Notice of the Final Oral Examination for the Degree of Master of Nursing of

BETHANY JEAL

BN (University of Manitoba, 2004)

“Welcome Home
Impact and Effectiveness of the Dr. Peter Centre’s Harm Reduction Model for Those Living with HIV/AIDS and Who Use Illicit Drugs”

School of Nursing

Friday, December 18, 2015
10:30AM
Technology Enterprise Facility
Room 264

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Bernadette Pauly, School of Nursing, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Anne Bruce, School of Nursing, UVic (Member)
Dr. Ryan McNeil, Interdisciplinary Studies, UBC (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Bruce Wallace, School of Social Work, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Deborah Begoray, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The Dr. Peter Centre (DPC), an HIV care facility, provides integrated health care services incorporating harm reduction strategies as part of service provision. These services include a “Harm Reduction Room” for those members who inject drugs, to do so in a supervised environment. In this thesis, I explore the perspectives of DPC members on the harm reduction approach as part of a larger study titled *A mixed Method Evaluation of the Impact of the Dr. Peter Centre on Health Care Access and Outcomes for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS who use Illicit Drugs*. Thirty DPC members were recruited as part of the qualitative portion of the larger mixed-method study. One-on-one in depth interviews were conducted with each participant and audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Participant narratives reflected positive experiences with nurses and other staff, and with the harm reduction philosophy at the DPC. Narratives from both participants who inject drugs and participants who do not inject drugs indicated support for the harm reduction room because of the safety it provides. Safety was related to reducing the direct harmful effects of injection drugs such as infection and overdose, and also to the refuge from the street and freedom from stigma of drug use that the DPC provides. Participant accounts expressed a sense of acceptance and belonging as a part of the community at the DPC highlighting the role of DPC in shifting drug use patterns. This thesis emphasizes that the harm reduction philosophy and the provision of harm reduction services at the DPC contributes to the overall health and well being of participants.