

Harm Reduction Client Survey 2023: Hesitance in Accessing Services

Since 2012, the BC Centre for Disease Control has asked people who use substances about their health and access to harm reduction and healthcare services. Between December 2023 and Mar 2024, we asked participants why they might hesitate to access health and social services.

British Columbia

Who took part?

 **20** Communities

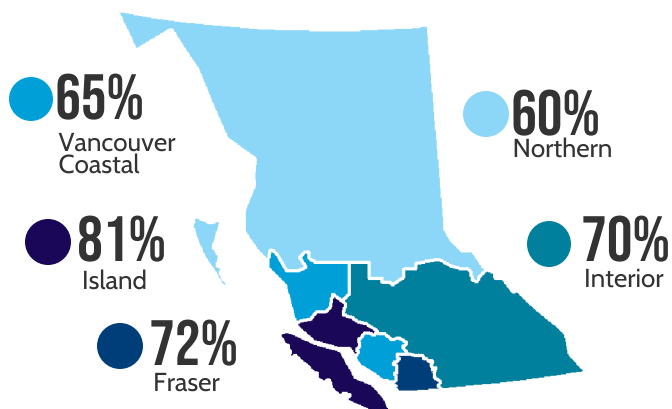
 **23** Sites

 **433** Participants

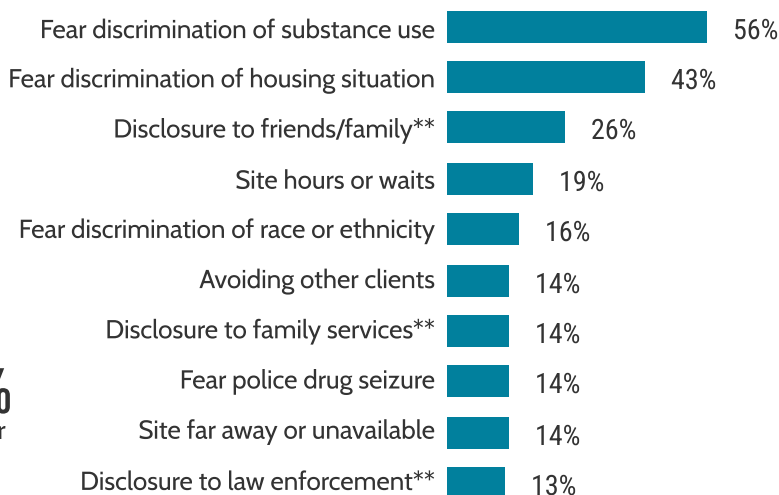
 **5** Health Authorities

Barriers

69% of respondents identified at least one barrier to accessing services across three questions.



Barriers reported:



** General worry about these people finding out about substance use, not specifically as the client of a service

Hesitance to use public services and spaces

I worry about calling 9-1-1 when someone has an overdose

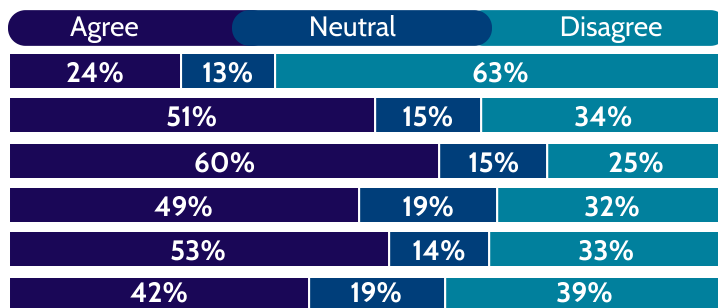
I do not want to go to the emergency department

I feel worried about interacting with law enforcement

I feel welcome in outdoor public spaces

I feel welcome using public services

I feel welcome at local businesses



Key takeaways



Fear of discrimination from providers, disclosure to friends/family and site/service availability were the most common barriers to accessing services.



Efforts to reduce social and structural barriers over an extended period may be required to reduce hesitance to access services.

Participation was limited to people who access harm reduction sites, and results are therefore not representative of all people who use substances in BC. As of 2022, this project is made possible with funding from the Ministry of Health.

toward
THE heart.com
BCCDC HARM REDUCTION SERVICES

BC Centre for Disease Control