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

of

SARAH HASTINGS

BA (University of Victoria, 2010)

“HIV/AIDS and HCV Risk Factors Related to Homelessness; Are Front Line Workers Equipped with Knowledge to Best Support Shelter Clients?”

Social Dimensions of Health Program

Friday, July 13, 2018
12:30PM
Cornett Building
Room A319

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Eric Roth, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Bruce Wallace, School of Social Work, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:
Dr. Nathan Lachowsky, School of Public Health & Social Policy, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Esther Sangster-Gormley, School of Nursing, UVic

Dr. Stephen V. Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Background
Shelter employees of the Victoria Cool Aid Society (VCAS) work with clients living with or at risk of contracting, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). The purpose of this thesis is to assess whether the VCAS shelter staff need further HIV/AIDS and HCV education to support shelter clients.

Methods
A two part (A and B) survey consisting of 70 questions was created that asked 38 Emergency Support Workers to: A) rate their ability (expertise) to answer HIV/AIDS and CV related questions, and B) to identify which questions contain important knowledge to know for their work. The survey explored the following subjects: 1) HIV/AIDS (12 questions), 2) Hep C (11 questions), 3) Health and Substance Use (3 questions), 4) Protocol (3 questions), and 5) Community Agencies (6 questions). From this format, it was possible to assess where staff felt their knowledge levels could use improvement, what topics they felt important to know for their work and to determine questions to include in a future training course.

Results
Results for each of the five sections showing both lower levels of knowledge (expertise) and knowledge importance, were as follows: 1) HIV/AIDS: 8 out of 12 questions, 2) HCV:10 out of 11 questions, 3) Health and Substance Use: 1 out of 3 questions, 4) Protocol: 3 out of 3 questions, and 5) Community Agencies: 3 out of 6 questions. Survey results were delivered via Power Point presentation to management of the Victoria Cool Aid society using simple graphs and charts to describe easily the findings to stakeholders. The presentation emphasised that staff overall are in need of specific HIV/AIDS and HCV education.

Conclusion
Emergency shelter workers are in need of HIV/AIDS and HCV education. The results can inform a HIV/AIDS and HCV educational course for VCAS shelter staff.