

Summary of Fireside Chat by Danya Fast and Kali-olt Sedgemore BCCHR Community Partnership Super Hub

Community of Practice meeting May 1, 2026

Kali-olt Sedgemore is a member of the 'Namgis First Nation and Kwakwaka'wakw people. They have extensive experience working in and leading frontline harm reduction services for people who use drugs and are the Executive Director of the Coalition of Peers Dismantling the Drug War Society (CPDDW). Dr. Danya Fast is an Associate Professor in UBC's Department of Medicine, a BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHR) Investigator, a Research Scientist at Foundry, and Co-Lead of the Community Partnership Super Hub. Trained as a medical anthropologist, she has extensive experience conducting qualitative, ethnographic, and community-based participatory research with adolescents and young adults who use substances in Greater Vancouver.

During their fireside chat, Kali and Danya reflected on more than a decade of collaboration focused on improving supports for young people who use substances. Their work centres on community-based, youth-led research and advocacy in Vancouver, with a strong commitment to harm reduction and meaningful youth engagement.

Kali was a founding member of the [Youth Health Advisory Council \(YHAC\)](#) in 2018, a group of eight young people with lived experience of mental health and substance use challenges and housing instability who work closely with Danya. Since its inception, YHAC members have been actively involved throughout the research process, from shaping study designs to learning about research methods and funding systems. They have collaborated on numerous academic papers, [Youth Voices reports](#), podcast episodes, and a series of short films (see below for selected examples).

In recent years, Kali has become a co-investigator on several studies led by Danya. Kali is also the Indigenous Harm Reduction and Peer Engagement Expert with the [UBC Youth Overdose Prevention Research Excellence Cluster](#), an interdisciplinary team dedicated to overdose prevention that is co-led by Danya Fast and Matt Carwana (Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC Department of Pediatrics; BCCHR Investigator; and Co-Lead of the Community Partnership Super Hub).

Danya and Kali underscored the importance of meaningfully engaging people with lived and living experience in research. Kali's journey from youth advisory member to co-investigator illustrates how meaningful participation can create pathways for leadership and influence. Both speakers emphasized that research teams that include individuals with lived and living experience are better positioned to produce relevant, impactful, and community-informed work.

Throughout the fireside chat, Danya and Kali described how collaborative research can support real-world change. For example, Kali has contributed to advocacy efforts for youth-focused overdose prevention services, the development of resources used in both service settings and policy advocacy, and the creation of youth-friendly educational materials such as a [Medetomidine Info Card](#). Practical resources such as these can improve safety and accessibility and have impacts that extend well beyond academic publications.

Another example of their work together was an international collaboration with colleagues in Lisbon, Portugal, which compared the experiences of young people who use drugs in Vancouver and Lisbon and explored how supports for these youth could be improved. This collaboration resulted in the publication [Harm Reduction Calls to Action from Young People Who Use Drugs on the Streets of Vancouver and Lisbon](#), presentations at international conferences, and the publication of an article in [Harm Reduction Journal](#).

During the second half of their fireside chat, Danya and Kali discussed their collaboration on the [Living On film series](#), a collection of four short films co-created with youth. One film, [LIGHT](#), was screened for CPSH CoP members. Narrated by Kali, the film explores the work of CPDDW and shares the story of a young person who used stimulants. It provides an excellent example of how combining personal storytelling with community-based perspectives can extend the reach of research findings beyond academic audiences and promote a more nuanced understanding of youth substance use, harm reduction, and the structural conditions shaping young people's lives.

During the Q&A period following the screening, CPSH CoP members asked about the inspiration behind the *Living On* films, the collaborative creative process, funding challenges, and lessons learned. Kali and Danya described filmmaking as a powerful way to share stories, honour lives, and reach audiences beyond academia. While the work involved emotional challenges related to grief and loss, it also fostered community, connection, and shared purpose among participants. Each film took approximately six months to develop, from concept creation and scriptwriting through filming and editing.

Selected List of Collaborative Knowledge Mobilization Works

Short Films

Light. *Living On* [film]. Kiddo Films; 2024 Dec 18. Available from:

<https://www.nowness.com/story/12111?previewToken=736b8e95e7f1e0beb9ff1e483638c3fd3e7c3fbc38267d70bb103d6ead1355d3>

Podcasts

Control. *Crackdown podcast*. 2020 Dec 28. Available from: <https://crackdownpod.com/podcast/episode-21-control/>

Community Reports

Youth Health Advisory Council, Barborini C, Eekhoudt C, McKenzie S, Celis S, Fast D. Welcome to YHAC Field School. Vancouver (BC): Youth Overdose Prevention Research Cluster, University of British Columbia; 2026. Available from: <https://youth-overdose-prevention.ubc.ca/media/file/welcome-yhac-field-school>

UBC Youth Overdose Prevention Research Excellence Cluster. Housing should be a home: Perspectives of youth who use(d) drugs on housing and homelessness in Vancouver. UBC Youth Overdose Prevention Research Excellence Cluster; 2025. Available from: <https://youth-overdose-prevention.ubc.ca/media/file/housing-should-be-home-reportpdf>

Youth Health Advisory Council, Barborini C, Eekhoudt C, McKenzie S, Fast D. Youth and caregiver voices on substance use recovery and healing. Vancouver (BC): British Columbia Centre on Substance Use; 2024. Available from: <http://www.bccsu.ca/youth-and-caregivers-reimaging-recovery>

Youth Health Advisory Council and BC Centre on Substance Use. Harm reduction calls to action. Vancouver: BC Centre on Substance Use; 2023. <https://youth-overdose-prevention.ubc.ca/media/file/harm-reduction-calls-actionpdf>

BC Centre on Substance Use with the Youth Health Advisory Council. Youth voices on treatment in the shadow of the overdose crisis: Key recommendations and findings for care providers. British Columbia Centre on Substance Use; 2022. Available from: <https://www.bccsu.ca/youth-voices/>

Academic Articles

McAdam E, Milloy MJ, Sayre E, Verdicchio C, Sedgemore K, May H, Pranteau S, Corriveau D, Friesen D, Fleury M, Fast D, DeBeck K. Policing and access to harm reduction services among young people who use drugs before and after the pilot implementation of decriminalization of personal possession. *International Journal of Drug Policy*. 2025;146:105068. [doi:10.1016/j.drugpo.2025.105068](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2025.105068).

Goodyear T, Jenkins E, Knight R, Sedgemore K, White M, Culham T, Fast D. Autonomy and (in)capacity to consent in adolescent substance use treatment and care. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2023;72(2):179-181. [doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2022.10.031](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2022.10.031).

Thulien M, Charlesworth R, Anderson H, Dykeman R, Kincaid K, Sedgemore K, Knight R, Fast D; Youth Health Advisory Council. Navigating treatment in the shadow of the overdose crisis: Perspectives of youth experiencing street-involvement across British Columbia. *The Canadian Journal of Addiction*. 2022;13(2):S62-S71. [doi:10.1097/CXA.000000000000146](https://doi.org/10.1097/CXA.000000000000146).

Thulien M, Anderson H, Douglas S, Dykeman R, Horne A, Howard B, Sedgemore KO, Charlesworth R, Fast D. The generative potential of mess in community-based participatory research with young people who use (d) rugs in Vancouver. *Harm Reduction Journal*. 2022;19(1):30. [doi:10.1186/s12954-022-00615-7](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-022-00615-7).

Canêdo J, Sedgemore K, Ebbert K, Anderson H, Dykeman R, Kincaid K, Dias C, Silva D, Knight R, Fast D; Youth Health Advisory Council. Harm reduction calls to action from young people who use drugs on the streets of Vancouver and Lisbon. *Harm Reduction Journal*. 2022;19(1):43-51. [doi:10.1186/s12954-022-00607-7](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-022-00607-7).

Giang V, Thulien M, McNeil R, Sedgemore K, Anderson H, Fast D. Opioid agonist therapy trajectories among street-entrenched youth in the context of a public health crisis. *Social Science & Medicine: Population Health*. 2020;11:100609. [doi:10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100609](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2020.100609).