

In an effort to support the design and overall planning for a new purpose built withdrawal management centre, in Vancouver Community, VCH Community Engagement held five focus groups with 23 individuals (1 self-identified trans person, 9 women, 2 men and 11 youth) who have had experience or knowledge of a detox facility. This compilation of their feedback provides their perspectives, ideas and feedback on what a client focused detox centre could be. This narrative format reflects multiple suggestions for the features described. This input will be provided to the facility design team to make the facility as welcoming, safe, comfortable and barrier-free as possible. Not all of this feedback may be possible to implement, but we are looking for every opportunity to make the site and the services work best for the people who use them.

What we asked....

- *What would make the space feel safe, welcoming, comfortable, and barrier-free to you?*
- *What features would you like to see in the; reception/waiting areas, the group, dining and meeting spaces, clinic room, and bedrooms?*

What we heard ...

From the outside coming in

From the outside the building appears welcoming with a modern design, lots of glass, with colours on the building and green plants and trees surrounding it. As I walk in the first area I see is an ante room or pre-waiting space, I am greeted by a person who is friendly and wants to help me. In this space there are places to sit that are comfortable, there is a safe bathroom where I can wash and get cleaned up, there is water to drink or herbal tea and snacks. There are designs and signs in this place that let me know this is a safe space for everyone no matter what culture or orientation. The person who greets me helps me and I go with them to a quiet space that is private and they help me to understand what I need. I find out what will happen next, where I will go. I may have to hand over all my belongings but they let me know that it is ok and that clothing will be provided to me. I am told they will make sure my personal items are cleaned up, debugged if needed and I will get them back and other items may have to be stored until I need them back but that they will be safe. There is even space for my dog to be cared for while I am here. Then the person provides a warm handover to the next space and staff who help me to get into care. If I am coming to this space for day treatment then in this pre-space I can check in and let staff know I am there, maybe through a phone or a computer where I check in and then they let me enter the intake space.



Coming in to stay

In the intake space there are friendly staff who welcome me and help me feel safe. They know my name and let me know what will happen next. It is a warm space with soft colours, wood and plants. It smells nice and there is the gentle sound of water and soft music. There are comfortable seats where I can rest and a refreshment area I can get something cool or warm to drink and snacks to eat if I am hungry. The spaces and doorways are wide and accessible even for wheelchairs. The surfaces are soft and rounded, organic and inviting. In this space I am provided with orientation and information about where I will be and what will happen next. I receive a welcome basket of pyjamas, slippers, ear plugs, an eye mask, personal hygiene items e.g. toothbrush, soap, shampoo (nice products). There are bathrooms that are safe and clean where I can shower and get cleaned up. I am asked how I want to be addressed while I am here, what name or pronouns I want to have used while here and how I want to be identified. I am asked if I want something warm to eat.

I am given a book with pages where I can write my questions or anything I want in and I meet some of the staff who I will be seeing and connecting with over the next few days that I am here. I receive information on what is expected from me while I am here, what behaviours are acceptable and which are not. In this space I go to a private clinic room and meet with a nurse or doctor and discuss my health and my addiction and what medication I will receive and how those meds will be administered. There is a care plan designed for me and with me to take me through this time in detox and help me get better. I am supported and offered help to locate services and housing or whatever I will need to make my recovery successful. I am told that when I am settled in, a little later that day, I will be given a tour of the spaces and places that are for clients.



Then I am guided to my room. It is my own space, not large but safe and clean and warm. It has warm, soft colours with some wood, a bed, a dresser with a drawer that locks for my personal items. There is a chair, a table or desk where I can sit and write or draw. There is a window with lots of light and a way to open up a small part of the window for air. My window has a black out blind so I can have it dark when I need to sleep. My room has a heater/cooler fan so I can regulate the temperature when I feel cold or too hot. I have a lamp so I can read or have soft lighting.



There is a small bathroom with my own toilet and sink so when I am sick I don't have to rush because someone is waiting or be embarrassed about what the bathroom smells or looks like. There is a mirror in the bathroom because sometimes I want to know if I look as bad as I feel. The bathroom has soap, shampoo and other personal hygiene items for me to use. There are warm blankets and soft pillows in my room. There is a comfortable chair to sit in. My room is located in an area where I feel safe. The bedroom area is designed to be safe and accommodate areas for youth, women, men and trans clients. My room is a quiet space where I can relax and feel safe, where I can heal and get better. When I don't want to be in my room there are many other spaces to go to where I can be with other people, where I can learn and share, where I can eat, and exercise. There are many choices but I am grateful for my room where I can be by myself and not worry if other people are looking at me or

I am here now and safe.....

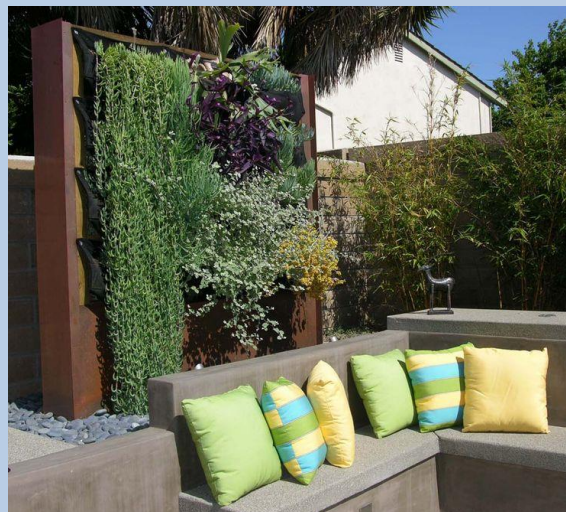
There are so many other spaces I can go while I am here. The dining room is really nice. There are different options for seating and it is flexible. If I want I can sit with a group of people or just one or two others. There are different types of seating and there is thoughtful and pleasing art work on the walls and in the space. The space is filled with light. All the surfaces and finishes; counters, tables light fixtures are rounded and soft. The food is really good; it makes me want to eat and makes me feel better. The lighting in the dining area can change throughout the day with the large windows bringing in lots of light and then softer light in the evening. There is a small kitchen that we can use to prepare snacks or cook together.

The dining room looks out on an outdoor garden. There is lots of green; plants and trees as well as colours with different flowers and herbs. The outdoor space is so calming and safe. It is fenced all around with living plant walls and can be accessed from the dining areas large glass doors that can open up to the outside in warm weather. The outdoor space has comfortable seating, a fountain and a space to stretch or practice yoga. There is music that plays in the outdoor space, nature sounds and spa like music; it is very calming. There is an awning that can be pulled out when the weather is wet so we can still use the space when it rains. In a far corner of the outdoor space there is a smoking pod. It is strange looking small space where a person, or two at most, can go to smoke. It keeps the smoke away from everyone else who does not want to smoke but allows those who need to smoke the chance to do so in a safe, non intrusive, non-judgemental way.



Getting well.....

The outdoor space can also be accessed from the Sacred Space or meditation room. This room is small and meant to be a place for spirit restoration, meditation and prayer. It is a special space and has calming colours and artwork, inspirational quotes on the walls. There is a large fish tank and it is soothing to watch the fish and one of our tasks is to care for the fish. It is very quiet; all of the spaces are quiet and when inside you can't hear the sounds of the city outside at all. This quiet room is so peaceful and important to healing body and soul. The fact that one wall is all glass doors that opens onto the outdoor space allows it to be used in different ways to support activities like prayer services, yoga or meditation classes. The window wall has a large cover that can be lowered when the doors are closed. The window covering has a mural with trees and plants on it.



Getting well.....

The clinic rooms are clean and welcoming and have glass that can be clear or frosted for privacy. The colours are warm and there is artwork on the walls. The clinic rooms are located right past the intake area and there are several clinic rooms to allow for increased access. Various treatments are provided in these rooms; acupuncture, massage, medication administration. The clinic rooms are located near the bedroom wings and there are several small nursing pods or stand up stations in the clinic/treatment area. It is easy to find and access staff.



There is a group room for meetings; SMART, AA or other educational sessions. There are classes and discussions on mind and body health. The groups room has large TV's that are used for presentations or for movie nights. There is an area in the group room where you can do exercise and there is some low impact equipment that can be used unsupervised. Adjacent to the group room is a library that has a great selection of books, comfortable seating and access to computers. The library is a great space to go for quiet time or to colour and do crafts to keep my hands busy. Having these choices of different places to go provides distractions from the pain of detoxing.

All the spaces are open and there are clear sight lines to the many spaces which allow staff to see clients and to maintain safety and a sense of community. There are rails on the walls in the halls and walkways to support me to walk as I am unsteady at times. There are rooms with showers and bathtubs where I go to get clean and warm. There are bubbles to use for baths.



Everything about this place feels welcoming, safe and healing. There is even a small shop where I can buy items I might need. If I have to go to my home to get something there is shuttle and someone will go with me. The staff are very friendly and caring.

This place gives me hope.

