

Matrix

Janey is 16 years old, bright, inquisitive and eager to be anything but 16. She loves pink purses, strawberry-flavoured lip gloss, hip-hop music and her three month old rottweiler puppy. She represents everything beautiful and miserable about being 16. But for all Janey's beauty - few people see her.

She comes to our first visit expecting the inquisition, to be told to move back home with her family, that if she doesn't quit drinking and smoking Crack she will die or end up on the streets turning tricks. Instead, we spend time getting to know each other. We meet for sushi, walk her puppy, picnic in the park - and we talk. We talk about her boyfriend du jour, the barbarity of women waxing their legs, eating warm cookies. We talk without ever forcing a conversation.

Some days she calls with buckets of tears convinced she's unlovable and broken beyond repair. Other days she is eager to share her clean days and revel in her accomplishments.

Being in the Matrix is a journey that takes many roads. It involves the joining together of numerous individuals that play a role in examining the discrepancies in Janey's life - the feelings and behaviours in her life that keep her from feeling fulfilled and block her road, and encourage her to continue using.

Each youth is different - some need more, some less. With Janey, being "girls" together was the therapy she needed. I would argue she didn't need a counselor - she needed someone to invest the time to hear Janey.

The Matrix Project has been providing low-barrier support, outreach and withdrawal services to youth in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows since May 2006. The staff's youth-centred approach is supported through best practice evidence, and is about developing a relationship with youth that sustains their many attempts to reduce or abstain from drugs and alcohol. With an initial focus on safety planning and providing flexible outreach services, youth are encouraged to explore their relationship with their drug(s) of choice and the roles, both positive and negative, they have played.

About the Matrix

The Matrix is a wrap-around, youth-centred addiction treatment pilot project designed from best practice evidence and customized for Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows. This community-based project employs professional staff dispatched to youth (16-24 yrs) to provide withdrawal management, clinical interventions, family support and aftercare guided by comprehensive assessments and a commitment to specific treatment-matching. MRTC, with its long tradition of client-centred, holistic addiction treatment, has developed the Matrix pilot project with Fraser Health providing financial support. Matrix staff are provided guidance and educational support through the Matrix Institute, associated with UCLA.



Meet New Associate
Corrine Arthur
Family Support Specialist
& Team Leader,
Matrix Pilot Project

In her role with the **Matrix**, and as Board President with the internationally known, *From Grief to Action*, Corrine promotes families maintaining a relationship with their substance using loved ones; she focuses on self-care and developing healthy, workable boundaries. Corrine continuously advocates for the humanization of substance users and their families by sharing her own story of substance use in the family.

On the Path has been reviewed by Marie Nightingale, Fraser Health Communications Advisor. If you wish to have your name removed from our distribution list please contact Katherine McCombie katherine.mccombie@fraserhealth.ca or call (604) 466-6970.