>	<p>In meetings, take a moment to highlight the achievements of members. Spotlight any projects or instances of effective collaboration (big or small!). Invite members to share or to recognize each other. Types of achievements to highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training or educational programs completed,</li> <li>• Completed meetings between internal and/or external partners,</li> <li>• Harm reduction program support,</li> <li>• Anti-stigma work with the community.</li> </ul> <p>Record achievements in the meeting notes. These notes can be used in newsletters and for recruitment to the CAT. Tracking and recording achievements may be important for future fundraising. For example, the number of partners attending different CAT meetings may be an important achievement to record.</p>	<p><a href="#">[Cowichan CAT Newsletter Example]</a></p>
<p>Training of members</p>	<p>Based on the ongoing feedback, determine if there are opportunities for members to improve a specific skill or learning together. For example, the CAT could host a <i>lunch &amp; learn</i> on various topics.</p> <p>Peers can be trained to support the activities of the CAT. Have documented step-by-step instructions alongside Coordinator support to share responsibilities.</p>	

## Onboarding New Members

Activity	Description	Resources
1 on 1 onboarding meeting	<p>Before a new member attends a CAT meeting, connect with them 1 on 1. Either the Coordinator or an experienced member could host the meeting (in-person or virtual). A peer can join as well and could be trained to lead these meetings. Foster connection between peers and community partners during onboarding.</p> <p>Connection before content! Get to know each other, be curious and friendly; find shared values. Discuss with them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAT meeting guidelines and how they can participate,</li> <li>• Their goals, and any doubts or aspirations they have about the CAT,</li> <li>• How to provide feedback (invite them to contact you directly with any questions, ideas, or concerns about the CAT).</li> </ul>	
Share new member information package	<p>Determine what information new members should be provided with to increase their confidence in attending meetings and set clear expectations.</p> <p>Send the terms of reference or community agreement that the CAT follows.</p>	[ <a href="#">Surrey CAT Terms of Reference Example</a> ]

### Appendix A - List of potential people and associations a CAT can engage to participate.

Associations <i>People, groups</i>	Descriptions <i>Specific types, roles</i>	Associations <i>People, groups</i>	Descriptions <i>Specific types, roles</i>
Health authority	Public health MHSU	Fire department	Fire chief
Health clinic	OAT prescriber General practitioner	Education	Secondary schools Post-secondary schools
Hospital	Emergency health services	People who use drugs (PWUD)	Income-assisted
Housing	BC Housing Local supportive housing		Unstable housing
Treatment services	Rehabilitation programs Counselling		Men in trades
Police department	Liaison officer		Indigenous LGBT Family members

*The Recruitment & Retention Skill Sheet was co-developed with CAT members as a supportive tool. It is not meant as CAT policy guidance or to set any standards. Questions? Contact us at [substanceuse@healthqualitybc.ca](mailto:substanceuse@healthqualitybc.ca)*