

STANDING in A FIELD NAKED

IMPROVING HARM REDUCTION
AT MANITOBA FESTIVALS

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N** MANITOBA
HARM REDUCTION
NETWORK



WE DID A SURVEY TO FIND OUT WHAT PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS AT MANITOBA FESTIVALS NEED TO BE SAFE, AND THIS IS A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

FOR MORE INFO OR THE COMPLETE REPORT CONTACT US OR VISIT WWW.MHRN.CA

WHAT RECREATIONAL DRUGS DO YOU USE?

THE MOST COMMONLY USED SUBSTANCE WAS CANNABIS: 86% of respondents reported using cannabis at festivals. The second most commonly used substance was alcohol at 81.3%. 79% of respondents reported using Ecstasy/MDMA, making ecstasy use as common as drinking alcohol. Hallucinogens were the next most commonly used substances with mushrooms being used by 75% of respondents and acid (LSD) being used by 57% of respondents. Other commonly used drugs included powder cocaine, nitrous, and ketamine. Other substances mentioned included amphetamine/speed, benzodiazepines and GHB, and to a lesser extent methamphetamine, opiates, crack cocaine, whippets, and research chemicals.



WOULD YOU USE THIS SERVICE?

MOST RESPONDENTS REPORTED THEY WOULD ACCESS DRUG CHECKING, food and water distribution, a drug information board, overdose response workshops. People also reported they would access resources such as information and naloxone distribution. Participants were offered a choice between types of chill zones (monitored, unmonitored, and consumption) and most would access a chill zone monitored by health volunteers. The need for safer spaces was reinforced with 71 respondents indicating they would access a safer space for women, non-binary, and trans folks, and 39 reporting they would access a safer space for people of colour.



RECOMMENDATIONS

DESTIGMATIZING: Acknowledge that people use drugs at your festival! By acknowledging that people use drugs at your festival you will be making it safer for them to seek help, access services and have a safe and fun festival.

DRUG CHECKING: Provide drug checking at your festival! Partner with a volunteer organization like Project Safe Audience or train volunteers knowledgeable in drug use to provide testing.

DRUG INFO BOARD: Facilitate the use of an info board people can use to share information about drugs they buy at the festival.

SUPPLIES: Provide supplies to help keep people safe. Harm reduction supplies, information, and free and accessible water and shelter are all important.

CHILL ZONES/RECOVERY AREAS: Provide a comprehensive safe space for people recovering from drug use monitored by health volunteers and people with experience in drug use. At the minimum this space should be comfortable, beautiful, calm, and have access to basic resources.

SUPPORT SAFER SPACES: Support safer spaces for other marginalized groups such as women, non-binary, and trans people and people of colour. Connect with orgs doing this kind of work and people who belong to these groups to design and run the space.

WORKSHOPS: Provide workshops on overdose, safer drug use and harm reduction to staff and volunteers. Additionally, arrange to offer these workshops to attendees at your harm reduction area!

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FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS:

“PEOPLE USE DRUGS! DRUGS ARE FUN!”

“CREATE POLICIES THAT ARE INFORMED BY DRUG USERS, THAT KEEP FESTIVAL GOERS SAFE AND DESTIGMATIZE DRUG USE.”

“GET RID OF THE POLICE! AN OVERWHELMING POLICE PRESENCE DOES NOT MAKE PEOPLE FEEL SAFER. POLICE HEIGHTEN ANXIETY, TENSION, AND ESCALATE SITUATIONS THAT HARM REDUCTION AND CRISIS VOLUNTEERS ARE TRAINED TO MANAGE.”

“I KNEW THE HARM REDUCTION SPACES WERE SAFE PLACES TO GO WHEN I WAS FEELING OVERWHELMED AND NOT FUNCTIONING WELL, THE VOLUNTEERS HAVE MOSTLY BEEN KNOWLEDGEABLE, NON-JUDGEMENTAL AND GREAT AT CREATING A CALM NON-STIMULATING SPACE TO REST. HAVING FOLKS WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT DRUG INTERACTIONS PROVIDING INFORMATION HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL. THE DRUG INFORMATION SHARING BOARDS HAVE BEEN GREAT FOR SHARING INFORMATION ON THE SUPPLY / ACCESSING SAFE SUPPLY. SAFER SEX AND SAFER DRUG USE SUPPLIES HAVE BEEN HELPFUL.”

“HARM REDUCTION IS REALLY LACKING AT MANITOBA FESTIVALS, THERE'S BARELY ANYTHING. BC KNOWS WHAT'S UP, THEY ARE SO FAR ADVANCED: DRUG TESTING AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION OF WHAT IS FOUND IN THE DRUGS, DRUG COUNSELLING, CHILL ZONE AND SAFE SPACES - THAT YOU ACTUALLY WANT TO HANG OUT IN.”

