

A group of four people are standing in a field of tall grass, holding hands in a circle. They are silhouetted against a bright sun that is low in the sky, creating a strong lens flare. On either side of the group are large, woven baskets or baskets made of natural materials. The person in the center is wearing a blue and white patterned dress and holding a small drum. The person on the right is wearing a dark jacket and a hat. The person on the left is wearing a blue shirt and a hat. The person on the far left is wearing a white shirt and dark pants. The ground is covered in dry, yellowish grass. The overall mood is peaceful and communal.

STRONG MEDICINE GUIDE

Hosting a Gathering
and Discussion



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Honouring the Story Sharers

WE RESPECTFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE all First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, families and communities who have been impacted by HIV and all the participants in *Strong Medicine* who graciously shared their time and stories, so we may draw from their courage, strength and wisdom:

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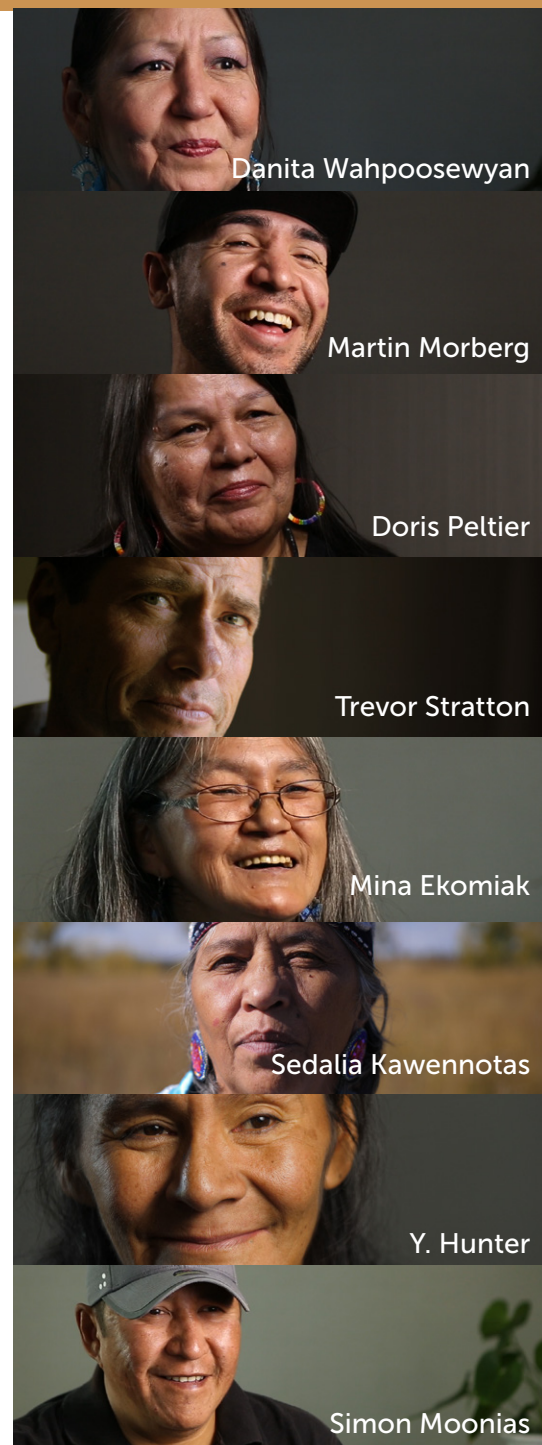
Mina Ekomiak, Chisasibi, James Bay, Northern Quebec

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Y. Hunter, Ojibway, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Simon Moonias, Thunder Bay, Ontario

WE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE this guide does not represent the views of all Indigenous people and cultures. Often there can be a misconception that a reference to Indigenous people or culture includes all of the various groups and communities there are on Turtle Island. However, it is important to be aware of and acknowledge the diversity that exists in First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures. That diversity is what communities and nations are working hard to preserve and revitalize.



Sharing the Stories

STRONG MEDICINE is a powerful 27-minute educational film featuring seven Indigenous people living with HIV and one Indigenous Elder. It was developed by the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) and CATIE with the guidance of community input.

Through their stories, the film's participants share how they have learned to weave Western medicine with cultural teachings. From their reactions to learning of their HIV status to their messages about the importance of HIV testing and treatment, we hear how their connection with their culture and traditions are helping them find balance in their lives.

A Kahnawake (Mohawk Territory Tio'tia:ke, Montreal, Quebec) Elder leads the group in ceremony and shares her views on the conversation. Sharing this film is a way for people to connect with the teachings and have meaningful discussion in a way that will help influence positive change for individuals, families and communities.

The film has three chapters, which can be viewed together or separately. Chapter 1: Sharing Strength; Chapter 2: Treat Us Well; Chapter 3: Culture Matters.



Revitalizing Teachings

FOR TIME IMMEMORIAL, Indigenous people have gathered to share knowledge and stories, to make decisions together and to recognize each other as valuable members of a community.

There is strength and power in this way of gathering and sharing. Everyone is welcome and respected; all voices have a chance to be heard and treated equally. It is important that this way of gathering is revitalized so everyone feels included and there can be a true sense of community. Especially when discussing sensitive topics such as HIV.

Traditionally, hosting a gathering in community meant everyone worked together to make sure everything was taken care of; everyone had a role and worked toward creating the space for people to gather together. This concept of teamwork is an important teaching to acknowledge and revitalize.



Everyone is welcome and respected; all voices have a chance to be heard and treated equally.

THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU take a respectful approach to creating safe space that will allow for empowering and thoughtful conversation about HIV. It includes practical tools that will be helpful to people who are planning a gathering for the first time and for people who have experience in hosting gatherings.

A “successful gathering” will encourage personal reflection and promote positive change. The guide is set up so those hosting the event can pick and choose what is useful. It is meant to be customizable to your event, so it fits your specific group and intention(s). Feel free to take only what is needed and leave the rest!

The film and guide can be used to encourage discussions with a variety of groups. Whether you’re a member of a team that works in a rural health centre or in an urban-based organization that provides HIV/AIDS services to Indigenous people, your team can use this guide to create space for discussions.

For more information and to view the film, please visit:
www.catie.ca/strongmedicine



***A “successful gathering”
will encourage personal
reflection and promote
positive change.***

Being Thoughtful

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE THOUGHTFUL about what this work will look like for you and your team/organization/community. Just as it is important to be respectful of the significance of cultural teachings, it is important to be respectful of the way that this work is done. Often this is called “*working in a good way*.” But what does that phrase mean and how does it apply here?

It is a phrase that is used often but can mean different things to different people. In the context of this work, which weaves together cultural and biomedical teachings, working in a good way means being respectful, inclusive and collaborative in a meaningful way.

For non-Indigenous organizations, being inclusive means encouraging involvement of Indigenous people and/or organizations throughout the process of planning and hosting a gathering. It is important to encourage involvement outside of the usual requests for local Indigenous people or elders to open and close the event with words or prayers.

Working as a team in a truly collaborative way will help all those involved to learn and contribute in a way that is impactful for everyone. The team/organization hosting the event should discuss what that would look like for them, be thoughtful about who to involve and be prepared to put some energy and time into developing meaningful relationships.

For Indigenous teams/organizations, it is important to understand that the teachings in the film, and those that may be talked about during your discussions after the film, may be different or new to you. Being inclusive in those situations means being open to all teachings. Many cultures and communities are working hard to revitalize teachings, roles and ceremony. For many, sharing those teachings is part of the process. The diversity within Indigenous communities and cultures should be honoured and acknowledged.

If there are teachings that you or your team carry that you wish to share, think about how you can do that “in a good way.” Work as a team to decide what that would look like and collaborate with other communities/organizations when/if needed. These conversations are important and can be very impactful for those involved.



Walking in Two Worlds

THE IDEAS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS are very personal for people and can mean different things depending on your individual beliefs and needs. It can mean embracing a variety of teachings and knowledge based on those needs and beliefs. Often it can feel like walking in two worlds for people who acknowledge the importance of cultural teachings as well as western knowledge of the physical body.

In *Strong Medicine* the story sharers talk about what that's like for them, weaving together cultural teachings and western knowledge of HIV testing and treatment. They encourage people to get tested for HIV and to start, resume or stay on HIV treatment for their own health as well as to incorporate culture and ceremony into their lives to help balance physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.



Often it can feel like walking in two worlds for people who acknowledge the importance of cultural teachings as well as Western knowledge of the physical body.



KEY THEMES FROM THE CHAPTERS:

THEMES CAN BE USED TO HELP YOU plan a screening and discussion. They can help you and your team to decide which messages are most important to discuss with your participants or prepare you for ideas that may emerge in a discussion.

Chapter 1: Sharing Strength

Spirit

Resilience

Hope

Reflection

Family

Support

Chapter 2: Treat us Well

Testing

Treatment

Stigma

Adherence

No shame

Relationships

Chapter 3: Culture Matters

Giving thanks

Strong medicine

Respect

Knowledge

Teachings

Humility

Balance

Spirituality

Love

Humor

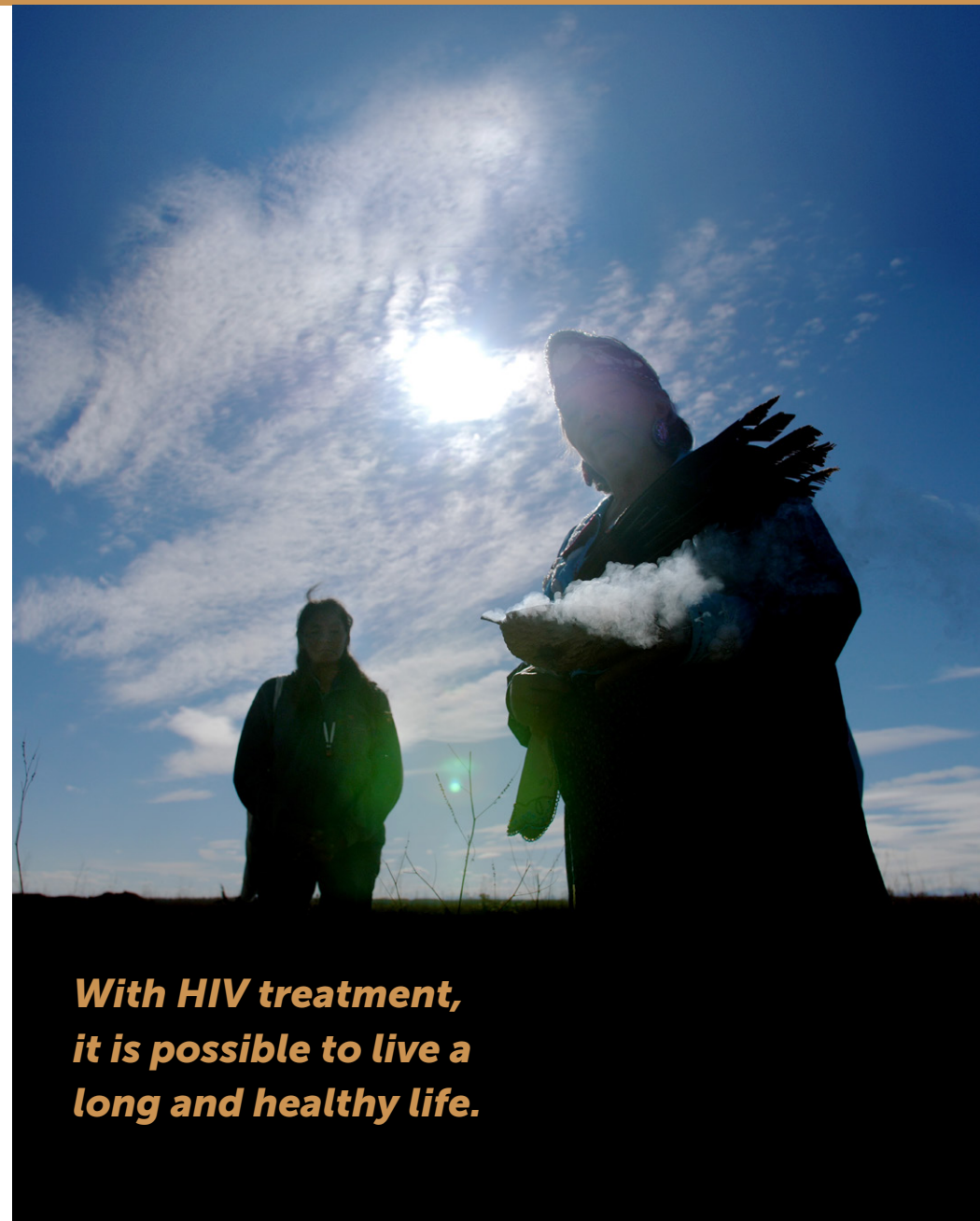
Healing

KEY BIOMEDICAL KNOWLEDGE SHARED:

- HIV is a chronic, manageable illness.
- Newer HIV treatments have few or no side effects.
- With HIV treatment, it is possible to live a long and healthy life.
- Testing is the only way to know if you have HIV.
- Regular testing and early treatment are very important for a person's health.
- HIV medication needs to be taken exactly as prescribed in order to work.
- HIV treatment is important for preventing the spread of HIV.
- Effective treatment can reduce a person's viral load to undetectable levels, which prevents sexual transmission of HIV (undetectable = untransmittable or U=U).

For some people, Western knowledge about HIV can seem overwhelming and might be seen as a reason to not have discussions or be part of a team organizing a gathering. **You don't need to be an expert in HIV** to hold space for learning and discussion to happen.

For anyone feeling that they need more information on the Western biomedical messages, there are always resources available and information that can be reviewed before the gathering or anytime along the way. Don't let that be a reason to not do this work.



***With HIV treatment,
it is possible to live a
long and healthy life.***

Being Intentional

TEAMS SHOULD BE MADE UP of people who are willing and able to help plan and complete tasks that will make the gathering a success. As a team, it will be important to think about the best way to set up a gathering to view and discuss the *Strong Medicine* film.

Together, think about and discuss why you want to show *Strong Medicine* to your group or community. What are you hoping to accomplish? What are your intentions for having this conversation? These questions will help you decide on the best approach to take for your organization/community.





Possible intentions for hosting a gathering:

- To generate discussion and promote awareness and a greater understanding of HIV testing and treatment.
- To highlight Indigenous experiences of health and wellness through the stories of HIV-positive Indigenous people who, in their own words, share their journeys and teachings.
- To highlight how antiretroviral medication, combined with cultural practices, can help Indigenous people living with HIV find balance in their lives.
- To share the teachings of the individuals involved in the film to inspire those living with HIV.
- To promote meaningful engagement, inclusion, and celebration for people living with HIV, their families and their communities.
- To create space for community members to connect who may not otherwise connect.

IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT to consider if your group/ community is ready to have this discussion. Have there been other programs or events in the past that have addressed this issue? If so, how were those received? If not, are you comfortable introducing this information at this time? You may want to consider working with another organization to provide general information about HIV first. Are group/community members seeking information?

These are just a few questions to think about and discuss with your team to help decide whether your group will be ready to have the deep conversation that comes with teachings that are shared.

See CAAN's *Assessing Community Readiness – Manual* to learn more about assessing the readiness of your group or community: <http://caan.ca/en/assessing-community-readiness/harm-reduction-implementation-guide/>.

A Path to Creating a Safe Space - Planning Guidelines

CREATING A SAFE SPACE will take time and attention, but it will be essential for thoughtful conversation to happen that will lead to positive change for individuals, families and communities. *Strong Medicine* emphasizes the importance of culture and blending teachings together. The gathering should reflect that message. No matter how many people you anticipate will be at the gathering or how much time you have to plan, there are a few things that will be a part of the journey.

It is important to be respectful and recognize the importance of learning from one another as an individual and as a team.



TEAMWORK

IDENTIFYING TEAM MEMBERS/PARTNERS is an important first step. Your team could be made up of people within your organization/community or you may be working with people from other organizations/communities. Regardless, working with people who understand or share your objective on the event will make the work easier for all involved.

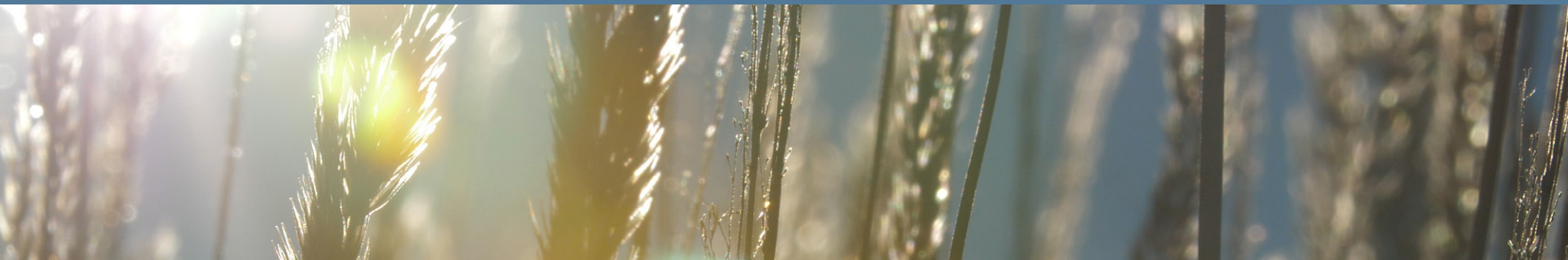
If you are partnering with other organizations/communities there should be at least two people from your organization/community on your team and at least two people from the other organization/community, if possible. It helps to have another person from the organization/community who understands the context and dynamic of the organization/community and can help provide input.

Communication is key. It can be challenging to work as a team if you are not used to working in that way. It is important to be respectful and recognize the importance of learning from one another as an individual and as a team. It will be important to meet often and communicate effectively with each other. Decide on tasks together, what they are and who will complete them; everyone has personal strengths they will bring to the team. Make sure to follow up and follow through on what is decided as a team.



It may take time to work out the roles and responsibilities of each team member, so be patient. People who are not comfortable holding space with a group (facilitating) can take on other tasks to help with the gathering. They could organize the food or arrange the equipment rental, for example.

Think about who you can partner with that will be involved in the planning and decision making of the event. Who can help with the tasks that will be identified during those discussions? Are there other organizations/communities that would be interested in supporting this event? Have you worked with them in the past or will this be a new collaboration? What is the budget and timeline you are working with?



For non-Indigenous organizations hosting a screening:

Out of respect for the cultural significance of the stories and teachings, it is important to discuss the event as a team in advance. Consult with Indigenous organizations and Indigenous people living with HIV. Ideally, partner with those Indigenous people/organizations so they can help navigate this area of work. Discuss as a team if there are other Indigenous organizations doing this type of work that you can approach. Who on your team can/will do that?

Part of creating a safe space is ensuring people feel included and respected. Involving Indigenous people who live with HIV/AIDS (IPHAs) is another way to do that. Involve those that are willing to be involved, i.e., planning, organizing, promoting or sharing their story.


If they choose to share their story, work with them to decide what that might look like; make sure they have enough time to share and allow for questions or discussion afterward. Include an honorarium in the budget for those that choose to share in this way.

***Part of creating a
safe space is ensuring
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and respected.***

TIME

YOUR APPROACH TO PLANNING and how you move through the process will be influenced by the amount of time you have to plan and carry out the event. Out of respect for the nature and the sensitivity of the topic, if the process feels rushed and you feel you are struggling to do the work in a good way and to give it the time and thought it requires, step back and reconsider if this is the right time for the event to happen.

How much time you have will affect where, when and how often you meet as a team. This may be one of the many things you and your team are working on so it is important to be realistic in your goals for planning and completing tasks along the way. How much time do you have to plan this event? Will the event be held in a few weeks or is it months away?



***it is important to be realistic
in your goals for planning and
completing tasks along the way***



The Community Readiness Model is a tool that can help to understand more about readiness, if that is needed before moving forward.

<http://caan.ca/en/assessing-community-readiness/harm-reduction-implementation-guide/>

AUDIENCE/GROUP

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PART of planning an event, especially an event that involves such a sensitive topic, is knowing your audience/group participants.

Discuss as a team: Who is your potential audience? Are they ready for this discussion? Should you have one gathering to view the film or three separate events to view segments? Would the participants be open to the discussion that happens after viewing all or parts of the film? Could you and your team members create a safe space with the audience/group participants you have in mind?

Thinking about the size of the audience will influence the space that your team chooses for the gathering as well. It will be important to keep the audience in mind as planning for the event continues. Keep in mind some ways you can tailor the event to the audience.

BUDGET

DETERMINING YOUR BUDGET for the event will help when deciding on a lot of important details. From the team perspective, be clear on the amount each partner organization will be contributing. Who from the team will be keeping track of the budget? Will there be someone from each organization that takes that task on?

Regarding the actual event, where will the event take place? How many people should you plan for? Do you need to arrange transportation? Who will be responsible for that and when?

It will also be important to think about how to honour and acknowledge those who contribute. For example, for those who are involved and may not be working directly for an organization or community, it will be important to acknowledge their time and energy by including an honorarium for them in the budget.



Think about how to honour and acknowledge those who contribute.

OTHER DETAILS: TOOLS FOR YOUR JOURNEY

THERE WILL BE A FEW DETAILS that come up closer to the event that will be important to think about throughout the planning process. Work as a team to take care of each detail and any challenges that may come up. Meet more frequently closer to the date of the gathering. Communicate to your team what has been done and what needs to be done by when.

Think about the details together: Who is facilitating which parts? Do you need to plan catering for the group? Will the location cost money to rent? Who will pay for the venue, the catering, the honoraria, etc.? Do you need to rent equipment for the gathering? What supplies/equipment are needed for the day of the event? Who will arrange those things? By when?

Depending on the room size and the size of the group, you may want to arrange the tables or chairs in a way that will help to create a more comfortable physical space for conversation after viewing the film. Try to have smaller group seating ready in advance if you plan to break into smaller groups for discussions.

It may help to plan for a quiet space for people who need to leave the room during or after the film. Plan to have someone from the team check in with anyone who leaves. Decide together who that will be.

No matter what level of experience you and your team have in planning and organizing gathering, there are

tools that may be helpful for you to help organize your work with the team and the gathering itself. See “Same Agendas, Planning Checklist and Sample Budget Form in the next few pages.

THE AGENDA

YOU AND YOUR TEAM should discuss together what the gathering will look like. The agenda can change and shift as your discussions evolve as a team. Capturing and organizing the ideas into an agenda can be a helpful way to organize your event and provide everyone with the information needed to prepare for the day. It can be helpful to create a more detailed agenda for you and your team and a less detailed agenda for the participants.

The agenda for your team (the **facilitator’s agenda**) will be more detailed. It will include information that the participants may not need to be aware of such as which team member is doing what and when, as well as information on other topics your team is planning to cover. (See Sample Facilitator’s Agenda.)

The **participant’s agenda** will be less detailed; it will not need as much information as the facilitator’s agenda. So keep it simple. You may even choose to just write the agenda on flip chart paper and hang it where the group can see it throughout the day. The group should be able to see how you have organized the gathering, but they may not need a copy for themselves; decide together how you will do that. (See Sample Participant’s Agenda.)

Sample Facilitator's Agenda

Strong Medicine Viewing and Discussion

Length of Time (approx)	Facilitator Activities	Resources Needed
5-25 mins.	Elder opening and local practice for gathering Introductions and getting to know your group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Introduction of facilitators · Introduction of participants 	Honorarium/gift for Elder ** Depending on size of gathering and number of participants, introduction of participants may not be possible
5-10 mins.	Discussion of respectful boundaries and creating a safe space Discuss space: washrooms, refreshments, safe rooms	Optional flip chart paper to write down group guidelines
5-10 mins.	Introduction of film <i>Strong Medicine</i>	Lesson plan
30 mins.	Screening <i>Strong Medicine</i>	DVD or downloaded film TV or screen and speaker laptop/projector
30-50 mins.	Check in after film and activity discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Use lesson plan to ask participants about feelings and thoughts after viewing the film, or ask the discussion questions listed 	Lesson plan Discussion questions
5-15 mins.	Closing of gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Thank the group for their participation · Elder closes the group 	Arrange for Elder to be back at the gathering 15-30 mins before you plan to end Ensure the Elder has received their honorarium/gift before they leave

Sample Participant's Agenda

(Can be handed out or written on a flip chart)

Strong Medicine Viewing and Discussion

9:00 a.m.	Welcome and opening by Elder (insert name of Elder) Introductions (if this applies to your group) Group guidelines
10:15 a.m.	Break (snack provided)
10:30 a.m.	Introduction of <i>Strong Medicine</i> film View <i>Strong Medicine</i>
11:15 a.m.	Discussion of film
12:00 p.m.	Close of the event by Elder (insert name of Elder)
12:15 p.m.	Lunch provided

Planning Checklist

Team member to complete	Planning Activities/Action Items	Date completed
	<p>Teamwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Set up a meeting schedule with the team, making sure each team member is included in emails and has an opportunity to attend each meeting. o Encourage team building at each meeting, provide food when able to, start with check-ins for each team member. o Decide as a team the steps and work needed to plan the gathering. o Divide the work amongst the team, consider the strengths that each team member brings (be open to providing/receiving input or suggestions from the rest of the team). o Decide as a team when you will have the tasks done, i.e., by the next meeting or by a certain date. o Who will take notes during meetings to be able to keep track of who is doing what and what needs to be done? 	

Planning Checklist

Team Member to complete	Planning activities/questions to guide your planning	Date completed
	<p>Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How much time do you have to plan the gathering? Days, weeks, months? o When do you need to start contacting guest speakers or any other organizations if that is what the group decides? o How long will the event itself be? An afternoon? A few hours in the evening? Part of an all-day event? o Where will the event take place? Who will contact the event location and when? <p>Audience/Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Who is the event for? o What questions will you ask the group to get a conversation going? o How many people do you anticipate attending? This will help decide room set-up and how long to give for introductions. o Who will address any negative comments or discussion that might happen and what would be some ideas on how to do so? o Will there be another space available for anyone that needs to leave the room? If so, where will that be? o Will you need someone to be available in that quiet space? If so, who? 	

Planning Checklist

Team Member to complete	Planning activities/questions to guide your planning	Date completed
	<p>Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Will a budget form be used at team meetings to keep track of expenses? o Who will keep track? One person? Or is it a team activity? o What other expenses are there to consider other than what is listed on the sample budget form? o Will you discuss the budget at each team meeting? <p>Other Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How will the room be set up? o When will the room be set up? The day before? Half an hour before? o Who will help with the set-up? o What materials are needed? Who will help get them ready? How will the materials get to the gathering? When will they need to be there? o Do you have all the equipment needed? Screen, projector, speakers, laptop. o Do you have all the supplies needed? Flip chart, markers, post-it notes, etc., o Is there Wi-Fi access if needed? o Will you need to book a caterer? Who will do that and when? 	

Sample Budget Form

BUDGET ITEMS	STRONG MEDICINE GATHERING BUDGET		
	Your team's contribution	Partner's contribution	TOTAL BUDGET
Materials and Supplies			
Catering/Food			
Honoraria for Elders/Speakers			
Room Rental			
Transportation			
Other			
Total \$ spent			

A Path to Holding Space: Facilitation Guidelines

THOSE WHO TAKE ON THE ROLE of holding space for discussion to happen also take on a responsibility to help that discussion happen in a respectful way so people can share, discuss and learn together. Those who hold space in this way (facilitators) help guide the discussion, redirect conversation when it goes “off track”, and at times may have to address negative attitudes or misconceptions about HIV in the room. When you step into this role it is important to remember your knowledge is valuable, and your role is extremely important.

Each time you hold space for discussion to happen it is a chance to learn something new. So, whether you are new to the experience or you have guided discussions in the past, there is always learning that happens. Acknowledge each experience as an opportunity to learn something new and practise teachings each time you hold space. Facilitation is often about learning together.

Each time you hold space for discussion to happen it is a chance to learn something new.



Four key elements to remember:


- 1) Be yourself:** let your own special personality shine through. You don't have to be like anyone else.
- 2) Be positive and enthusiastic:** your passion is contagious. Concentrate on the strengths not just the challenges
- 3) Be clear:** some people may be hearing this information for the first time.
- 4) Get people involved:** people often learn better when they can participate and relate to the topic.

Strong Medicine touches on many sensitive topics. Holding space for a group to discuss those themes and how they feel about them is important but could be challenging. As a team it will be important to think about and discuss how you may deal with some of the challenges that come up.

It is important to let people work through their emotions and process new information in their own way.

A few things to consider:

- The stories shared in *Strong Medicine* may trigger feelings and emotions that can be challenging for some people. Before showing the film, you may want to arrange to have the option for an elder, staff member or volunteer to be available to provide support. A designated “quiet space” away from the screening, where viewers can speak with someone supportive or take time away is strongly recommended.
- Think about whether you will share personal opinions and values. You may not agree with what some people say and they may not agree with you, That's okay! It is important to let people work through their emotions and process new information in their own way. Be open to letting those who are ready to share, share. It is such an impactful way for everybody to learn.
- There are a variety of biomedical terms that are used in the film that not everyone will be familiar with. It is a good idea to review and have extra resources about HIV testing, treatment and monitoring available for your group. (See the CATIE Ordering Centre for additional resources: www.orders.catie.ca)

A photograph of a group of people walking through tall grass at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. In the foreground, a woman with long dark hair is seen from the side, looking towards the group. In the background, several other people are walking away from the camera. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Thank the people who share during discussions; it takes courage and bravery to share personal stories/experiences/ views with a group.

- If you are familiar with and comfortable discussing the biomedical terms, think about how and when you would do that. You may want to invite local HIV organizations to set up information tables or, if there is time, have them lead a discussion/presentation on HIV before the screening. (Decide as a team who to invite.)
- Remind everyone of their responsibilities to respect one another's opinions, experiences, and knowledge. Model for your group how to do that. Thank the people who share during discussions; it takes courage and bravery to share personal stories/experiences/ views with a group, especially on such a tough topic. Thank the group for being there and being open to learning more about the topic.



Stepping Stones On Your Path: Tools For Your Journey

EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN WAY of holding space and encouraging discussion, so keep that in mind when planning for a *Strong Medicine* Gathering and discussion. Here are a few tips to help you walk your path in a respectful way, both as an individual and as a team:

- Love is an energy that can be felt without words. Remember that individuals, families and communities have been impacted on many levels. Reminding each other of the importance of working from the heart can be what is needed most to influence positive change.
- Your team and those attending the gathering are coming with wisdom to share. Both sets of contributions are meaningful. Be open to straying from the agenda that you and your team have set. Sometimes the group will guide you down another path; as long as the conversation is respectful and the group seems comfortable with the direction it is taking, that's ok! Once the conversation wraps up, take a break and decide as a team how you can readjust things to make sure you are touching on the themes/ topics you were hoping to.
- As you gain experience with planning gatherings and guiding discussions it will be easier to adjust and stay on track. Letting respectful discussion happen naturally is more important than rushing the group through an agenda just to stay on schedule. Let your group know if there are changes to your plans/agenda with them. Asking the group for written or verbal feedback, so you know what worked well and what didn't, will help you and your team learn from each experience.
- When the space is created for people to be honest with each other then that is when change can happen. Let the group know if you are finding conversations to be challenging or heated. When people feel safe they tend to speak their truth. By naming the situation it can remove the tension for the group. You may not agree with what is said but everyone should be able to be honest about their views or knowledge on the topic. It is more impactful when the group can share, discuss and learn together.



- It is important as the people holding the space that you be honest with the group that comes together. You don't have to be an expert on the topic. Let them know when you don't have the answers for difficult questions. Offer to look up information and get back to them with the answer. Make sure to follow through with it.
- Recognize that this work takes courage. It may feel challenging to move forward at times. Some people may not recognize the importance of the conversations happening or the discussions that you and your team are encouraging. Work together and remember the strengths you bring as individuals and as a team.
- If the conversation begins to turn negative or you have a difference of opinion happening, address the situation from a place of positivity. For example, if someone begins to act disrespectful or say disrespectful things, thank them for sharing and acknowledge that they have a lot of emotions about the topic and they may not be the only one feeling this way. It is important for everyone to have a chance to speak and learn together. Sometimes people just want to be heard or have a chance to share their opinion. It is the responsibility of the people holding space for the discussion to keep the conversation going.

WAYS TO ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION

AFTER THE SCREENING it may be best to start with an activity or question that encourages some self-reflection. You and your team may want to ask the group for their initial thoughts to encourage group members to process emotions before taking part in a discussion or you may want to use one of the statements below to encourage sharing. Self-reflection is an impactful way for people to process the experience and learn from each other. It is a way for your team to encourage thoughtful discussion no matter what their level of experience or knowledge of HIV.

As a team, think about the discussion you are hoping to generate with your group. What are your intentions for this gathering? That discussion will help you and your team decide how to start the conversation with your group.

Ask group members to share by using one of the following statements (share your own example to model how to do it):

- *I learned....*
- *I realized...*
- *I was surprised....*
- *What stood out most for me was...*



Depending on the size of the group, the group's knowledge of HIV, experience with discussing the topic of HIV and the intentions for holding a screening, you may choose to use one or more of the questions below or adapt them to your specific group:

- What is your initial reaction to the film?
- Did any moment or scene jump out at you in particular? What was it? And why?
- What themes, stories and/or lessons resonated with you after watching *Strong Medicine*?
- What, if any, insights did you gain about HIV?
- Was there something mentioned in the film that you would like more information on?
- What are some challenges to accessing care and services for people living with HIV in our communities? What can the communities and/or organizations do to increase access to testing and care?

Questions that encourage deeper discussion:

- How might your life change after hearing you are HIV positive for the first time? What response would you want from your family and friends if you received this diagnosis?
- How are the traditional teachings and knowledge passed down to you important for your well-being? What do health and wellness mean to you? How are Western and cultural teachings important for our health?
- What does resilience mean to you? What can we do, or what do you do, to promote resilience in your community/organization?
- How can we use our traditional teachings in treating HIV in our communities? How does culture make a difference in supporting individuals living with HIV to access and remain connected to the resources available?



How can we use our traditional teachings in treating HIV in our communities?

Questions to encourage discussion when working with people living with HIV/AIDS (ideal for smaller groups, once a safe space has been established):

- How do you feel after hearing the journeys of the people in the film? Could you relate to the stories and teachings of the people in the film? Which ones?
- What were some of the strategies for living with HIV that were shared by the people in the film to care for themselves and their health? Were there strategies and tips you feel you could try in your journey?
- What does well-being and healing mean to you? How do cultural teachings give you strength?
- In the film, Doris Peltier states that “HIV is a teacher.” Have you ever felt this way, and if so, are there things you have learned about living with HIV that you would like to share with others?
- Looking back at your journey since diagnosis, what teachings and strategies to stay healthy would you share?



Holding Space: A Lesson Plan

WHAT IS A LESSON PLAN?

LESSON PLANS CAN BE USEFUL TOOLS that help keep you focused on your overall goal and provide steps to guide you in the discussion along the way. The layout of the lesson plan helps to clearly organize the discussion for the person or people leading the discussion.

The **Intention/objective** and **By the end of this session** sections are for the planning team to be clear on the intentions and messages you want to get across in the discussion. They are for your group and don't need to be stated in the discussion.

There are three columns:

- the **Left column** shows the approximate time the section will take
- the **Right column** lists the supplies needed for the section
- the **Middle column** shows the activity or the topic and gives a script or suggestion on how to introduce it.

The **Introduction** is to start framing the discussion for the group. It can be read as it is written or said in your own words.

Getting to know your group is for finding out what people already know. Remember everyone comes with knowledge to share and/or build on.

Activities is an opportunity to share information, knowledge and teachings. You want to encourage people to get involved in the discussion and learning through activities. Watching videos or playing games are examples.

Checking in is a way to check with the group to see if the knowledge and teachings are clear; to see if they have picked up on the message you were hoping to share.

Closing is a way to wrap up in a positive way, acknowledge and thank people for their participation and let people know if anything will be happening next.



As a team, decide who will be looking after what part of the lesson plan. It is also a good idea to read over the lesson plan a few times before the Gathering so you feel more comfortable during the discussion.

Strong Medicine Lesson Plan

	<p>Objective:</p> <p>To facilitate meaningful discussion during a screening of the <i>Strong Medicine</i> film in order to encourage positive change for individuals, families and communities</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the role of culture in healing or looking after one's health • Discuss the importance of testing and treatment 	
Time: 60 min	Instructor Activities	Media
	<p>Introduction and Why It's Important:</p> <p><i>Strong Medicine</i> is a powerful 27-minute educational film featuring a Kahnawake Elder and seven Indigenous people living with HIV. It was developed by the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) and CATIE along with community input.</p> <p>Through their stories, the participants share how they have learned to weave Western medicine with cultural teachings. From their reactions to learning of their HIV status to their messages about the importance of HIV testing and treatment, we hear how their connection with their culture and traditions are helping them find balance in their lives.</p>	

Time: 60 min	Instructor Activities	Media
5 min	<p>Get to Know Your Group:</p> <p>How many people know someone who is living with or impacted by HIV? (ask for a show of hands)</p> <p>There are so many individuals, families and communities that have been affected or impacted by HIV. We know that taking care of our mind, body and spirit is important for all of us. It is especially important for people who are impacted by HIV. If culture can help one person find balance it will help to bring positive change to others as well. We will hear the personal experiences of how embracing culture can be so powerful.</p> <p>While we watch the film keep these statements in my mind.</p> <p>I learned...</p> <p>I realized...</p> <p>I was surprised by...</p> <p>They will help guide our discussion as a group afterwards.</p>	<p>Write on Flipchart paper visible to your group:</p> <p>I learned...</p> <p>I realized...</p> <p>I was surprised by...</p>
30 min	<p>Show the full <i>Strong Medicine</i> film (27 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the video is ready to go. Have another team member ready to start the video after your introduction. • Make sure the speakers are working and not too loud, increase the sound as needed once the video starts. • If possible, dim the lights while the video is playing 	<p><i>Strong Medicine</i> film on DVD/ computer screen, projector, laptop, speakers</p>

Time: 60 min	Instructor Activities	Media
15 min	<p>Checking in to see what the group learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Note to team of Facilitators:</i> To get conversations going, asking general questions can help get people comfortable talking to one another. Feel free to pick and choose ways to encourage discussion that work for your group. <p>Post-viewing discussion – suggestions for starting the conversation:</p> <p>Ask group members to share by using the following statements (sharing your own example can get the conversation started):</p> <p>I learned.... I realized... I was surprised....</p> <p>Ask the group one or more of these questions to start the discussion (<i>you can also choose questions from the "Questions for deeper discussion" or "Questions for when working with people with HIV/AIDS" section on pg 31</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your initial reaction to the film? • Did any moment or scene jump out at you in particular? What was it? And why? • What themes, stories and/or lessons resonated with you after watching <i>Strong Medicine</i>? • What, if any, insights did you gain about HIV? • Was there something mentioned in the film that you would like more information on? • What are some challenges to accessing care and services for people living with HIV in our communities? What can the communities and/or organizations do to increase access to testing and care? 	

Time: 60 min	Instructor Activities	Media
2 min	<p>Closing:</p> <p>Thank you to everyone who shared in the conversation today. We hope we have helped people to gain more knowledge about HIV testing and treatment. It was our intention to encourage a thoughtful discussion that we can all learn from. Please let us know if you want more information about HIV or HIV testing as we can provide information about other resources that are available.</p>	Provide list of HIV resources

Resources for Additional Learning and Action

Resources that provide information about HIV and HIV treatment can be very useful to you in preparing to screen and discuss *Strong Medicine*. These resources can also be used by individuals who are considering going on or staying on HIV treatment and their care providers in discussions about HIV treatment and health. Please visit www.catie.ca for more information.

HIV Basics: Important, plain language information about HIV. <http://www.catie.ca/en/basics/hiv-and-aids#what>

HIV Treatment: A collection of information and resources in plain language about HIV treatment and the importance of starting and staying on treatment. <http://www.catie.ca/en/treatment/hiv>

Your Guide to HIV Treatment: A guide for people living with HIV explaining what we know about HIV treatment (it can be downloaded and printed). <http://www.catie.ca/en/practical-guides/yght>

Glossary

Adherence

Taking your anti-HIV drugs on time every day as prescribed without missing any doses.

AIDS

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; the most serious stage of HIV where, without treatment, an individual becomes sick with life-threatening infections.

Antibody

A blood protein made by the immune system to help fight germs in your body.

Anti-HIV drug

A drug used to treat HIV, also called antiretroviral therapy (ART) or antiretrovirals (ARVs).

AIDS service organization (ASO) or HIV organization

A community organization providing services to people living with and affected by HIV.

Asymptomatic

Not having any symptoms of HIV infection.

CD4+ cells

A type of immune system cell that HIV infects and destroys. Your CD4+ cell count tells you how strong your immune system is.

Combination therapy

see **HAART**

Complementary and alternative medicine

Health and medical practices that fall outside of Western medicine, such as herbal therapies and mind–body therapies.

Disclosure

Telling someone that you are living with HIV.

Drug Holiday

When a person who normally takes medication for HIV to suppress their viral load takes a break for a period of time and does not take any medications. “Holidays” from HIV medications are not recommended and can be dangerous for one’s health.

Highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART)

Treatment for HIV involving a combination of anti-HIV drugs (also called combination therapy, ART, cART).

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

A virus that weakens your immune system, your body’s built-in defence against disease and illness.

HIV-positive

To have HIV, as confirmed through HIV testing.

HIV-related infection

A general term that describes infections that can cause disease in someone whose immune system has been weakened by HIV (also called opportunistic infection).

Immune system

The cells, organs and other parts of your body that work together to protect you from germs and viruses.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

PEP is a way to help prevent the transmission of HIV in an HIV-negative person who may have been recently exposed to the virus. It involves taking HIV medications as soon as possible after a potential exposure to HIV and within 72 hours of that exposure. For PEP to be effective, a person must take PEP as prescribed and have no further exposures to HIV during that time.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)

PrEP is used by people who are HIV negative to help prevent them from getting HIV. It involves taking a prescription pill that contains two HIV medications, emtricitabine and tenofovir. It is very important to take the pill as prescribed for it to work.

Recreational drugs

Drugs used non-medically for personal enjoyment, to cope, or as a result of dependency, such as ecstasy, cocaine or heroin (also called street drugs).

Resistance

The ability of HIV to continue replicating when anti-HIV drugs are taken. When HIV becomes resistant to an anti-HIV drug, that drug will no longer be effective against the virus.

Seroconversion

The point in time when your body develops a detectable level of antibodies to HIV, usually several weeks after infection.

Side effect

A secondary and usually unwanted effect of a drug, such as headache or nausea.

Substance use

Taking recreational drugs.

Symptomatic

Having symptoms of HIV infection.

Treatment as prevention (TasP)

We now know that medications that treat HIV can also prevent HIV transmission: If a person is HIV-positive and takes HIV treatment that suppresses their virus to undetectable levels, they will not pass HIV to the people you have sex with. In other words, undetectable HIV is sexually untransmittable.

Undetectable equals untransmittable (U=U)

U=U is a simple but very important message, based on a solid foundation of scientific evidence, that someone with HIV who is taking antiretroviral treatment and who has maintained for at least six months an undetectable level of the virus in their blood cannot transmit it to someone else sexually, with or without the use of a condom.

Undetectable viral load

The viral load is said to be “undetectable” when the level of virus in the blood of a person living with HIV is so low it can’t be measured.

Viral load

Measurement of the amount of HIV in the blood.

Resources

These resources are available on the CATIE website at www.catie.ca.

CLIENT RESOURCES

It's all still possible: Starting points for living well with HIV

Your guide to HIV treatment

The Power of Undetectable: What You Need to Know about HIV Treatment as Prevention

What can Western medicine learn from Indigenous healing traditions? (The Positive Side)

SERVICE PROVIDER RESOURCES

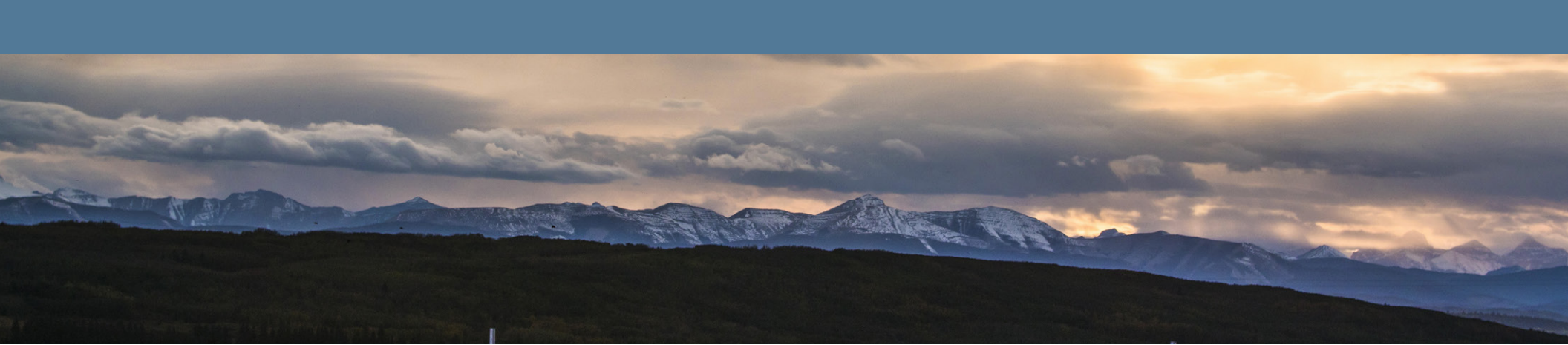
The HIV testing process

HIV testing technologies

HIV treatment and an undetectable viral load to prevent HIV transmission

Getting to undetectable: Population differences in Canada (Prevention in Focus)





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<http://www.bccdc.ca/our-services/programs/chee-mamuk>

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Hello Cool World

With gratitude and respect, CATIE acknowledges that our work takes place on Indigenous land. CATIE's office is situated on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, The Haudenosaunee, Six Nations and the Huron-Wendat, which is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis people today. We acknowledge that our outreach and education work is also carried out on Indigenous territories across the country. As a non-Indigenous organization, we acknowledge our own privilege and role in the systems of colonization, and we strive to dismantle them.

Chee Mamuk is an Indigenous program housed within the BC Centre for Disease Control in Vancouver, BC. We respectfully acknowledge our main office is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples – Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Selil'witulh (Tsleil-Waututh), and x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam).

About CATIE

CATIE strengthens Canada's response to HIV and hepatitis C by bridging research and practice. We connect healthcare and community-based service providers with the latest science, and promote good practices for prevention and treatment programs. As Canada's official knowledge broker for HIV and hepatitis C, you can count on us for up-to-date, accurate and unbiased information.

About Chee Mamuk

The Chee Mamuk Program is a comprehensive, evidence-based and community-driven program that has been working in relationship with Indigenous communities across B.C. for 30 years. The collective goal of the Chee Mamuk program is to develop programming and resources that are engaging and meaningful to communities in reclaiming culture and traditional teachings. Our program provides innovative and culturally appropriate HIV, STI and hepatitis information grounded in science and tradition.

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Canada's source for
HIV and hepatitis C
information

