Harm Reduction Client Survey 2022: Hesitance to Seek Services

The B.C. Harm Reduction Program administered a survey to harm reduction supply distribution site clients across BC from November 2022 to mid-January 2023. We asked participants “In the last six months, have any of the following things made you hesitant to access services you need to be healthy?”.

Who took part?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Health Authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who Experiences Hesitance?

- 47.4% of participants were hesitant to seek services for at least one reason
- 58% of people AGES 40 - 49
- 52% of people concerned about LOSING HOUSING in the past six months
- 53% of CIS WOMEN

Who Experiences Hesitance?

- 46% of people from NORTHERN HEALTH
- 49% of people from VANCOUVER COASTAL
- 48% of people from INTERIOR HEALTH
- 57% of people from ISLAND HEALTH
- 37% of people from FRASER HEALTH

Reasons for Hesitance

- Worried police or parole would learn of use: 12%
- Worried police would seize drugs: 12%
- Worried family or friends would learn of use: 11%
- Worried about racism: 10%
- Worried family services would learn of use: 7%
- Worried employer would learn of use: 7%
- Worried health care provider would learn of use: 7%
- Worried about sexism: 5%
- Site is in my red zone: 4%

Remove Barriers, Reduce Hesitance

- Results indicate there are still negative repercussions from the legal system simply for using substances
- Reduce police presence at service delivery sites to facilitate access to services
- Stigmatizing interactions with care providers, especially unnecessary involvement of security and police, deter access
- Enhance client-centered, non-judgmental care for people who use substances
- Decriminalization may help shift social perceptions of substance use and reduce stigma from family and friends

Participation was limited to people who access harm reduction sites, and results are therefore not representative of all people who use substances in BC. As of 2022, this project is made possible with funding from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.