



CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND
PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE
COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTHÉRAPIE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Addictions Awareness Week 2020: Dealing with Addiction Amid a Global Pandemic

OTTAWA (November 23, 2020) – This week marks National Addictions Awareness Week (NAAW), a campaign looking to present Canadians with ways to reassess the way they think about substance use disorders and people who use drugs, and the impact addictions have on those directly impacted by addictions, and their loved ones. The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) supports this initiative and to increase access to mental health and substance abuse services across the country for all Canadians.

NAAW hopes to highlight solutions to help address the harms related to substance use, and provide an opportunity for Canadians to learn more about prevention and talk openly about recovery and solutions.

Addiction is a complex process where problematic patterns of substance use or behaviours become extreme and interfere with one's life. In Canada, it is estimated that approximately 21% of the population, or 6 million Canadians, will meet the criteria for addiction in their lifetime. Most Canadians are impacted by addiction either directly or indirectly through a loved one who is struggling.

With the additional challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing an increase in substance abuse and associated deaths in Canada. According to a survey by Nanos Research, many Canadians say their mental health is worse than before COVID-19, and have reported an increase in alcohol consumption. COVID-19 has negatively impacted the mental health of Canadians and led to increased consumption of addictive substances, and has simultaneously increased isolation and reduced access to support, treatment, harm reduction services.

"CCPA believes that mental health, including addiction, needs to be treated as a health priority," said CCPA President Jenny Rowett. "As Canadians adjust their lifestyles to deal with COVID-19, we need to continue to advocate prioritizing mental health and better access to services for Canadians."

The theme of this year's NAAW is 'Change Begins with Me.' Social media is the main platform for the campaign to ensure Canadians stay safe during the pandemic. Supporters of the initiative can either share information or be an ambassador for change to be a part of the campaign.

#ChangeBeginsWithMe, #NAAW

Although alcohol is the most common substance, Canada is also in the midst of an opioid crisis. One of the multiple factors that this crisis is a result of is stigma towards substance abuse disorders. CCPA strongly supports NAAW's goal to change the stigmatizing culture in our country.

"Canadians suffering from addictions and struggling with mental health illnesses need help, and those who love and support these individuals also need support. We want to make sure they can get the help they need, when they need it," said CCPA President-Elect Kathy Offet-Gartner. "Counsellors and



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psychotherapists across the country have transitioned to online platforms, and are ready to provide their services.”

The services of counsellors and psychotherapists are cost-effective and are complementary to the work of other service providers. To learn more or find a counsellor near you, please visit the CCPA directory of Canadian Certified Counsellors across Canada at <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/>.

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[The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association \(CCPA\)](#) is a national bilingual association providing professional counsellors and psychotherapists with access to exclusive educational programs, certification, professional development and direct contact with professional peers and specialty groups. CCPA promotes the profession and its contribution to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians.

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