



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Use  
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Statement by Rita Notarandrea, CEO, on National Addictions Awareness Week 2018

**Ottawa, November 26, 2018** — The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) is pleased to launch [National Addictions Awareness Week](#) from November 26 to December 2, 2018. This week is part of CCSA's mission to address issues of substance use in Canada by providing national leadership and harnessing the power of evidence to generate coordinated action.

We chose this year's theme, **All Walks of Life**, to illustrate that addiction does **not** discriminate. Addiction does not care about age, gender, skin color, religion or sexuality. It does not care about your income or class or what kind of family you come from.

It is time for us all to discard some deeply held stereotypes about substance use disorders and acknowledge that addiction touches **everyone**. In communities across the country, one in 10 Canadians struggles every day with a substance use disorder. That person could be a friend or family member, a colleague or neighbour, or someone else close to you.

Too often, substance use disorders are compounded by guilt and shame because of negative stereotypes and discrimination in our society. In fact, stigma is one of the major barriers to recovery from substance use disorders. Addiction is **not** a moral failing, nor is it a choice.

During National Addictions Awareness Week, CCSA will also continue its work to help reduce the stigma of substance use disorders. We will be offering a Facebook Live panel from our workshop, **Stigma Ends with Me**, on Thursday, November 29. We want to shine a spotlight on the issue and inform more Canadians on how the language they use matters. The workshop aims to increase awareness of stigma and to identify strategies to address stigma in our communities and workplaces through education, personal stories and language. We are building meaningful partnerships with others committed to addressing stigma.

This year, our video campaign provides a platform for people to share their experiences with substance use. We encourage you to watch and share these videos.

There is a great deal of work to be done. CCSA will continue to deploy evidence to increase understanding about substance use disorders in the broader public: open minds and shift attitudes from stigmatization to compassion in the work place, in our communities and in our families. It's time for us to see this disease like any other — one worthy of the same care, attention and compassion.

To help share these important messages, CCSA has created a communications toolkit designed to facilitate public discussions. The toolkit includes videos, infographics, social media images and other content, and is available on the CCSA website. We encourage you to share this within your networks and to use it throughout National Addictions Awareness Week and beyond in our joint effort to facilitate discussion on substance use, stigma and recovery. Please join us.

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Visit [CCSA.ca](http://CCSA.ca) for more information on events throughout National Addictions Awareness Week. Visit our Facebook page for information on the stigma workshop.



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CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

CCSA activities and products are made possible through a financial contribution from Health Canada. The views of CCSA do not necessarily represent the views of the Government of Canada.