

WELCOME!

WE WILL GET STARTED SHORTLY.



SAFE SUPPLY & DECRIMINALIZATION OF DRUG USE: A PANEL TALK

SAVING LIVES USING EVIDENCE-
INFORMED APPROACHES



Panel



Giulia Di Giorgio
Fierce survivor of the
war on drugs.
Chair of CAPED and a
member of SUNAR and
CAPUD



Dr. Tiffany O'Donnell
Addiction Medicine
Consultant for Nova
Scotia Health and Co-
Chair of Doctors for
Decriminalization



Petra Schulz
Co-founding Director of
Moms Stop the Harm



Natasha Touesnard
Executive Director of
the Canadian
Association of People
who Use Drugs

Moderator



Sarah Peddle
Service Learning
Manager, Dalhousie
Medicine
Evaluator, SUNAR

DATE AND TIME:

**TUES. SEPTEMBER 28TH, 2021
6:30-8:30PM**

LOCATION:

**HALIFAX CENTRAL LIBRARY LIVE
STREAM. TO ACCESS, PLEASE**

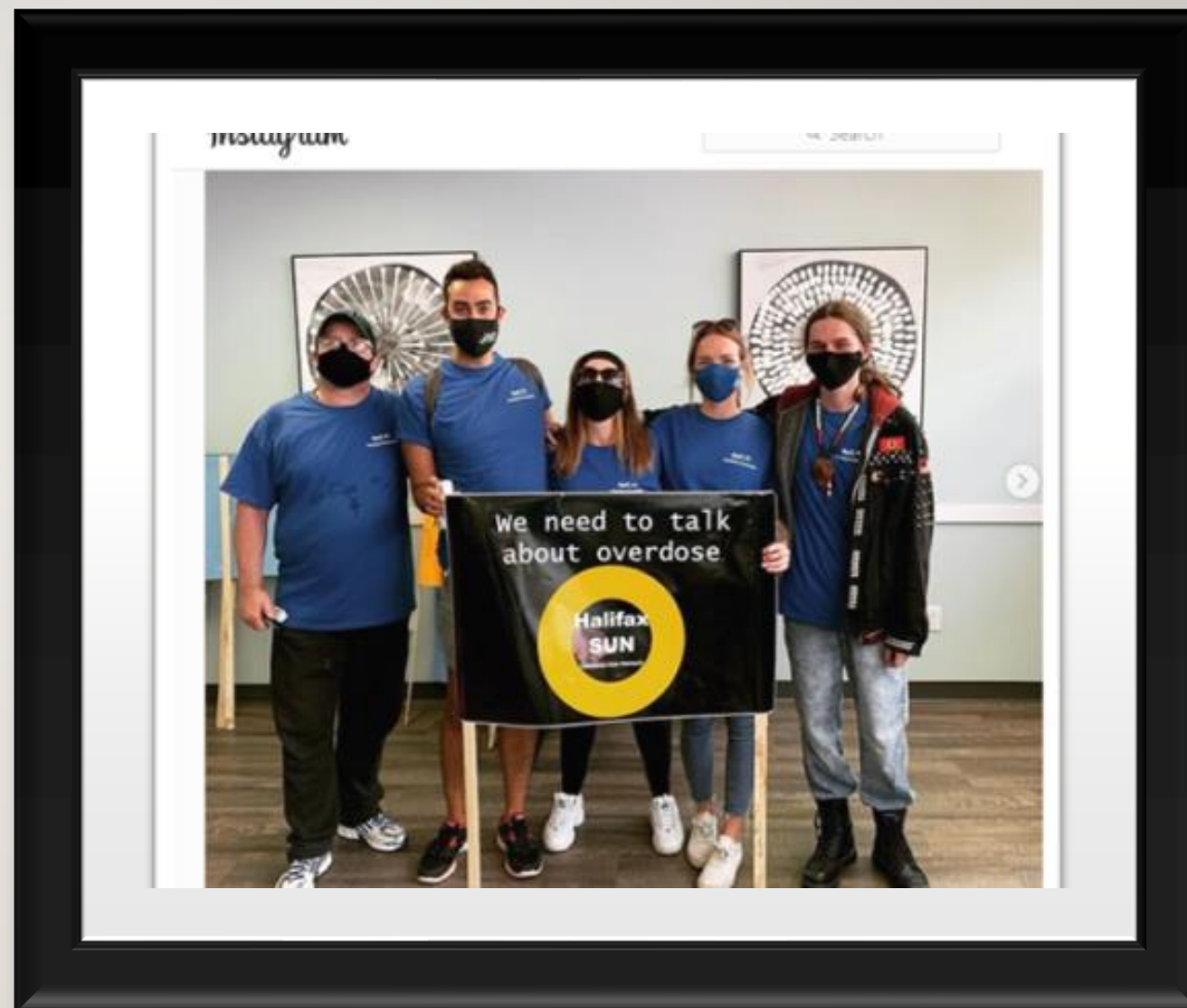
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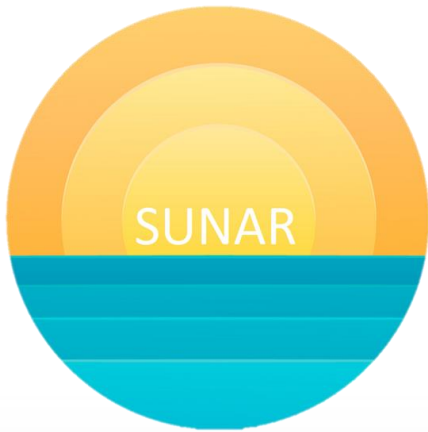
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/SUNAR2021](https://tinyurl.com/SUNAR2021)



AGENDA

- Territory Welcome – Elder Billy Lewis
 - Territory Acknowledgement – Sarah Peddle
-
- Overview of SUNAR – Sarah Peddle
 - Panel Presentations – Moderator, Sarah Peddle
 - Giulia Di Giorgio
 - Dr. Tiffany O'Donnell
 - Petra Schulz
 - Natasha Tousevard
 - 3 rounds of discussion and Q&A
 - Fireside chat
 - Online audience
 - In-person audience
 - Final words from the panelists
 - Thank you's
 - Evaluation Survey





SHEDDING LIGHT ON *Substance Use*

Substance User Network of the Atlantic Region

A peer-led, regional network of PWLE across Atlantic Canada

Main Objectives:

-  Safer use practices
-  Stigma & isolation
-  Improve policies, programs & practices



Key Partners of SUNAR



PREVENT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER. RESPECT. SUPPORT.





PANEL – BRIEF
PRESENTATIONS

GIULIA DI GIORGIO



Giulia Di Giorgio is a fierce survivor of the war on people who use drugs. She was one of the original drug user advocates in Canada, lending her voice to the creation of various programs and services and research that support PWUDs. She is a founder and Chair of Cape Breton Association of People Empowering Drug Users, a member of SUNAR and the national DU group, CAPUD.

Having endured being criminalized, hospitalized, homeless, and more as a direct result of her substance use, she has had to unlearn the stigma she had internalized and rebuild her life for the better. Giulia aims to lend her voice in the process of securing evidence-based services for her community, as well as implementing programs to empower and undo the harms created as a result of the criminalization of people who use drugs, by being a voice around tables where decisions are being made about our lives.

Safe Supply Saved Her Life.



How Safe Supply Saved my Life

**How CRIMINALIZATION and DRUG POLICIES ruined a good portion
of it:**

**Sharing my story as a demonstration of the direct negative effects of
drug policy and how these policies create harms and stigma and are
interwoven throughout all sociocultural systems directly & indirectly
causing innumerable irreparable harms**

Moment of Silence

Every 80 minutes in Canada another Person dies from Overdose.

We are asking you to support us in our quest to save lives.

Please join us in a minute of silence as we remember our loved ones lost to the overdose crisis and drug-related complications and harms.

Thank you.



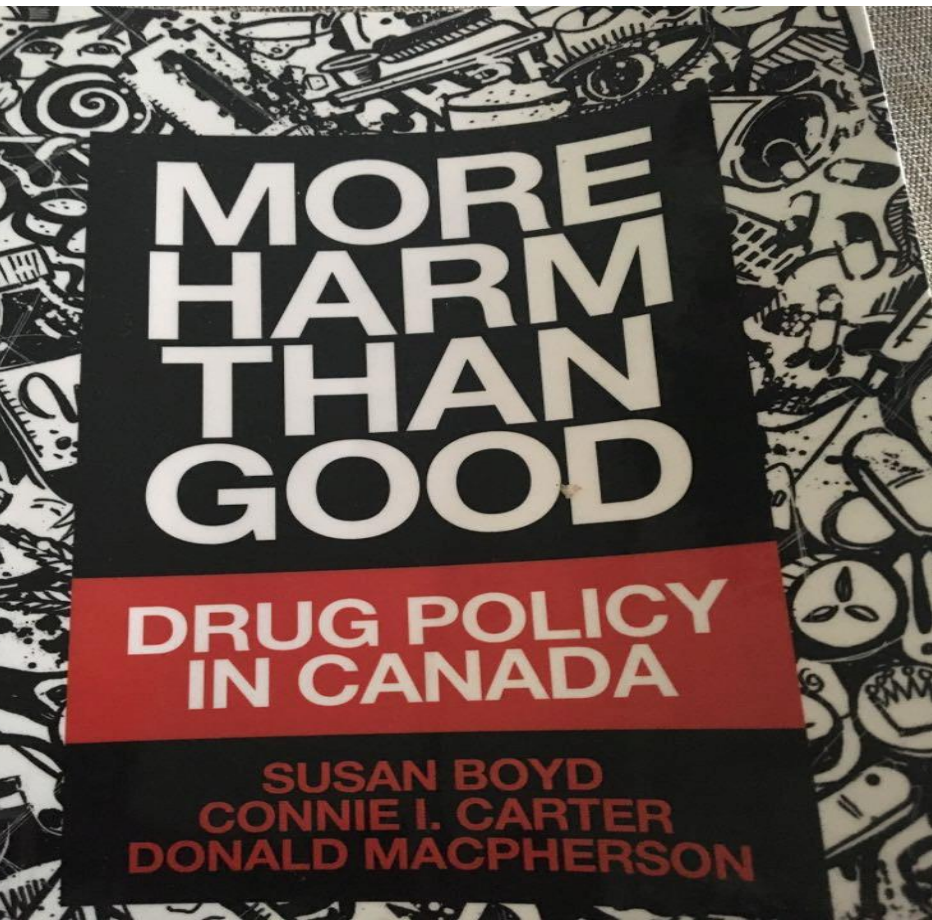
C.A.P.E.D

NOTHING ABOUT
US, WITHOUT
US!

THE USER IS THE EXPERT!



Everyone
should read
this book!!!



In an era when the "war on drugs" has resulted in increasingly militarized responses from police, harsh prison sentences and overcrowded prisons, a re-examination of drug policy is sorely needed. Are prohibitive policies actually effective? In what ways do prohibitive policies affect health care, education, housing and poverty?

More Harm Than Good examines the past and current state of Canadian drug policy, especially as it evolved under the Conservative government, and raises key questions about the effects of Canada's increased involvement in and commitment to the war on drugs.

The analysis in this book is shaped by critical sociology and feminist perspectives and incorporates insights not only from treatment and service workers on the front lines but also from those who live with the consequences of drug policy on a daily basis: people who use criminalized drugs. The authors propose realistic alternatives to today's failed policy approach and challenge citizens and governments at all levels in Canada to chart a new course in addressing drug-related issues.

Susan Boyd is a distinguished professor in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria. **Connie I. Carter**, formerly the senior policy analyst at the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, is the research officer for the B.C. Representative for Children and Youth. **Donald MacPherson**, formerly the drug policy coordinator for the City of Vancouver, is the director of the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition.

FERNWOOD PUBLISHING

critical books for critical thinkers



Cape Breton Regional Library

Prohibitive Drug policies effect policy within all social/public service domains including

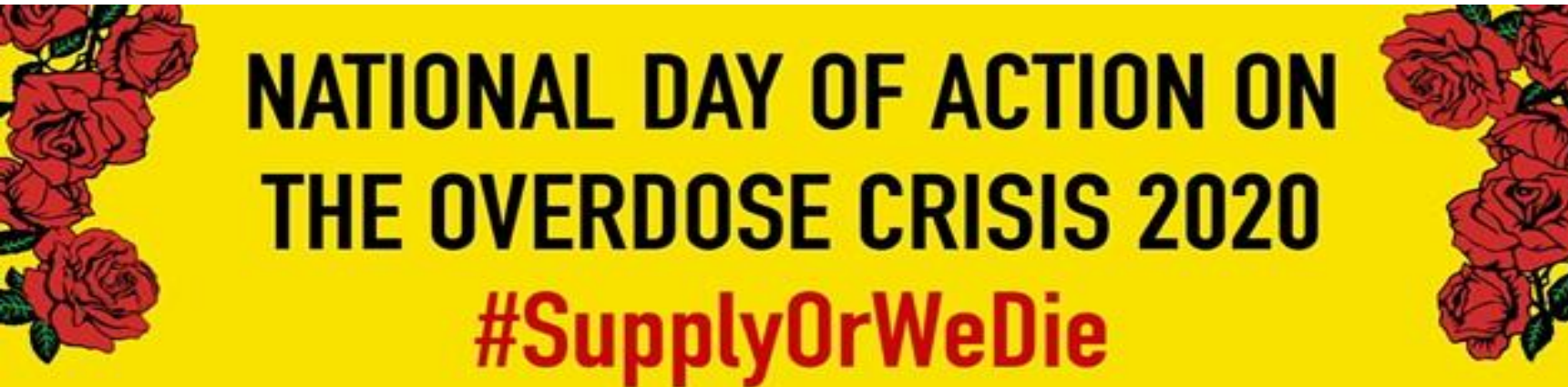
- Health**
- Housing**
- Social Assistance**
- Child Protective Services**
- Education**
- Employment**

Once someone is identified as a substance user, because drug policy designates substance use an illegal and stigmatized activity, PWUD are discriminated against and scorned within society, often drug use is an acceptable justification to refuse a person support and/or to further criminalize us. Its no wonder social determinants of health are so low in regions like Cape Breton where rates of SU are so high! We don't stand a chance at survival, and rates of recidivism are through the roof; how are you expected to survive if you can't get a job with a criminal record? People re-offend because we have no choice.

"I stopped doing dangerous drugs in a dangerous fashion the first time my drug use was treated as a means to cope, a health issue—and was being treated as such—**rather than a crime.**"

<https://gettingtotomorrow.ca/.../08/why-decriminalize-drugs/> [#GettingToTomorrow](#) [#Ottawa](#) [#ChangePolicySaveLives](#) –Sean LeBlanc, Drug Users

Advocacy League



The overdose epidemic and COVID-19 are colliding.
We need a safe supply now or we will die.

WE DEMAND

1. Declare a National Public Health Emergency for the overdose epidemic
2. Create and fund a comprehensive national safe supply program that extends beyond the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Decriminalize all drugs, people who use drugs, and people who sell drugs
4. Expand the legal protection in the Good Samaritan Act to include all drug-related charges and protect those with warrants for their arrest and without citizenship status
5. Expand federal funding for Overdose Prevention Sites (OPS) and Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS)

**Partnerships to make SS happen:
OPS?**

MySafe?

NSMHA – Eastern Zone?

ALLY Centre Health Clinic?

Physicians & Surgeons?

Doctors NS?

Ministers of Health, Justice,

Community Services?

DULF? LEAP?

All we need is just one prescriber!



Current drug policies in Canada are the backbone to the harm we as drug users experience day to day. The federal government is trying to allow for a more streamlined access to safe supply by creating exemptions and providing opportunities such as MySafe to encourage the medicalized access to safe supply, but as you can see from our situation in Cape Breton – even though key stakeholders, including the acting Chief of Police endorse the opening of an OPS and safe supply, after advocating and pleading for the last two years, we still have not found a prescriber to champion the cause, and people continue to die! We need the provincial government to uphold these evidence – based, life saving services.

Just because we don't have a tainted illicit drug supply to the degree of larger cities, it doesn't mean what is here isn't making people sick.

And because of the way our PMP has caps on what they think doctors should be limited to PX, and the way they flag doctors who do provide these life saving measures, prescribers are leery to even have the conversation.

PWUD who were using diverted opiates, have been siloed onto OAT.

CB has more ppl on OAT in the last 4 yrs than Hfx & Dartmouth combined.

A large % of these ppl continue to use problematically because they are not offered their drug of choice, nor do they have the support system necessary to move forward in life, or to heal.

If the soon to open 'hubs' cared about what ppl really needed, they would offer hydromorphone at their new 'outpatient withdrawal management program'. Why are they NOT talking about the # of ppl still using drugs on OAT?! Why don't they meet ppl where they are at with what they are currently using? Because their goal is 'recovery' or 'abstinence', rather than keeping people safe or alive, meeting people where they are at with what we/they need.

“All we need is just one doc”, CAPED member



CAPED has the opportunity to partner with Dr. Mark Tyndall and the MySafe Team to be part of their National MySafe project which would allow us to house a vending machine in Sydney's soon to open Overdose Prevention Site.

We have identified that the main barrier to safe supply is **the lack of community & provincial/regional support**

The feds have done a lot, but healthcare is controlled by each province/territory which is why we see our neighbors in NB with a progressive new evidence-based treatment centre; their health authority and health minister supported them!

This is what we need in Nova Scotia, especially Cape Breton, and all communities!



Safe Supply Saves Lives

Last year, there was a campaign, led by our national drug user advocacy group, CAPUD (Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs), where **PWUD** (People Who Use Drugs) **PWLLE** (People With Lived/Living Experience) - people who've been there - stated what was necessary to end the suffering & dying.



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“All we need is just one doc”, CAPED member

Although we don't have fentanyl to the degree of larger urban centres, we do have a toxic illicit street supply, and many people, including those on OAT/ORP who are still problematically using these substances. Others are purchasing the same pills that the machine would dispense on the street at great costs, ruining their lives to generate money to purchase these pills by committing low-level crimes and sex work.

Being a participant in the project would prevent people from having to access the street supply of drugs.

Local research that Margaret Dechman did last before her passing found that 80% of men interviewed at our correctional facility were incarcerated for drug use related non-violent low -level crimes and had underlying trauma related to childhood sexual assault.

Until people are able to gain supports needed to heal, PWUD do so to cope.

The opposite of addiction is connection, the opposite of pain – be it emotional or physical, is relief.

Allowing PWUD the opportunity to join our program would restore their quality of life, similar to Dr. Sara Davidson's safe supply program that some of our SUNAR peers are on. They have shared how much their lives have improved in these ways, this is the same for all of us who have had safe supply provided to us by healthcare providers.

Safe supply saved my life. Imagine the cost and years and opportunity I could have been afforded had someone provided me safe supply sooner.

Imagine all the lives that may have been saved if people had access to a legal regulated safe supply.

Imagine all the lives that can be saved today if we put aside pre-conceived biases and expand access to safe supply now.

Decriminalizing drug use would allow a shift in attitude. Rather than a penal prohibitive approach, we could focus on safe use, be it recreational, social, or more of a health issue for those of us who need drugs to survive.

Monies that are invested in jails and courts could be shifted to avenues for healing and efforts to raise access to needed supports which would prevent a lot of harm.

Investment in peer-led consultation is imperative to knowing what will work.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

If you are a physician or NP interested in prescribing for Cape Breton and/or learning more about MySafe project, please contact Giulia Di Giorgio : capedns@gmail.com

To join CAPED:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/997508517350134>

Video of MySafe:

<https://youtu.be/AEv5GoyalDE>

Link to recorded Safe Supply Session hosted by CAPED welcoming Dr Leah Genge & Dr Tommy Brothers from 2020:

<https://youtu.be/9Hfe7ZRBD7k>

DR. TIFFANY O'DONNELL

Tiffany O'Donnell is a family physician in Sipekne'katik First Nation and a consultant in Addiction Medicine for the Nova Scotia Health Authority. She is a co-founder and co-chair of Doctors for Decriminalization (@docs4decrim), a national coalition of physicians advocating for health-centred drug and substance policy, and she provides medical care through the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia for women who have experienced incarceration, and through Mobile Outreach Street Health.



PETRA SCHULZ

Petra Schulz is one of the three founding directors of Moms Stop The Harm. They started the organization together in May of 2016 after the three women from Edmonton connected with a common bond; the loss of their sons.

Petra lost her youngest child Danny to an accidental fentanyl overdose in 2014, a result of our nation's failed drug policy.

Petra represents families with lived experience in Health Canada and CCSA advisory committees. She has been a speaker for TedX at MacEwan University, at conferences, community meetings, professional organizations, universities, and all government levels. She contributed to the anti-stigma campaign, "See-Beyond" and a research project on mother's advocacy.





Safe Supply & Decriminalization Of Drug Use: A Panel Talk Saving Lives Using Evidence

PETRA SCHULZ

MOMS STOP THE HARM

Why we share our stories

Drug policy is based morals societal standards and beliefs, not evidence.

Stigma makes it hard for people to speak out., but many do

- CAPUD, Crackdown Podcast, VANDU, BCYukon, HANDUP
- MSTH, FAR, FSDP (US), Anyone's Child (UK) CSSDP

Families and individuals can help change the narrative by evoking empathy in the public, politicians, policy makers

Our painful stories open hearts and opening hearts leads to opening minds.





Danny Schulz 1989 – 2014

The myth of the drug bust!

There is more where this came from but it will likely be less safe

Drug seizures don't save lives

Drug seizures make the supply more deadly

The war on drugs is a war on the people we love. It needs to end!

Local News / Crime

ALERT dismantles fentanyl superlab taking more than \$300M in drugs and precursors, biggest similar seizure to date

Lauren Boothby

Sep 02, 2021 • September 2, 2021 • 2 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



ALERT has dismantled a fentanyl superlab, seizing more than 31 kilograms of fentanyl and precursors along with 7,600 kilograms of chemicals used in fentanyl production. ALERT photo



Crime



Edmonton man sentenced to four years in first case of charges tied to fentanyl death

Dylan Short

Jul 24, 2019 • July 24, 2019 • 3 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



Helen Yarmey and George Yarmey, the parents of Jordan Yarmey, speak to reporters after their son was sentenced on Wednesday, July 24, 2019, to four years in prison for trafficking and criminal negligence causing death related to the fentanyl overdose death of 33-year-old Szymon Kalich. They spoke about the devastating impact of fentanyl on both families. PHOTO BY DYLAN SHORT /Postmedia

Jordan's Story

British Columbia

Lawsuit filed in B.C. court argues criminalization of drugs is a charter violation



Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs claims federal laws force drug users into toxic illicit market

Brenna Owen - The Canadian Press • Posted: Sep 02, 2021 9:21 PM PT | Last Updated: September 2



Pairs of shoes representing lives lost to drug poisoning hang on the Burrard Street Bridge in Vancouver. More than 21,000 people died of drug overdoses in Canada between 2016 and 2020. (Ben Naim/CBC)

41 comments

This Overdose Awareness Day, Activists Will Again Hand Out Safe Drugs

After tracking 900 drug users during three earlier events, advocates say their 'compassion club' model has resulted in zero overdoses.

Jen St. Denis, 24 Aug 2021 | TheYee.ca
Jen St. Denis is The Yee's Downtown Eastside reporter. Find her on Twitter @JenStDen.

605 views | Social media icons | JOIN | 14 Comments



A safe supply of free drugs will be given out during an event organized by the Drug User Liberation Front in Vancouver and cities across the province next Tuesday. Photo by Maggie MacPherson.

Politics / Local News



Legal challenge launched against Alberta government over changes to supervised consumption sites

Anna Junker
Aug 20, 2021 • August 20, 2021 • 3 minute read • 5 Comments



A needle drop box outside the safe consumption site at the Sheldon Chumir Centre in Calgary's beltline was photographed on Tuesday January 29, 2019. PHOTO BY GAVIN YOUNG / Postmedia

No more Ms. Nice Mom -
Moms are taking radical action

MSTH Position on Safe Supply and Decriminalization

Respect for human rights of people who use substances

Access to a safe supply of pharmaceutical alternatives to toxic street drugs

Ultimately legal regulation of all substances based on harms and benefits

Decriminalization of people who possess illicit substances for personal use

No fines, alternative sanctions, forced treatment or thresholds

Inclusion of aspects of sharing “necessity based trafficking”

I am so glad you are here!

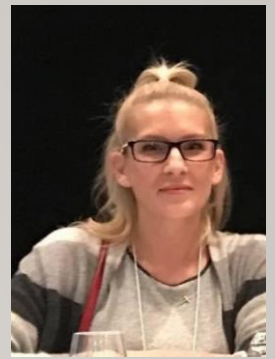
Moms Stop The Harm

Website www.momstoptheharm.com

Social media @momstoptheharm



NATASHA TOUESNARD



Natasha Touesnard is the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of People who Use Drugs. Natasha believes in the organizations' mission and strives to reduce oppressive societal conditions people who use drugs face by raising their voices throughout the policymaking process. Prior to this role, she was the Site Coordinator and lead Case Manager at the Open Door Clinic, family practice and opioid agonist treatment clinic located in Dartmouth, NS.

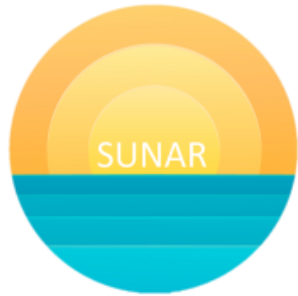
Natasha was among several local people who use(d) drugs who formed the first drug user group in the Atlantic provinces. The Halifax Area Network of Drug Using People (HANDUP) was created through the member's collective vision, and she held the role of Project Coordinator for a number of years. She holds several volunteer positions where she is able to share her expertise and advocate for the health, and human rights of people who use drugs. Most notably Natasha was a Canadian Delegate at the United Nations 62nd Session Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2019.

Natasha lives by the guiding principle of "Nothing About Us Without Us" is a strong proponent of harm reduction and advocates for the respect of and holds a commitment to people who use illegal drugs, who face insurmountable challenges due to drug prohibition-based laws and policies.

Fireside chat Q&A with the Panelists



Thank You!



All SUNAR members & key partner sites



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DALHOUSIE
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DOCTORS FOR
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Click on that link to open the survey in your browser.

Don't forget to click "done"!

Thanks again,

