

A Look at Outcomes...

Promoting leadership in low-threshold community Harm Reduction Community Harm Reduction Response Teams (CHRRT) Project

Street Health, Toronto



Overview of the CHRRT Project

- CHRRT was a partnership of ten health and social service organizations in Toronto neighbourhoods
- The project aimed to employ marginalized people who use substances in low-barrier community Harm Reduction
- CHRRT started with a participatory, entry level HR training program led by folks from the community
- The trainees then transitioned to paid part-time Harm Reduction Support Worker (HRSW) jobs with partner organizations



Partner Role

- 10 diverse partner agencies
- Organizations hire and supervise 2 HRSWs each in a range of roles

Program Resource Group

- Community leaders and researchers guide a community learning process

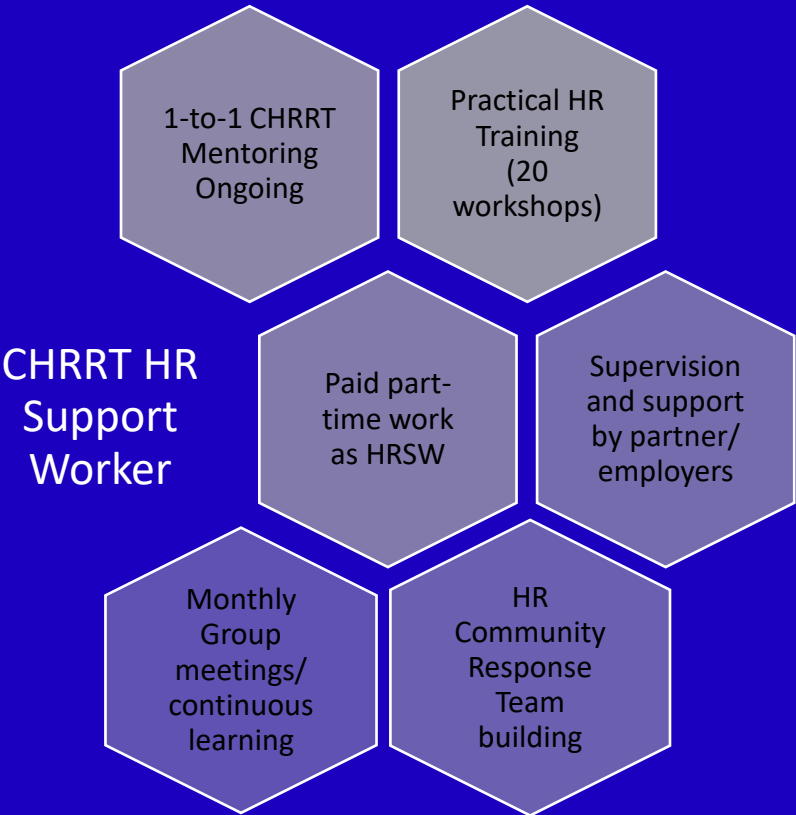
CHRRT Partners

- Agincourt Community Services Assn.
- Dixon Hall
- Fred Victor
- Maggie's
- Parkdale Queen West CHC
- PASAN
- Regent Park CHC
- Sistering
- Street Health (Anchor)
- Ve'ahavta

CHRRT Training content

- Harm Reduction 101
- HR, sex work and sexual health
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- OD prevention and Naloxone training
- HIV/AIDS/HCV/STIs
- Service user engagement, support and referral
- Diversity and Anti-Opression in practice
- Scenario and problem solving
- Drugs 101
- Boundaries and self-disclosure
- Ethics, confidentiality and social media
- Managing work stress and overload
- Trauma
- Restorative justice
- Transitioning to work as an HRSW
- Mental Health
- Dealing with the police
- Shift tracking data collection
- Graduation

The model included many supports to HR Support Workers



Participating HRSWs

- 32 diverse, talented people from the community
- All had lived experience of hardship and substance use



A Look at Outcomes... Pre-Pandemic - 2019

Reaching people in need
Low-threshold community Harm Reduction
Community Harm Reduction Response Teams (CHRRT) Project

Street Health, Toronto

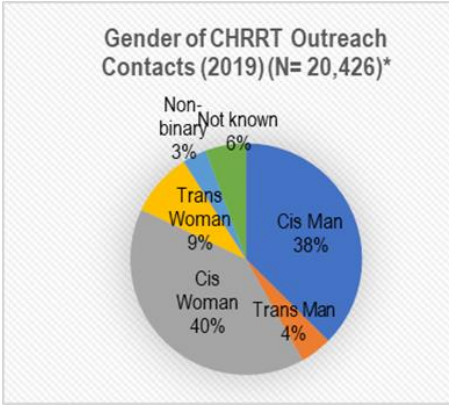


CHRRT HR Support Workers (HRSWs) reached large numbers of people across Toronto neighbourhoods

- 32 trained HRSWs
- 1010 documented CHRRT shifts

Scale:

- Reaching 20,426 diverse people in the community
- Multiple Toronto neighbourhoods

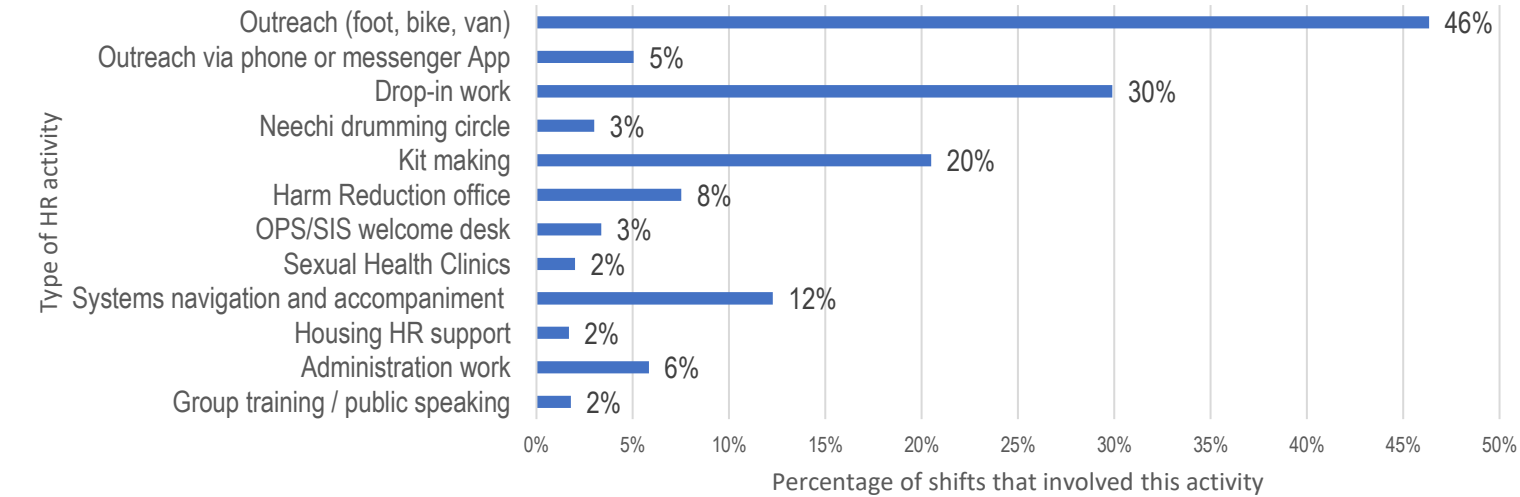


“Harm Reduction work offers people a constructive and engaging, different pathway to change and self-care that builds on their lived experience and expertise.”

(Community leader)

CHRRT workers took on a range of HR activities.
They started at entry level and then took on more responsible roles

CHRRT HRSW Work - HR activities as % of Shifts at 10 Partner Organizations - Pre-Pandemic 2019 (N=1010 Shifts)



Lifesaving Results – An overview of community outcomes

Harm Reduction promotes health, safety and wellbeing

HRSWs are natruals. Anecdotal evidence widely confirmed the health promotion and lifesaving nature of this work.

CHRRT HRSWs have distributed kits for safer use, promoted safer use practices and behaviours, raised awareness of toxic drug supply and drawn attention to the dangers of using alone.

“It’s about one drug user spotting another drug user and offering support... this is the nature of being a peer.” (CHRRT HR worker)



HR information, Education and Response

CHRRT 2019 Shift Tracking Data for ten sites

HRSWs connected to folks in the community:

- 4216 - Talked about Harm Reduction or safer use
- 382 - Showed someone how to use Naloxone
- 2188 - Talked about safer sex/sexual health
- 18 - Responded to an overdose

A Look at Outcomes... Pre-Pandemic - 2019

Reaching people in need
Low-threshold community Harm Reduction
Community Harm Reduction Response Teams (CHRRT) Project

Street Health, Toronto



Strong relationships with HRSWs promote access to low-threshold services

It is difficult to break through barriers and develop rapport with people. Often, it will take some time for them to open up and feel comfortable: they gradually deepen their relationship with folks. HRSWs understand that people’s moods fluctuate and that they will not always be at their best.

Relationship Building Process

CHRRT 2019 Shift Tracking data for 10 sites

- HRSWs connected to folks in the community:
- 7089 - Building rapport
 - 4336 - Having a supportive conversation
 - 229 - De-escalation or crisis intervention

“Folks just need someone to talk to.”
(CHRRT HRSW)



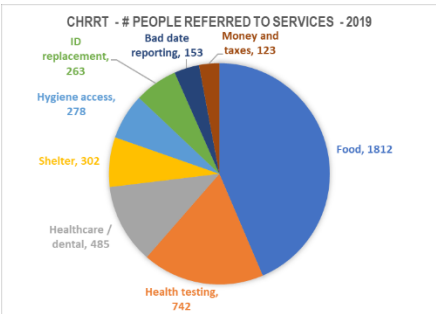
Basic needs and HR supplies for people in ‘survival mode’ are a key entry point for services

- “We seem to be in a time when kindness becomes an act of social justice. It is so absent from people's experience on the street. If they experience kindness from people, it is remarkable to them.” (Partner)

HR Supplies handed out by CHRRT HRSWs
CHRRT 2019 Shift Tracking Data for ten sites

- HRSWs connected to folks in the community:
- Gave basic needs supplies
 - Gave harm reduction supplies
 - Gave safe-sex supplies
 - Gave out a Naloxone kit

HRSWs streamline referrals, making it more likely that people will use them



“Our community HR workers are real assets ... they are involved in all of our projects at different levels. They do a tremendous job: they make connections with new people and provide resources; they have increased the accessibility of participants to HR supplies.” (Partner)

Further Findings

- HRSW’s ‘lived experience’ of poverty, stigma and substance use is a key factor in the success of low-threshold HR
 - “People ask me why I am still involved in this community since I am not homeless or using now. This is my community who supported me when I needed them and gave me resources. This is my way of giving back. It is my lifelong destiny to bring a voice to those that don’t have one exactly right now.” (CHRRT HRSW)
- Low-threshold HR takes a trauma-informed approach to build the resilience of service users and HRSWs. It is highly specialized, work that requires an activist, social justice perspective.
- HRSWs have been important source of community learning and resource in supporting innovative low-threshold HR responses.



FIGURE 1 - THE CHRRT TEAM NAMES THE QUALITIES REQUIRED TO DO HR WORK

