

AHA CENTRE

A PROJECT OF CAAN



ABOUT THE AHA CENTRE ...

- Is a CIHR funded **national**, Indigenous-led collaborative research centre housed at the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN).
- THE AHA Centre builds capacity in and supports culturally-responsive, community-based HIV and determinates of health research through meaningful engagement with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples living with HIV, communities, researchers and policy makers.
- Guided by CBR principles, we support **innovative and creative research** that is grounded in Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies as well as rights, strengths and action-based inquiry.
- Disseminate Research findings about HIV & AIDS in Indigenous communities through novel **Knowledge-Translation-to-Action (KTA)** approaches.





AHA Centre's Vision & Mission

The AHA Centre 2.0 is poised to be more effective by maximizing investments available in Indigenous HIV and AIDS research by drawing even more community and academic leaders into research in both underdeveloped and highly engaged regions in Canada.

Vision: We envision a network of institutions, communities and individuals working together for excellence in community-based research, culturally-responsive approaches, and action-oriented solutions to HIV and AIDS affecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Canada.

Mission: The AHA Centre builds capacity in and supports culturally-responsive community-based HIV and determinants of health research through meaningful engagement with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples living with HIV, communities, researchers and policy makers while utilizing knowledge translation to inform evidence-driven action.

The AHA Centre's Strategic Plan will be achieved through the following *Objectives* and related activities:

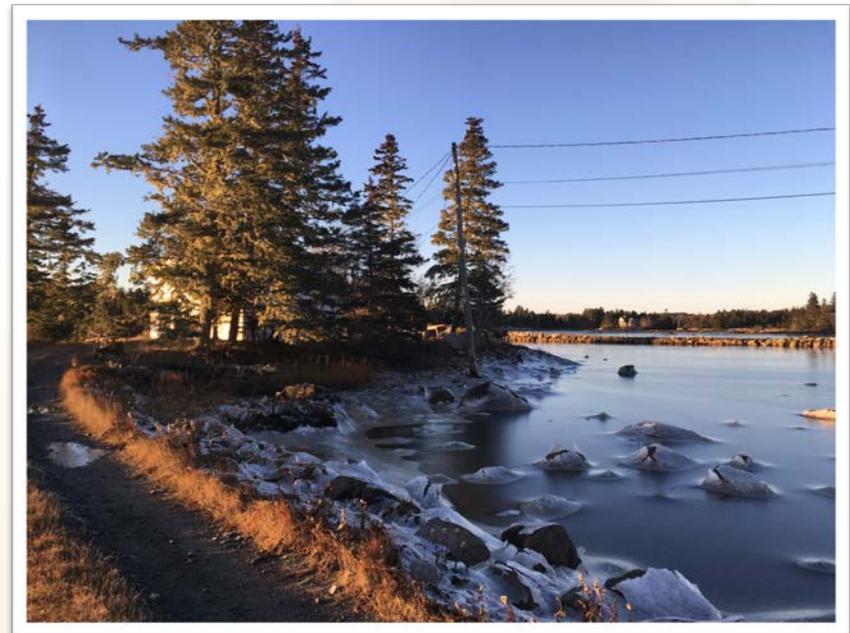
Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Doing: Continue to entrench, model, and implement Indigenous ways of knowing and doing;

Communications: Link stakeholders together and circulate information regarding researchers' work, resources, funding opportunities and events of relevance to community-based HIV research;

Knowledge Translation: Promote and support the translation of research evidence into culturally-responsive and accessible formats;

Partnerships: Facilitate and support partnerships among AHA Centre stakeholders and between external partners and stakeholders;

Support/Mentorship: Identify and enhance community-based research capacities within Indigenous and academic communities through financial support, reciprocal mentorship and training.



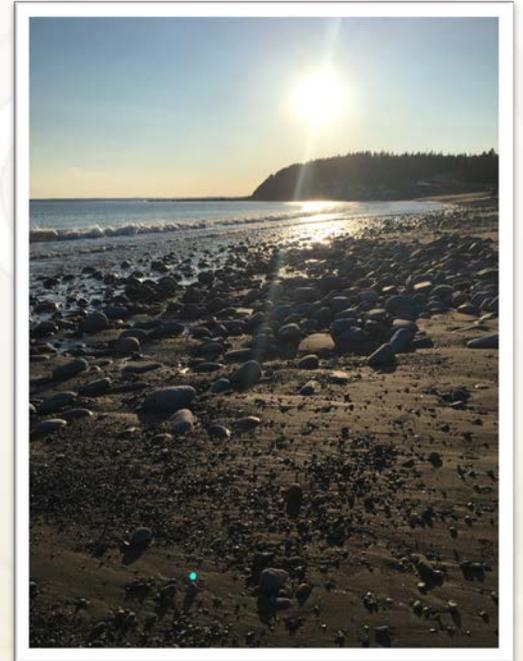
AHA Centre Leadership

The AHA Centre Co-Directors Dr. Charlotte Loppie (University of Victoria) and Ms. Renée Mashing (The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network) bring together an impressive team of Indigenous and allied researchers and community members.

Elders and Knowledge Keepers: Elder Maggie Paul and Knowledge Keeper Rick Kotowich work with us to care for the work of the AHA Centre in a good way.

Our Governing Council (GC): is a decision-making body co-chaired by Loppie and Mashing.

National Aboriginal Research Advisory Committee (NARAC): meets to discuss the Centre's progress and strategic priorities makes recommendations on the development and direction of all Centre programs, initiatives and alliances. NARAC reviews the Community Engagement Fund Program grant applications and AHA Centre resources prior to publication.



AHA Centre Governance Structure

With a leadership team of highly respected community members, researchers, and Elders, the AHA Centre is governed by a team with an exceptional track record of working with Indigenous communities.

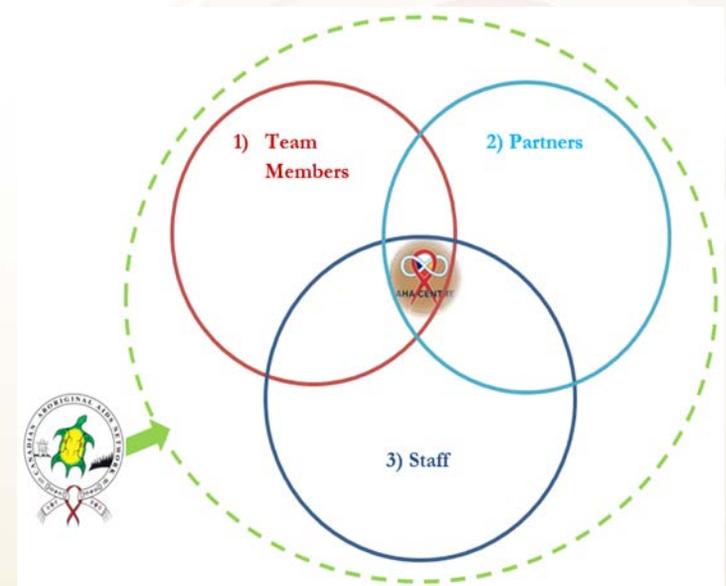
1. **The AHA Centre team:** Knowledge Users, Investigators, Collaborators and Supporters
2. **Partners of the AHA Center:** Organizations and centres working in the fields of HIV and AIDS, STBBIs, Indigenous Health and related areas of research.
3. **Staff of the AHA Centre:** Staff members are the heart of the AHA Centre and work closely with the Operations team (co-Directors and CAAN CEO) to ensure smooth operations.

Red: Governing Council; Principal KUs/Is; Co-KUs/Is; Collaborators.

Blue: AHA Centre Partners.

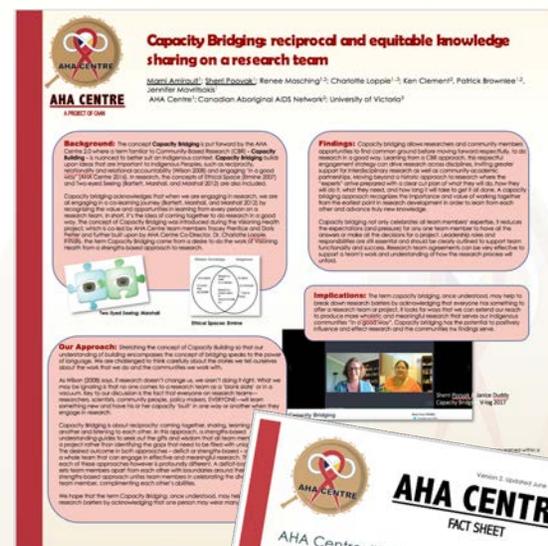
Navy: Staff/Ops Team.

Green: CAAN.



Some of the AHA Centre's offerings include ...

- ✓ Our Website
- ✓ Journal of Indigenous HIV Research (JIHR)
- ✓ Factsheets and other research-related resources
- ✓ Community Engagement Fund
- ✓ News Blasts with (bi-monthly)
- ✓ Workshops and presentations
- ✓ Student and IPHA support and mentorship



Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Doing (IWKD)...

Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWK) are complex, dynamic and fluid that honours the diversity within and between our First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.

It considers multiple and diverse points of view by honouring what we know locally and intergenerationally.

The 'doing' refers to the operationalization or implementation of IWK.

The AHA Centre's work is informed by IWKD in some of the following ways:

- ✓ Works closely with AHA Centre leadership to develop Indigenous methodologies, tools and resources;
- ✓ Mentor students and allies in IWK;
- ✓ Centre decisions are consensus based,
- ✓ Active participation of Elders and Knowledge Keepers through consultation
- ✓ Inclusion of using a Two-Eyed Seeing approach;
- ✓ Include locally appropriate protocol and ceremony at AHA Centre and CAAN events, including AHA and research team meetings.



Doing our research in a good way ...

Doing research in a good way explores:

- relationship building;
- meaningful engagement; and
- Dialogue.

It teaches us about worldviews, principles and protocols of community partnerships.

It respects and incorporates Indigenous knowledges to guide the research.

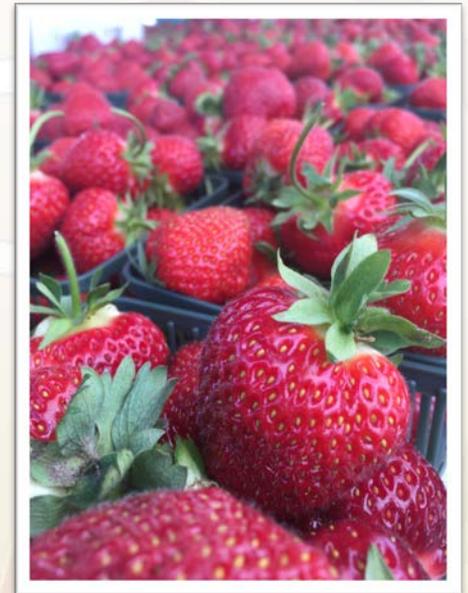
Positioning Elders as guides, as we work towards understanding how to embark on and conduct research that is respectful of Indigenous knowledges in working with Indigenous communities.



Knowledge Translation – sharing what we learn

A key feature of the Centre's mission is to develop culturally relevant mechanisms for knowledge translation (KT) and exchange with Indigenous communities and organizations that directly supports action. Core KT activities of the AHA Centre include:

- ✓ **The Journal of Indigenous HIV Research (JIHR)** is peer-reviewed, open access, online journal is published annually. It is the only journal that focuses on Indigenous HIV and AIDS Community-Based Research.
- ✓ **The Wise Practices Gathering (WP)** is hosted bi-annually and is a national gathering bringing together diverse stakeholders in Indigenous community-based HIV and AIDS research for capacity development and dissemination of research findings.
- ✓ **Indigenous Knowledge Sharing Model** is in development with the Governing Council and our National Aboriginal Research Advisory Committee.
- ✓ **Fact Sheets and Other Resources** can be found on the AHA Centre's, such as the JIHR, our Factsheets, information about our Community Engagement Fund and more!



Partnerships – working together makes us stronger

Partnership is essential to the success of the AHA Centre 2.0. Team members, external partners, supporters and/or colleagues assist in the dissemination of resources, KT materials, engage in capacity building and maximize the impact of the AHA Centre's vision and mission.

Key activities include:

- Creating networking opportunities through activities such as Wise Practices, CBR & KT workshops
- Working closely with CAAN's IPHA Liaison to connect IPHAs with researchers in areas of mutual interest;
- Inviting decisionmakers and opinion leaders to present and engage at Wise Practices and regional workshops to diversify speakers, support networking, and highlight regional issues;
- Provide letters of support and collaboration for stakeholder and external partner grants in addition to assisting with grants crafting as requested; and
- Partner with the CIHR - Institute of Aboriginal People's Health, Canadian Association of HIV Research, newly funded Indigenous Mentorship Networks to co-host annual meetings between researchers and communities advancing HIV/AIDS CBR issues.

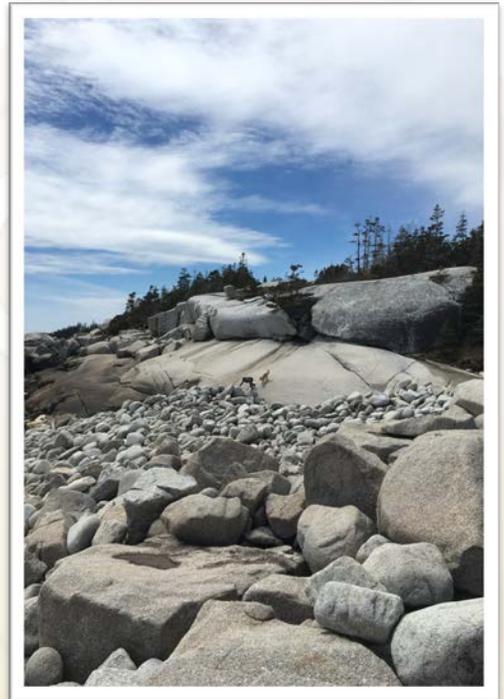


Ways we support research & skills development

To achieve our objective for support and capacity building the AHA Centre 2.0 strategic plan outlines several core activities. CAAN and the AHA Centre have strong ties with students and community members engaged in research contributing to the future of Indigenous leadership in HIV/AIDS CBR.

Core support & capacity development activities for the AHA Centre 2.0 include:

- ✓ **Community Engagement Fund** assists Indigenous communities, Indigenous AIDS Service Organizations, Indigenous students and/or allies interested in developing an HIV and/or AIDS focused research project.
- ✓ **Workshops & Presentations** are designed and held to develop and build on skills that are needed to do good HIV research with Indigenous communities across Canada. We also participate in conference
- ✓ **IPHA & Student Research Support** Mentorship is an integral part of the the “doing” for AHA Centre staff as both IPHAs and student learn about and how to do Indigenous research.
- ✓ **IWKD & Indigenous Research Development** works with our leadership to develop several Indigenous research methods and frameworks such as Land Based Research and IWKD.



AHA Centre Evaluation

AHA Centre staff work in collaboration with San Patten and Associates on an External Evaluation annually. The purpose of Evaluation is to collect and analyze evidence of the Centre's achievements and processes. The evaluation will assess if and how the AHA Centre has achieved its desired outcomes, completed planned activities and maintained a high level of community accountability. The evaluation will assess relevance and performance (effectiveness, efficiency, and alignment with community-based research values) between July 2017 and June 2022.





AHA Centre Staff

Sherri Pooyak

Community-Based Research Manager (Capacity Building)

- Capacity Building and bridging
- Assist Indigenous communities in the development and implementation of HIV Indigenous research;
- Develop and Implement capacity building workshops and resources
- Mentor and support students, community members and IPHAs;
- Facilitate the Community Engagement Fund and its activities;
- Grant writing and support
- Report writing
- Planning AHA Centre meetings
- Represents the AHA Centre and CAAN on research teams
- Resource development
- Student, IPHA & AASO research support
- Planning & hosting Wise Practices Gatherings
- CBR workshop facilitation
- Conference presentations



Marni Amirault

Community-Based Research Manager (Knowledge Translation)

Indigenous Knowledge Translation (KT) simply means that we share what we learn from our research. We draw on Indigenous knowledges that are informed by rich oral traditions, experiential knowledge and so much more.



- Oversees AHA Centre KT & communications work
- Manages the Journal for Indigenous HIV Research
- Resource development
- Student, IPHA & AASO research support & mentorship
- Planning & hosting Wise Practices Gatherings
- CBR workshop facilitation
- Grant writing and support
- Report writing
- Planning and hosting AHA Centre meetings
- Represents the AHA Centre and CAAN on research teams
- Conference presentations

Jennifer Mavritsakis

Communications Assistant

Communications is a fluid field—difficult to pin down and define when by design, it is meant to adapt to the specific needs of an organization or group of people. Such is the beauty of effective communication.



- Website design and updates
- Social media management
- Organization of evaluation materials
- Sharing/uploading AHA Centre resources
- Promote AHA Centre Projects (ex: CEF)
- Bi-monthly newsletters
- Assist with the annual publication of the JIHR
- Event and presentation planning (as needed)
- Assist with reporting
- Scheduling of meetings

Let's get in touch!

AHA Centre staff are here to connect with community and support all of the amazing work that is being done in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities from coast-to-coast-to-coast. Please feel free to reach out to us!

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Communications Assistant

