



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Decriminalization: The Facts

What you need to know

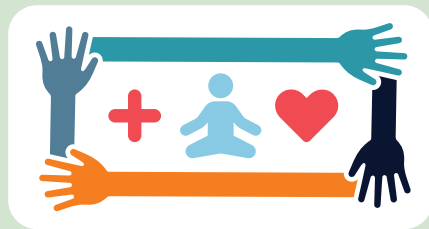
Beginning on Jan. 31, 2023, **possession of small amounts of certain illegal drugs will be decriminalized** in British Columbia. There is a lot of misinformation about what drug decriminalization is and what it isn't. Here are some facts.

What is Decriminalization?

Applies to adults 18+	Includes opioids (heroin and fentanyl), cocaine (powder or crack), methamphetamine (meth) and MDMA (ecstasy)	NO arrests or seizures for personal possession under the threshold
Police will provide resource cards with information on supports and will make voluntary referrals	2.5g cumulative threshold with police discretion above	NO fines, tickets or other administrative sanctions
Culturally safe approaches for Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations living in rural/remote areas	Robust police training and monitoring and evaluation framework	NO mandatory treatment or diversion

What WILL decriminalization do?

- ✓ Reduce stigma, shame and fear. People who are using drugs need support and not judgment.
- ✓ Decriminalization will allow people to be more open about their use and help to ensure they are connected and cared for. This care and connection can support open conversations on options for healing.
- ✓ Reduce the risk of toxic drug poisoning and save lives and relationships.
- ✓ There will be continued engagement with communities about how decriminalization will be implemented at home.
- ✓ Make substance use and the toxic drug crisis a public health issue and not a criminal one. This means there will be no criminal record with the associated stigma and legal issues it creates when trying to establish a future life.



What WON'T decriminalization do?

- ✗ Enable substance use – without decriminalization people will still use but in an unsafe and unsupported way.
- ✗ Legalize substances – trafficking and producing stays illegal.
- ✗ Override First Nations self-determination – Nations will still be able to decide what works for them on their own land.

Visit our Decriminalization Q&A to learn more

www.fnha.ca/harmreduction



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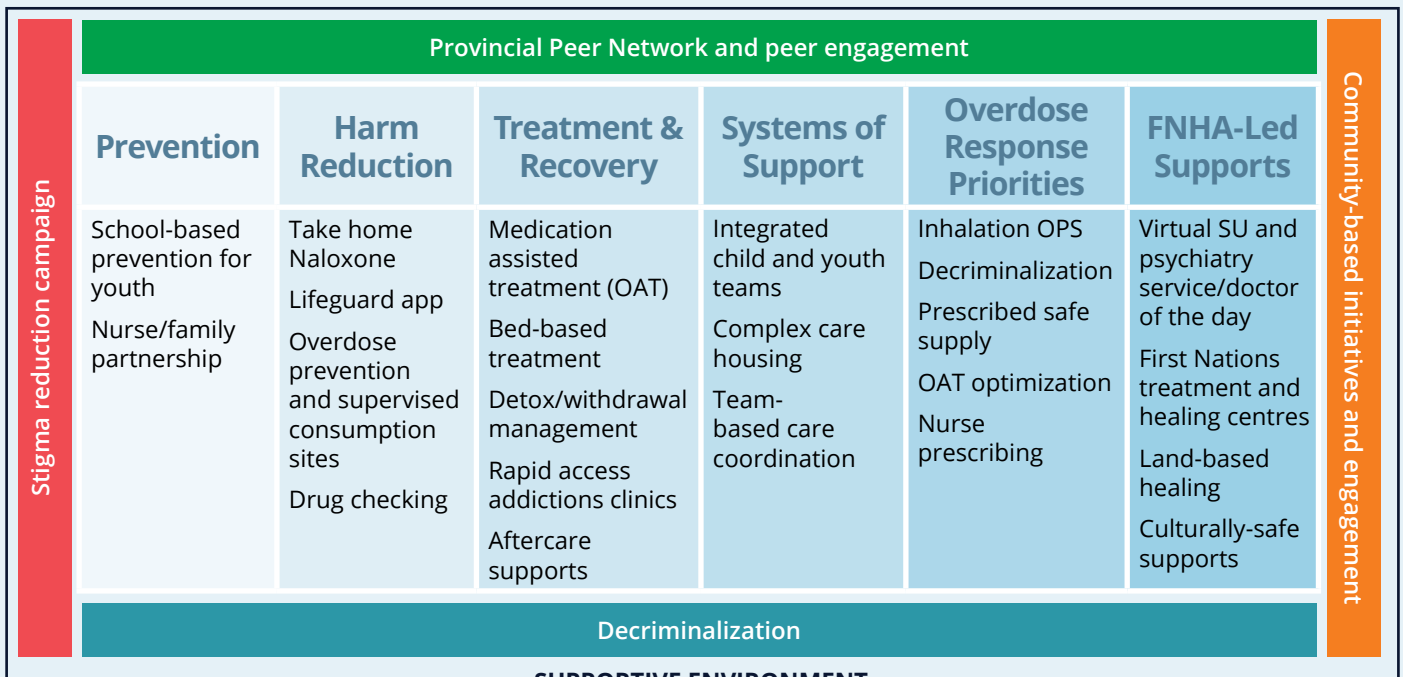
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How will decriminalization help?

Decriminalization alone won't solve the toxic drug crisis, but together with harm reduction strategies, treatment and recovery options, overdose prevention, community-based initiatives, and systems of support, decriminalization will help save lives and relationships.

Decriminalization is an important part of a larger response to the toxic drug crisis.

Building a System of Care: Our initiatives span the continuum



Decriminalization is for and by people who use substances

The BC government consulted with people who use drugs, their advocates and their loved ones to understand their needs and concerns because they are the people most impacted by the toxic drug crisis. Decriminalization didn't come into effect because of government-to-government engagement at any level.

How is the FNHA addressing the toxic drug crisis?

The FNHA's framework for action for addressing the toxic drug crisis is to support people on their healing journeys, create an accessible range of treatment options, keep people safer while using, and prevent people who experience drug poisoning from dying.

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