

Alternate Models of Exemption Working Group

Why was the working group formed?

The working group was formed to identify alternatives to the current onerous [Section 56 exemption](#) model and application process. The current Section 56(1) exemption was originally written to provide a means by which academics could use illicit substances in research settings; therefore, the exemption cannot be easily applied to health and social service organizations trying to implement harm reduction services. The intention of this group is to come up with alternative models that are better suited to the current reality of the drug poisoning crisis. While this work is necessary, it is a half-measure, as unnecessary death will continue until decriminalization is fully realized and implemented in Canada.

Who is involved in the working group?

The working group includes the leadership and participation from people with living and lived experience of using drugs, OPS/SCS service providers, legal and academic researchers, and drug policy advocates across Canada, with administrative support and facilitation by the Dr. Peter Centre's KTE team.

Why is this work important?

The mechanism that the federal government has for exemptions to the federal drugs laws are very specific and can create more barriers for people who use drugs. The current mechanism only exempts OPS/SCS settings, and this is only a small proportion of drug use, not meeting the larger needs of people who use drugs.

What's next for the working group?

- [Alternate Models of Exemption](#): The group has identified various alternate models of exemption to federal drug laws to encompass and reflect the reality for the larger community of people who use drugs. This includes exemptions that are/for:
 - Episodic
 - Satellite site
 - Care providers
 - Organizational
 - Drug checking
 - Safer supply