

OPIOID PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Responses from individuals who have expertise related to the field of substance use disorder to the question: “If there was one thing you wish that could be done to change this health crisis, what would it be?”

Answer: “Access to Care”.

Sue Van Slooten, Co-chair of LEAN (Lived Experience Advisory Network) and Community Navigator of The Table.

Answer: “As a medium to long term solution, I advocate embracing prevention. This should be done as a complement to harm reduction, treatment and justice in a comprehensive strategy.”

David Somppi, Chair, Planet Youth Lanark County and Chair, Carleton Place Municipal Drug Strategy Committee.

Answer: “If there was one thing I could change in this public health crisis, it would be an increased focus on harm reduction at home. In my opinion, we do not see enough to strategies being discussed aimed specifically at parents, spouses or adult children attempting to help those using drugs at home and thus people living with someone who is using drugs are underequipped to practice harm reduction at home. For example, education specifically designed to help people understand the risks associated with an abstinence only approach to drug use, would help foster discussions between all those involved and lead to a more supportive approach. Creating a space where it is OK to talk about drug use will save lives.”

Shawn McLaren, Chief Learning Officer, St John Ambulance

Answer: “Safe injection sites in every town and needle exchanges in pharmacies. Most individuals who suffer from substance use disorder feel isolated and are filled with fear. Most have experienced some form of trauma in their lives so counselling has to be readily available and accessible.”

Anonymous Family Physician working in Lanark County