



#Staff #Harm\_reduction #Edmonton

## **“I’ve always had several balls in the air.”**

There is an intoxicated person sleeping in an apartment stairwell. There is a woman with a broken leg in an alcove. Each call fielded by the dispatcher at 211 that fits the mandate of the 24/7 Crisis Diversion has an equal chance of going to Boyle Street or Hope Mission teams. What’s the difference? “Hope is more clean cut, conservative, but ethnically diverse” and Boyle, in its self assessment, is “a little strange, eclectic, like tropical birds.” Stephen is such a strange bird: an educated theologian, profoundly

reflective, he’s been at this 10 years. He took a break recently, concerned that he might be over-empathizing with people that he spends his nights collecting, listening to, and depositing, mostly at the shelter. He returned to work with a new resolution, not to expect transformation in this street level work - not to put this weight on the people he meets. And so we spend the evening walking the Rogers Centre and taking calls, warmly greeting familiar people who’ve had a setback...or just a raucous night.



staff profile

# Stephen

Male  
40s  
White

## Staff perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Purpose** "A lived spiritual practice is something you live all the time."

**Health & wellbeing** Teaches yoga and martial arts; "a strong discipline for self-sufficiency."

**Connection** "The idea of being whole is being part of a group."

### Stressors

**Existential**

### Motivators

**Formal roles** 24/7 van driver

**Organization**

Boyle Street

Musician?

Academic?

Ally

**Skills & capabilities**

Self awareness

**Narrative:** Lowered expectations

"I've always had several balls in the air."

**Time orientation:**

past future

**Desire for change:**

low high

**Wellbeing**

rootedness adventure

## Support role

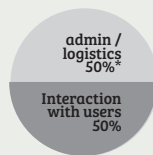
### Team Practices

**Reflection**

individual team

"I can't just follow old traditions to engage with modern & global chall

### Time Usage



\*Depends on the evening how much driving between pickups and dropoffs

## Opportunities

### Brokering Breakfasts.

What if crisis diversion staff left each rider with an invitation to an early morning hangover-cure breakfast, and used it to gauge change talk & broker to new spaces/staff?

### Purposeful Onboarding.

Crisis Diversion staff are high on individual purpose, but team orientation is limited to shadowing. What if induction was intentional about joining a culture of purpose?

### Alternate destinations.

What if there were more endpoints than the shelter? What if riders could opt to awake in a healing house, a dry village, or hotel, with a volunteer shift as payment?



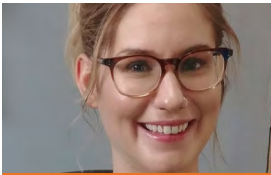
# Amanda

#staff #Harm\_reduction #Edmonton

**“It could be easy to fall into a narrative of ‘this is a broken place’ but I don’t see it that way at all anymore.”**

Amanda has to be prepared for pretty much anything on a shift, so like the people she works with, she carries a backpack (“My ride or die!”) with everything she will need: nolozone kit, brochures, notes from a staff meeting, 5 “Re-write your story” postcards, “because we’re actually collecting stories as an organization,” socks (to give away, candy (for herself), paper for notes. Of her backpack contents, she says “I one hundred percent have been influenced [by the service users]!” Amanda appears young with a

lot of friendly energy. Before the Mustard Seed, she volunteered at Victim’s Services with Police and got a lot of free training. At the Mustard Seed it is different - she learned what she needed to know sink or swim style. There are references to shifts in her outlook, or “learning the hard way,” but no complaint. It’s Amanda’s job to facilitate community, which “can mean framing things in a certain way...I think the wider community of Edmonton could really learn a lot about what community means.”



staff card

# Amanda

Female  
20s  
White

## Staff perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Connection** "So important to me to bridge gaps - all of the gaps between us we really just make up in our heads."

**Development** "My supervisor helps me process stuff that happens here, decisions I make that weigh on me."

**Respect** "There's a modelling aspect to it: healthy boundaries...learning to see someone in a holistic way."

### Stressors

**Relational** "People here assume that I'm very Christian, which could be intimidating...I worry that folks will think I'm judgemental."

**Isolation** "There's not a lot of people in my life who work in a similar context so I can feel isolated without my coworkers."

### Motivators

#### Formal roles

Program coord.

#### Organization

The Mustard Seed

sister

coworker

connector

#### Skills & capabilities

Non-violent intervention

Safe Talk

Noloxone use

Respectful

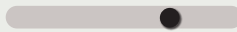
#### Narrative:

We're the same

"My purpose is breaking down the gulf... put ourselves on the same level, to move forward"

#### Time orientation:

past



future

"I want to connect to a larger vision of what I think my job can be."

#### Desire for change:

low



high

#### Wellbeing

rootedness



adventure

## Support role

### Team Practices

#### Reflection

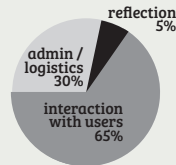
individual



team

"I often just burst into her office but we all have a monthly one-on-one with Rochelle, about 1hr." "We always start a shift with a circle; we have a reflective question."

### Time Usage




## Opportunities

#### Purpose Days.

What if staff in the sector could take turns hosting Purpose Days and invite others to see how they are experimenting and growing in their practice?

#### Office share.

What if Amanda started 'renting out' the little table in her office for members to use, while she's there, in the pursuit of quiet work?



*This is an image of a mural that Sebastian collaborated on, getting the youth to assist the artists. It's faces of Boyle Street Coop members.*

# Sebastian

#staff #immigrant #Edmonton

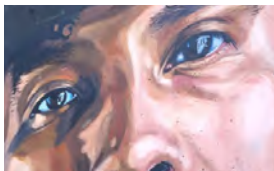
**“I have been offered jobs with a little more money, but I stay here for the freedom. No one else can offer that.”**

In the interview for this job, Sebastian announced “I am hard to manage.” Since then he has been given a lot of lee-way: “the freedom of Boyle Street” but he has also done all his own fundraising to get equipment. He tries to do what iHuman does, but here, at Boyle Street. Beside us, he has turned a makeshift closet into a makeshift recording booth. Outside of work (though the boundaries are porous), Sebastian runs Create Art Edmonton, a free art school based out of the community league he has

strategically become president of.

He is a force. Sebastian is impatient with bureaucratic barriers and energetic in creating workarounds, but there are limits to what he can do for youth who are a danger to themselves, and in crisis, when the building closes.

Sebastian brings the “artistic, revolutionary” pillar to Boyle’s youth services. “You have to fight for your rights” and he shows youth how to use art for that purpose.



staff card

# Sebastian

Male  
40s  
Immigrant

## Staff perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Health** "I've had success. Unless you're sober, you can't do it. You've got to have control over your own faculties."

**Development** "I need a reason to live, to get up, to start becoming driven."

**Relational** "I need friends to call on a bad day. I wish I had more people and friends who would have intervened earlier."

### Stressors

**Family** "When you can no longer pick up the phone to call your family because there is no one left to answer, that is the worst."

**Relationships** "When I get healthy, I'm not sure if they will be the same relationships. People weren't really there for me like I would have been for them."

**Friends** "I alienated all my friends. I want to re-engage with my friends but first I have to get my head on straight."

### Motivators

#### Formal roles

youth worker

#### Organization

Boyle Street

musician

artist

free agent

#### Skills & capabilities

fundraising

networking

mentoring

advocating

#### Narrative:

fight for your rights

"If kids are too challenging or threatening to workers they will try to age them out."

#### Time orientation:

past



future

"To 410 requires 2 psychiatrists to sign the form. It takes 3-4 months to get 1 psychiatrist in a room."

#### Desire for change:

low



high

#### Wellbeing

rootedness



adventure

## Support role

### Team Practices

#### Reflection

individual



team

"Some staff don't feel comfortable saying what they believe, but I do." "I have never been recognized so much for my work in other cities."

### Time Usage

(Not sure of Sebastian's time usage. It spills over allotted hours & there's overlap between different jobs and personal life.)

## Opportunities

#### Frontline Proposals.

What if there was a regular call for unfiltered proposals from the frontline? To understand the pain points and opportunities felt by staff on the ground.

#### Dynamo fellowships.

What if the highly motivated with big ideas could apply for a fellowship that would expose them to new opportunities, funders, and pay some of their overtime?

# Ed



#staff #Christian\_services #Edmonton

**“They have stronger community - around drinking and addiction - than almost any other Edmontonian.”**

Ed emits the vibe of a pastor - that mix of friendly authority, relish for the big ideas, and palpable desire for human connection. While pursuing calls in the Hope Mission 24/7 Crisis Diversion Van, Ed seeks opinions on the best approaches to refugee settlement, something that has been occupying his mind. When we pick up a young, distressed woman with a confusing story of eviction from a Police Station, Ed moves to the back of the van and attempts to draw her out. He encourages her to be emotionally

vulnerable and listens, asking follow up questions in a soothing tone. At the shelter, he offers a prayer and she accepts. Ed's prayer is custom-made, inviting her to share her truth with a spirit guide. "A spirit guide is an angel by commission!" he explains later. "I said it that way so she would understand." Over the next few days, Ed is eager to chat: his mind is bubbling over with ideas about service provision - the tension between corporate and communal structures, different philosophies of care, etc.



resource card

# Ed

Male  
50s  
White

## Staff perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Community** “Many of these people have better community than any church!”

**Intentionality** “Safe injection done well could become a safe community - but it has to be so intentional!”

**Conection** “We need a minimum of ten non-sexual touches a day to be healthy.”

### Stressors

**Basic needs vs. healing** Funding for infrastructure and basic needs services, but people need healing.

### Motivators

**Formal roles** outreach worker

**Organization**

Hope Mission

Christian

counselor

connector

**Skills & capabilities**

listening

de-escalation

analytical

**Narrative:** We can do better

“The Reformation showed it’s not an organized single effort but about several smaller efforts.”

**Time orientation:**

past  future

**Desire for change:**

low  high

**Wellbeing**

rootedness  adventure

## Support role

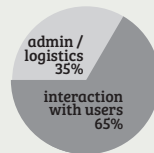
### Team Practices

**Reflection**

individual  team

“Sacred spaces - Ambrose House is the best example of that.”

### Time Usage



[\*Depends on the evening how much driving between pickups and dropoffs but Ed’s focus is on interaction time.]

## Opportunities

#### Purpose Days.

What if staff in the sector could take turns hosting Purpose Days and invite others to see how they are experimenting and growing in their practice?

#### Dynamo fellowships.

What if the highly motivated with big ideas could apply for a fellowship that would expose them to new opportunities, funders, and pay some of their overtime?

#### Frontline Proposals.

What if there was a regular call for unfiltered proposals from the frontline? To understand the pain points and opportunities felt by staff on the ground.