

This is National Addictions Awareness Week

Did you know that decriminalizing illicit substances is not associated with increased rates of substance use?

In the United States, almost one-fourth of adults (23%) with serious mental illness report past-year substance use problems. A growing body of evidence suggests that decriminalization is an effective way to mitigate the harms of substance use and the policies and practices used to deal with it. Decriminalization could play an important role in reframing substance use problems as chronic health conditions rather than criminal activities.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police endorses decriminalization as an effective way to reduce public health and public safety harms.

Experts say that decriminalization has the potential to:

- Decrease the number of overdose deaths
- Decrease the rate of substance use
- Reduce stigma
- Increase access to life-saving supports and services

Countries such as Portugal, Germany, Lithuania, Australia, and the Czech Republic have implemented decriminalization. These countries have found it to be an effective way to reduce the harm associated with substance use and criminalization. Substance use is a public health matter, not a criminal justice issue.



*We see what we want to see...
See that decriminalization saves lives!*

To get help for you or someone you care about, call 1-866-531-2600 or go to ConnexOntario.ca. Many services ARE free and help IS available.

Brought to you by the Simcoe Muskoka Addictions Awareness Week Committee:

Canadian Mental Health Association, Simcoe County Branch

Georgian College

Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care

Wendat Community Programs

Barrie Housing

