



# THE AHA CENTRE

## NEWSLETTER • APRIL 2020

A two-month re-cap under normal circumstances typically begins with a list. A very simple list comprised of four categories: accomplished tasks, works in progress, things to share, and gentle reminders. Today I find myself without a list. Instead of arranging my carefully organized pieces to the newsblast puzzle, I am casting a net into a deceptively calm pond hoping to catch what I need. This shifted space that I now occupy feels foreign but then I look out my window and I see rainbows on every house as far as my eye can see and it makes me think that there is more in my net than I realize.



This newsletter outlines the comings and goings of our team and it may give the appearance that we are “business as usual” but I believe it is important to also mention that we are doing our best to take care of ourselves and each other and mending our nets if they have holes. I hope each of you are in a space where you

can take great care. Sending wishes of health and safety to each friend and family member of the AHA Centre.

### **Webinar: April 22, 2020** **Journal of Indigenous HIV Research (JIHR) – Find Out More!**

To promote our collaboration with REACH and volume 11 of the JIHR we will be co-hosting a webinar on April 22. It will be a one-hour webinar where we will discuss the history of the journal, the submission and peer review processes, this year’s theme of allyship and much more!

To register, please visit:  
<https://pacificaidnetwork.org/2020/03/24/webinar-journal-of-indigenous-hiv-research-jihr-find-out-more/>

For more information on the theme of volume 11 - Navigating Allyship: What does it mean to work together in service to the community? - please visit: [www.ahacentre.ca/journal.html](http://www.ahacentre.ca/journal.html)

We hope you can join us!

### **Good News to Share**

In March of this year, Candice Lys (founder of FOXY and SMASH and AHA Centre research team and Governing Council member) was presented with an Inspire award for her work in education.

“Dr. Candice Lys has transformed sexual and mental health education research in the North through her development of two youth

programs: FOXY (Fostering Open eXpression Among Youth) and SMASH (Strength, Masculinity and Sexual Health), which have reached more than 6000 Indigenous and Northern youth since 2012. Both programs use photography, music, and traditional Indigenous knowledges to empower youth to develop sexual agency and resiliency."

<https://indspire.ca/laureate/candice-lys/>



(Candice Lys: third from the left)

Congratulations Candice! Your work and accomplishments inspire us.

## Suggested Readings

### How Do We Balance Tensions Between COVID-19 Public Health Responses and Stigma Mitigation? Learning from HIV Research

By Carmen H. Logie & Janet M. Turan

*We are not being invaded. The body is not a battlefield. The ill are neither unavoidable casualties nor the enemy. We – medicine, society – are not authorized to fight back by any means whatever.*

Sontag (1 p. 180)

Sontag's quotation above from 'AIDS and its metaphors' [1] reminds us to expose, and disengage from, constructions of illness that propagate fear. We are called to address the fear of COVID-19 by correcting misinformation [2, 3]. While misinformation is indeed a driver of fear and stigma, other underlying facilitators produce stigma [4, 5] and need to be considered in stigma mitigation. HIV research and an understanding of the historical construction of illness can be leveraged to mitigate COVID-19 stigma. COVID-19 public health responses—essential for prevention and containment [6, 7]—also have the potential to

exacerbate stigma [8]. We outline four tensions between COVID-19 containment and stigma mitigation and offer possible ways forward.

[https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-020-02856-8?fbclid=IwAR1b1tZHF8\\_r7cgmo4R7taKnaZKSswlB9VdyTGjH9-n7-yggy5C5dFwYv-w](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10461-020-02856-8?fbclid=IwAR1b1tZHF8_r7cgmo4R7taKnaZKSswlB9VdyTGjH9-n7-yggy5C5dFwYv-w)

### Opinion: We can't police our way out of a pandemic

By Alexander McClelland

As we've learned from ineffective approaches to HIV prevention, criminalizing a virus discourages testing and drives people away from seeking health care.

<https://nowtoronto.com/news/coronavirus-we-cant-police-our-way-out-of-pandemic/?fbclid=IwAR2vpzG89P3J0CVZu0WpT5ocRkocxSVj4R3LubliCk4v94NI5S4YruhuxNY>

### Decolonizing Community Care in Response to COVID-19

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic responsibly, Indigenously

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, the World Health Organization announced that the Coronavirus, COVID-19, is a global pandemic. With this news it is easy and also legitimate for us to feel stress, concern, and even fear. As Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors were intentionally exposed to viruses, this moment can also feel triggering and bring up ancestral trauma and even distrust and disbelief...

<https://ndncollective.org/indigenizing-and-decolonizing-community-care-in-response-to-covid-19/>

### CATIE. Canada's source for HIV and hepatitis C information

We would like to encourage everyone to visit CATIE's website ([www.catie.ca](http://www.catie.ca)) for the latest medical information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) and its effect on those living with HIV.

## Community Engagement Fund

We are so proud to offer support for Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals and/or organizations who would like to develop an HIV and/or AIDS related research project. Up to **\$10,000** is available per project!

The application deadline is **May 1, 2020**.

For more information, please visit:

[www.ahacentre.ca/community-engagement-fund.html](http://www.ahacentre.ca/community-engagement-fund.html)

## A message from CAAN

CAAN is sending well wishes and prayers up for our members, partners and friends. CAAN is committed to doing the best we can to sustain and support our peoples especially IPHAs and IPHepC.

We are maintaining our focus on our mandate and our ongoing responsibilities to meet our commitments. We are also learning all we can regarding the impact and context of COVID 19 as it relates to our work - both for delivering activities and the processes for how we work together.

Staff have remote access to e-mail and will continue to be available online. Several staff have CAAN specific Facebook pages, we have a CAAN Facebook page and we are also posting on Twitter.

We respect that all of us are experiencing shifts in our capacity to work based on health, work from home contexts and overall well-being. All staff appreciate and will share patience in our work activities. The expectation is that we are all doing our best ethically, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

## Contact Us

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments:

<http://www.ahacentre.ca/contact-us.html>

