

Prescribed Safer Supply Clients Perspectives

The following quotes have been taken from program evaluation reports.

Substance Use and Health Benefits:

“If it wasn’t for this program, I really don’t think I’d be here right now... and feeling as healthy as I do.” (2)

“If didn’t have this program, I probably would not be here today”. (4)

“I haven’t had an overdose since I’ve been on the program. I had a couple shortly before where I had to be defibrillated.” (1)

“It’s furthered me away from using street drugs. I’m still using street drugs, but in my brain, I now have a way out, and I’m trying to move in that direction.” (1)

“I know what I'm getting and I don't have to worry like 'today, I'm going to go [overdose]'". (3)

"[Safer Supply is] there for me when I'm not at that point of being able or willing to absolutely kick [opioids]... I don't have to worry about not having anything there to cope with or help me cope". (3)

“I don’t use street drugs anymore. I never thought it was possible”. (4)

Access to care:

“The nurse practitioners at Parkdale. I’m not afraid to ask them anything now. I trust them fully. Whereas before, for 10 years, 15 years, I didn’t even want to walk into a doctor. I wouldn’t go into a hospital if my leg was half chewed off. You know what I mean – I just didn’t trust them, until the program. It’s a good thing.” (1)

“They don't judge you and they accept you for who you are, however you look, or whatever. If you didn't wash or shower or whatever, they'll offer you shower facilities and all that. They'll offer you something to eat. They just make you feel comfortable... accept you for who you are". (3)

"I love the staff. Things are great. They're helpful. They're supportive. They're there for you when you need them. And that's the biggest thing is the support. I find with a lot of the other programs... the biggest thing of why they fail was because of the lack of support". (3)

“There's usually someone here that can guide you in the right way of whatever program you would need”. (3)

Social Benefits:

“I got a job, got stable housing, stopped using, connected with kids again, I’m in school.” (1)

“For myself, it’s helped my relationship with my family now. I can go take my daughter’s kids out, which she wouldn’t let me before. I’ve been on the program – almost 4 years, 3 and a half years. For me, it’s the relationships I’ve gotten with people that I haven’t had before.” (2)

“I have interests now. Things I used to like to do – that I didn’t know I liked to do because I never had time to do anything I liked to do. I like helping people, and walk around and I find myself doing that, and having more time to be myself, instead of this guy who hustled and robbed everybody.” (2)

“It’s done nothing but been good for me. I’ve got my family, I’ve been housed for [the] first time in 10 years, I’m volunteering at [organization]. I’m doing things that I just, didn’t care about, had no motivation to before.” (2)

“We could finally get to a point where we could think of other things than just doing drugs”. (3)

“There are people that are on this program that started off in tents and now they’ve actually got themselves to a position where they’re renting an apartment. That doesn’t happen without Safer Supply” (3)

Safety:

“Once I was a client of this program, I knew I was safe” (3)

“Yeah, I think it’s probably helped a lot of women, most that are on it, probably. It has saved their lives. We don’t have to go on the street, we don’t have to bother people for money, be ever put in a position where we have to bother somebody for money to get our drugs. It’s safe. We know we’re not being poisoned to get [sexually assaulted]. It’s a safe place to get our drugs.” (1)

“It has made me feel safe, and I don’t know if this comes into play for the program, but before I used to street work. I don’t have to go and fucking work to get fentanyl because if anything, I always have the pills....” (1)

Reduced engagement in criminal activities:

“I haven’t broken the law since I’ve been on it [the SOS program], and you know, haven’t robbed anybody, or people aren’t afraid of me right now, and that kind of feels good.” (2)

“We don’t have to go to the streets anymore to make our habit, to make money to pay for our pills. Since I’ve been on it [the SOS program], I haven’t gone to jail in three and a half years. So, that’s a good thing. I’m pretty much not working [in sex work] at all anymore, so. It saved my life.” (2)

Sources cited:

1. [Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre Safer Opioid Supply Program Evaluation Report](#), 2023.
2. [London InterCommunity Health Centre Safer Opioid Supply Program Evaluation Report](#), 2022.
3. [Safer Supply Ottawa Program Evaluation Report](#), 2022.
4. [Assessment of the Implementation of Safer Supply Pilot Projects](#), 2022.