



The Peer Advisory Committee (PAC) is composed of up to 10 individuals who use(d) illicit drugs (PUID) in the context of extreme poverty and precarious housing. This group provides experiential knowledge and perspective as a core aspect of the YES2SCS campaign's application for a Federal exemption to allow SCS services, in the designing of Victoria-specific SCS service delivery model, and to provide peer-designed and peer-delivered community outreach and harm reduction education.

PAC has been meeting since March 6, 2015 and has had seven meetings to date. This time has allowed for the PAC to develop a clear mandate, to develop skills as community leaders and educators, and to develop working relationships with steering committee members of yes2scs in moving forward in campaigning for, and negotiating the conditions for, SCS in Victoria.

Mission statement

We aim to ensure that drug users are included in the entire process of implementing safe consumption services on Vancouver Island, in particular Victoria and surrounding areas. Our intention is to ensure that this inclusion is meaningful, honest and avoids tokenism of drug users. The input of drug users must be included in all aspects of any potential safe consumption services ranging from community discussions and consultations straight through to implementation and service delivery.

The peer advisory committee commits to ensuring we accurately represent the voices of our peers. As a committee we recognize the needs of drug users are diverse and there is not a one size fits all solution however, we will make our best efforts to consistently engage and consult with as much of our community as conceivable. We will earnestly attempt to acknowledge and include the invaluable experience, opinions and concerns of our peers in all aspects of representation and work that we engage in.

How the PAC is making a difference

Based on lived experience, PUID are best-positioned to communicate the necessity of harm reduction and the establishment of a supervised consumption site as life saving health care.

Building organizing capacity is a core component in creating conditions for effective self-representation and meaningful involvement in decision-making.

First, meetings of the PAC every two weeks provides an opportunity for capacity-building, skill-sharing and education as means of strengthening the collective voice of people who use illicit drugs. This will provide opportunities for meaningful engagement, first with the steering committee in creating applications for SCS, and then in direct negotiations and dialogue with core city stakeholders in the next two years of planning for SCS in Victoria.

Second, PAC members are skill-sharing and training in presentation and media skills to enable people who use illicit drugs to represent themselves in the campaign for SCS. PAC members are doing presentations on the need for SCS to local organizations in Victoria as a way of both building capacity among the PAC and creating spaces for de-stigmatizing dialogue between service users and non-service users in Victoria.

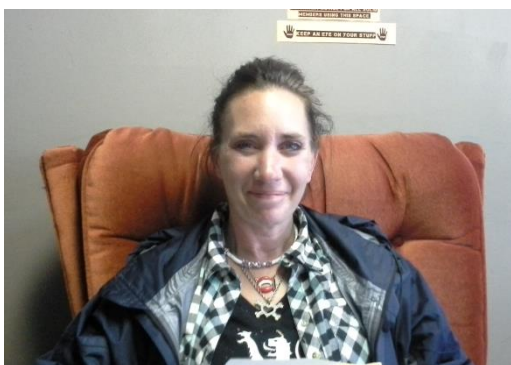
After preliminary presentations at VIPIRG, AVI, SOLID, PEERS, Christ Church Cathedral, the Unitarian Church, and the Cap on Discrimination working group, the PAC has revised their presentations to best represent their intention to provide peer experiential knowledge. At this time, PAC is in the process of connecting with various groups and organizations to provide education on the importance of establishing a supervised consumption site through the revised presentations.



Katt ~ “Working with the Peer Advisory Committee has been a good support for me being a past user wanting to make an impact on decisions or [be] part of the process”

Accomplishments to date

- The PAC has developed their own logo foregrounding their presence as a unique and essential perspective within the YES2SCS campaign.
- The group has identified the importance of building capacity and support among PUID in order to ensure peers are included in decision-making processes as well as the implementation of practices and programs that affect their community. PAC reps have engaged in two media training sessions alongside yes2scs steering committee members.
- The PAC is organizing their first community outreach event for PUID to take place during the “Street Deaths are Preventable Week”. On Friday May 19, 2015 PAC will host a barbeque and needle clean up at the “Whale Wall” located in the downtown inner harbor. The event will allow for PAC to identify themselves as a group to the PUID community and establish connections and strengthen networks so to ensure sustained accountability to peers through committed lines of connection.



Cindy ~ “The Committee has and is made up of a range of different personalities and family unit friendships. It allows me to use my artistic gifts, open-mindedness, and compassion. I would be very disappointed if this committee came to an end. I truly believe that this committee still can benefit our society and make a huge difference in lives. I’m proud to be given the opportunity to live out my dreams and save, educate and change people’s lives”



Sheldon ~ “The peer advisory committee has given me the opportunity to be punctual, on time, [and] on task. The Advisory Committee has helped me with my listening skills, patience, and tolerance”

Katie ~ “As the facilitator of the PAC I feel incredibly privileged to work with some of the most profoundly thoughtful, intelligent and strong group of people I have had the opportunity to encounter. The PAC is providing a safe space for drug users to voice their opinions and directly impact the issue of Safe Consumption Services and the yes2scs campaign in Victoria, an issue that is obviously very near and dear to the heart of all of our participants. Not only does it allow for the committee to engage in issues surrounding safe consumption services it has allowed for leaders from the drug using community to emerge, learn new skills and find opportunities for growth. The PAC is helping to build self-esteem and capacity of the participants. In addition to working on the yes2scs campaign our members have had the opportunity to learn facilitation skills, communications/active listening skills, giving presentations and some are doing media training as well. The PAC is giving people purpose, tangible transferable skills and is providing an invaluable service not only to the drug using community but the community at large.”

See budget to date attached below