

Supported by  
Creating Community



## Choices for a Healthy Lifestyle

A Community Outreach program of the  
**Victoria Health Co-operative**

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We work to create and support a community where everyone enjoys optimal well-being. In 2010, with the help of Vancity the VHC started *Choices for a Healthy Lifestyle* as our first community outreach program and have held *Choices* programs of 4 to 8 sessions in drop-in centres, churches, BC Housing locations and libraries.

We work with the host organizers and potential participants to select topics based on the interests of the participants and the availability of presenters. Topics have included:

- + **Choices** for healthy movement and exercise regardless of your level of mobility
- + **Choices** for health eating on a tight budget
- + **Choices** for recreation and relaxation on a tight budget
- + **Choices** for transportation on a tight budget and with mobility challenges
- + **Choices** for best selection of food and supplements to avoid incompatibility with medication
- + **Choices** for dealing with stress, sleeplessness, anxiety
- + Your **Choices** of useful resources in your community - learning from all participants, making little booklets.
- + And the ever-popular **Choices** for glamour on a budget

Other topics can be offered including: mobility, sleep, entertainment, pets, transport, dealing with stress, making friends, how to break bad news, gentle exercise and staying active even with a disability ....

For these **Choices** programs we like to provide home-made soup and healthy snacks. All our presenters, snack-buyers, organizers and the very important soup-makers are volunteers. We enjoy the programs and feel it is a useful way to serve our community.

We schedule a volunteer organizer from the Co-op to be at every session, receive feedback from the participants, presenters and host organizer. If requested, we prepare posters or flyers for use by the host as reminders.

We find that action-oriented, participatory sessions are preferable if acceptable to the host and participants.

### **What would work for your small group?**

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**Hans Kai™**



Supported the Creating Community Wellness Society.

Delivered by the Victoria Health Co-op, Weaving Wellness Co-op and Rainbow Co-op.

## **Hans Kai™: addressing a community wellness need**

For many years healthcare professionals and policy makers have known that we need an Integrated Health and Wellness approach, not merely medical services. We need to encourage the full range of community members, wellness professionals including those in the medical and surgical fields to stretch their knowledge and work together. This is the path to reaching as many individuals and communities as possible, affordably and effectively. As this is so easy to say – why has it so rarely been implemented? What is needed?

We need a way, a vehicle, to make such a change easy, appealing and demonstrably cost-effective. We need a way to be bold and to challenge the archaic and overburdened medical system. One such tool is **Hans Kai™**. **Hans Kai™** requires a only minimal amount of costly and scarce healthcare or medical professional hours, is economically sound and is self-sustaining. **Hans Kai™** was developed after World War II in Japan where resources were very scarce. Six decades later, and in a very prosperous Japan, it remains highly effective. It was brought, successfully, to Canada, by Nor'West Co-op in Winnipeg, and then made available across Canada with the Victoria Health Co-op as the lead in BC.

**Hans Kai™** works with groups of about 8-40 community members interested in making lifestyle changes, equipping them with the skills to take an active role in enhancing and managing their own health and wellness. **Hans Kai™** includes proper eating, active socializing, better mental health and stress management. Components can be added to meet the needs of specific groups such as youth, young families, seniors, GBLT participants, people living with altered brain function.

**Hans Kai™** groups decide how often to meet, and for how long. The medical professional time commitment is low, generally around an hour for some of the **Hans Health School** sessions. Non-medical professionals and trainers facilitate, and support as needed. Community engagement is high, and the participants become healthier people.

Would a **Hans Kai™** program meet a need in your community? Are you interested in supporting **Hans Kai™** financially and/or by volunteering?

For **Hans Kai™** in British Columbia, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, please contact Vanessa Hammond at the Victoria Health Co-op, [vichealthcoop@gmail.com](mailto:vichealthcoop@gmail.com) 250 415 9272.

For all other locations, please contact Michelle Kirkbride [mkirkbride@norwestcoop.ca](mailto:mkirkbride@norwestcoop.ca) in Winnipeg, 204-938-5971 or Mike Sadlowski [msadlowski@norwestcoop.ca](mailto:msadlowski@norwestcoop.ca).