



GOOD MEDICINE

**Medication Assisted Treatment for
our Tribal and Urban Natives**

National Harm Reduction Coalition creates spaces for **dialogue and action** that help heal the harms caused by racialized drug policies.



Policy &
Advocacy



National &
Regional
Conferences



Trainings &
Technical
Assistance



Overdose
Prevention



Resources &
Publications

GROUP AGREEMENTS

- + **Make Space, Take Space**
- + **Use “I” Statements**
- + **WAIT (Why Am I Talking?)**
- + **Vegas Rule**
- + **Say It Raw!**

What else would you add?

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

- Whose land are you on?
- Text your ZIP code 1-855-917-5263 or enter your location at <https://native-land.ca>

We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work in territories where Indigenous nations and Tribal groups are traditional stewards of the land.



California Tribal Communities

There are currently **109** federally recognized Indian tribes in California and 78 entities petitioning for recognition. Tribes in California currently have nearly 100 separate reservations or Rancherias.



California Indian Library Collections

Source: California Courts; The Judicial Branch of California



**TAKE A
MOMENT**

**NATIONAL
HARM REDUCTION
COALITION**

ALL THOSE WE'VE LOST TO AN OVERDOSE

**THINK
ABOUT
THEM**

- They were a son or daughter
- Maybe a parent, an uncle, or aunt

**THINK
ABOUT**

**Think about the family &
friends they left behind**

**THINK
ABOUT**

**Think about the loss to the
whole community**



**THIS AFFECTS
OUR ENTIRE
COMMUNITY**

Where Are We At In Addressing Substance Use?

- Are we providing services that make a difference?
- Are we basing our treatments in our traditions?
- Are we pushing back against stigma towards Natives who use drugs?





**Our Natives
Have the
Highest Fatal
Overdose Rates**

COLLATERAL DAMAGE



- High incarceration rates related to substance use
- High risk of fatal overdose when released without access to medication assisted treatment (MAT)
- Higher recidivism rates without MAT and other harm reduction interventions

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER & TREATMENT?

Personal experience?

Formal training/education?

Unchallenged beliefs?

Traditional Knowledge?

Western Intervention?

Experiencing behaviors of people who use drugs?

MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT

MAT involves taking certain medications to help ease withdrawals and decrease the craving to take opioids.

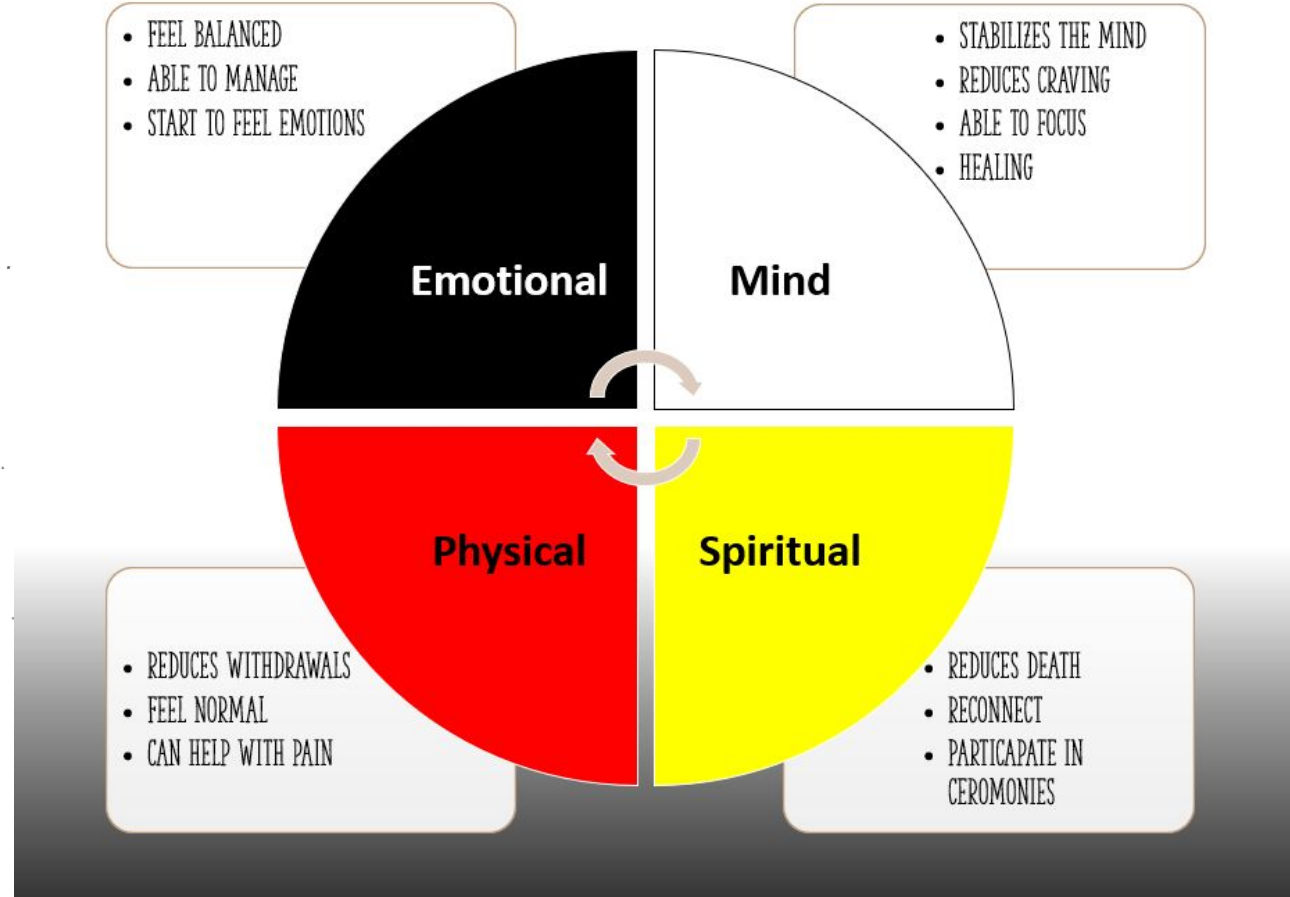
Research shows that **MAT is more successful at helping people with recovery than abstinence-based approaches.**



Understanding cravings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5Mky3Jr960>

WHY MAT WORKS



Medications for Substance Use Disorder Treatment

- [Acamprosate](#)
 - This medication is used along with counseling and support to help decrease cravings and urges to use alcohol

Opioid Agonists: A drug that activates the opioid receptors in the brain. They include:

- [Methadone](#)
 - Is a long-acting, full opioid agonist that reduces opioid craving and withdrawal and blocks the effects of opioids.
- [Buprenorphine](#)
 - This medication is a partial opioid agonist and can be prescribed by a physician. It can be given in multiple forms including pills, sublingual films, or an injection. A common brand name is Suboxone.
 - It helps ease withdrawal symptoms and opioid cravings.

Medications for Substance Use Disorder Treatment, Continued

- [Disulfiram](#)
 - This medication is used along with counseling and support to treat alcohol use disorder. It blocks the breakdown of alcohol in the body.
- [Naltrexone-bupropion](#)
 - This medication is approved to treat opioid and alcohol use disorder
 - It blocks the euphoric & sedative effects of opioids but is considered less effective than methadone or buprenorphine as a treatment for opioid use disorder.
- [Naloxone](#)
 - This is a full opioid antagonist, meaning it binds to opioid receptors in the brain and reverses and blocks the effects of opioids like heroin or fentanyl.
 - It is used to reverse opioid overdoses.

A Tribal Member's Personal MAT Journey

I am writing this paper because I wanted to share my story of my addiction and how MAT has been incredibly life saving for me. I struggled with my addiction for roughly 10 years and with the help of MAT therapy I have been clean for 3 years and 3 months. This is the longest I have stayed clean and I owe a big part of it to the MAT program and all the wonderful staff that assists. Four years ago I was lost, homeless, shooting up and losing all hope. I started out with pain pills from the dentist and gradually started snorting the pills, then when that wasn't doing it I started shooting up and eating strips of Fentanyl. I never thought I would be "a junkie." Nodding out, not breathing in my sleep, ODing. **All I wanted was to not be sick.** What's the saying "Tired of being sick and tired " I found myself to be pregnant and knew this baby deserved a clean mom. I found it easier to stay clean pregnant because there was another life in me. I got on Subutex then gradually went to Sublocade and I am still on the sublocade today. Before the MAT program there were hardly any resources on addiction here. I am incredibly proud with how far this program has come. **Thank you for giving me the tools to rebuild back my life** and be a contributing member to society. Whenever I catch myself having a bad day I tell myself my worst day sober is still better than my best day high, your kids need you. So thank you MAT for allowing me to be the best version of myself for my kids family and friends.



BREAK

NATIONAL
HARM REDUCTION
COALITION

A vertical decorative element on the left side of the slide, consisting of a black and white maze pattern.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES & BARRIERS FOR MAT?

STIGMA

“Drug for a drug”

Unsupportive

**Discourages those who are
seeking support**

**Tells people they aren't sober
because they're on MAT**

What else?

MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS FOR MY COMMUNITY

Have I done my
research?

Do I know enough
about medication
assisted treatment to
make good decisions?

Do I make decisions
based on personal
issues/experiences?

What's my
responsibility as a
leader? In my position?
What influence do I
have to make changes?

**IF YOU HAD THE
CHANCE, WOULD
YOU OFFER
THEM MAT?**



A close-up photograph of several people's hands clasped together in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The hands are of various skin tones and are positioned in a way that suggests a group hug or a collective gesture of solidarity. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hands. The overall tone is warm and positive.

**PROTECTING OUR
NATIVE PEOPLE
AGAINST RELAPSE
& DEATH**

Tribal Interventions & Use of Cultural Traditions

- Can incorporate tribal and traditional practices into MAT services
- Use cultural & traditional knowledge for healing
- Make culture and tradition a part of the patient process
- Integrate these practices into treatment policies & procedures

SUD Treatment Reinvented: Native Based Practices

DEATH
PREVENTION

HARM REDUCTION
SERVICES

MAT/CM

NATIVE BASED
PRACTICES

REDUCE STIGMA

YOUTH
PREVENTION

EDUCATION AND
OUTREACH

FRUITFUL
COLLABORATIONS

COMMUNITY
HEALING



DELIVERY OF SERVICES

TRADITIONAL

- Spiritual
- Open
- Healing practices that predate western medicine
- Tailored to your own journey

WESTERN

- Within 4 walls
- Forceful
- Recolonizing
- One size fits all
- Must go to them


OVERDOSE PREVENTION WITH PATIENT CARE

- Opioid overdose reversal kits
- Ensure MAT patients have access to naloxone (Narcan)
- Help patients create safety plans to reduce risks of overdose



RECOVERY IS MORE THAN JUST ONE PERSON

- Helping one person recover means we are helping the family
- Helping the family means we are helping the community
- Helping the community means we are helping our future generations



CLOSING & QUESTIONS

- **Moving forward, how will you talk about substance use disorder and MAT?**
- **If you already provide MAT, what cultural activities or traditional knowledge can you add to those services?**
- **If you are a person receiving MAT, what can your community do to help reduce stigma and better support you?**



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING
THIS WORKSHOP

harmreduction.org

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NATIONAL
HARM REDUCTION
COALITION



INTERCONNECTION

IS OUR STRENGTH