

DELTA COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM

WELLNESS WAVE



MAGAZINE
2024



CONTENTS



PAGE 1

AUTHORS AND COVER ART

PAGE 3

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF STIGMA

The article examines the damaging effects of stigma on people who use substances, highlighting how discrimination hinders access to treatment and perpetuates cycles of drug use and social exclusion.

PAGE 7

*DRUG POLICY IN PORTUGAL:
RACHETING UP THE PRESSURE*

The article outlines Portugal's struggles with drug policy challenges while highlighting its overall success, showcasing innovative strategies that balance harm reduction with effective management of substance use issues.

PAGE 9

EVERY STORY IS DIFFERENT

A comic strip that follows Jeff's wellness journey, blending treatments, support, and resources into a humorous yet inspiring tale of recovery.

PAGE 12

UNDERSTANDING PRESCRIBED SUPPLY/ PRESCRIBED ALTERNATIVES

An article that argues for exploring new and emerging treatments, including prescribed alternatives, to enhance approaches for managing substance use and improving patient outcomes.

PAGE 15

EXERCISE AND RECOVERY

An article that details how exercise propelled Phil's recovery and ongoing stability, highlighting scientific evidence of exercise's profound benefits for mental health and addiction recovery.

PAGE 17

OPINION: TOXIC POLITICS CAUSING THE PARALYSIS OF MEANINGFUL ACTION

An opinion about the failing to unite on actions or prevention is deepening our crisis, as disagreement drives us further into trouble.



PAGE 18

MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO

An article that reveals that children learn best by imitation, urging adults to model healthy lifestyles to foster positive behaviors in youth.

PAGE 20

CHANGING DIRECTION STARTS WITH ONE

Top five things we each can do to create change, emphasizing personal responsibility for making a difference.

PAGE 22

BRAIN GAMES EMOTIONAL REGULATION EXERCISE

PAGE 24

COPING SKILLS TO PASS ON TO YOUR KIDS COLOURING SHEET

PAGE 25

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

PAGE 26

RBRAIN GAMES ANSWER KEY & MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

PAGE 27

SOURCE INFORMATION



AUTHORS

The Delta Community Action Team, led by individuals with substance use experience, aims to address the toxic drug supply crisis by improving community health and wellness, enhancing social connections, advocating for support for families and youth, and promoting initiatives for mental wellness and substance use prevention.



Phil Kristofic

Delta CAT Peer Coordinator

Phil is the Peer Coordinator of the Delta Community Action Team and has been an integral part of leading action in the community. For 20 years, Phil lived on a sailboat in Ladner. His hobbies and interests include working out, writing, and playing guitar. Phil reports that he would not be where he is today without the loving support of his family, friends, and partner. Phil is thankful for the positive influences in his life and all those who have allowed him to be a part of their lives.



Kathy Woudzia

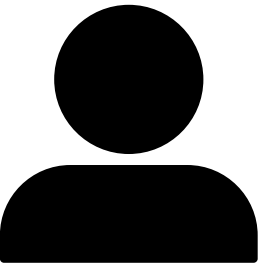
Person with Lived Experience

Kathy Woudzia is a mother of four children, the eldest one deceased. She is nana to four grandchildren. She has an education in kinesiology, library technician, database programming, business and writing. She has worked as a library technician, conference planner, accounting technician, and business owner. She loves spending time with her family, babysitting grandkids, tennis, pilates, walking, hiking and biking, water sports, writing poetry, reading and listening to podcasts. Kathy is currently taking more university courses and volunteers for the Delta Community Action Team. Her goal is to help make the world a place where substance use disorder is a thing of the past.



Clifford Reynolds
Person with Lived Experience

Clifford Reynolds has been a resident of Delta off and on for all of his 43 years. He has been a member of the Delta Community Action Team since 2022, contributing to and leading various projects and events. He used to work in sales and enjoys meeting new people and trying new experiences. Clifford looks forward to working with the team for years to come.



Anonymous
People with Lived Experience

Many members have played a vital role in the Delta Community Action Team, but the burden of stigma and the potential effects of self-disclosure on their social lives necessitate their anonymity. The firsthand experience and insights they contribute are essential for informing the community. They work on initiatives designed to reduce stigma and increase awareness of mental health, substance use, and prevention, while also advocating for meaningful change.

COVER ART

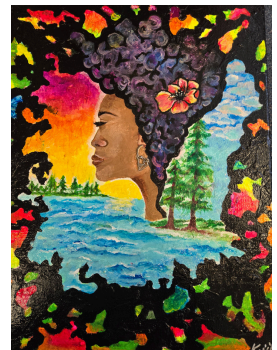


Kathleen Lilly
Person with Lived Experience

Kathleen is a mixed medium artist originally from Richmond, BC. Her influence stems from her experience growing up in

an artistic family and her years working in social services on the Downtown East side of Vancouver.

Kathleen's abstract style and use of vibrant colors in Lady Chakra expose her love of femininity and peace of mind, which is what motivates her personal wellness journey.



Lady Chakra

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF STIGMA

Kathy Woudzia

Stigma is taking us away from our roots – and we are all suffering from it. At our roots, we are creatures of connection. Herd animals thrive both physically and mentally on staying close to one another. So why have humans spent so much time trying to separate ourselves from each other? We can't remain close when we keep generating false stereotypes that others are less than. It is critical for humans to return to our roots of togetherness and connection, and we can start with the very human issue of substance use.

What is stigma?

According to the Oxford Language dictionary, stigma is “a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality or person”². It is a deeply ingrained societal attitude that can lead to discrimination and prejudice against individuals who struggle with SUD. Furthermore, stigma can exacerbate feelings of shame and guilt in individuals battling SUD, making it even harder for them to seek help.

What is substance use disorder?

Substance use disorder (SUD) is a complex issue that affects individuals, families, and communities worldwide. While the physical and psychological effects of SUD are well-documented, there is another aspect of this problem that often goes unaddressed: stigma. Stigma surrounding substance use can have far-reaching consequences, hindering efforts to provide support and treatment to loved ones who need it most.



Julia Taubitz, Unsplash.com

“A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality or person.”

Stigma can manifest in various ways, from systemic, community/social, and self. Systemic stigma arises from prejudice and discrimination in areas such as medical care, housing, and employment. For example, gaps in employment history due to illness are often stigmatized.

Community or social stigma are negative attitudes or behaviour towards people who use drugs or towards their friends and family members. Examples of this include community members' misbeliefs and misunderstanding as a result of systemic stigma.

Self-stigma is often a direct result of systemic and community/social stigma. It can occur when a person who uses substances internalizes messages about people who use drugs and applies them to themselves.

People who self-stigmatize believe the negative stereotypes generated by society and media. They often isolate from friends and family leaving themselves more vulnerable to potential toxic drug poisoning events.

Why is stigma an issue?

One of the most significant challenges in addressing stigma surrounding substance use is dispelling common misconceptions and stereotypes. For example, many people still believe that SUD is simply a matter of poor moral character or weak willpower.

In reality, it is a complex disease that involves changes in brain chemistry and requires comprehensive treatment and support. Often there is mental illness associated with trauma and people self-medicate to feel normal.

How can we stop stigma?

Education

Education plays a crucial role in challenging these misconceptions and reducing stigma. By increasing public awareness about the science of substance use and the factors that contribute to it, we can help shift attitudes towards a more compassionate and understanding perspective. This includes recognizing that SUD can affect anyone, regardless of their background, and that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Empathy and support

Another important aspect of addressing stigma is promoting empathy and support for individuals in recovery. Rather than stigmatizing those who struggle with substance use, we must create environments that encourage openness and acceptance. This can involve providing access to evidence-based treatment options, supporting harm reduction initiatives, and fostering a sense of community among individuals in recovery.

Role model

What can we do as a society, community, and person right now? We can model our behaviour by using non-stigmatizing language. Instead of calling a person a "drug addict", we can say "a person who

uses substances". Instead of saying "addiction", we can say "substance use disorder".

Advocacy

It is also essential to address the structural barriers that contribute to stigma and hinder access to care. This includes advocating for policies that prioritize SUD treatment and mental health services, as well as challenging discriminatory practices in healthcare, housing, and employment. By dismantling these barriers, we can create a more inclusive and supportive society for individuals affected by SUD.

We can help in our own community by encouraging our local and provincial government to provide a broader range resources for people who use substances locally. People who use substances often do not want to leave the comfort of their community for support.

SUD is not an individual problem. It affects society as a whole, creating a ripple effect. Family members of people who use substances will testify that their loved ones were affected by – and affected – family, friends, employment, housing, and healthcare.

Ultimately, combating stigma surrounding SUD requires a multi-faceted approach that involves education, advocacy, and community engagement.



By working together to challenge stereotypes, promote empathy, and remove barriers to care, we can create a more compassionate and understanding society where individuals struggling with SUD can find the support and treatment they need to thrive. It's time to break the cycle of stigma and build a future where everyone affected by SUD is treated with dignity and respect.

Healing effects of ending stigma and creating compassion and connection can be felt by us all, whether we know it or not.

Person-first language emphasizes the individual before their condition, focusing on their humanity rather than defining them by a behaviour or characteristic. For example, instead of “drug user”, it’s “person who uses substances”.

Words have power
Use your words to decrease stigma

NEW DCAT LANGUAGE GUIDE



DRUG POLICY IN PORTUGAL: RACHETING UP THE PRESSURE

Clifford Reynolds

In 2001, Portugal decriminalized all unregulated drugs. However, in 2008, the laws were changed and it became illegal to possess amounts that exceeded a 10-day supply³. Harm reduction strategies were introduced, and a legal process was created where individuals caught with excess drugs could receive voluntary treatment instead of facing criminal charges⁴.

As a result, HIV infections from injection drug use fell sharply, the prison population decreased by 16.5% from 2000 to 2008, and overdose deaths in Portugal were very low by 2011⁵. Portugal still boasts the lowest drug-related death rates in Western Europe⁶. However, recent headlines questioning the effectiveness of its drug policy have caused confusion and prompted further investigation.

Drug-related deaths have increased since 2011, aligning with neighboring countries in Western Europe⁶. Critical factors such as the financial crisis



in 2007-2008, the introduction of fentanyl to the global drug market, and the worldwide pandemic of 2019 are all factors that cannot be ignored when considering the overall rise in deaths across Europe^{4,7}.

It is reported that since 2001, funding for social services in Portugal has decreased, and support for helping people with substance use issues has weakened. Funding for drug treatment services plummeted from \$82.7 million in 2012 to \$17.4 million, and the number of people who use drugs in treatment dropped sharply from 1,150 in 2015 to 352 in 2021³.



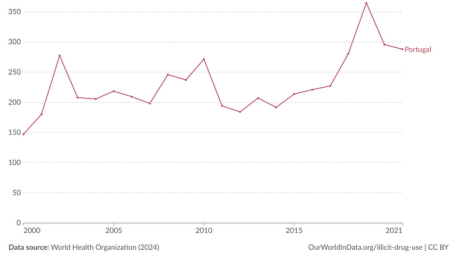
Criticism

Critics argue that Portugal's drug policy remains primarily within the criminal justice system rather than in healthcare. With oversight of the criminal justice system, it doesn't fully support people's rights to use drugs. This can affect those who aren't ready or willing to seek treatment but still deserve safety.

Additionally, the rate of expansion of harm reduction services has been questioned, which may suggest an abstinence leaning approach ⁴. Initially programs that provided access to clean needles helped to reduce HIV rates, however, as of 2023, Portugal reported having only two witnessed consumption sites and 82 syringes per person who uses drugs, which is under the World Health Organization target of 200 ⁸.

Mental health and substance use disorders deaths, 2000 to 2021

Estimated annual number of deaths from mental health and substance use disorders. This includes alcohol use, drug use and eating disorders. Figures do not include deaths from suicide, which are often related to these disorders.



Mental health and substance use disorders deaths, 2000 to 2021, Our World, Our Data

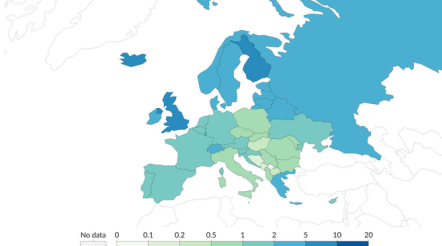


Take Away

Overall, while there seems to be room for innovation, Portugal's drug policy is a proven success that has lowered deaths and increased safety, making it worth looking into more. With rising concerns about the toxic drug supply, it's important to focus on successful evidence-based strategies and find ways to improve them locally instead of letting fear of the unknown hinder progress.

Drug use disorder death rate, 2021

Estimated annual number of deaths from drug use disorders⁸ per 100,000 people.



Drug use disorder death rate, 2021, Our World, Our Data



Diego García, Unsplash.com

EVERY STORY IS DIFFERENT

Jeff's Journey to Wellness

Hi there, my name is Jeff.
I'm here to tell you about my wellness journey. I owe it all to connection and a willingness to try a variety of options.

Let me explain...



I had a loving family who worked long hours. I was alone a lot.

I often felt anxious and had trouble understanding school work. I acted out when I needed connection. Instead of connection, I usually got in trouble.

I often felt like I did not belong.

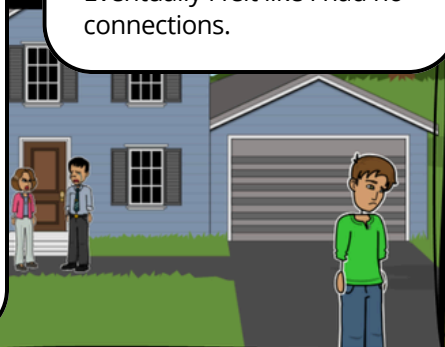


I tried drugs as a way to connect with certain friends. Drugs eventually become the thing that took my mind off of my anxious thoughts and my low self esteem.

Later, my main connection was to the drugs themselves - instead of people I did them with.

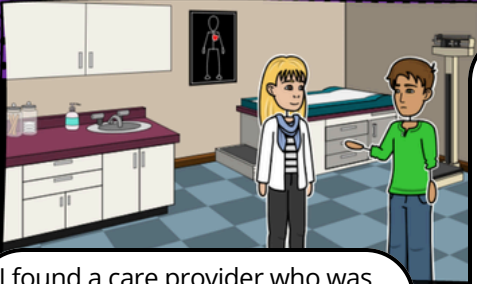
I was ill and in order to cope, I had to depend on the criminal drug market.

I lost trust with my family. Eventually I felt like I had no connections.





Jeff's Unique Journey to Wellness



I found a care provider who was compassionate and who met me where I was at.

This meant that she provided the type of care that I felt ready for.

I found resources that kept me safe during the toxic drug supply crisis.

I had naloxone and I had my drug use observed in case of an emergency. Shelter was hard to find, but I had access to food and harm reduction supplies so I stayed as healthy as possible during that time.



3



Healthy policies and laws kept me away from the criminal justice system.

I would not have the education and career that I have today if I had a criminal record.

I tried detox and recovery centres a few times.

I received compassion and support from my care provider when things didn't seem to work.



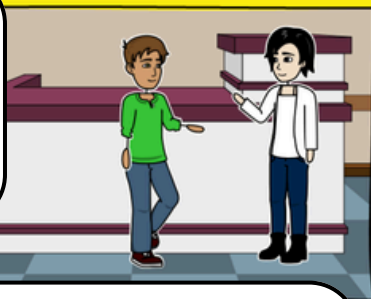
4



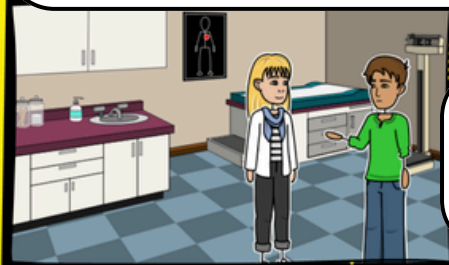
Jeff's Unique Journey to Wellness

She offered a prescribed drug supply to prevent detox symptoms and therapy to explore why I depended on substances and to learn other ways of being.

At that point I was open to trying something new.



I stopped buying drugs illegally, this made me feel safer and less vulnerable to criminal markets and poisoned drugs.



I started taking part in daily routines. I found a job and housing.

Therapy showed me different learning techniques.

Eventually, I got a grant to go back to school.



There was a supportive culture at work.

They believed that employee health and wellness was an investment.

Their policies allowed them to work with my treatments so I can take my medication and attend my appointments and classes.

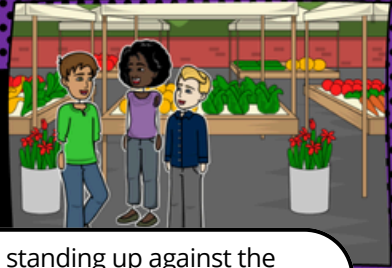




Jeff's Unique Journey to Wellness



I formed connections with my family again. I also formed connections with school friends, work friends, neighborhood friends and support group friends.



I started standing up against the stigma of mental health and substance use. This opened the door for others to open up.

I discovered that many people face various struggles and often rely on a variety of unhealthy coping mechanisms. Additionally, I found that many individuals are on their own distinct paths to wellness.

7



Slowly, my care provider and I decreased my prescribed supply and balanced it with other therapies.

It wasn't always easy, but I had a web of connections and support to lean on. I was finally on my journey to wellness.



8



Jeff's Unique Journey to Wellness

Now I work to prevent substance use from early ages. I ensure sources of positive experiences and connection are set up in the community.

Connections and positive experiences in childhood buffer negative experiences and build resiliency to stressful events.

I also role model healthy ways to connect and coping strategies, such as playing sports, spending time in nature and meditating.



Best of all, I enjoy all of my connections!

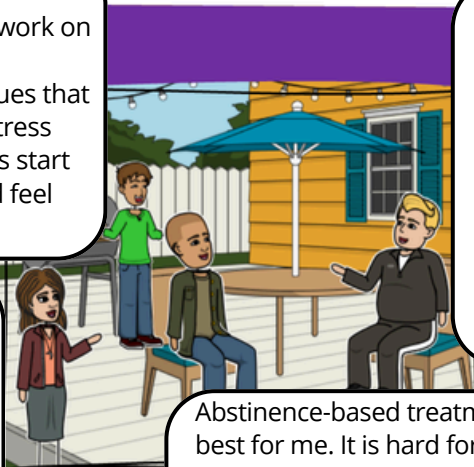
Treatment is not one-size-fits-all.

Every story is different, and everyone has their own unique path; we just need support while we find it.

9

I have stopped my prescribed supply. I work on wellness every day. Therapeutic techniques that help me cope with stress and past experiences start to become habit and feel easier each day.

The system of getting prescriptions had many challenges for me. Now I advocate for easier access and safe public policies around it.



Since being on prescribed supply, I have been able to function as a productive member of society.

I can work, spend time with family and friends and engage in community activities.

Abstinence-based treatment worked best for me. It is hard for me to understand how prescribed supply works.

I am curious to learn more.

10



Hush Naidoo Jade Photography, Unsplash.com

UNDERSTANDING PRESCRIBED SUPPLY/ PRESCRIBED ALTERNATIVES

Kathy Woudzia

On average, this equates to 6.9 deaths per day due to toxic drug poisonings.



A map of Delta, City of Delta image

In Delta

The same report shows that there were 22 fatal toxic drug poisonings and 121 suspected paramedic attended drug poisoning events. Twenty-two might seem small, but Delta recorded 18.5 deaths per 100,000 population due to toxic drug supply poisonings in 2023¹⁰. This figure is higher than that of neighbouring communities such as Burnaby (18), Tri-Cities (17.4) and South Surrey White Rock (17)¹⁰.

Addressing the toxic drug supply crisis requires using a multi-pronged approach, and one such approach is prescribing alternative medications to those resistant to other forms of treatment.

Imagine a world where regulated, prescribed medications help you break free from the grip of street drugs. By choosing these alternatives, you not only reduce exposure to the dangers of the criminal market but also create your own unique path to health and healing. While challenges such as the risk of diversion must be addressed, it may be time to explore options that complement traditional abstinence treatments and empower recovery journeys!

BC Coroners Service reports that in 2023 unregulated drug toxicity is the leading cause of death in British Columbia for persons aged 10 to 59, accounting for more deaths than homicides, suicides, accidents, and natural disease combined.

What is prescribed supply/prescribed alternatives?

This approach involves the provision of pharmaceutical-grade substances, such as hydromorphone and fentanyl, to individuals who use drugs, with the aim of reducing the harms associated with unregulated drug use while care focuses on healing the source of the substance use (such as chronic pain or psychological trauma). The overall objective is to gradually reduce dosage while promoting healing and integration into community activities, including work and family.

While the idea of supplying drugs to those with substance use disorders may seem counterintuitive, proponents argue that it represents an important puzzle piece for response to a public health emergency.

The toxic drug supply crisis, fueled primarily by the proliferation of potent synthetic opioids like fentanyl, has claimed countless lives and devastated communities worldwide.

Beyond harm reduction

Traditional harm reduction strategies, such as needle exchange programs and opioid agonist therapy (methadone, suboxone, sublocade),

have undoubtedly played a crucial role in mitigating some of the harms associated with drug use. However, the relentless rise in deaths associated with toxic drugs underscores the need for innovative approaches that challenge the status quo.

Medications

Hydromorphone and fentanyl are two drugs commonly prescribed for opioid dependence due to their potency and pharmacological properties. Hydromorphone, a synthetic opioid with similar effects to heroin, is often administered orally or by injection as a pain reliever.

When provided in a controlled setting, hydromorphone can serve as a safer alternative to unregulated opioids, reducing the risk of a toxic drug poisoning and other adverse health outcomes.

Unfortunately, most of our most vulnerable populations who use drugs have built a tolerance to heroin and hydromorphone and require a more potent alternative to stave off sickness. Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is significantly more potent than heroin, is now being prescribed as a more potent alternative.



Benefits

Prescribed alternative medications can alleviate the burden on healthcare and criminal justice systems, reducing the need for emergency response services and hospitalizations, as well as mitigating the opportunities for criminal and underground drug markets.

They provide people who use drugs with an alternative to purchasing toxic street drugs.

By providing access to prescribed supply, these programs can also facilitate engagement with healthcare and social services, ultimately supporting individuals on their journey towards health and wellness.

Obstacles

A key concern regarding prescribed medications is the issue of diversion, where these drugs end up in the hands of individuals who were not



Mathurin NAPOLY / matnapo, Unsplash.com

prescribed them, either through illegal purchase or due to unsafe storage and handling. The term "safe supply" is inherently misleading as it might imply that prescribed medications are inherently safe, however, all medications can be hazardous if not monitored and used as directed by the prescriber. Currently, leaders have not found a significant solution to address these concerns effectively.

It's time

It's time to collaborate on solutions. How can we adopt innovative approaches that prioritize the health of people who use drugs, eliminate preventable deaths from toxic drug supplies, and develop effective policies to minimize diversion? Let's start the conversation and work towards these goals together.



Markus Spiske, Unsplash.com

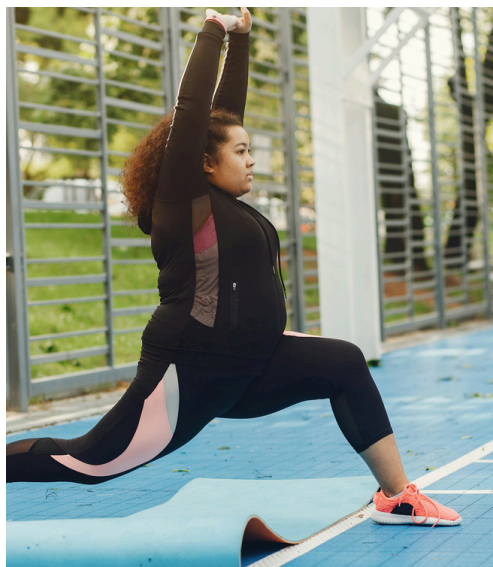
EXERCISE AND RECOVERY



Victor Freitas, Unsplash.com

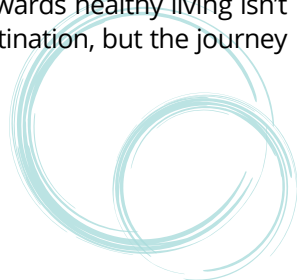
I started my fitness journey as part of my recovery a few years ago. I was 42 years old. Joining a gym was fairly easy, but working out in front of people was daunting at first. Starting off, I feared judgement from every gaze directed towards me.

I didn't know much about fitness or the fitness community when I started working out. Fortunately, both embraced me with open arms. A few years in, fitness and exercise has shown and given me so much. It has shown me community, consistency, hard work and determination. I draw constant inspiration from those around me. They lift me up.



Gustavo Fring, Pexels.com

The gym is my place of zen, where I can focus only on the task at hand, unplug from daily distractions and continuously challenge myself. I am physically and mentally evolving is constant - from my workouts to healthy eating and a healthier lifestyle. I have met seemingly unattainable goals, and set and met new ones. In constantly striving to move forward with ever shifting purpose, I've come to realize that this movement towards healthy living isn't about the destination, but the journey itself.





Besides my own experience, there is growing evidence that exercise can be a powerful tool in recovery from substance use. One recent study found that adding simple workouts to treatment improved recovery from a variety of substances, including cocaine, opioids, cannabis and alcohol. Studies and personal stories show exercise eases withdrawal, curbs cravings, replaces triggers that lead to drug use, helps you think more clearly, improves sleep, boosts mood, provides structure and routine, and boosts self-esteem and self-control¹¹.

Both aerobic exercise such as running, swimming and dancing and strength training such as weightlifting, push-ups, lunges and squats are helpful.

Even walking for 30 minutes per day is enough to bring about health benefits. I never anticipated how much I would benefit from fitness, but now I can't imagine life without my workouts.

20 MINUTE WORKOUT FOR BEGINNERS

Warm-Up (3 minutes)

1. March in Place - 1 minute
2. Arm Circles - 30 seconds (15 seconds forward, 15 seconds backward) Leg
3. Swings - 1 minute (30 seconds each leg)

Workout Routine (15 minutes)

1. Circuit 1 (5 minutes)
2. Bodyweight Squats - 1 minute
3. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, lower into a squat, and return to standing.
4. Push-Ups - 1 minute
5. Modify by doing them on your knees if needed.
6. Jumping Jacks - 1 minute
7. Rest - 1 minute

Circuit 2 (5 minutes)

1. Lunges - 1 minute
2. Alternate legs, stepping forward and lowering your hips until both knees are bent at a 90-degree angle.
3. Plank - 1 minute
4. Hold a plank position on your forearms or hands.
5. High Knees - 1 minute
6. Jog in place, bringing your knees up towards your chest.
7. Rest - 1 minute

Circuit 3 (5 minutes)

1. Glute Bridges - 1 minute
2. Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor, lift your hips towards the ceiling.
3. Mountain Climbers - 1 minute
4. In a plank position, alternate bringing knees towards your chest.
5. Bicycle Crunches - 1 minute
6. Lie on your back, bring one knee to the opposite elbow while extending the other leg.
7. Rest - 1 minute

Cool Down (2 minutes)

1. Forward Fold - 30 seconds
2. Child's Pose - 30 seconds
3. Standing Quad Stretch - 30 seconds (15 seconds each leg)
4. Deep Breathing - 30 seconds

TOXIC POLITICS CAUSING THE PARALYSIS OF MEANINGFUL ACTION OPINION

Anonymous DCAT Member

The debate around the open use of drugs is a contentious issue. While lawmakers are discussing it, harm continues to occur in both private and public settings.



Wesley Tingey, Unsplash.com

The majority of society would prefer that nobody feels the need to use drugs at all. Nobody wants the public, especially young people, to be exposed to drug paraphernalia and use.

Children are the most vulnerable to the negative effects of being exposed to substance use because their brains are still developing until their mid-to-late twenties¹². This exposure can have harmful effects on their learning and influence them in a negative way. They are at risk of being exposed to substance use and may find themselves in situations where they become desensitized and accepting of drug use. It's important to plan for the future, and prevention is something we can all agree on.

We need to educate our youth and community about the short- and long-term negative effects of drug use. It's vital to help young people learn how to prevent their first experimental drug use.

We also need to allocate education, support, and resources for young families and communities to provide the basic factors for health and opportunities for children to form strong and safe connections with adults and have positive experiences. This will ensure that tomorrow's generation is equipped with resilient brains and a variety of coping mechanisms.

The political battle of decriminalization is just that. Instead of finding what is wrong with the other side's points, let's come together on what we can all agree on, and we need to start yesterday.

MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO

PREVENTION

Anonymous DCAT Member

It's an age-old saying that, as it turns out, is supported by science. There is evidence to show that children learn by imitation as an instinctual and ingrained way of learning. According to researchers Mark Nielsen and Keyan Tomaselli, modelling appears to be a universal way of learning. Many Indigenous cultures exemplify this, as they are observed to spend less time teaching and instead slow their activities down for children to copy¹³. This underscores the flaws in that other age-old saying, "do as I say, not as I do". Children are more inclined to learn by imitation rather than being taught lessons that adults do not model.

This is good news; the tools we have to promote wellness and prevent, delay, and reduce substance-use for future generations focus on wellness for ourselves. Here are some ways to role model wellness and substance-use prevention that we may overlook:



CONNECTION



Tanner Mardis, Unsplash.com

Social connection is an integral way to maintain mental wellness. Prioritizing social connection by limiting our own screen time, scheduling time to spend with others, and paying attention to feelings or behaviors that may indicate a need for connection are all important ways to prioritize staying connected and maintaining sources of support during hard times. **Canadian Alliance for Social Connection and Health Link**



SCAN ME



VARIETY OF ROUTINES



Tanner Mardis, Unsplash.com

As a culture, we seem to have normalized the use of legal drugs as a way to socialize, spend time, and cope with stress. Many believe that having a glass of wine or getting together for drinks is a good way to unwind. However, in Canada, alcohol accounts for the highest amount of health and societal costs and harms.¹⁵

Additionally, although alcohol is often seen as a way to connect with others, it is paradoxically linked to feelings of disconnection, as evidenced by increased anxiety and incidents of violence¹¹ Engaging in activities like sports, recreation, spending time in nature, creating art, or connecting over tea, can be beneficial ways to connect with friends, relax, and relieve stress, benefiting both the body and mind.



POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

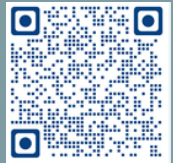


"The Resilience Scale" Albertafamilywellness.org

It is fair to say that we all enjoy positive experiences. Positive experiences also have long-lasting, beneficial health effects, especially for youth. They help counteract negative impacts of adverse experiences for children and aid in the development of neural pathways that promote lifelong

resilience and mental well-being. Openly discussing feelings, seeking support during tough times, engaging in community traditions, feeling a sense of belonging at school, having supportive friends, and having at least two caring adults are all positive experiences reported by youth¹⁸ Providing and modelling these experiences can have long-lasting positive effects, helping children carry on with positive experiences for future generations. This is where community can have the most impactful role in preventing future substance-use for the next generations.

Alberta Family Wellness Link



SCAN ME

BRAIN GAMES

WELLNESS WORD SEARCH

U G R O U N T I N E S G T D L
B H O L I S T I C D J F N R I
Z X E M O T I O N S S S K E E S
R E S I L I E N C E G P X G T
V A X B C O C P C Q R L C U E
T C T O G C O C N T O X E L N
H A E T D R N M R I U F R A I
O L M S A A N C A E N D I T N
U N P U K T E L P M D N S I G
G B A L E N C E G P I S E O T
H P T Y F R T H S O N U E N I
T X H U X B I V M W G I L L E
S Z Y K N Y O S C E C Z F T F
X K V E M X N U R R N S A S C
C O M P A S S I O N U T O R U

Mindfulness	Listening
Connection	Holistic
Grounding	Empathy
Thoughts	
Resilience	Empower
Balance	Self
Regulation	Emotions
Compassion	Exercise
Attachment	Routines

EMOTIONAL REGULATION: MIND CONTROL EXERCISE



Joshua Fuller, Unsplash.com

Emotional regulation improves your mental health and peace of mind, helping you gain clarity and different perspectives. It also allows you to pass this skill to future generations and reduce stress-related physical illnesses. Try this five-minute exercise when you experience strong emotions:

1. **Self-Awareness:** Recognize your feelings, name them.
2. **Mindfulness:** Pause to observe your inner state and surroundings; breathing exercises can help.
3. **Cognitive Reappraisal:** Explore alternative thoughts; for example, consider "my child is learning" instead of "my child wasn't paying attention."
4. **Adapt:** Accept that change is inevitable, focusing on what you can control and give yourself grace for what you cannot.
5. **Self-Compassion:** Support yourself as you would a friend, allowing time to develop these new skills.

A WAVE BEGINS

Our team brainstormed and came up with these simple examples of how individual changes can come together to create a wave of community wellness. Implementing these strategies not only enhances individual well-being but also contributes to a more supportive, compassionate, and understanding community.



MODEL SELF-CARE:

- **Impact:** Demonstrating self-care teaches others, especially younger generations, the importance of maintaining their own mental and physical health. It also helps to normalize self-care as an essential part of life.
- **Example:** Practice and talk about your own self-care routines, whether it's regular exercise, healthy coping and connection activities, meditation, setting boundaries, or seeking professional support. Sharing these practices openly can encourage others to prioritize their own well-being.



CONNECT

- **Impact:** Strengthening social connections helps build a supportive community where people feel valued and less isolated. This can significantly reduce stress and improve overall mental health.
- **Example:** Regularly reaching out to friends, organizing community gatherings, or simply being present and approachable in your neighborhood can create a network of support and understanding.

WITH DROPS



CHECK IN WITH SELF & BE CURIOUS



CHANGE LANGUAGE

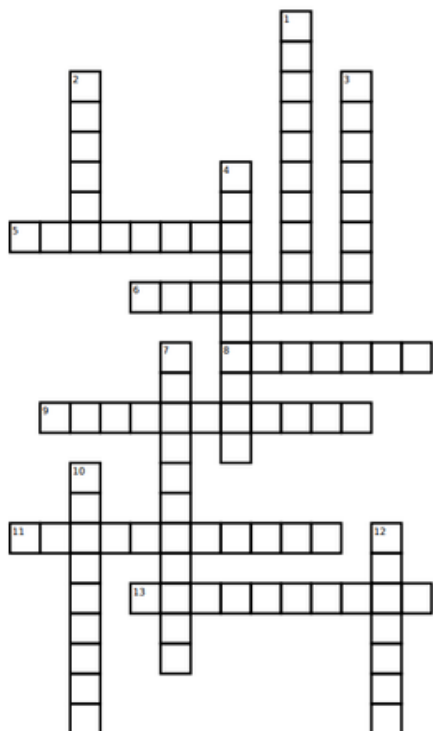
- **Impact:** By exploring our own emotional responses and being curious about different perspectives, we foster empathy and understanding. This approach helps in addressing biases and misconceptions, which can improve interactions with others facing mental health or substance use challenges.
 - **Example:** When you feel a strong reaction to a topic, take time to reflect on why that is and consider alternative viewpoints. Sometimes, it's not about being right or wrong, but understanding that issues are complex with multiple truths. What matters is coming together to learn, not necessarily to agree.
- **Impact:** Language shapes perceptions and attitudes. By using non-stigmatizing language, we help reduce the shame and isolation that often accompany mental health and substance use issues. Referring to people first, such as "a person with a mental health condition" rather than defining them by their condition, promotes dignity and respect.
 - **Example:** Instead of saying someone is "clean" or "dirty," use terms like "in recovery" or "actively using." This shift fosters a more supportive and understanding environment.

BRAIN GAMES

PREVENTION CROSSWORD



Milad Fakurian, Unsplash.com



Across:

5. This often determines how systems work and what society believes to be right or wrong
6. Things we can teach children to recognize, in order to develop healthy ways to respond to others
8. You may not understand but you demonstrate this as a way to show compassion and support.
9. This is debilitating, but many people struggle to find adequate treatment

11. Expectations placed on people that are damaging (such as men not being allowed to show sadness)
13. An exercise that helps to control the mind

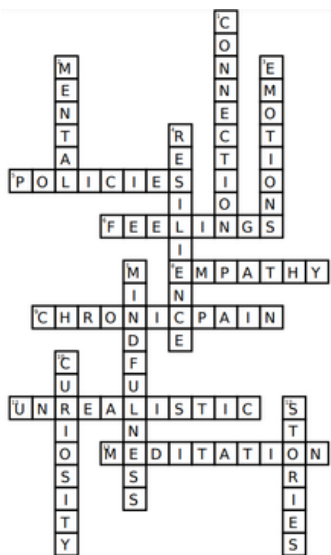
Down:

1. The opposite of addiction
2. A vital aspect of health, that is often overlooked, misunderstood and stigmatized
3. The body's way of telling you that there is something you need to explore and better understand
4. This helps children better cope with stress later in life and is created by consistent relationships with safe adults
7. The practice of orientating oneself to your surroundings
10. A way to approach things we do not fully understand yet
12. Something a person shares when wanting to be seen and heard

BRAIN GAMES

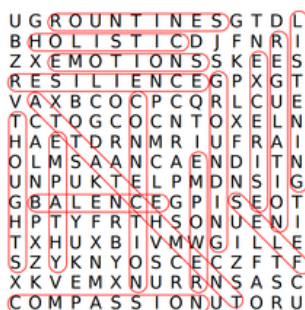
ANSWER KEY

PREVENTION CROSSWORD



Milad Fakurian, Unsplash.com

WELLNESS WORD SEARCH



5-MINUTE GROUNDING EXERCISE

This exercise aims to help you center yourself, reduce anxiety, and reconnect with the present moment.

Instructions:

1. **Find a Comfortable Position to rest in** (1 minute)
2. **Take Deep Breaths** (1 minute)
3. **Engage Your Senses** (2 minutes)
 - Notice touch, sounds, sights, and smells
4. **Grounding Visualization** (1 minute)
 - Imagine roots extending from your feet into the earth, anchoring you.
5. **Return to the Present** (30 seconds)
 - Bring awareness back to your breath, gently wiggle your fingers and toes, and open your eyes when ready.

SOURCE INFORMATION

1. Unsplash. Beautiful free images and pictures [Internet]. Unsplash.com. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://unsplash.com>
2. Burchfield R. Oxford English dictionary. 1982 [cited 2024 Sep 17]; Available from: <https://www.oed.com/?tl=true>
3. Rêgo X, Oliveira MJ, Lameira C, Cruz OS. 20 years of Portuguese drug policy - developments, challenges and the quest for human rights. *Subst Abuse Treat Prev Policy* [Internet]. 2021;16(1). Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s13011-021-00394-7>
4. Shea G. Is Portugal's drug decriminalization a failure or success? The answer isn't so simple [Internet]. Knowledge at Wharton. Knowledge@Wharton; 2023 [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/is-portugals-drug-decriminalization-a-failure-or-success-the-answer-isnt-so-simple/>
5. Washingtonpost.com. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/07/07/portugal-drugs-decriminalization-heroin-crack/>
6. Drug use disorder death rate [Internet]. Our World in Data. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/death-rates-from-drug-use-disorders>
7. Alarcão V, Candeias P, Stefanovska-Petkovska M, Pintassilgo S, Machado FL, Virgolino A, et al. Mental health and well-being of migrant populations in Portugal two years after the COVID-19 pandemic. *Behav Sci (Basel)* [Internet]. 2023;13(5). Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/bs13050422>
8. Harm reduction – the current situation in Europe (European Drug Report 2024) [Internet]. Europa.eu. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/european-drug-report/2024/harm-reduction_en
9. DeltaMap [Internet]. Delta.ca. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://www.delta.ca/about-delta/deltamap>
10. Coroners. Statistical reports on deaths in British Columbia [Internet]. Gov.bc.ca. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/death/coroners-service/statistical-reports>

SOURCE INFORMATION

11. Theodorakis Y, Hassandra M, Panagiotounis F. Enhancing substance use disorder recovery through integrated physical activity and behavioral interventions: A comprehensive approach to treatment and prevention. *Brain Sci* [Internet]. 2024 [cited 2024 Sep 17];14(6):534. Available from: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-3425/14/6/534>
12. The teen brain: 7 things to know [Internet]. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-7-things-to-know>
13. Nauert R. Children copy what they see: Here is what to know [Internet]. Psych Central. 2018 [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://psychcentral.com/news/2018/05/27/modeling-behavior-for-children-has-long-lasting-effects>
14. Canadian Alliance for Social Connection and Health [Internet]. Canadian Alliance for Social Connection and Health. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://casch.org/>
15. Canadian substance use costs and harms [Internet]. Csuch.ca. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://csuch.ca/>
16. Alcohol, Drugs and Addictive Behaviours Unit, World Health Organization. Global status report on alcohol and health and treatment of substance use disorders [Internet]. Who.int. [cited 2024 Sep 23]. Available from: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/377960/9789240096745-eng.pdf?sequence=1>
17. Brain story certification course [Internet]. Albertafamilywellness.org. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/>
18. Positive childhood experiences (PCEs) [Internet]. Pinetree Institute. 2021 [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://pinetreeinstitute.org/positive-childhood-experiences/>
19. Havening Techniques - better living through neuroscience [Internet]. Havening Techniques Official Website. [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://www.havening.org/>
20. Essential fascial maneuvers [Internet]. Human Garage. 2023 [cited 2024 Sep 17]. Available from: <https://humangarage.net/essential-fascial-maneuvers/>





For more information, please contact us:

deltaCATeam@outlook.com

www.deltaCAT.ca