

## Local Leadership United (LLU):

### Elected officials are invited to participate in a facilitated dialogue about healthy communities & the Unregulated Drug Poisoning Crisis.

Dear Representatives and City Staff,

We recognize that local governments are uniquely positioned to lead public conversations and galvanize efforts to reduce substance-related harms in their communities. Great work has been happening at the local level to respond to Unregulated Drug Poisoning Crisis, alongside other major challenges (i.e. homelessness, COVID-19, climate events). To support your community's ongoing efforts, elected officials are invited to participate in a regional convening of local governments and local health resources from your region.

This free event is part of a provincial project delivered through a partnership between Community Action Initiative (CAI) and the British Columbia Centre for Disease control (BCCDC). Since April 2022, Local Leadership United (LLU) has engaged over 50 local governments across BC at in-person dialogue events. LLU also presented at the UBCM AGM, the Metro Vancouver Mayor's table, and is providing training to bylaw, other first responders and service providers across the province. Facilitated by a team of experienced harm reduction & community health educators, LLU dialogues provide a supportive, safe-space for leaders who are interested or engaged in harm reduction and overdose prevention efforts to grow their knowledge, skills, and to network with the local resources who can support their work. We also discuss how harm reduction is interconnected with local government mandates and an approach that supports success with respect to larger goals (i.e., public safety, homelessness).

An agenda is attached below.

*"I have learned how much I don't know. I am so proud of all the work happening in our community and know we can get through this together"* – City Councillor at close of the LLU Northeast event

*"It has been so supportive to have a third party hold neutral, safe space for these tough conversations. Relationships have been formed and strengthened, and we are excited for where new partnerships will take us"* – Partners at Fraser Health after three LLU events in the region

Date: October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 9:00am -4:00pm

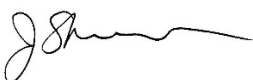
Location: Prestige Beach House Kelowna, 1675 Abbott St, Kelowna, BC V1Y 8S3

To register, visit [llukelowna.eventbrite.ca](https://llukelowna.eventbrite.ca).

We can offer \$0.68/km in mileage to cover travel to and from the event. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss the project further, please reach out to our Project Manager, Noah Chalifoux, [nchalifoux@caibc.ca](mailto:nchalifoux@caibc.ca).

Thank you for taking the time to read this invitation and we hope to see you at our event!

Most sincerely,



Janine Stevenson,  
Director of Strategic Initiatives & Special Projects, Community Action Initiative (CAI)

# Local Leadership United (LLU): Regional Dialogue

## Healthy Communities and the Overdose Crisis

### Agenda

*Coffee & Light Breakfast Welcome (9:00-9:30)*

Introductions (9:30)

Update on the Provincial Overdose Crisis/Response

History of Prohibition

Harm Reduction – What've you heard?

Introduction to Local Resources & Community Action Team (CAT)

**Lunch & Networking Time (12:00)**

How does Harm Reduction fit into your Larger Mandates?

Protected Strategy & Networking Time with Local Resources

**Closing Circle (end by 4:00)**



# LLU

Local Leadership United  
Harm Reduction & Overdose Prevention

*Supporting Locally-Driven  
Wellness, Across BC*

Get in touch:  
[nchalifoux@caibc.ca](mailto:nchalifoux@caibc.ca)

## LLU Intro and Local Resource Invitation

Local Leadership United (LLU) is a provincial project meant to support Local Governments in growing the work communities are already doing to respond to the Unregulated Drug Poisoning Crisis. The project was created by the BC Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC), through a partnership between Community Action Initiative (CAI) and the BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC), in recognition that Local Governments are uniquely positioned to support community response to the Unregulated Drug Poisoning Crisis. Since April 2022, LLU has been hosting regional convenings with Local Governments and relevant stakeholders across BC, including in the Interior (4), Northern Health (4), Island Health (3), Coastal Health (2) and Fraser Health (3). LLU has also supported training of bylaw officers, city staff, Community Action Teams (CATs), and presented at the UBCM AGM, Metro Vancouver Mayor's Table and supported other online engagements with local governments. In June 2023, LLU hosted a provincial convening of the LLU members we have engaged across the province, including representation from 29 local governments. LLU regional dialogues provide:

- An opportunity for elected officials to learn more about harm reduction, overdose prevention, the toxic drug crisis and the good work already being done in their local context and in other communities.
- Facilitated conversations about how harm reduction fits into larger municipal mandates (ie. housing, public safety, economic development) and how it can be used to support broader goals locally.
- Provide an opportunity for elected officials to connect with their local resources, including Harm Reduction Coordinators/Healthy Community Teams/Mental Health and Substance Use Teams at the Health Authorities, community-based organizations who are leaders in harm reduction, and other important stakeholders.
- Protected time for elected officials and their local resources to plan/strategize around their local priorities with respect to harm reduction and overdose prevention.
- Support local networks of leaders working on harm reduction/overdose prevention.
- Give a voice to elected officials and communities across BC with respect to the Unregulated Drug Poisoning Crisis and the challenges faced at the local level – our team reports back to the OERC regularly and a comprehensive evaluation plan is in place to capture learning from dialogue sessions.

**Date:** October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 9:00am - 4:00pm

**Location:** Prestige Beach House Kelowna, 1675 Abbott St, Kelowna, BC V1Y 8S3

**Point of contact:** Noah Chalifoux, Project Manager, email: [nchalifoux@caibc.ca](mailto:nchalifoux@caibc.ca), cell: (647) 406-0575

### We would like you to:

- Join us for a dialogue session with elected officials from the region and participate in the conversation
- Participate in an informal networking activity with elected officials in which you will:
  - Introduce your work and how you may support/work with them.
  - Describe the best way to reach you and decide together how you might stay in touch (bring business cards if you can).
- Join us for Lunch/networking time
- Participate in protected strategy and planning time with elected officials around how harm reduction can be applied to support their broader mandates and work with respect to substance use.
- If attending, please advise of any dietary restrictions or other accessibility needs, and don't hesitate to reach out to Noah with any questions

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** Since the dialogue sessions are aimed at supporting relationships and the conversation builds through the day, it is important that resources attend the full session.

# Local Leadership United (LLU): Harm Reduction & Overdose Prevention

## Background & Introduction

In April 2016, the province of BC declared a public health emergency in response to an alarming increase in overdose deaths. Sadly, the latest [coroner report](#) reveals that the unregulated drug poisoning crisis continues, with an unprecedented death rate of 6 people dying each day and over 10,000 dead in BC since 2016.

As part of the provincial overdose response, there has been an unparalleled investment in community-based harm reduction services, which are proven to save the lives of those at highest risk of substance-related harms. In BC, research has shown that scaling up community-based naloxone distribution, supervised consumption sites, overdose prevention sites, harm reduction education and outreach services has saved countless lives: modeling data suggests that from April 2016 to December 2017 alone, over 3,000 deaths were prevented by these interventions. Since 2018, Community Action Initiative (CAI) has supported community overdose response through the Community Action Team Grants (CATs), which help communities build partnerships and action-oriented strategies for local overdose response.

Since spring 2021, a provincial project, Local Leadership United (LLU), has provided further support to the great work happening at the local level. LLU holds neutral space for local governments to dialogue about the unregulated drug poisoning crisis, harm reduction and their unique role in supporting local response alongside local health resources. CAI is partnered with the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC) to deliver this support to local governments. As of February 2023, 14 regional dialogues have taken place with elected officials in Northern Health (4), Interior Health (4), Vancouver Coastal Health (2), Island Health (3) and Fraser Health (3). In June 2023, LLU convened 70 members of local government, health authority staff and service providers who had attended LLU dialogues in their region. LLU has also facilitated capacity building events with CATs (3), provided harm reduction trainings for municipal bylaw (3) and held numerous online engagements with local government, community and health partners from around the province.

## Project Goals

LLU supports work happening at the local level through collaborative dialogues with local governments and the harm reduction resources who can support their work. Using a world café style of engagement, elected officials will learn about harm reduction and its utility with respect to the unregulated drug poisoning crisis, broader community well-being, public safety, and other local government priorities. In the wake of the pandemic and municipal elections last fall, LLU dialogues provide an opportunity for elected officials and harm reduction resources to come together in-person. Our goal is to grow shared understanding and supportive partnerships between health authorities, community-based organizations, and local governments, who all have unique roles to play in building healthy and resilient communities.

We have been working to:

- **Build local capacity, knowledge, and relationships**, with a focus on relationships between elected officials and harm reduction resources in their communities.
- **Support a commitment to change** that values harm reduction and upholds the importance of engaging those most impacted by overdose as a reciprocal and on-going relationship between local governments, PWLLE and community-based organizations.
- **Ensure an equitable and supportive processes:** Follow and be guided by the principles of Appreciative Inquiry, Harm Reduction, and Cultural Humility (See Appendix A).
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- **Bring forward the voices of local leadership:** Recognizing that the solutions to these complex problems come from the local champions engaged in the work, we regularly report back to our health partners on our learning through LLU engagements and an evaluation plan is in place to document key findings.

## Approach

Over the past year and a half, LLU has supported local governments by hosting small regional dialogues (max 25 participants, including 6-8 harm reduction resources from the region). Harm reduction resources from the health authorities and community-based organizations participate in the conversation and are given protected time to describe their work and how they can support elected officials with respect to substance use related challenges. Health authority, local government and community partners have all expressed the value of having a third-party hold neutral space for open dialogue. The dialogues are half-day sessions that focus on identifying shared values and relationships between elected officials and the local resources who can support their work and messaging with respect to harm reduction. The local resources typically include:

- Key frontline health authority partners
  - Harm Reduction teams
  - Mental Health and Substance Use teams
  - Healthy Community teams
  - Medical Health Officers (in some regions)
- Community-based organizations providing frontline harm reduction services in the region.
- PWLLE who can shoulder challenging conversations with elected officials, who often come to dialogues with misconceptions about substance use and harm reduction.

An overview of the dialogue is provided below. The success of LLU in facilitating often challenging conversations lies in our focus on the values & principles of harm reduction that can guide our work. We also develop a conversation about the specific role of local governments in overdose response, provide tangible examples/success stories and demonstrate how harm reduction can support their goals with respect to broader municipal mandates (i.e., public safety, homelessness, community engagement & well-being). The most important part of the day is the protected time for elected officials to meet the local resources in the room and strategize around how they can work together. An evaluation plan is in place, including a pre/post dialogue survey and thematic analysis of the conversations that take place.

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| <b>LLU Regional Convening Overview</b>   |
| Introductions in Circle  |
| Why we are here - Update on the Provincial Unregulated Drug Poisoning Crisis & Response  |
| Harm Reduction – What’ve you heard? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous Perspectives on Harm Reduction and Connection to Truth &amp; Reconciliation</li> </ul> |
| How did we get here? – The History of Prohibition  |
| Introduction to Local Resources  |
| Catered Lunch & Networking Time  |
| How does harm reduction fit into broader municipal mandates?   |
| Protected Strategy & Networking Time with Local Resources  |

## Appendix A: Methods of Dialogue

Adapted from: <https://www.artofhosting.org/home/>

### The Circle Way

We would like to acknowledge that we are borrowing from Indigenous traditions to start important conversations in circle. Circles support the inclusion of all in an equal way and establishes safety and solidifies ground rules for the anticipated work ahead. We will start the dialogue in circle and end in circle. We will end the dialogue in circle so that everyone has the opportunity to reflect on the work.

### Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a method that allows people to focus on the positive. It acknowledges the importance of naming the problem but then moving to describing and defining what is working and then building on the success of that.

## References

BC Centre on Disease Control. *Do Harm Reduction Efforts Save Lives in B.C.?* Factsheet. Vancouver: BC. N.d.: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Documents/BCCDC\\_factsheet\\_harm\\_reduction.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Documents/BCCDC_factsheet_harm_reduction.pdf)

BC Centre on Disease Control. Overdose Emergency Response Centre: Terms of Reference. Vancouver. BC. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/overdose-awareness/terms\\_of\\_reference\\_nov\\_30\\_final.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/overdose-awareness/terms_of_reference_nov_30_final.pdf)

BC Centre on Disease Control. B.C. deaths averted summary: British Columbia report. Unpublished data. See: Irvine, M., et al. (2019). Modelling the combined impact of interventions in averting deaths during synthetic-opioid overdose epidemic. *Addiction*. 2019. 114, 9, pp. 1602-1613.

BC Coroners Service. Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths in BC. N.d.: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf>

Cram, F. *Appreciative inquiry*. *Mai Review* 3(1), 3: 1–13 (2010). [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fiona-Cram/publication/231135895\\_Appreciative\\_Inquiry/links/09e41511217a02ed93000000/Appreciative-Inquiry.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fiona-Cram/publication/231135895_Appreciative_Inquiry/links/09e41511217a02ed93000000/Appreciative-Inquiry.pdf)

Ministry of Health, Government of BC. *Provincial Health Officer Declares Public Health Emergency*. News Release. Victoria, BC: BC Ministry of Health: 2016. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016HLTH0026-000568>

The Center for Appreciative Inquiry. *What is Appreciative Inquiry (AI)?* N.d. <https://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/more-on-ai/what-is-appreciative-inquiry-ai/>