Canada: Myth versus Reality
Real-world policy implications and impacts for “safe cities” and “justice”

Janet Butler-McPhee, HIV Legal Network

Not a Criminal:
Safe Cities and Justice for All People Living with HIV
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17:45 – 18:45
Emerald Room
Canada Case Study: (Policy) Myth Versus Reality

• Canada: beacon of progressive policy?
• Must consider real-world implications
• Policy jurisdictions:
  - municipal, provincial, federal
• Policies at all levels trickle down
Case Study 1: Drug Policy

**Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)**

Possession of substance

4 (1) Except as authorized under the regulations, no person shall possess a substance included in Schedule I, II or III.

Punishments range from a fine to terms of imprisonment 6 months – 7 years.
Case Study 1: Drug Policy

There were 83,483 drug arrests in Canada in 2018. More than 55,000 of these were for personal possession. This is a colossal waste of public resources. 470,000+ drug arrests were made in Canada between 2014-2018. But the overdose crisis has only gotten worse. 72% of all drug arrests were for personal possession in Canada between 2014 & 2018. Drug use is a health issue, not a criminal one.

Canada's current approach is irresponsible and harmful. DECRIMINALIZE SIMPLE DRUG POSSESSION NOW! aidslaw.ca
Case Study 1: Drug Policy

• Billions of $$ spent in policing, courts, and correctional costs attributed to the use of criminalized substances.
• Exemption: Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (s.56)
• Piecemeal approach: City of Vancouver, Province of B.C., City of Toronto
• Decriminalization in B.C.: Pilot Project
• Real-world impacts
Case Study 2: Anti-trafficking Efforts and Policing

- Conflation of sex work and trafficking compounds issue
- Anti-trafficking efforts and their impact on migrant sex workers
- Billions of $$ spent on anti-trafficking efforts and policing
- Policy at various levels, including municipal bylaws
- Real-world impacts
Case Study 3: HIV Criminalization

- Federal policy
- Prosecutorial guidance(s)
- State of play: HIV criminalization in Canada and law reform
- Real-world impacts at municipal level
Thank you!

Janet Butler-McPhee

jbutler@hivlegalnetwork.ca
www.hivlegalnetwork.ca