

not the symptoms, but the why

What is 'below the surface' that is contributing to children/youth's substance use and/or the toxic drugs crisis?

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Burn down the system!

Fear of MCDFD

Desire to Numb/Escape

Social determinants of health

Systematic oppression

Indigenous determinants of health

Trauma

not the symptoms, but the why

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\$\$ in the wrong place

this is not an iceberg, its a
tornado...we are all
disconnected in the chaos and
swirl and need to find the calm
of the storm together

Unsafe Living
Environment

Lack of community
collaboration and
prevention.

The toxicity of the drug
supply; we are not getting to
the root of the potency of
the drugs, both in toxicity
and addiction.

social determinants of
health and health
inequities

Lack of sense of
belonging

Toxicity of the
underlying drug supply.

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attachment disruptions

Blow up MCFD and invest funds into family support and prevention

colonialism, Indigenous specific racism, prohibition and criminalization of substance use.

We are not listening to each other and our disconnection gives govt ability to avoid responsibility/liability - we can't agree on a path forward so they are off the hook

Supports that are actually following through and walking along with the youth

lack of support without judgment

Need to root approaches in harm reduction. And dismantle mental barriers that hold people back from enacting that approach.

intergenerational trauma

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Expansion of alcohol availability.

disconnection, lack of belonging

Extremely illicit toxic drug supply

An outdated response to a new (i.e. toxic) drug supply

Lack of natural healthy relationships. Youth in care are surrounded by paid adults

views politicized creating fear, shame, blame
misunderstanding pointing fingers rather than "truly seeing" each other and reaching in together to take chances and be courageous

Drug use is self-intervention to issues we need to address.

Shift in normative values

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The Moral distress and fear in our helpers is overwhelming, we are losing good helpers and practice is becoming risk adverse due to fear

Availability of harder, more toxic, drugs in current context of criminalized production of drugs.

lack of courage to be innovative as clinicians/service providers in an ever increasing toxic drug supply

Lack of safe affordable housing with wrap around supports.

Reactive approach of the health sector - failure to work upstream.

Stigma, loss of connection, structures that move away from Love and Caring.

Responses that are not trauma informed

unconscious bias; paternalistic perspectives that drive a "we know better than you, young person"

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Lack of developmentally age appropriate services.

Insufficient trauma-informed services

That using drugs is a life line, its whats keeping them alive. Youth are dealing with grief in this toxic drug crisis Drugs help to escape that reality sometimes

No regulated safer supply and/or extremely limited options

politics and media make it look like polar issues when really its a continuum of care that is needed, not one of the other

Fear

Failure to promote childhood and youth resiliency.

We haven't internalized toxic drug supply and impact it has on families and youth as an "existential threat." (lack of compassion, stigma) - versus COVID measures, where we saw systems respond ASAP.

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mixed messages -
abstinence "just say no"
vs harm reduction

We keep focusing on tertiary prevention rather than primary prevention in the form of community development and strengthening. The Icelandic Prevention Model has given us great hope in this way

The system of child welfare is fundamentally oppressive and the continuation of residential schools. A whole new system is needed.

lack of regulated drug options (i.e. similar to cannabis)

old therapeutic models
dont work in context of
TDS

disconnection, unbelonged,
fear to lead with love,
intergenerational harms,
systemic and individual
racism and exclusion

Indigenous specific
racism

preference for
abstinence based
model

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Adult-focused approaches applied to youth who use substances - need for youth-specific services

cycle of blame and shame leaves us stuck and not moving forward

Lack of timely access to mental health services

Multiple systems of oppression - anti-black Racism, transphobia, homophobia

Issues to access services in the rural and remote areas

Policy/structures that put systems at the center and not youth.

The supports that are supposed to be there are not doing the work they supposed to do or been secretive about what supports are there

Feeling invisible and not wanted to loved. Not feeling connected to anyone or anything. Disconnected and floating in a void.

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The extreme toxic drug supply is the underlying problem and it is exposing all of the other systemic problems and limitations.

stigma, dehumanization of folks who use drugs - scapegoating these folks - enables lack of political will to address the toxic drug crisis. Individualizing structural issues - poverty, housing crisis.

Repercussions of connection to MCFD and given ultimatum to stop using drugs which makes them go deeper

White supremacy and anti-indigenous racism

Below the surface, children are dealing with big issues few of us are equipped to face. We all need critical connections that lessen the load.

intergenerational trauma without adequately resourced intergenerational healing resources

Control drugs at the point of production/import and not at the consumer level

Criminalizing substance use

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Stigma

Youth have shared that services do not meet their needs - are often paternalistic / colonial and not gender affirming or culturally safe / inclusive.

Difficulties in accessing safer supplies

Trying to find pathways that open doors and welcome youth, such as Every door is the right door, and treatment starts the day you are ready.