

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA)

Canada's Drug Strategy is the federal response to the harmful use of substances. These include illegal drugs, alcohol, pharmaceuticals, inhalants and solvents. The Strategy takes a balanced approach to reducing both the demand for, and the supply of, drugs and substances. It contributes to a healthier, safer Canada through prevention, treatment, enforcement, and harm reduction initiatives.

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA)–Canada's National Addiction Agency

CCSA's mission is to provide objective, evidence-based information and advice to help reduce the health, social and economic harm associated with substance abuse and addiction. Established by an Act of Parliament in 1988, CCSA is an arm's-length, not-for-profit organization supported in part by the federal government through Canada's Drug Strategy. By working collaboratively with governments, researchers, enforcement agencies, treatment professionals and the private sector, CCSA aims to achieve a balanced and holistic approach to addictions that will lead to a healthier and safer Canadian society.

Three global activities

CCSA fulfils its mandate by engaging in three global activities: transferring knowledge, developing policy, and building partnerships.

Transferring knowledge

Gathering, generating and disseminating knowledge is one of CCSA's most important activities and the impetus behind the Centre's support for a national research agenda. Surveys and studies give CCSA a clearer picture of addiction and its impact on individuals and society, and evidence-based best practices form a solid foundation for CCSA training initiatives.

Developing policy positions

Developing, monitoring and analyzing drug policy is an activity that flows logically from CCSA's focus on knowledge. CCSA recognizes that policy must always be thoroughly grounded in evidence, but it must also be practical to implement and consistent with community standards. Policy decisions cannot be made in a vacuum.

Building partnerships

Coordinating stakeholder involvement and brokering partnerships and networks are central to CCSA's mandate. Collaboration makes the most of limited resources, allowing projects to go ahead where they could not have been achieved in isolation. Often a partnership born of necessity grows beyond original expectations to become a new catalyst for action.

How CCSA works

CCSA has developed a five-step process for determining where it should focus its efforts for maximum effectiveness and how it can best meet the goals of each individual initiative. CCSA:

1. Identifies a need through broad consultation with key stakeholders, and explores possibilities for funding and in-kind support.
2. Identifies and recruits partners, and establishes national steering committees and advisory groups, as required.
3. Conducts environmental scans and assesses current knowledge through literature reviews, surveys and key stakeholder interviews.
4. Collaborates with its partners, and develops a work plan and implementation strategy that identifies the best mechanism for project delivery. This could be a report, a workshop, a website or a combination of several components.
5. Implements the project and evaluates its outcomes. This allows the Centre to refine its project development process based on experience and feedback from stakeholders.



Accountability

The expanded scope of CCSA's work under the renewed Canada's Drug Strategy has been enthusiastically embraced by the staff and the Board alike as an indication that their contribution is valued. CCSA's response to significant and rapid growth has been based on the latest thinking in sound governance and leadership. In a global atmosphere of increased public scrutiny, CCSA is very conscious of its duty to constantly re-evaluate its processes and to make changes as necessary.

For more information on the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, please visit <http://www.ccsa.ca>

To learn more about Canada's Drug Strategy, please visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cds

Find out what governments, non-governmental organizations, and other partners are doing – National Framework for Action – Visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cds-nfa