

Category: **Healthcare**

Project: **Addictions Don't Discriminate Exhibition**

What was the challenge?

Addictions Don't Discriminate is an in-person interactive exhibit that takes participants on the journeys of real people whose lives have been impacted by addiction. The exhibit is designed to inspire understanding, empathy and action in the viewer by using infographics, and visual diagrams to explain the stories of 6 Edmontonians whose lives have been affected by addiction. We used typography as well as charts, diagrams and infographics to represent themes related to addiction and stigma. The Urban Wellness Plan Framework, a critical framework that is used to understand six kinds of connection that are at the heart of individual and community wellness, provides additional information on Adverse Childhood Experiences and how interational Trauma and Truth and Reconciliation affect addition.

What was the solution?

The final project resulted in 21 double sided panels that are printed fabric, stretched onto aluminum frames. Each panel is 38" x 93" high. Panels are double sided and when the exhibition is set up, consists of three main zones: an introduction to the concept of addition and the storytellers, 6 different stories of lived experience and then an area that includes resources and activities about addiction that mobilize and encourage community action. Other deliverables include a website, a hosting toolkit, and an evaluation for participants. The exhibit uses QR codes throughout the panels to provide additional information and show video and audio content.

Contact:

name: City of Edmonton, Gillian Harvey
company/organisation: DHRIL
(Design x Health Research Innovation Lab, University of Alberta)
e-mail: gharvey@ualberta.ca
website: addictionsdontdiscriminate.com/

What was the effect?

Four hundred and fifty people attended the launch from Nov 4-9. The exhibition has travelled to thirteen locations across Alberta. In addition to an exhibition, there is a video, activities, and educational resources related to addition. General feedback from the exhibition survey revealed that:

- Many people in attendance already had a deep understanding about addiction/worked in the field/had lived experience or knew someone close to them who had lived experience
- Exhibit reinforced their already existing thoughts and beliefs and they were happy others were going to see this and potentially have more empathy
- "This exhibit helped me see how addiction is a crisis of disconnection"
- The messaging about language was a great reminder
- The inclusion of the spectrum of substance use was helpful and eye-opening
- The people who did mention action items said that they will support supervised consumption sites and harm reduction, that they have more compassion and that they will work to break the stigma by sharing what they learned/saw and telling others about the exhibit
- The information about the current drug poisoning crisis in Alberta was informative for many

