

We hope this zine can help provide a starting point for youth to feel empowered to identify and advocate for their mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs when accessing healthcare.

Written by and for young people who use drugs,

Youth affected by systemic barriers such as racism, cisheteropatriarchy, ableism, fatphobia, whorophobia, the war on drugs and other forms of criminalization may face further challenges when accessing healthcare.

Even after connecting with a resource, it is normal to feel overwhelmed or uncomfortable when interacting with service providers.

Why did we make this zine?
We made this for young people navigating healthcare services, recognizing that finding + accessing resources is often complicated.



Talking to Healthcare Providers

A Guide For Young People in "Canada"



created by: **GET SENSIBLE**

You have the right to quality care!

- Request access to your healthcare records
- Be assured that personal information remains confidential
- Ask questions + express concerns
- Have a support person present for examinations if requested
- Receive cultural + gender sensitive care
- Participate in healthcare decisions, be informed the appropriate information to inform those decisions
- Be provided care regardless of race, sexuality, gender or economic status
- Give or refuse consent for any procedure, for any reason
- Be treated with dignity + respect

Youth Patient Rights
In Canada, you are entitled to certain rights when accessing healthcare. These include but are not limited to...

This work would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions from young people who participated in our surveys and interviews.



Created by **Get Sensible**
www.getsensible.org
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Additional resources:

A Project by **Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy**
www.cssdp.org



In Collaboration with the **Canadian Public Health Association**
substanceuse.ca/
www.cpha.ca



Linktr.ee/sensiblyouth
Illustrations by Pascale!



This work was made possible through a financial contribution from Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.

Being dismissive of your concerns, not addressing questions, or rushing through appointments.
Not providing adequate information or explanations about your treatment.

Using stigmatizing language to describe drugs and the people who use them, such as "addict", "junkie", "crackhead", etc.

Lack of respect for any part of your identity (e.g., not using your pronouns, not being accommodating to neurodivergent needs, micro or macroaggressions etc.)

Signs to Watch Out for in Healthcare Providers



Tips for a Successful Appointment



Preparing to go:
Write your main concerns and questions down before going into an appointment in case you feel overwhelmed.

- During your appointment:**
- Go a few minutes early to give yourself time to relax and prepare for your appointment.
 - Bring an advocate! This might look like a friend, or a parent/guardian.
 - Remember, it is up to you how much to disclose to the provider during your appointment.

- After you go:**
- Take care of yourself after an appointment/medical encounter.
 - This could look like;
 - A walk or bike ride
 - Journal, reflect on treatment plans/goals
 - Ensure you are fed and hydrated
 - Draw or paint
 - Call a friend/ someone safe

Uses inclusive language in posters clearly displayed in waiting areas and other patient spaces.
Ensures you clearly understand and consent to all procedures.

Supports your choices and provides harm reduction strategies for safer drug use when needed.
Encourages open and non-judgmental conversations.

Listens actively to your concerns.

Positive Signs in a Healthcare Provider



Phrases you can use when talking to healthcare providers

Sometimes knowing the "right thing to say" when navigating healthcare systems can be intimidating, try some of these phrases when advocating for your needs

If your provider is refusing a test or referral
"Can you please record the refusal to provide the requested test in my file?"

If you need more info or have questions
"I need clarification on..."
"Can you explain ___ again?"

"What is the goal of this treatment? What are the risks and benefits of this treatment?"

Boundary Setting

"I'm not comfortable being weighed today and would like to skip this step of the appointment."
"I'm not using ___ (substance) as a way to understand my health and would like this appointment to focus on my health independent from ___"