



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction



**ISSUES of
SUBSTANCE**

CCSA's National Conference

Halifax

NOVEMBER 17-19, 2025
NOVA SCOTIA

A Guidebook to Services and Supports





This document was published by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA).
Suggested citation: Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. 2025. *CCSA's Issues of Substance 2025: A guidebook to services and supports*. Ottawa, Ont.: Author.

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This document can also be downloaded as a PDF at ccsa.ca.

Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre :

Questions de substance 2025 du CCDUS : guide sur les services et les soutiens

ISBN 978-1-77871-246-3



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Acknowledgements

We begin by acknowledging that we are gathered here in Halifax, Nova Scotia, operating in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.

Being present on this land today is not just a matter of geography; it is an invitation to reflect on the history of this place, the resilience of the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples, and our responsibilities as treaty people. To be here is to recognize both the gifts and the obligations that come with living and working on traditional lands: to listen deeply, to act with respect, and to contribute to a future grounded in equity and reconciliation.



Nova Scotia - Bay of Fundy - 1985

Welcome

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) is excited to host its 2025 [Issues of Substance](#) conference in Halifax from November 17 to 19!

We hope you'll find the conference an engaging experience, that you'll share your expertise and make meaningful connections with people from across Canada who share an interest in learning about substance use health.

This guidebook is intended as a resource for people with lived and living experience of substance use. It includes information about local resources, harm-reduction services, and supports that will be available at the conference centre and in the community. It was inspired by feedback from people with lived and living expertise, and other resources created by and for people with lived and living experience of substance use.

Thank You

We thank and acknowledge the people with lived and living experience of substance use who contributed their time and expertise to provide advice and direction on how to support the physical and psychological safety of conference attendees. Their contributions have helped CCSA understand the Halifax substance use health context as well as the broader systemic barriers to providing harm reduction and support services to people who use substances.

While we were not able to implement all the recommendations brought forward by our partners, this was an invaluable learning opportunity to ensure Issues of Substance and CCSA continue to grow as a welcoming and supportive environment for all people across the substance use health spectrum.

Thank you to the many individuals at Mainline Harm Reduction Services, Nova Scotia Health and Moms Stop the Harm for their efforts, especially in helping with our Lost Loved Ones Memorial and for supporting us in integrating a Halifax-informed and specific approach at the conference.

Substance Use Health Considerations

Like much of Canada, Halifax has an unpredictable drug supply. Fentanyl, benzodiazepines and xylazine are increasingly found in unregulated drugs. Please consider testing your supply before using. If you're feeling particularly at risk, unwell or uncertain, travelling to Halifax may not be the best option. If so, please email us at ios@ccsa.ca to discuss the situation as there may be other options for us to partner and collaborate.

Health and Safety Considerations

1. **Naloxone:** Free naloxone kits are widely available in Halifax, such as the Shoppers Drug Mart at 5524 Spring Garden Rd, Halifax, Lawtons Drugs at 5201 Duke St, Halifax, and can also be acquired at the conference at the Harm Reduction room. This room will be staffed with an outreach worker to assist you. Carry a naloxone kit, even if you're not using opioids — overdoses can happen unpredictably due to contaminated drug supply.
2. **Drug checking services:** Halifax does not offer drug testing at any specific sites, however, test strips for drug checking can be acquired at Mainline Harm Reduction at 5367 Cogswell St, Halifax, or on site at the Harm Reduction room located at the conference. Additionally, Nova Scotia drug alerts can be found here: [DRUG ALERTS - Nova Scotia Take Home Naloxone Program](#).
3. **Supervised consumption services (SCS):** Direction 180 operates a mobile health van and provides support to people who use drugs. Halifax doesn't have fixed SCS, but harm reduction organizations can direct you to safe-use supports.
4. **Never use alone:** If you can't use with someone, use services like the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) at 1-888-688-6677.



Conference Information

The Issues of Substance conference will take place at the [Halifax Convention Centre](#) at 1650 Argyle St, Halifax, NS B3J 0E6 902-421-1302. The Halifax Convention Centre is [Rick Hansen certified](#), ensuring accessibility for all.

The registration and information desk is on the Fifth Level of the Convention Centre. Staff will be available during the following hours:

Sunday, November 16: 5–7:30 p.m.

Monday, November 17: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Tuesday, November 18: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Wednesday, November 19: 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Check the full conference program: IssuesOfSubstance.ca/conference-program

Hotel Information

[Sutton Place Hotel Halifax](#)

1700 Grafton Street
902-932-7548
Check in: 3 p.m.
Check out: 12 p.m.

[Cambridge Suite Hotel Halifax](#)

1583 Brunswick Street
902-420-0555

[Four Points by Sheraton Halifax](#)

1496 Hollis Street
902-423-4444

[Prince George Hotel Halifax](#)

1725 Market Street
902-425-1986
Check in: 4 p.m.
Check out: 12 p.m.

[The Hollis Halifax by Hilton Doubletree](#)

1649 Hollis Street
902-429-7233

The hotels offer many amenities, including on-site restaurants and free internet access. For more information on CCSA Issues of Substance 2025 room blocks, visit: issuesofsubstance.ca/accommodation

Smoking policy: Smoking is not permitted in the hotels. There are designated smoking areas outside the hotels for guests.

Photo ID: The hotels require guests to show photo ID and provide a credit card number at check in. If this poses any difficulties, please email ios-info@ccsa.ca.

Getting to Your Hotel from the Airport

By public bus:

- **Route:** Use the Halifax Transit 320 Regional Express bus.
- **Stops:** The bus runs between Halifax Stanfield Airport and downtown Halifax.
- **Fare:** A one-way fare costs \$4.75 (exact change is required).
- **Luggage:** The route allows for passenger baggage.

By shuttle:

- **Services:** Look for shuttle services like Maritime Bus, which connects the airport to downtown Halifax.
- **Booking:** You can pre-purchase tickets online or at the Ground Transportation Booth at the airport for Maritime Bus.
- **Pick-up Location:** Maritime Bus has a glass bus shelter to the right of the Arrivals Exit.

By taxi and rideshare services:

- You can hail taxis from various companies or use rideshare apps like Uber.



➤ On-site Supports

A variety of services and supports will be available at the conference centre. (Please refer to the map below.) All counsellors and support providers will have access to a quiet space should you wish to have a private conversation.

Room 504

A licensed bilingual counsellor will be available to provide support to anyone who chooses to drop in during conference hours.

Room 505

This space will have harm reduction supplies, naloxone kits and an outreach worker who can provide information about local resources and off-site, community-based services and supports.

Room 606

Supports will be available in this space for residential school survivors, their families and people impacted by intergenerational trauma. Staff from the [Resolution Health Support Program](#) will be present to offer a safe, respectful environment to share, listen and talk. Trauma-informed support staff will also be available to provide emotional and cultural care throughout the conference.

Room 614

This space will have information about local resources and community-based services and supports.

Summit Level Floor Plan



Well-being Supports

Therapy Dogs

St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog program in Halifax will provide sessions with their dogs during afternoon breaks, Room 503.

Guided Meditation

During morning breaks on Monday, November 17 and Tuesday, November 18, Rand Teed will be facilitating Guided Meditation, Room 503.

Recovery Meetings

- Healing Hearts Meeting: Monday, November 17 at 5 p.m., Room 614, facilitated by Antoinette Gravel-Ouellette
- SMART Recovery Meeting: Tuesday, November 18 at 5 p.m., Room 614, facilitated by Antoinette Gravel-Ouellette
- “Friends of Bill W.” Breakfast Meeting: Tuesday, November 18 at 8 a.m., Room 615, (please bring your breakfast from the buffet)

Naloxone

Naloxone kits will be available at the registration desk and in Room 505. You don’t need ID or a health card to get a naloxone kit at the conference.

Free naloxone kits are widely available in Halifax, such as the Shoppers Drug Mart at 5524 Spring Garden Rd, Halifax and Lawtons Drugs at 5201 Duke St, Halifax. Carry one, even if you’re not using opioids — overdoses can happen at any time due to the unpredictable drug supply.

Transportation Supports

Taxi chits will be available to individuals who need support accessing community services and supports, such as SCS, overdose prevention sites, and community resources. Taxi chits are available from CCSA staff at the registration desk and Rooms 505 and 614.

Drug Toxicity

The supply of substances in Halifax can be unpredictable.

If you use substances, please be very careful and note that even smoking drugs has been linked to an increasing number of drug toxicity deaths. Drug harm alerts can be found via Nova Scotia Health Harm Reduction Resources: [Harm Reduction | Nova Scotia Health](#).

Please take care of yourself and those around you.

Here are some important tips and resources:

- Never use substances alone.
- Carry naloxone and know how to use it. Learn more at [Naloxone Saves Lives](#).
- [Download the Lifeguard Digital Health app](#), which provides a variety of health-related supports including drug toxicity response.
- ReFix Overdose Prevention Site is located at 2151 Gottingen Street, Halifax. ReFix is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.: [https://www.direction180.ca/refix#:~:text=ReFix%20is%20the%20first%20Overdose,180%20\(Halifax%2C%20NS\)](https://www.direction180.ca/refix#:~:text=ReFix%20is%20the%20first%20Overdose,180%20(Halifax%2C%20NS)).



Phone and Support Lines

Call toll-free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (unless otherwise noted)

- **National Overdose Response Services (NORS)** virtual safer consumption hotline: 1-888-688-NORS (1-888-688-6677)
- **Suicide crisis line** serving people at risk for suicide: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)
- **310 Mental Health Support:** 310-6789 (no area code needed)
- **KUU-US Crisis Line Society** serving First Nations, Métis and Inuit: 1-800-588-8717
- **Hope for Wellness Helpline** serving Indigenous people: 1-855-242-3310
- **Trans Lifeline hotline** serving trans people in crisis: 1-877-330-6366
- **Crisis Centre Chat** 12 p.m. to 1 a.m., Pacific standard time: 1-800-721-0066
- **Nova Scotia Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line:** 1-888-429-8167

➤ Offsite and Virtual Supports

Rapid Access and Stabilization Program (RASP) - [RASP \(Rapid Access and Stabilization Program\)](#)
[Nova Scotia Mental Health and Addictions](#)

1. **[FREE Virtual Addiction Counselling | Canadian Addiction Counsellors Certification Federation](#)**.
1) Register an account; 2) Select a counsellor; 3) Schedule your appointment at 1-855-922-1122
[RASP \(Rapid Access and Stabilization Program\) | Nova Scotia Mental Health and Addictions](#)
2. **Halifax Recovery Support Centre** (Fenwick Street)
[New Centre for Addictions Care in Halifax | Government of Nova Scotia News Releases](#)

An outpatient, drop-in (or appointment-based) centre staffed by doctors, nurses, social workers and peer supporters. Services include:

- In-person assessments
- Harm-reduction strategies
- Outpatient withdrawal support
- Group programming and relapse prevention
- Links to inpatient treatment and community resources

Location and hours:

- 5633 Fenwick St, Halifax.
 - Open Monday–Saturday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; call 902-429-4229 to confirm
3. **ReFix Overdose Prevention Site** is located at 2151 Gottingen Street, Halifax. ReFix is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.: [https://www.direction180.ca/refix#:~:text=ReFix%20is%20the%20first%20Overdose,180%20\(Halifax%2C%20NS\)](https://www.direction180.ca/refix#:~:text=ReFix%20is%20the%20first%20Overdose,180%20(Halifax%2C%20NS)).

4. Self-referral Supports:

[Halifax Substance User Network – Halifax SUN](#)

[Inpatient Treatment Program](#) (Withdrawal Management)

[Mental Health and Addictions Services](#) (NS Health)

[Salvation Army Centre for Hope & Anchorage Program](#)

[2 Denarii Society](#)

[Freedom Foundation](#)

[Talbot House](#)

[Direction 180](#)

[Narcotics Anonymous](#)

[Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

[Cocaine Anonymous](#)

[AI-Anon](#)

[Nar-Anon](#)

[NADACA](#) (Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselling Associate of Nova Scotia)

5. Self-Management and Recovery Tools: [SMART Recovery Meetings](#);
Community Addictions Peer Support Association: [Peer Support Meetings 2025 - CAPSA](#)

Abstinence-Based Services

Cocaine Anonymous

Virtual and in-person meetings

[Cocaine Anonymous –Halifax](#)

Narcotics Anonymous

Virtual and in-person meetings

[Narcotics Anonymous – Halifax Area](#)

Alcoholics Anonymous

Virtual and in-person meetings

[Alcoholics Anonymous – Meetings in Halifax](#)



Co-ordinating Prescriptions

If you take medication and need to co-ordinate a prescription, please plan ahead, especially if you're coming from out of province. For example, you may consider asking your doctor for take-home doses (carries) for opioid agonist therapy (OAT). If you need a letter indicating when you will be in Halifax, CCSA is happy to provide one. Please email ios-info@ccsa.ca.

If you are arriving from within Nova Scotia

You can co-ordinate the prescription transfer between your usual pharmacy and the pharmacy you will use while at the conference. For detailed instructions on how to do this, please refer to the appendix.

If you are arriving from out of province

1. Choose a pharmacy where you will go to pick up your prescription. Refer to the list of pharmacies in the next section.
2. Go to the pharmacy shortly after you arrive and bring the following items:
 - Photo ID (for example, health card, provincial ID, driver's licence)
 - The name of your health insurance benefits provider, if you have one, and your policy number (bring your card if you have one)
 - Prescription label
 - Name and contact information of the pharmacy you normally go to

If you are coming from out of province and receive social assistance

You will need to pay cash for the medication and a pharmacy dispensing fee.

Most social assistance programs will reimburse the cost with a receipt. Please keep these with you.

Local Pharmacies

The pharmacies listed are those closest to the Halifax Conference Centre and downtown hotels.

CCSA does not endorse any of the pharmacies listed.

Fertility Pharmacy Services Ltd

Offers in-store shopping, pick up and delivery, naloxone training and distribution.
1535 Dresden Row, Halifax, NS B3J 3T1
Open Mondays to Fridays, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
902-405-8822

Lawtons Drugs Lord Nelson

Offers in-store shopping, pick-up and delivery, naloxone training and distribution.
5665 Spring Garden Rd, Halifax, NS B3J 1G9
Open Monday to Saturday, 9 a.m.–9 p.m.
Sundays, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
902-422-9686

Lawtons Drugs Scotia Square

Offers in-store shopping, pick-up and delivery, naloxone training and distribution.
Waterfront Centre
5201 Duke St, Halifax, NS B3J 1N9
Open Mondays to Saturday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m.
902-429-5436

Nova Pharmacy

Offers in-store shopping.
6199 Coburg Rd, Halifax, NS B3H 1Z8
Open daily, 9 a.m.–10 p.m.
902-423-8000

➤ Things to Do in Downtown Halifax!

You can use the Halifax Transit website (Bus and Ferries) to plan your trip. For more information, visit [Halifax Bus and Ferry](#).

Visit Halifax's Historic Waterfront

The Halifax Waterfront is a bustling hotspot in the city. With one of the world's longest urban boardwalks spanning the length of the waterfront, 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) from Pier 21 at the Halifax Seaport. Visit [Halifax Historic Waterfront](#).

Halifax Citadel National Historic Site

It's not an exaggeration to say Halifax, a city on the sea, owes its existence to the Citadel. It was the large hill overlooking the easily defended harbour below that led the British military to found the town there in 1749, visit [Halifax Citadel National Historic Site](#).

5 Must-Visit Museums in Halifax

One of Halifax's local museums are always a great option for indoor fun, visit [5 Must-Visit Museums in Halifax](#).

For more ideas, visit [Discover Halifax](#).

➤ Contact

We appreciate you attending our conference! We aim for it to be a welcoming and valuable experience for you. If you have any further comments or questions, please reach out to us at ios-info@ccsa.ca.



Appendix

Transferring a Prescription from Within Nova Scotia

1. Call the pharmacy you want to transfer your prescription to.
2. Give them your full name as it appears on your health card.
3. Explain that you are attending a conference in Halifax and provide the dates you'll be there.
4. Ask that your daily prescriptions be transferred to the pharmacy for the dates you'll be in Halifax and then transferred back.
5. Give them the name and address of your usual pharmacy and the name of your pharmacist.
6. Request that this is completed for yourself or the person on whose behalf you're calling and ask them to call you the day before the conference to confirm.
7. Ask the Halifax pharmacy to ensure it has the necessary stock of medications for your prescriptions to be filled on those days.
8. Ask them what time you should go to the pharmacy on the date you wish to pick up your prescription, so you can plan your activities around it and confirm that you'll bring ID with you.

References

British Columbia Centre on Substance Use. (2023). *The challenge of change: Conference guide for people with lived or living experience of substance use*. Vancouver, B.C.: Author.

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