

Reducing HIV Stigma & Promoting Community Resilience Through Capacity Building

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Presented by

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Project ACE Team



Acknowledgements

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- Alberta Community Council on HIV
- SafeLink Alberta
- HIV Edmonton
- AIDS Committee of Durham
- Regional HIV/AIDS Connection
- Positive Living Niagara
- AIDS Committee of Ottawa
- Community Alliance for Accessible Treatment

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❖ **Contributions of staff/Trainee team**

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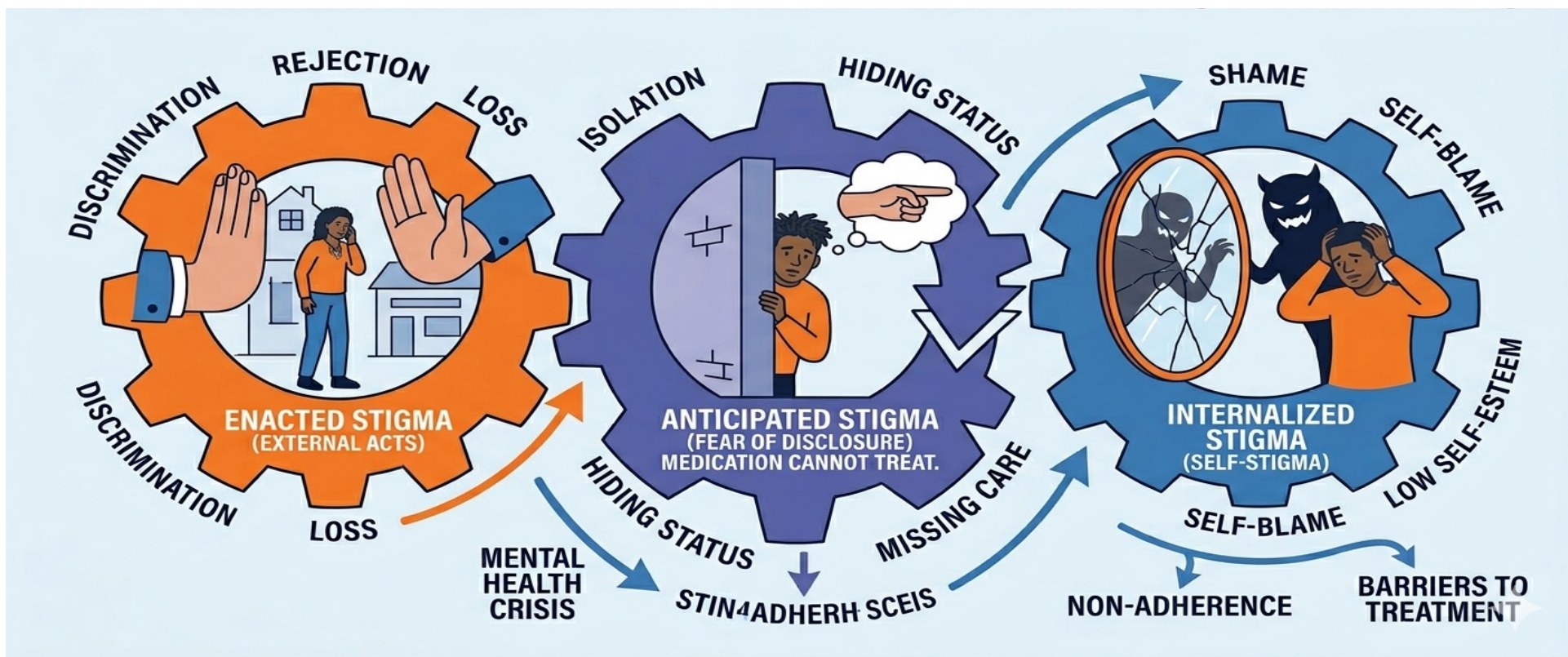
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❖ **Graphic designer**: A. Cheung

❖ Free images from **Pixabay & Wowzer**

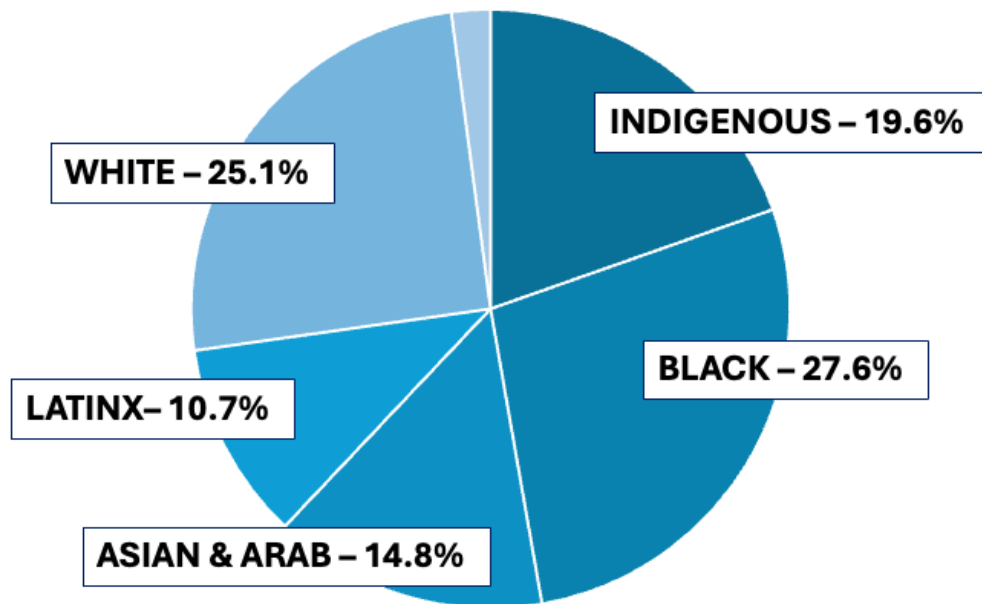


Despite advances in prevention, testing & treatment, HIV stigma persists...



Racialized HIV Disparities in Canada (2023)

New HIV cases with race/ethnicity information available
(No race and/or ethnicity data from Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Quebec)



Public Health Agency of Canada. HIV in Canada, Surveillance Report to December 31, 2023. Ottawa, 2025.

Racialized communities bear disproportionate burden of HIV disparities.

Our response:

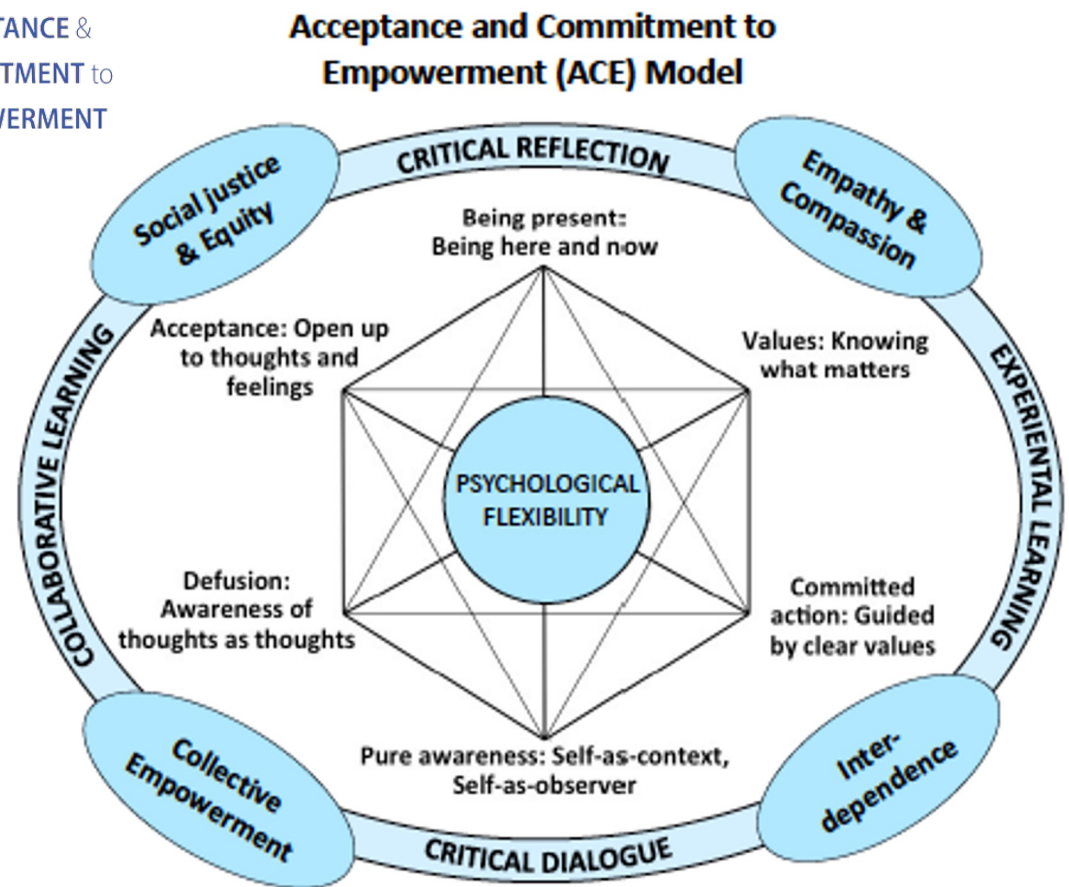


Project ACE: Multi-level Response



OBJECTIVES:

- Address internalized stigma at individual / personal level
- Address enacted stigma at interpersonal, organizational, and community levels
- Build capacity and advocate for effective community response



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Project ACE: Three Phases

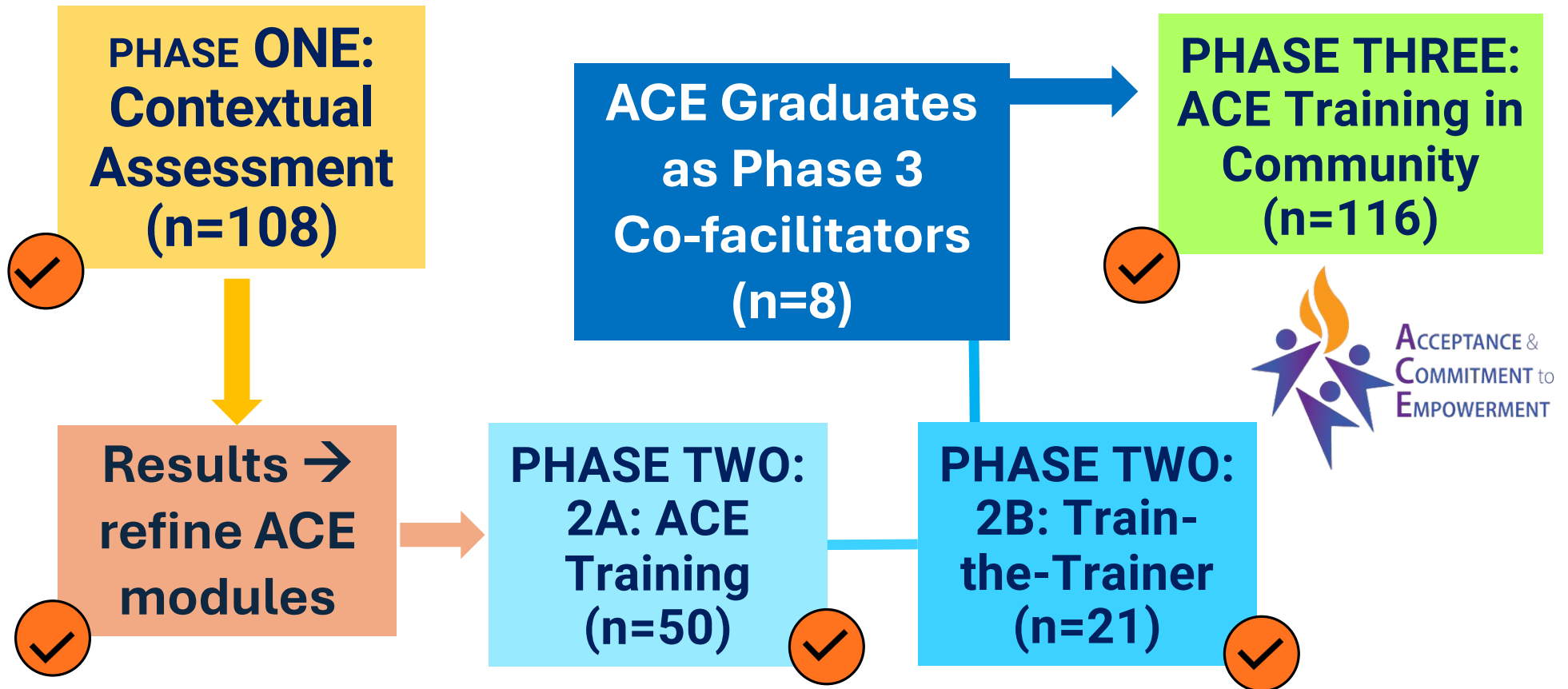
- **Phase One: Contextual Assessments** on the local needs and experiences of HIV stigma using
 - (i) a baseline survey with local service organizations serving immigrants/refugees; and
 - (ii) focus groups with service providers (SPs), and community members (CMs).
- **Phase Two: Train-the-trainer program** that builds capacity among SPs and community leaders to become co-facilitators of the ACE intervention.
- **Phase Three:** Engage CMs living with or affected by HIV stigma in the ACE intervention to enable them to become HIV community champions.

Project sites: Calgary, Edmonton, the GTA, London, Niagara Ottawa,

Participation criteria:

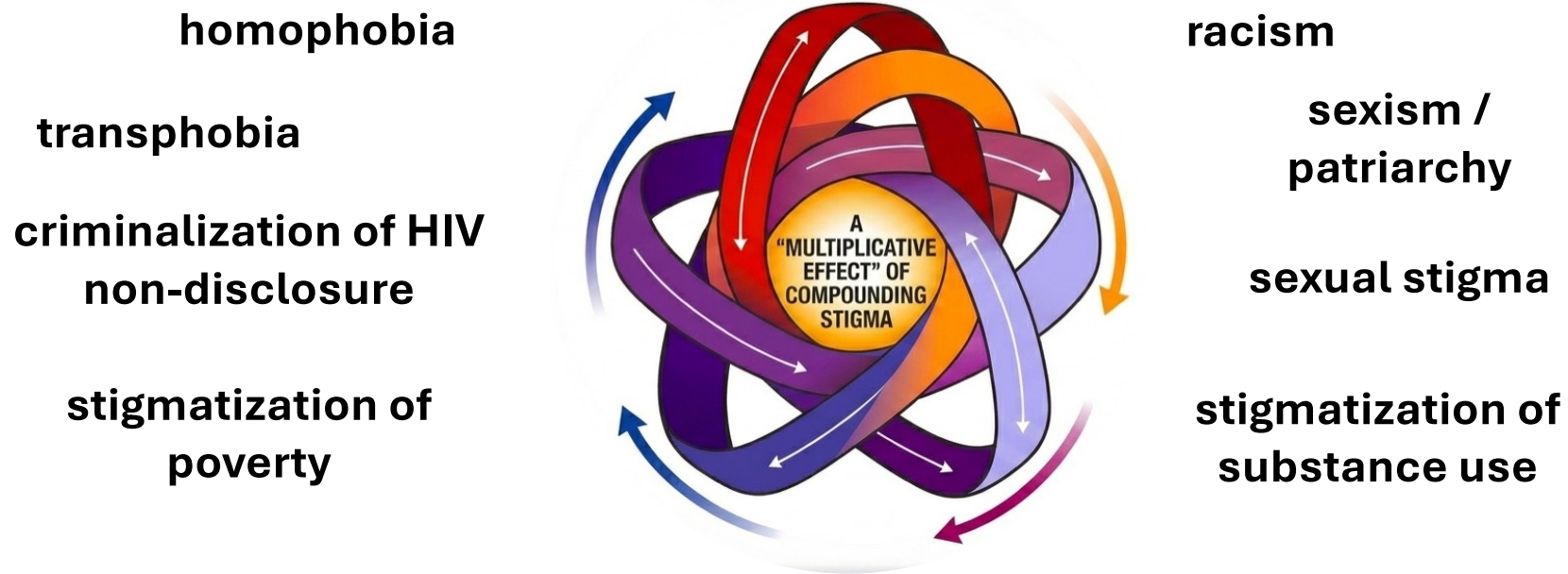
- Age 18 and over;
- CMs living with or affected by HIV stigma in one of the six cities, OR
- SPs/ CMs working in one of the six cities;
- interested in reducing HIV stigma

Project ACE: Three Phases



Phase One: Contextual Assessment (FG: n=91)

Results: Compounding Stigma & Impacts



IMPACTS: Interlocking stigma → multi-level challenges
(mental health, social isolation, barriers to health / social care, HIV
prevention, treatment adherence, care engagement)



Six
weekly 1.5-hour
Online
Group Session



Phases Two & Three


ACE intervention consists of:

- one pre-intervention self-learning module on **HIV101**
- 6 weekly self-directed online modules (about 1 hour each) plus a six 1.5-hour weekly interactive video group session.
- Graduates of Phase 2 were eligible to take part in 4 train-the-trainer program to become a co-facilitation of ACE.

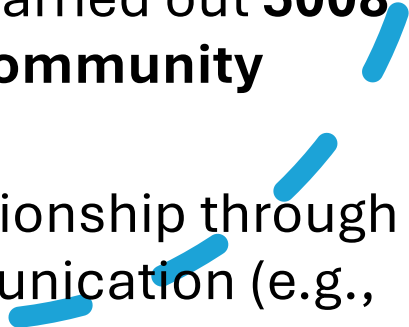
**One-hour
online self-
directed
learning model**



Phases 2 & 3 Results: Survey & Activity Logs @ 3-month post-intervention



Preliminary Findings:

- Evidence of increased self-compassion and personal growth
 - Observed downward trend of internalized stigma and stigma against people living with HIV
 - Strong readiness and commitment to fight HIV stigma
 - **Demonstrated action:** the **166** ACE graduates had carried out **5008** stigma reduction and social equity activities **at the community level!!**
 - **In addition,** some graduates have engaged in championship through their established networks in arts, media, and communication (e.g., CBC documentary), reaching thousands.
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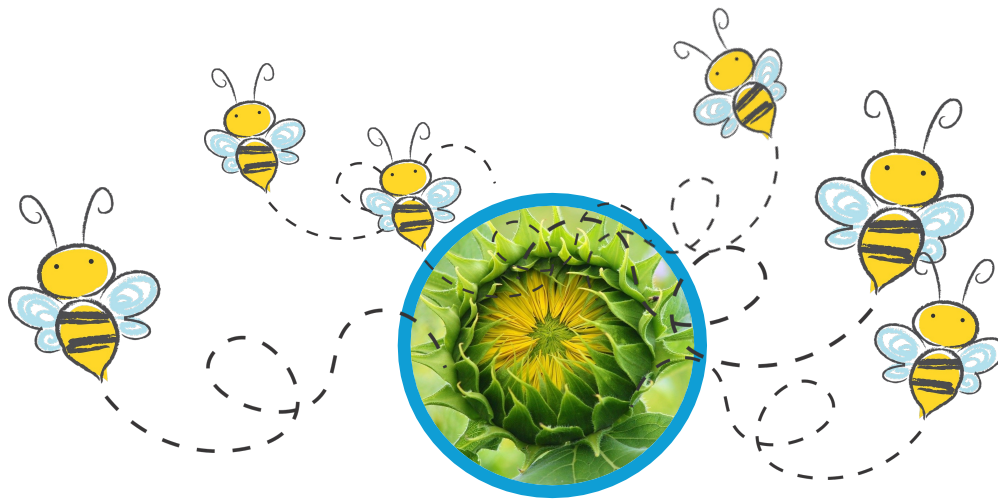
Next Steps

- Knowledge translation and exchange
- Refine ACE intervention
- Build alliance to secure resources to integrate ACE into programs and services



Together we are agents of change...

Question and Dialogue...



Images from Pixabay



<https://projectace.ca/>