

# BREAKING THE CYCLE

- HIV, IDU, AND
- PRISON RECIDIVISM

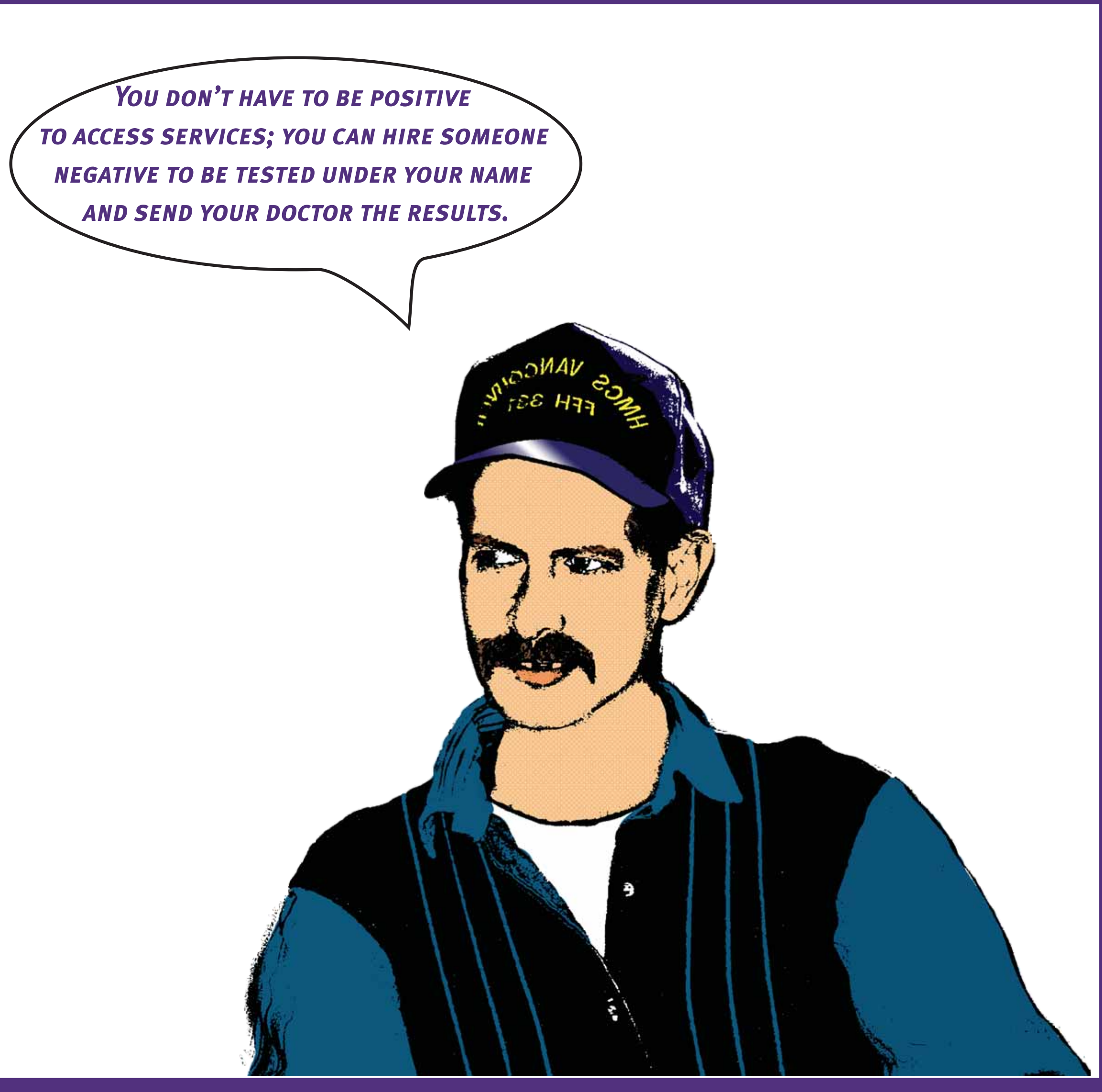


## BREAKING THE CYCLE (BTC)

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH HIV/AIDS (PWAs), A PROPORTION OF WHOM ARE INJECTION DRUG USERS (IDUs), LEAVE PRISON, RE-ENTER A CYCLE OF POVERTY WITH LIMITED ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE RESOURCES, RE-JOIN DRUG USE AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY NETWORKS AND QUICKLY RETURN TO THE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM.



PEER RESEARCHERS TELL HOW BTC HELPED BREAK THE CYCLE OF PRISON RECIDIVISM, ADDICTION AND TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR HEALTH.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE POSITIVE TO ACCESS SERVICES; YOU CAN HIRE SOMEONE NEGATIVE TO BE TESTED UNDER YOUR NAME AND SEND YOUR DOCTOR THE RESULTS.



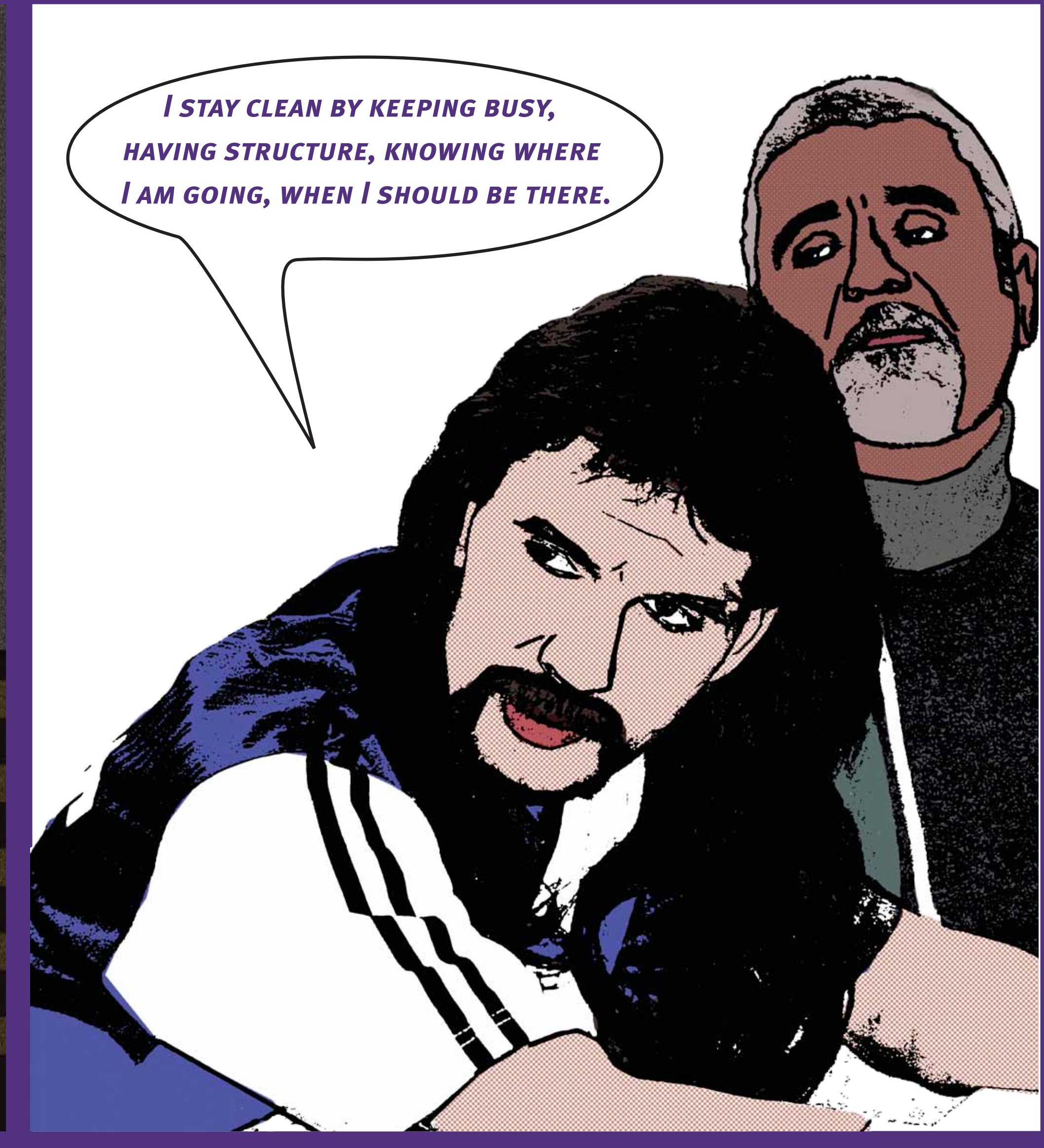
YOU NEED TO EXERCISE SOME SORT OF STRENGTH WE CAN GO BY.

BTC WAS A SUCCESSFUL COMBINATION OF POPULAR EDUCATION, COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH (CBR), & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. DRIVEN BY EVIDENCE THAT LEARNING BASIC RESEARCH TECHNIQUES MAY GRADUALLY ALLOW STIGMATIZED COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO BECOME "CONSUMERS", NOT PASSIVE SUBJECTS OF RESEARCH "ON THEIR BODIES AND LIVES" AND ENGAGE IN EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY.

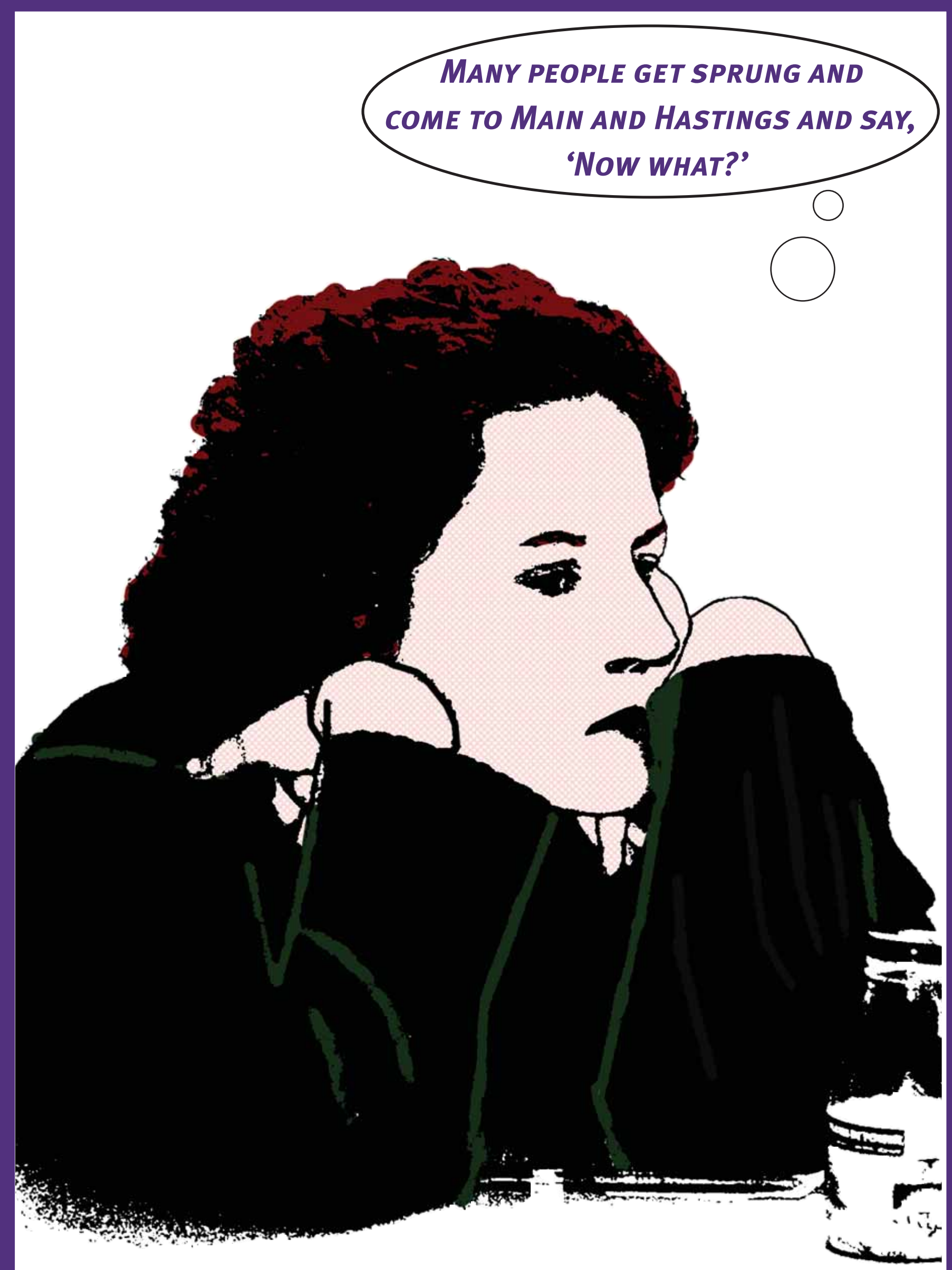
BTC DID NOT EXPECT THAT PERSONS LIVING WITH POVERTY, ILLNESS AND ADDICTION WOULD BECOME PROFESSIONAL RESEARCHERS.

BASELINE ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA WAS COLLECTED FROM PEER RESEARCHER'S LIVED EXPERIENCE: HIV POSITIVE ACTIVE IDUs WITH A HISTORY OF INCARCERATION WHEN FACING HARDSHIP, DEVISE SUCCESSFUL ALBEIT TEMPORARY WAYS OF "HACKING" THE SYSTEM (E.G. SOME HIV POSITIVE INDIVIDUALS USE THEIR WELFARE MONEY FOR DRUGS BECAUSE FREE FOOD IS READILY AVAILABLE IN THE DOWNTOWN EAST SIDE).

BTC JOINED THE BC CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE HIV/AIDS PROJECT CHASE (COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY EVALUATION) TO SUBMIT ONE PROPOSAL TO THE 2005 CIHR CBR FUND.



I STAY CLEAN BY KEEPING BUSY, HAVING STRUCTURE, KNOWING WHERE I AM GOING, WHEN I SHOULD BE THERE.



MANY PEOPLE GET SPRUNG AND COME TO MAIN AND HASTINGS AND SAY, 'NOW WHAT?'



BREAKING THE CYCLE HAS BECOME A BIG PART OF MY LIFE, WE TALK ABOUT THE PROJECT WHENEVER WE SEE EACH OTHER ON THE STREET.

AIDED BY VOLUNTEER RESEARCH SPECIALISTS AND A COORDINATOR, TEN PEER RESEARCHERS ATTENDED A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS THAT COMBINED POPULAR EDUCATION WITH TRAINING IN BASIC SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH METHODS. AN ITERATIVE PROCESS WAS FOLLOWED TO RETRIEVE AND INTERPRET PRELIMINARY DATA AND TO BUILD EACH SECTION OF A FORMAL RESEARCH PROTOCOL.



FOR ADDICTS, THE CRITICAL TIME IS WHEN THE DOOR SLAMS BEHIND THEM WHEN LEAVING PRISON.

