

Safer Substance Use in Guelph

Understanding substance use & identifying program and service needs in the community

Interviews with 108 people who use substances (other than alcohol, tobacco and cannabis) were carried out in Guelph in April 2018 and were conducted by a trained peer researcher, someone with lived experience of substance use.

What are we seeing in our community? What substances and services are being used?

Among participants, crystal meth and opioids were the most commonly used substances

What gaps and barriers exist to accessing services in the community?

Participants were facing complex challenges in their lives, especially housing.

What are the biggest concerns for the safety and wellbeing of people who use substances in our community?

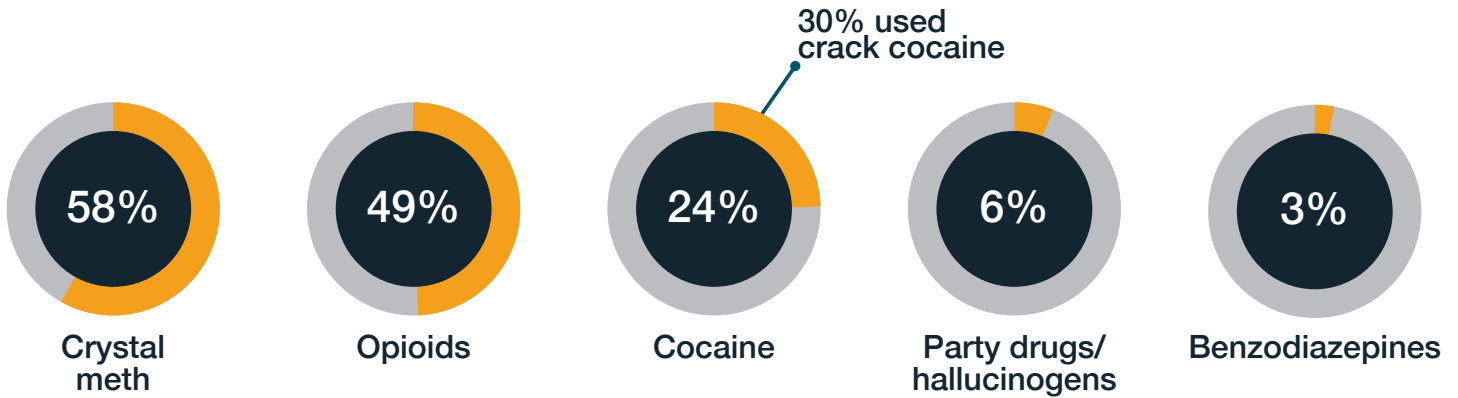
Participants were scared about overdose, dying and the contamination of the drug supply

How can we better support safer substance use?

Strong support among participants for a Supervised Consumption Site (SCS)

For more information about these interviews and findings, contact Kiley at kiley.alderson@wdgpublichealth.ca or 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4208

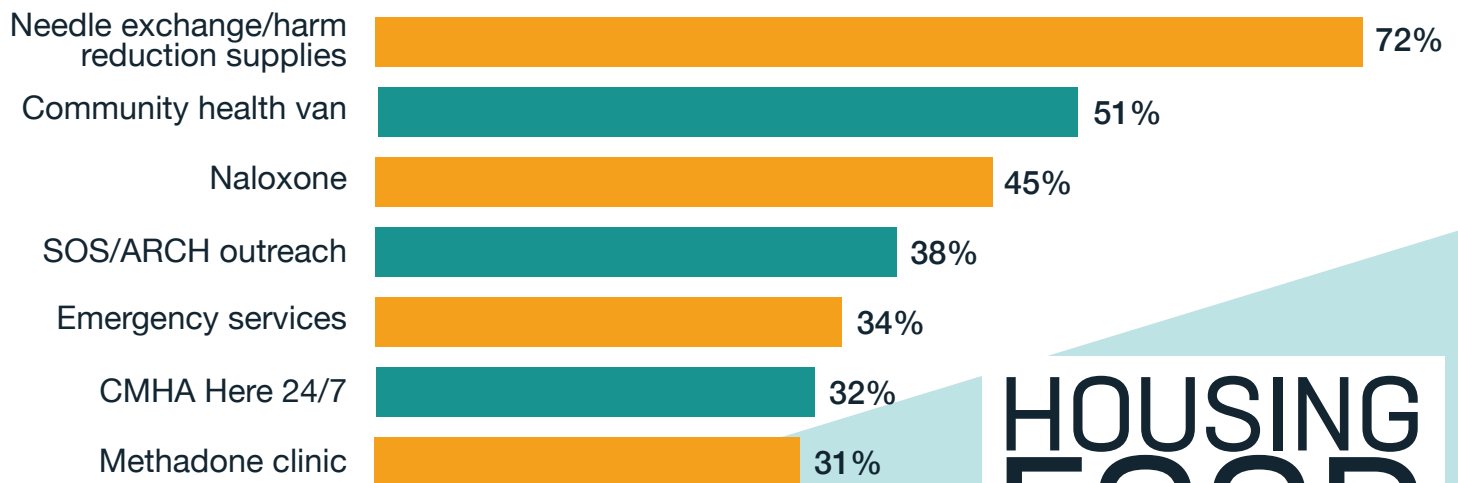
What and how people are using



! The majority of participants used every day, smoking and injecting were the most common ways to use, and people used in a mix of public and private locations.

“ I have been using IV since I was 13. My dad put it in my arm when I was 13 and I haven't stopped...

Top services used in the past 6 months for substance use:



Complex needs and barriers

An understanding of people's complex needs and barriers to accessing support is essential to reduce substance harm in the community.

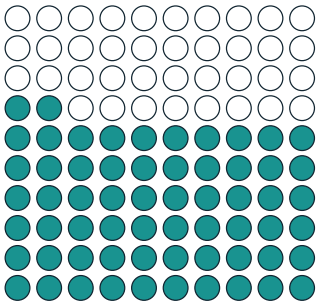
Over half of participants reported housing as one of their biggest needs. Other issues included access to food, counselling, financial and mental health support, primary health care and pain management.

HOUSING
FOOD
COUNSELLING
FINANCIAL SUPPORT
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE
PAIN MANAGEMENT
EMPLOYMENT
DETOX
RECREATION/LEISURE
TRANSPORTATION

People are scared

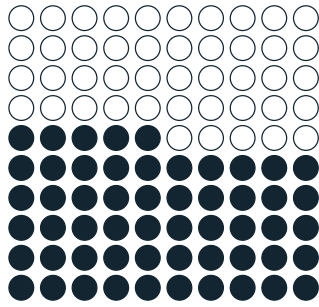
62%

of participants are scared or worried about an overdose or dying. Many are worried about contamination.



55%

of participants have experienced a very negative reaction to using too much drugs, lost consciousness or felt their life was at risk.



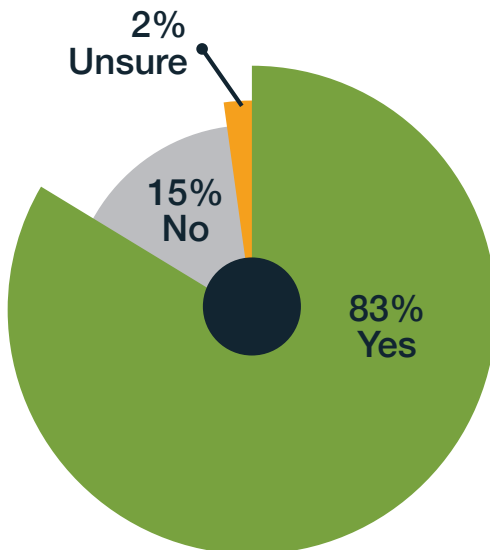
“ I have lost 21 friends since I was out of jail.

“ A lot of stuff is cut with fentanyl and carfentanyl. A lot of things have changed even since last summer on what people are using and what it's cut with.

The majority of these events were related to opioids, most often fentanyl. Some people are purposely using fentanyl, where others are trying to avoid it but suspect fentanyl contamination.

Strong support among participants for a Supervised Consumption Site (SCS)

Would you go to a SCS?



Other services participants want:



- Expansion of needle exchange/harm reduction supplies. More locations, increased hours, and more needle drop boxes throughout the community.
- 24/7 services and programs
- A counsellor or someone to talk to
- Housing and housing support
- Opportunities for recreation/places to hang out
- Self-care and support groups
- Safe place to store personal belongings
- Education about substances

Top 5 services participants would want to see in a SCS:

Nursing staff, a “chill out” room after using, food (including take-away), washrooms, withdrawal management.

“ A place where I can go do it and not have to worry about overdosing. Not having to do it by myself.

Advisory committee

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health
Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy
Sanguen Health Centre
HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health (ARCH)
Toward Common Ground

Recruitment locations

Guelph Community Health Centre
Royal City Church
Welcome In Drop In
Hope House
Ontario Addiction Treatment Centres (OATC)
Wyndham House Youth Resource Centre

Thank you

To the people we interviewed for sharing your stories
and your ideas for services in the community.

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

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These findings are not generalizable to all people who use substances in the community. People not accessing services at recruitment locations in downtown Guelph were less likely to be included.