

# Building Positive Connections

## Manitoba HIV Program Outreach and Social Support Program Services Evaluation

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### BACKGROUND:

As a vital component of the community-based program of the Manitoba HIV Program, Nine Circles Outreach and Social Support program team works with clients to facilitate access to HIV education, care and treatment; provide support; facilitate skills-building and empowerment; and, reduce the barriers to care.

To do this, team members with clients conduct client-centered risk assessments and share information; work with care teams to improve the quality of care provider relationships; make appropriate referrals to clinical and social service organizations; participate in health care planning and implementation; implement strategies to promote healthy practices; conduct one-to-one and community education sessions; create a network of social support services; and promote adherence through frequent follow-ups for medication and appointment keeping. This team works with the larger context of clients' lives by promoting strategies to help clients live healthy with HIV.

### OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the Outreach and Social Support program evaluation were to determine whether clients improved health and wellbeing as a result of their participation and to what extent short and long-term issues are identified and addressed.

### METHODS:

In order to assess the objectives, client interviews were completed along with an analysis of documented program contacts.

### RESULTS:

This program plays an important role in retaining clients' connections to HIV medical care, improving adherence to antiretroviral therapy, and helping clients establish a network of support services in the community. Working from a client-centered perspective, the team facilitates improved access to health and social support services.

### CONCLUSIONS:

The majority (88%) of clients in the sample felt their health has improved since being connected with their worker. Some clients attributed improvement in their health to the fact that they are in contact with a Worker and a doctor and/or nurse and this broader network of support has helped to improve their health and life situation.

*"[My Worker] supports me, believes I can change my lifestyle... believes in me."*

*"I don't feel alone anymore. I don't feel [as] upset about things as before. That is something good for me."*

*"Staff here [at Nine Circles], the clinic and the support workers are on top of their game. They are always here to talk to me when I need someone."*

*"It is like having a friend to talk to, a shoulder to cry on when things get rough. She gives me great advice, I appreciate that."*

*"He respects my decisions. He helps me to make the correct decisions when I need. He is always there to help me."*

*"She's great with kids... we all call her Auntie."*

*"I'm going out more. I'm participating in many programs Nine Circles has offered. I'm going to conferences, something I wouldn't have done before."*