

# Substance Misuse Among Indigenous Peoples Of Canada: The Problem Of Inhaling Solvents Among The Cree

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## The Helping Horse: How Equine Assisted Learning Contributes to the Wellbeing of First Nations Youth in Treatment for Volatile Substance Misuse

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There has been recent interest in Canada exploring the benefits of equine assisted interventions in  
the treatment of First Nations youth who misuse volatile substances. Using the richness of an  
exploratory case study involving the White Buffalo Youth Inhalant Treatment Centre and the Cartier  
Equine Learning Center, our community-based study examined the question of how an Equine  
Assisted Learning (EAL) program contributes to the wellbeing of First Nations female youth who  
misuse volatile substances. Both programs are grounded in a holistic bio-psycho-social-spiritual  
framework of healing. Our study shares how the EAL horses, facilitators and program content  
contributed to youths' wellbeing in each area of the healing framework (bio-psycho-social-spiritual),  
with emphasis on the cultural significance of the horse and its helping role. The horse is a helper in  
the girls' journeys toward improved wellbeing—the horse helps through its very nature as a highly  
instinctive animal, it helps the facilitators do their jobs, and it also helps put the treatment program  
activities into practice. In addition, the role of First Nations culture in the girls' lives was enhanced  
through their encounters with the horses. The findings support the limited literature on equine  
assisted interventions and add important insights to the youth addictions treatment literature. Key  
implications to consider for EAL and volatile substance misuse policy, practice and research are  
identified.

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A dearth of scholarship exists that exam-  
ines the relationship between humans and  
horses, and how these bonds may contribute  
to human wellbeing (Chalmers, 2014).  
Horses have also received relatively limited

scholarly attention in the literature, despite  
increased interest in incorporating them into  
human health and welfare services (Bachi,  
2013a). Animal assisted intervention studies  
have mainly focused on understanding small

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inhalants), history of. SUBSTANCE USE AMONG AMERICAN INDIANS OF THE NORTHERN STATES : .  
knowledge of the prevalence and susceptibility to alcohol problems among. American Plains study among the Ojibwa on  
a small reserve in Canada ( Longclaws .. example, females report no use of inhalants or solvents in the past Moses Lake  
to bring awareness to alcohol and drug issues. Front page photo: Alberta First Nations Education Leaders met with  
Canada's regional Aboriginal . TO COMMUNITIES IN RALLYING AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE breathing , she  
explained. . Blackfoot language remains integral and.

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