



Advocacy at Casey House – Glossary of key terms

Affordable Housing

In Canada, housing is considered “affordable” if it costs less than 30% of a household’s before-tax income. ([Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](#))

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction refers to the evidence-based policies, programs and practices that aim to minimize the negative impacts of drug use, and focuses on working with people without judgment or requiring that they stop using drugs in order to receive support. (Adapted from [Harm Reduction International](#))

Naloxone

Naloxone (NARCAN®) is a drug that prevents or reverses the effects of opioids, including respiratory depression, sedation, and hypotension. It can be used in emergency situations to reduce opioid overdose deaths. Take-home naloxone kits are available for free at most pharmacies. (Adapted from [Health Canada](#))

Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT/iOAT)

Opioid agonist therapy provides prescription access to long-acting opioids to reduce symptoms of opiate withdrawal. There are two forms of this therapy: oral (OAT) and injectable (iOAT). Several medications can be used as OAT in Canada, including methadone, buprenorphine, hydromorphone and prescription heroin (where available). iOAT is recommended for individuals with opioid dependence who have not responded to oral treatment. (Adapted from [CATIE](#))

Safer Drug Use Supplies

Safer drug use supplies include sterile equipment for injection and inhalation, such as needles, syringes, alcohol swabs, bowl and stem pipes, and sterile water. Distributing clean supplies for injecting and inhaling substances reduces infectious disease transmission, health complications, and other injuries associated with substance use.

Safer Supply

Safer supply refers to a regulated supply of pharmaceutical grade drugs that traditionally have only been accessible through the illicit drug market. This includes drugs that are currently illegal, such as heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamines and MDMA. There are different models for accessing safer supply in Canada, the most common of which is by prescription from a healthcare provider. (Adapted from [CATIE](#))



Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health refer to a specific group of social and economic factors that influence health. These relate to an individual's place in society, such as income, education or employment. Experiences of discrimination, racism and historical trauma are also important social determinants of health, particularly for populations such as Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQ and Black Canadians. (Adapted from [Health Canada](#))

Supervised Consumption Services (SCS)

Supervised consumption services (SCS) are health services that provide a space where people consume drugs and are monitored by staff who can provide education on harm reduction and emergency medical care for an overdose. SCS also distribute sterile drug use equipment and can act as a pathway to other health services. (Adapted from [WHY SCS](#)).

Supportive Housing

Supportive housing is long-term affordable housing that is coupled with the provision of ongoing social services, designed to assist people with basic care needs, such as those with mental health and substance use challenges. (Adapted from [Canadian Mental Health Association](#))

Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care accepts and understands the impact of trauma on one's health and well-being; provides an opportunity for people to express their needs and experiences; and builds on the inherent strength of trauma survivors. Providing trauma-informed care requires service providers cultivate safety in every interaction, reflect on their own beliefs and biases, and exercise compassion while providing care. (Adapted from Casey House's Harm Reduction Capacity Building webinar series)