

SUBSTANCE USE AND THE WORKPLACE

A safe and supportive workplace contributes to a healthy life

Stigmatizing language prevents people who use substances from reaching out for support and treatments.

BC Overdose Crisis in Numbers

April 14, 2016: Public Health Emergency declared in response to rise in drug overdose and deaths

79%: males account for the majority of drug related deaths in the non-Indigenous population

19-49 years: men in this age group are most at risk of overdose and death

5.6: the average number of illicit drug toxicity deaths per day in BC

209/872: nearly 1/4 of the people who died from a drug overdose in 2018 were employed in the trades or transport industry

55 out of 100: overdose deaths occur in private residences

5x: Indigenous people are 5 times more likely to experience an overdose event than non-Indigenous people
(2020)

Substance Use and Employment

LEGAL RIGHTS of the Worker

The Canadian Human Rights Act defines dependence on drugs or alcohol as a disability. When an employee is diagnosed with substance dependence, they have a right to be accommodated by their employer – just as anyone else with a disability.

STIGMA hurts

*The words we use shape **the way we think about substance use disorders**. It influences the way we treat others, how we choose to care for them and how safe they feel to talk about their substance-use disorder or seek support. Using derogatory, judging and moral-based language to talk about drug use and substance use disorders can have a **stigmatizing effect**. Stigma contributes to feelings of shame, hopelessness and prevents individuals from asking for help when they need it and ultimately contributes to overdose.*

How YOU can help

- Use **person-first language** when talking about substance use
- Educate yourself and your peers about substance use
- Check out these resources:

<https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-09/CCSA-Language-and-Stigma-in-Substance-Use-Addiction-Guide-2019-en.pdf>.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnmSxcfNBuw>

EVERY WORD MATTERS

Together, we can end the harm caused by stigmatizing language.

- ➔ Take the pledge to stop using stigmatizing language when talking about drug-use and substance use disorders
- ➔ Share the pledge with your co-workers and staff.

<https://www.addictionmatters.ca/takethepledge/>

