

# Mental Health & Substance Use Update

## ***Collaborative Innovation: New Assisted Living Model Integrates Mental Health Support at Hillside Terrace***



Community Health Services (CHS) and Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU) have partnered to launch a pioneering Assisted Living model at Hillside Terrace, operated by the Cool Aid Society. This innovative approach integrates MHSU support to enhance opportunities for individuals with physical and medical care needs and their MHSU needs. Key enhancements include onsite MHSU clinicians, specialized group programs, and inter-departmental training opportunities. CHS and MHSU's case management team and Cool Aid's operators meet weekly, with leadership attending every few weeks to ensure residents' care needs are proactively identified and addressed.

The MHSU clinicians are responsible for:

- Increasing access and reducing barriers for CHS staff to complete ADL tasks.
- Providing case management for mental health, substance use, and behaviour care planning support needs.
- Making referrals to other MHSU services.

This new care model is a unique and relatively new approach in BC. Island Health's work was featured at the 6th BC Centre on Substance Use conference, where Nanette Breker (MHSU) and Sarah Westgate (CHS) showcased their pioneering work in assisted living. They highlighted that the unique approach is one of the first within British Columbia.

A thorough evaluation will refine this model, hoping to expand for a future outreach consultant team for assisted living. Additionally, work is underway to introduce an MHSU education passport to support CHS staff in tracking training progress for de-escalation techniques, trauma-informed care, and harm reduction. This initiative aims to enhance collaboration and bridge services between CHS and MHSU, ensuring they meet the community's evolving needs through education and increased cooperation.

[Click here to read more about the conference!](#)

## Nanaimo's Drop-In Counselling

The counselling clinic at Island Health's Brooks Landing in Nanaimo has changed its name! Previously known as **the Crisis Counselling Clinic**, the new clinic is called **Drop-in Counselling Clinic (DCC)**. This rebranding aims to create a more welcoming environment where clients feel comfortable seeking support without concerns about crisis labels. The DCC is part of a priority goal by Island Health to improve access to counselling services.

Same-day access/drop-in counselling is a vital service for clients experiencing urgent or crisis mental health support that require same-day access but do not require an Emergency Department or Psychiatric Emergency Services. Visit the Drop-in Counselling Clinic remains vital for individuals experiencing crises or seeking mental health support. Client surveys have shown positive feedback, reflecting gratitude for the service and welcoming environment.

No referral is needed to access this service. The Nanaimo drop-in clinical and same-day walk-in services in MHSU offices across Island Health provide support for issues such as anxiety, depression, life stressors, suicidal thoughts, grief, and mental health concerns, welcoming individuals of all ages. Sessions are available Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., with flexibility for multiple visits as needed.

For more details about Drop-in Counselling Clinic services, please get in touch with 250-739-5710.

### **Mental Health & Substance Use Support is a Call Away**

**Service Link** is an information line for individuals seeking mental health and substance use services across the Island Health region. Anyone can phone Service Link any day of the week from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm to speak with a call taker: 1-888-885-8824.

**Service Link** provides information and service navigation; **Service Link** is not a crisis intervention or referral service.

Visit Island Health's updated MHSU webpages: **Mental Health & Substance Use Services** (<https://www.islandhealth.ca/mhsu>)



## National Indigenous Peoples Day

Throughout June, Island Health celebrated National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, culminating in special events to mark the occasion. The focus during the month, day, and every month in Island Health is on promoting gratitude and cultural humility among our staff. The MHSU division celebrated the day in various ways. For example, the Indigenous Outreach Team attended the Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations at Royal Roads University. Events throughout the day included:

- Lekwungen Traditional Dancers and Singers
- Traditional canoe landing protocol practice
- Joyful Jiggers, Ribbon Skirt Dancers and more!

Please check out [MHSU's Cultural Allyship](#) page for more resources towards your cultural safety & humility journey.

## PIP >>>> SPRUCE

I'm excited to share an update on Nanaimo's substance use parenting support program. **Formerly 'Partners in Parenting (PIP),' it's now 'SPRUCE – Substance Use Parent Services.'** SPRUCE provides counselling, case management, and outreach to pregnant or parenting individuals navigating substance use challenges. The program is flexible, tailored to diverse needs, and collaborates closely with support networks. Recent efforts focus on enhancing outreach and service delivery to improve engagement and retention.

The name change to SPRUCE: Substance Use Parent Services aims to reflect the services inclusively, with 'SPRUCE' offering a discreet option. The program addresses substance use stigma to ensure accessibility. 'SPRUCE' symbolizes resilience and strength, qualities embraced by all clients.

Referrals to SPRUCE can be made by community members, agencies, Island Health teams, or directly by clients. Contact the MHSU Barons Road office at 250-739-5880, attend drop-in Intake Services at MHSU Brooks Landing, or call 250-755-5710 for more information.

