

Danita Wahpoosewyan's 2024 Biography

Tansi/Hello! My name is Danita Wahpoosewyan and I am 58 years young. and I have Spirit names: Lightning Rock Woman, She Who Calls Far and White Horse With Wings. I am from Treaty 4, Anishinabec First Nation, formally called Sakimay First Nation. My mother is full Cree from White Bear First Nation and my father is full Saulteaux. I am the proud mother of 2 children, 4 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. I have lived on my reserve when I was younger but Regina, Sask. is my home. I was diagnosed as a person living with HIV in 2005. The following year I was hired full-time at Aids Programs South Sask(APSS) as their needle-exchange co-ordinator from 2006 to the end of 2012. I was trained to do peer support and started to do media public speaking.

I am currently employed with Aids Programs South Sask (APSS), facilitating a weekly addiction to Traditional Talking Circles for at-risk populations and also facilitated a twice-week Opioid Support group for 1 year., Wellness Wheel Inc. I am one of 2 Peer Leads where I do peer engagements and co-facilitate basic peer training to peers. I was a part of the Opioid Stewardship Program supporting patients in acute care in the hospitals for 3 years. I volunteer at All Nations Hope Network as a Willow Warrior, engaging with peers for cultural interventions and support. I also sit on their ANHN board. Another hat I wear is I am a Peer Mentor with Sask Health Authority where I support newly diagnosed peers living with HIV(2014-present) in their Peer to Peer Program.

Nationally and beyond I am currently on the board of directors at Communities Alliances and Network (CAAN), did sit on the CATIE board of directors for 2 years, Canadian Aids Society (CAS) for 1 term, and was on board at the International Community of Women Living with HIV(ICW-NA). I also currently sit on various advisory boards in Saskatchewan. Two years ago I also was trained to become a Peer Researcher of the Giggii-Bapimin Research project. I am currently involved as a peer researcher for the Sask. HIV Stigma Index research study.

I am the recipient of the Sheldon Bowman Memorial Award in 2019 and in 2023, CAAN Legacy Lifetime Award in 2019. Other accomplishments are that I took part in a few documentaries like Sask Union of Nurse's "Making a Difference/On the frontlines of HIV Crisis", CATIE/CAAN's "Strong Medicine", CAAN's "Re-Membering" and Wellness Wheel "Wellness is Life". I have done numerous speaking engagements locally and nationally speaking my TRUTH and educational presentations with the Peer-to-Peer Program, Wellness Wheel and CATIE.

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