

Cannabis Use & Drug Treatment Court Programs in Ontario

October 2022



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society**

Research Methodology



Community-Based Research Project

- Who was involved?
 - Core Research Team:
 - CMHA
 - JHSO
 - P-HSJCC
 - Academic advisor
 - Individuals with lived experience
 - Advisory Committee
 - Drug Treatment Court Champions Team
- Mixed-methods approach using two streams:
 1. **Clients:** four surveys & interview
 2. **Service Providers:** one survey & interview
- Proposed Sample Size:
 - 5 client participants/DTC
 - 5 service providers/DTC
 - **Total:** 70 clients and 70 service providers

Research Plan & Timelines



Overview of Plan & Challenges

October 2020: Received Funding

- Core Research Team & Advisory Committee
- Data Collection Tools & Update Environmental Scan

Challenges:

- COVID-19
- Operation of DTCs
- Client engagement
- Sample size

November – December 2020:

- Data Collection Tools Finalized
- Research Ethics Board Application Submitted

*CCBR workshops begin (November 2020-April 2021)

- Sample size
- Recruitment
- Client engagement

January – March 2021:

- Developed Drug Treatment Court Champions Team
- Research Ethics Application Approved

- Staff capacity

Research Plan & Timelines



Overview of Plan & Challenges

April 2021:

- Meeting with Drug Treatment Court Champions Team
- Information Sessions and Data Collection Training

May 2021-August 2021:

- Client Pre-Survey Administered
- Service Provider Survey Administered

September 2021 – August 2022:

- Client Post-Surveys Administered
- On-going Meetings to Discuss Data Collection

Challenges:

- COVID-19
- Operation of DTCs
- Program approach
- Client engagement
- Representation

Data Collection Tools



Data Collection Tools & Champion Packages

- Data Collection Tools:

- Recruitment Posters
- Consent Form
- Support Form
- Debrief Form
- Surveys
- Interviews

- DTC Champions Packages

- Client Tools Package



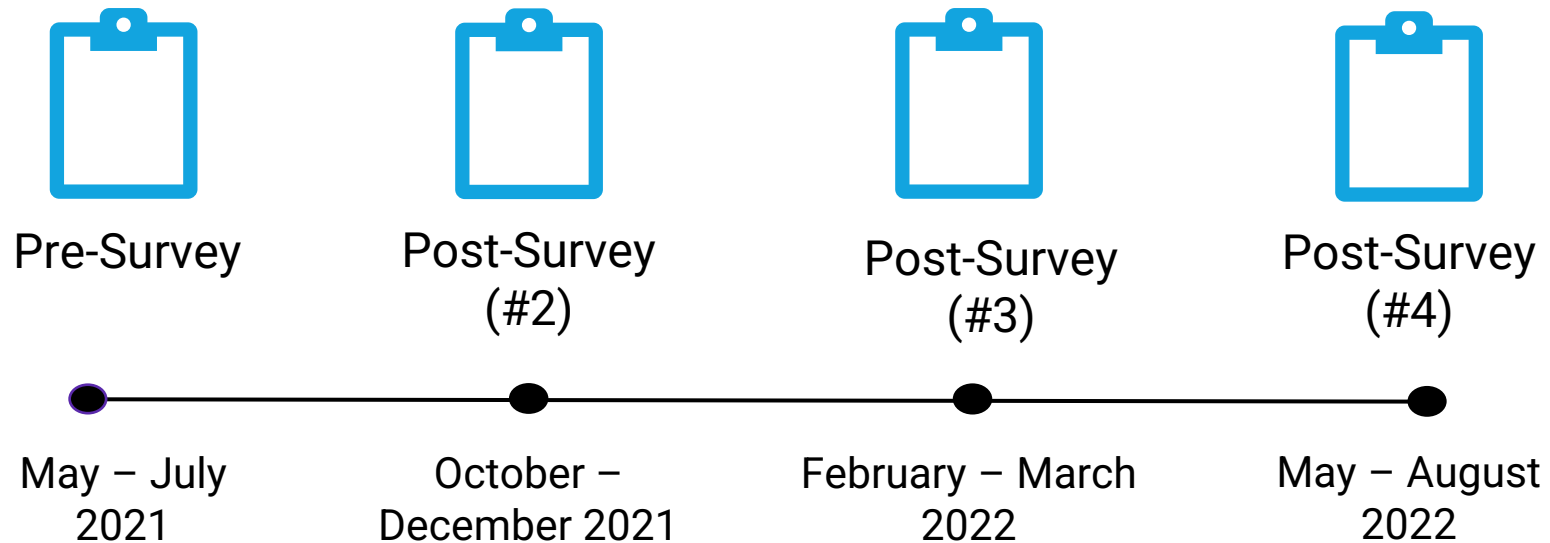
- Online & Paper Methods
- Reference Package
- Service Providers Tools Package:
 - Recruitment Poster
 - Survey Link

Data Collection Process

Toronto DTC Survey Administration



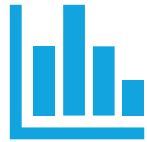
- When were we administering surveys?



Client Survey Results



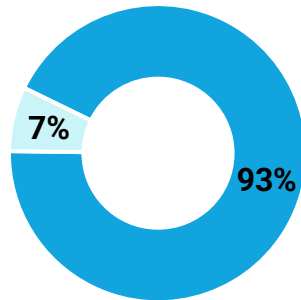
Client Demographics



SURVEY RESULTS

Survey 1: 28
Survey 2: 25
Survey 3: 22
Survey 4: 22

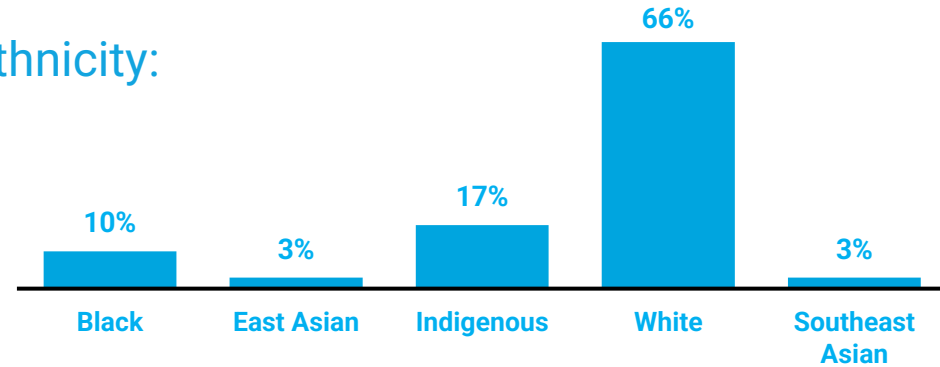
GENDER



■ Male
■ Female

AGE: 36 to 55 (71%)

Ethnicity:



Some high school or high school diploma/GED (72%)

Income support or unemployed/unable to work (69%)



DTC Program Involvement

Court Worker (36%); Self-Referral (32%)

Client Survey Results



Overview: Criminal Justice Involvement & Substance Use

Criminal Justice Involvement

- First interaction:
 - 17 or younger (62%); 18 to 25 (17%)
- First charged:
 - 17 or younger (52%); 18 to 25 (21%)
- Conviction(s):
 - Theft under \$,5000 (86%)
 - Fail to comply (86%)
 - Fail to appear (82%)
 - Drug Possession (75%)

Substance Use

- Ever used?
 - Cannabis, alcohol, crack, cocaine
- Frequency of use: daily
 - Crack, cannabis, fentanyl
- Treatments for substance use
 - Residential treatment centres
 - Addiction treatments
 - DTC programming
- Reasons for substance use
 - Trauma, grief & stress, mental health issues, boredom, loneliness

Client Survey Results



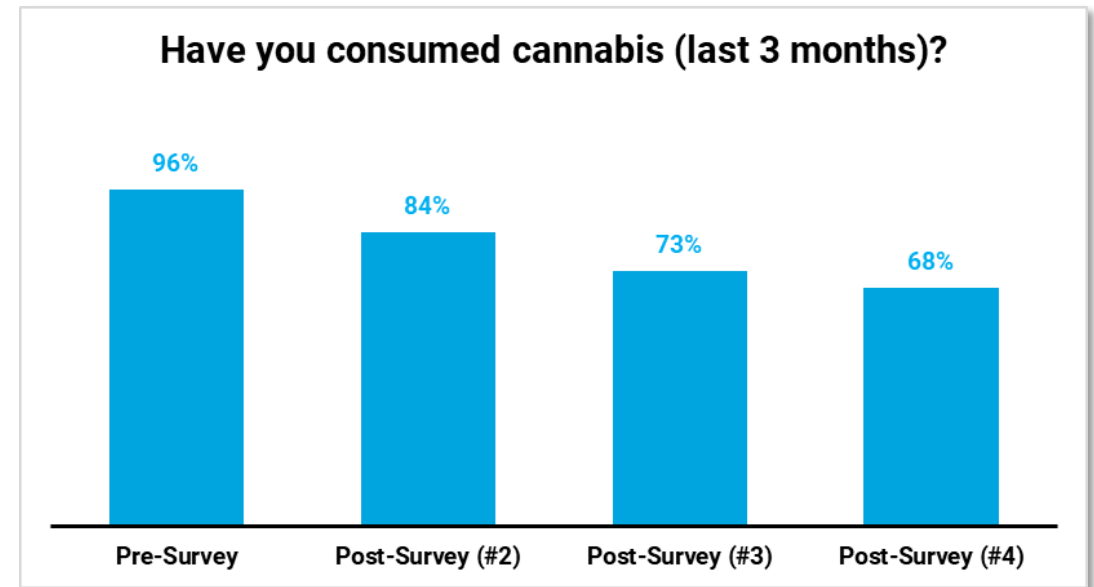
Overview: Cannabis Use & Mental Health

Cannabis Use

- Amount of cannabis:
 - 2 grams or less → none or almost none
- Cannabis products:
 - From a friend, from a dealer, legal storefront
- Reasons for cannabis use:
 - Reduce anxiety
 - Treat anxiety
 - Sleep and relaxation
 - Stress relief

Mental Health

- Formal diagnosis: addiction/substance use disorder
- No formal diagnosis: anxiety and depression



Service Provider Engagement



Overview of Survey & Interview Results

 **Survey Results:** 15 participants

 **Interview Results:** 5 participants

• Demographics

- Gender: mostly female
- DTC Program Location:
 - Toronto
 - Niagara
 - Simcoe
 - Guelph
 - Peterborough
 - Lanark, Leeds & Grenville
- Role:
 - Court liaisons, program managers, crown attorneys, defense and duty counsel, judges, and more...

Clients served

- Number of clients/week
 - 1 to 4 (n=7); 10 to 20 (n=1); 38 to 50 (n=3)
- Most served population
 - White, males, aged 30-50
 - Females, 25-50

Client Approach

- Harm-reduction
- Abstinence
- Both

Service Provider Engagement

Overview of Survey & Interview Results



Substance Use

- **Most used substance:** fentanyl, methamphetamines, cocaine, cannabis
- Harms/benefits of cannabis (on program, mental health)

Client Outcomes

- **Reasons for non-completion:** non-compliance, dishonesty, re-offending
- **Successes:** making changes, reconnecting, employment, housing, etc.
- **Challenges:** resources, funding, relapse, COVID-19



**If you have any questions,
please ask during the
moderated Q&A discussion**