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# Withdrawal Management & Detox

## What does it all mean?

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*Updated: May 2024*

# Overview



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- Understanding detox and withdrawal management
- Difference between community-based and medical withdrawal management
- What culture and traditional medicines can bring to the process
- What to expect when detoxing
- Learnings from First Nation communities and partnerships





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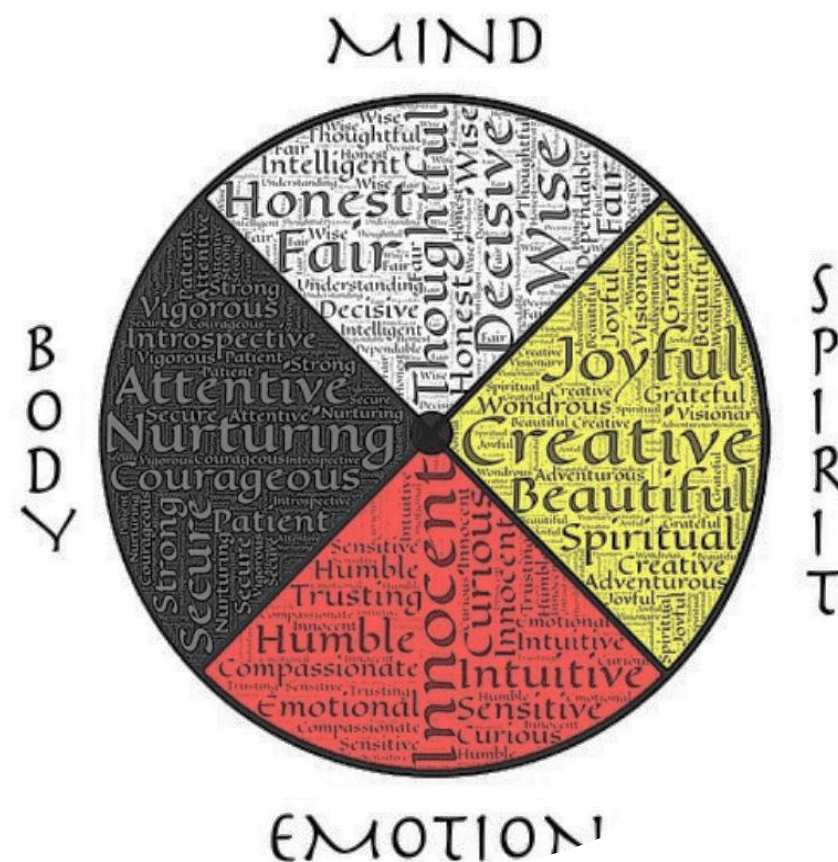


# All Paths Lead to Wellness



# Understanding Detox & Withdrawal

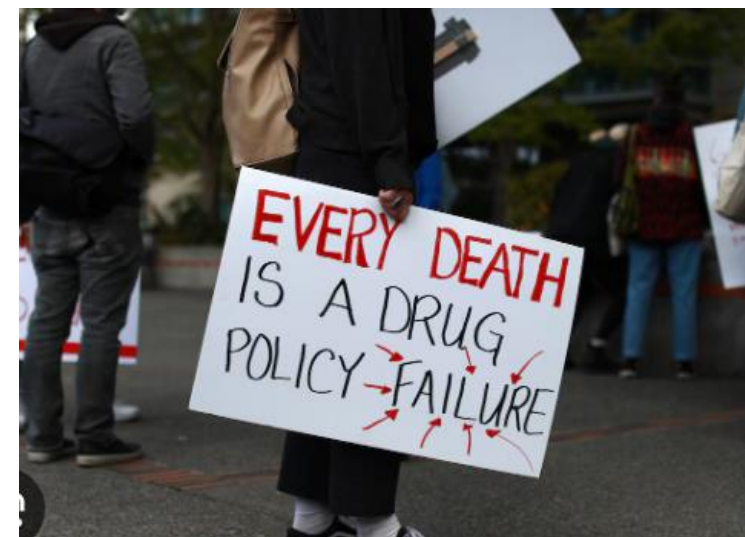
- **Detox:** Process of the body and mind getting rid of the chemical effects of substances that have been stored in the body over time.
- **Withdrawal:** Describes the symptoms that the body experiences during detox.
- **Withdrawal Management:** Wholistic and comprehensive approach to helping someone through the detox/withdrawal process.





# The Unregulated Drug Supply

- The unregulated drug supply across BC has become highly toxic and unpredictable with the addition of synthetic substances including fentanyl, carfentanil, and benzodiazepines.
- Often it can be difficult to know exactly what is in a substance, and it is possible to be exposed to substances without knowing.
- This can make the detox process more complex as withdrawal symptoms can be hard to predict.

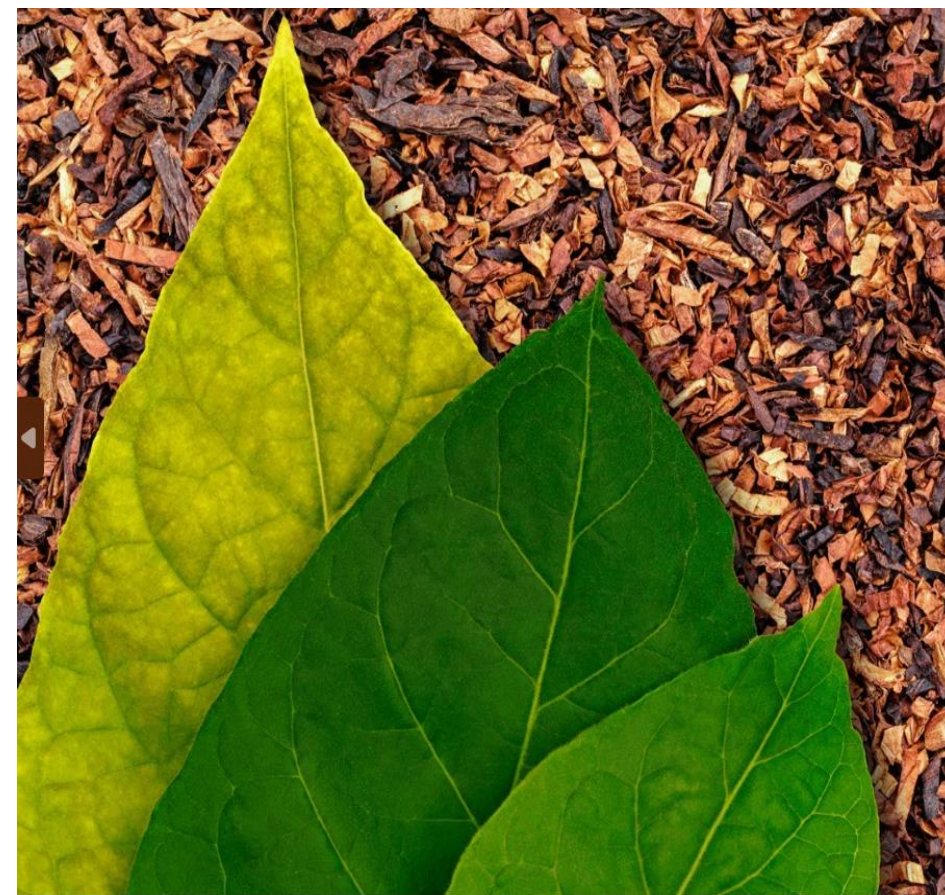




# Options for Detox/Withdrawal

Depending on the individual and their needs the detox/withdrawal process may take place in:

- **Medical Detox Facility:** 24 hour care available
- **Home or Community-based Detox:** Medical and community support available.
- **Cultural or Land-based Healing Detox:** Focus on culture & traditional medicines to support the withdrawal process. Little to no medical support.

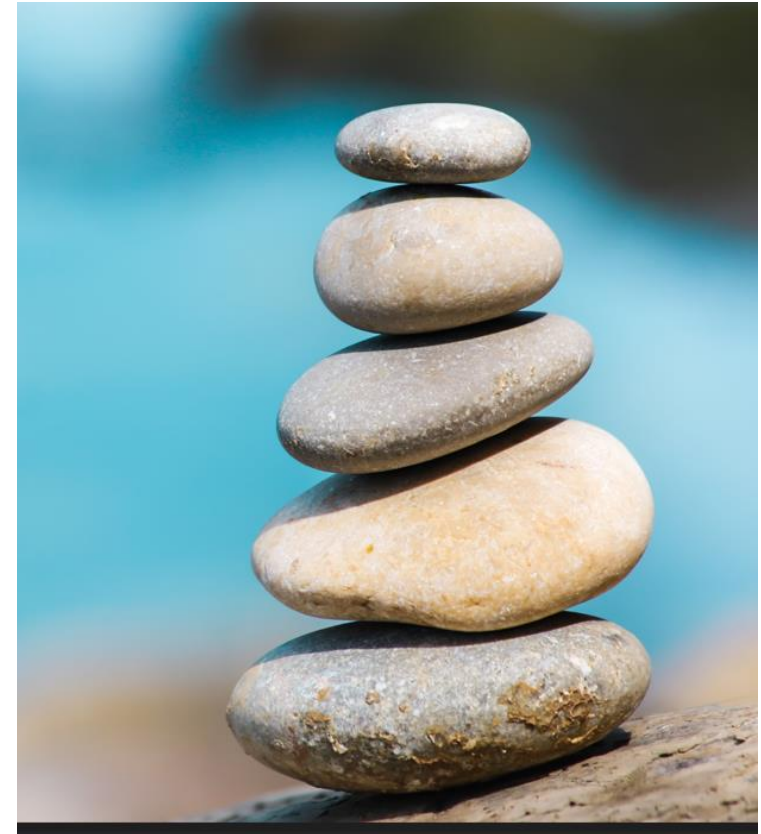


# Medical Withdrawal Management



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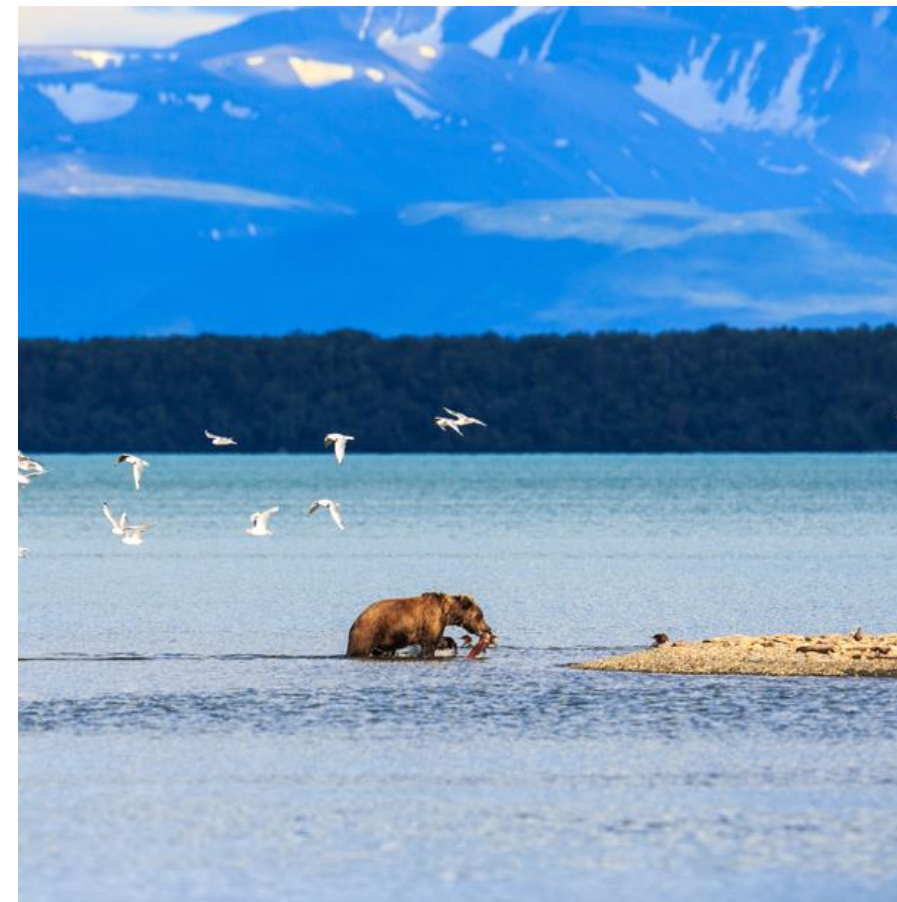
- Often referred to as “Medical Detox”
- Typically provided in a specialized inpatient withdrawal management facility.
- Generally only a small amount of people will require this type of medically managed service.
- Reasons for medical detox may include:
  - History of seizures, delusions, or hallucinations.
  - Homelessness or unhoused.
  - Chronic health condition(s).
  - Require medication management for symptoms.





# Home/Community Based Detox

- Withdrawal management provided in home or through mobile service.
- Depending on substances and overall health, medications may be used along with regular support/check-ins from health care staff
- Requirements for mobile/home detox may include:
  - Substance-free housing/shelter where a family member/friend can monitor
  - No history of severe withdrawal complications





# Land-based Healing Withdrawal Management



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## Guiding Principles

- Focus on culturally safe models of care
- Fosters collaborations
- Honours local strengths and resources – building the expertise at home
- Targets multiple determinants of health including: self determination, cultural teachings, life skills, connection to land, language and traditional medicines
- Fosters connection to traditional territories and community including healers and Elders





# Choosing the right option

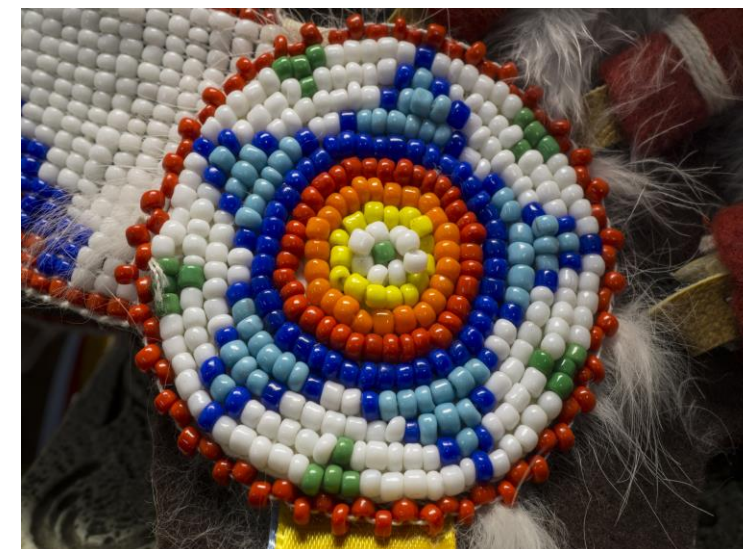
- Individuals goals & wishes for their detox/withdrawal process.
- Substances used and overall health.
- Closest medical care.
- Supports available in community.
- Aftercare considerations.





# Weaving Western and Cultural Approaches

- When we plan for withdraw management supports in community we can combine the best of both worlds.
- Partners could include Elders, Peers, Outreach Workers, Community Nurses, Pharmacists, Traditional Medicine knowledge keepers, Healers, Aunties and Uncles
- Setting up community safe spaces, wrap around supports,





# First Steps

- Assessment by a healthcare provider.
- Assemble a support team.
- Develop a plan for managing common withdrawal symptoms.
- Develop a safety plan for emergency medical help if needed.





# Alcohol

- Alcohol can be a very dangerous substance to detox from without support as withdrawal symptoms can be life threatening.
- It is important to visit a health care provider before detoxing from alcohol to make sure the right supports are in place.
- Medications can be prescribed to help manage withdrawal symptoms.





# Opioids

- Quitting “Cold Turkey” or detoxing from Opioids without medical support is not recommended.
- Can cause severe withdrawal symptoms that are associated with high rates of relapse.
- People are more likely to experience a toxic drug poisoning after detox due to lowered tolerance



**Low tolerance is a MAJOR risk factor for toxic drug poisoning**

# Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT)



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- Safe and effective medication-based treatment for people who are dependent on opioids.
- Helps to improve day-to-day functioning, find stability, manage withdrawal symptoms, and work toward recovery.
- Helps to lower the risk of drug-related harms, including Hep C and HIV transmission, as well as fatal drug poisoning.
- Helps people stay in treatment and engage in their care.





# Benzodiazepines “Benzos”

- Benzo's have steadily been increasing in the unregulated drug supply since 2019.
- Today Benzo's are showing up in between 40 60% of down samples.
- Withdrawal from benzodiazepines without medical support is of great concern as it can lead to life-threatening complications.
- Detox in a medical facility is almost always recommended.







# What about Stimulants?

- Amphetamines, Crystal Meth, Cocaine, Ritalin/Adderal.
- For most people a medical detox is not needed.
- Withdrawal symptoms can last from a few days to a few months, and while rarely dangerous, it can be a very painful process to go through.





# Preparing for the Process

- Client-centered approach.
- Education & awareness around the process and what's involved – timing, waitlists, what to expect.
- Treatment plan? Healing/wellness journey?



# Teachings from experience:



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- “Both options get you full support”- when traditional and western healers work together
- “partnerships and trust” – when community nurses get full support from partners
- “land as medicine” – when we use the medicines of the land to detox, stabilize and heal
- “On the land” – learning how to do detoxing and connection safety at the same time



# Regional Supports

- What paths and supports are available in your region?
- Who are your FNHA contacts?
  - Regional Addiction Specialists
  - Four Directions team
  - Wellness Navigators
  - Traditional Wellness Specialists
- Community Organizations?
  - Friendship Centres
  - First Nations led organizations.



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## Mental Health & Substance Use Service Link

**1.888.885.8824**

Are you looking for information on mental health, substance use, addiction medicine, and harm reduction services?

Call any day of the week to connect with mental health and substance use services across the region.



### Support – Not Stigma

- Scan the QR code for [islandhealth.ca/mhsu](https://islandhealth.ca/mhsu)
- And check out the new [Wellbeing.gov.bc.ca](https://Wellbeing.gov.bc.ca) webpage!





# Doctor of the Day and Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Services

- Supports access to detox and treatment
- DOD directly accessible by clients. To reach DOD call 1-855-344-3800 7 days a week, 8:30-4:30
- VSUPS Referral-based service. Referral can be received from DOD if client doesn't have GP or Nurse. To make a referral, 1-833-456-7655, between 9:30am-4:00pm. Appointments may also be outside of these hours. [FNVSUPS@fnha.ca](mailto:FNVSUPS@fnha.ca)





# Thank you!

**Gayaxsixa** (Hailhzaqvla)

**Kw'as ho:y** (Halq'eméyem)

**Mussi Cho** (Kaska Dena)

**Huy tseep q'u** (Stz'uminus)

**Huy ch q'u** (Hul'qumi'num)

**Tooyksim niin** (Nisga'a)

**Haa'wa** (Haida)

**Kwuk<sup>w</sup>stéyp** (Nlaka'pamux)

**Kukwstsétsemc**

(Secwepemc)

**Gila'kasla** (Kwakwaka'wakw)

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**Kleco Kleco** (Nuu-Chah-Nulth)

**HÍSWKE** (Sen'cōten)

**Sechanalyagh** (Tsilhqot'in)

**Snachailya** (Dakelh)

**T'oyaxsim nisim** (Gitxsan)

# Questions? Discussion?



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