

Harm Reduction – A Guiding Principle

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection operates under the harm reduction philosophy, which refers to a range of public health policies designed to reduce the harmful consequences associated with drug use and other high risk activities without requiring abstinence from such activities.

Harm reduction strategies recognize that the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination, and other social inequalities affect both people's vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with drug-related and other harms.

The primary aim of RHAC's harm reduction programming is to reduce the transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C and other blood-borne infections. We educate service users about the health risks associated with drug use and provide information and materials necessary to practice safer drug use and safer sex.

For those who want to stop using drugs, we provide referrals to drug or alcohol treatment services. Interventions may be targeted at the individual, family, community, or society level. We address the impact of drug use along a continuum and work in collaboration with community stakeholders to develop effective harm reduction services.

**Condoms can prevent
HIV transmission.**



Testing. Testing. Testing.

Know your HIV status. Get tested.

Having an HIV test is the only way to be certain about your HIV status. Knowing your status is the best way to take care of yourself and your partner(s).

RHAC works with Options Anonymous HIV Testing Clinic to provide clinics in several locations in and around London. You will get anonymous results on the spot with immediate access to counselling.

**30% of people
living with HIV/AIDS
don't know it.**



Regional
HIV/AIDS
Connection

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1-866-920-1601
www.hivaidsconnection.ca**

We are a community-inspired organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals and diverse communities living with, at-risk for or affected by the challenges associated with HIV / AIDS.

Voice Knowledge Hope

MIDDLESEX OXFORD ELGIN
PERTH HURON LAMBTON



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**HIV/AIDS
Impacts All
Communities**



Why is Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (RHAC) in your community?

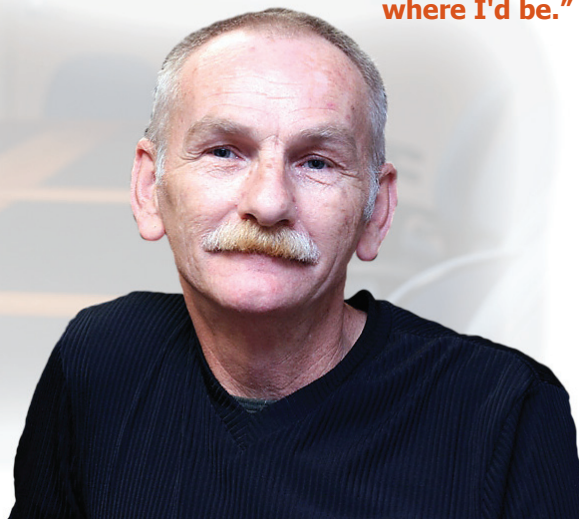
In 2006, an HIV/AIDS community planning report commissioned by the AIDS Bureau at the Ontario Ministry of Health was completed using input from people involved in HIV/AIDS work in London and surrounding counties. The report highlighted the unique challenges and needs of people in rural areas and smaller communities living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Increased stigma and discrimination, transportation to HIV-specific medical services and support and lack of up-to-date HIV education were identified as areas needing attention.

The Regional HIV/AIDS Connection is a well-respected AIDS Service Organization (ASO) in Ontario that has led the way in HIV/AIDS advocacy, prevention initiatives, education, and support services for over 25 years. The report identified RHAC (formerly the AIDS Committee of London) as the agency best positioned to begin providing HIV/AIDS services in Perth, Huron, Lambton, Elgin, and Oxford counties in addition to its work in London/Middlesex.

We work to:

- Increase access to medical, practical and psychosocial services for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS
- Integrate and coordinate programs and services for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs)
- Provide HIV/AIDS educational and outreach materials to the community
- Establish partnerships to strengthen our ability to provide effective services in each community
- Continually identify needs and solutions for people and communities affected by HIV/AIDS in southwestern Ontario
- Develop Hepatitis C programming and services as we strive to respond to the growing need in our community

**"Without RHAC,
I don't know
where I'd be."**



Client Services

Client services staff are skilled in offering services to many diverse populations of people living with and affected by issues specifically related to HIV/AIDS.

Client services staff members will meet with you any time, including after regular office hours at RHAC or at a location other than RHAC. All of our services and programs are completely confidential and free. Please call ahead to schedule an appointment.

- Crisis intervention
- Counselling
- Practical support and financial counselling
- Advocacy – navigating "the system" to access services outside of RHAC
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Country Cupboard food bank
- Referrals to other agencies
- Social and support groups, plus education

Community Relations

- Creating public awareness in Perth, Huron, Lambton, Elgin, Middlesex, and Oxford counties
- Building partnerships with community organizations
- Empowering volunteers
- Fundraising to meet our mission
- Strengthening stakeholder relations

Education

We provide creative and innovative HIV/HCV education and outreach that is rooted in harm reduction. Our work explores safer sex, testing, disclosure, POZ prevention and stigma/discrimination. We engage youth, women, straight, gay, bisexual, MSM, trans, African-Caribbean & black students, teachers and communities. Whether it's online, in a bar, at a booth or over the phone we can help facilitate multicultural HIV/HCV awareness. SHARE (Stories of HIV/AIDS Related Experiences) videos and speakers also enhance our programming by putting a human face to HIV/HCV related stigma and discrimination. You can book one of these along with a presentation or booth by contacting our department.

You may also want to know more about our:

- Ambassador Program for students/volunteers
- Open Closet youth group
- London HBT Working Group
- Community-based research projects

