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CAT KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

**Project Summary**

*Anti-Stigma Media & Messaging*

*The aim of this Project Summary is to provide insights to other teams that may want to undertake similar work, so that they can learn from your experience and implement effective projects! Your responses can be brief and bullet pointed.*

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| --- | --- |
| **Title of the project** | Indigenous Harm Reduction Bags |
| **City /organization** | Kamloops, BC. Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society (KAFS) and UWBC. |
| **Contact email** | NatikaB@uwbc.ca |
| **Date of project** | 2021 and continuing into 2022 |
| **Who was involved?** *Roles & responsibilities* | |
| * The Indigenous Team of Wellness Campions (ITWC), which is a sub-committee of the CAT. * KAFS, especially the Indigenous Outreach Worker who is also the Lead of the Indigenous Team of Wellness Campions. * An Indigenous artist who did the bear design for the bags and COVID masks. * Printing company to make the bags. * The CAT committee. | |
| **What was the objective?** *Goals & aims* | |
| * To create multi-use, backpack-style Indigenous harm reduction bags that contained items that were Indigenous-specific (i.e. medicine pouches), but that could also be used appropriately by non-Indigenous folx. * To put together hundreds of culturally appropriate harm reduction bags. Specifically, there were bags for folx who smoke and for folx who inject. * These bags included harm reduction supplies, period supplies, medicine bags (that are made by the ITWC), snacks, articles of clothing (such as socks and toques), water, and an updated list of resources. * To ensure that the imagery of the bags reflected Indigenous expression (i.e. the bear design) and that Indigenous folx could see themselves reflected. * To have this lead by an Indigenous team, with support from an Elder. | |
| **What did you do and what was the effect?** *Resources needed, outputs produced, effects & feedback* | |
| * Distributed the bags to local agencies in Kamloops, as well as were directly given to folx (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who needed them. * The bags were much appreciated by the folx who received them. * It brought the broader CAT collective together, as “many hands, make light work.” Whenever it was time to coordinate making medicine pouches or fill the bags, many members of the CAT showed up to help. It was a great way to gather and get to know each other. | |
| **What worked well?** *Strengths, key drivers & enablers* | |
| * We learned so much from the Elder that attended and from the prayers that were offered. * The whole process was Indigenous-led, and everything was done according to protocol. * The project was inclusive and had all of people in mind when they were put together and distributed. * It was an affordable project with a wide reach. | |
| **What was challenging?** *Less-effective work, barriers & lessons learned* | |
| * It can be a challenge coordinating everyone’s schedule, as usually between 10 – 15 people come to help. * With COVID restrictions especially at the beginning of 2021 and then again in late 2021 (during the Omicron spread), we were not able to meet as a large group. * Storage of the bags is challenging, so the group needs to meet throughout the year, as to keep the number of bags manageable for the storage is available. | |
| **What could you do next?** *Partnerships, spreading & expanding* | |
| * It would be great to include nasal naloxone in the bags, as for now we only have the injectable naloxone kits. A lot people (both substance users and naloxone administrators) have a fear of needles, but the nasal naloxone is expensive to purchase. * It would be great to be able to add a lot more drug testing strips to the bags, but those are expensive as well. * We could expand and create harm reduction bags that are specific to male-identified and female-identified folx. | |
| **Any other learnings to share with fellow Community Action Teams?** | |
| * It’s important to have Indigenous-led projects and it is very special when there is an Elder who is supporting the project. * Indigenous-led projects can be inclusive for everybody, so long as protocols are followed, to avoid cultural appropriation. | |

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