

# What Methamphetamine Services Are Being Offered in Canada?



## An Environmental Scan of Trauma, Sex, Gender, and Equity-Informed Methamphetamine Treatment Services

Methamphetamine use is of growing concern in Canada and is associated with a number of negative health and social consequences. The Centre of Excellence for Women's Health conducted an environmental scan in 2022 of existing available methamphetamine treatment services, and the sex, gender, trauma, and equity considerations embedded within the programs. The scan identified 14 programs offered in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick in different settings and using different treatment modalities. This overview highlights treatment modalities [1] offered in Canada and examples where treatment services adapted for methamphetamine use have considered trauma, sex, gender, and equity informed approaches.

Sex and Gender Informed Approach	Trauma Informed Approach
Gender and sex informed practice involves developing substance use programs that are effective and appropriate for everyone. Sex informed approaches consider how biological characteristics such as anatomy, physiology, genes, hormones and neurobiology affect the ways that bodies respond to various substances and influence treatment outcomes. Gender informed approaches consider how social factors such as gender relations, roles, norms, gender identity and gendered policies affect individual experiences of substance use, the effectiveness of treatment, and a person's ability to access care and treatment.	Trauma-informed practice involves integrating an understanding of experiences of violence and trauma into all aspects of service delivery, so that any service user feels safe and able to benefit from the services offered. The goal of trauma-informed services and systems is to avoid re-traumatizing individuals and to support safety, choice, and control on the part of all service users.

## SERVICES OFFERED IN CANADA

### Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinics

[Shared Health Manitoba](#) has created no and low barrier RAAM clinics that do not require a referral. The RAAM clinics have been connected to a mobile and peer support services to reduce access barriers and support clients with a range of health and social concerns.

**RAAM clinics are low-barrier, walk-in clinics that patients can access to get support for substance use disorders without an appointment. RAAM clinics provide quick access to assessments, counselling, referral to community services, and prescriptions for medications that may help lessen cravings and withdrawal symptoms.**

[1] Adapted from SAMSHA TIP 33 Treatment for Stimulant Use Disorders (Updated 2021).

## Outpatient Counselling and Contingency Management

In Edmonton, the [Queer and Trans Health Collective](#) offers the Peer N Peer Substance Use Program which was designed to support 2S/LGBTQ+ people with safer substance use and sex education, free 4 – 6 session one-on-one counselling and support, and access to harm reduction services. Practices focus on helping people reduce methamphetamine use and improving overall health and well-being. They involve meditative practice, awareness, and staying in the present moment.

**Outpatient counselling can include a range of services (i.e., cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness interventions, contingency management and social and recreational activities) to help reduce or abstain from methamphetamines. Contingency management is a behavioural intervention used in outpatient services to encourage behavioural change through providing incentives for achieving desired change.**

Several provinces have started to invest in contingency management programs, including in British Columbia, where they are piloting a contingency management program that incorporates sex and gender considerations.

**Outreach services are harm reduction-oriented services – including case management, crisis intervention, counselling, and health promotion – to people who need support in addressing their substance use and other health and social needs. Outreach can be done in places where people feel most comfortable to meet people where they are at.**

## Outreach

In Winnipeg, [Resource Assistance for Youth Incorporated](#) offers street-based outreach and 24/7 access to methamphetamine and other substance user services. The outreach services support youth, and particular Indigenous youth, who experience homelessness.

## Withdrawal Management

[Klinic Community Health](#) (Winnipeg, MB) is expanding their mobile treatment and withdrawal service to include additional wraparound care during and following their 30-day detoxification program. The expansion will focus on serving underserved populations including Indigenous people, youth, and men who will benefit from continued care that is trauma-informed.

**Withdrawal management can help people manage cravings and detoxification from methamphetamines. In addition to pharmacotherapies, withdrawal management and detoxification can be used as a time to support improvement in sleep and nutrition.**

In Ontario, the Independent First Nations Alliance is developing a community methamphetamine withdrawal support program, which will include training on traditional and land-based withdrawal management in the five communities it serves.

**Live-in substance use treatment services offer participants an opportunity to focus on recovery in an environment removed from their daily lives. Live-in treatment programs can be several weeks to months in duration; including stabilization and treatment/support regarding substance use, health, financial, family, and other concerns. Live-in treatment programming is often abstinence based.**

## Live-in Treatment

In New Brunswick, live-in treatment services in Campbellton have been individualized to more closely meet clients where they are at. This approach has allowed for tailoring to sex, gender, and trauma concerns.

## Drug Treatment Courts

Nationally, drug treatment courts have been able to integrate [mindfulness](#) and other trauma-informed approaches in order to support individuals in learning about substance use and make lifestyle and behavioural changes.

**Drug treatment courts involve substance use and criminal justice system service providers together, in offering court-monitored treatment and community services for people facing charges for non-violent crimes related to substance use.**

**For many Indigenous Peoples, connection with culture is an important part of wellness. Indigenous approaches to substance use may be guided by the notion of 'culture as intervention' that is, integrating traditional Indigenous cultural practices, traditions, and ceremonies as foundational to support of wellness and healing. There are many forms of Indigenous cultural approaches such as land-based programming, sweat lodges, etc.**

## Traditional Indigenous and Land-Based Approaches

The [Thunderbird Partnership Foundation](#) leads national efforts to disseminate culturally relevant resources about methamphetamine that highlight the importance of teachings from Elders, land-based programming, and healing circles, to support First Nations communities in addressing the harms of methamphetamine use.

While some programming in Canada that reaches methamphetamine users are integrating sex, gender, trauma and equity considerations to some degree, more action on these important approaches is essential.



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For more information, see the [Stimulating Conversations](#) project.