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# CATIE: Anti-Stigma

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Understanding of Harm Reduction Programs  
and Services: A Survey of Canadians





# Methodology & Respondent Profile



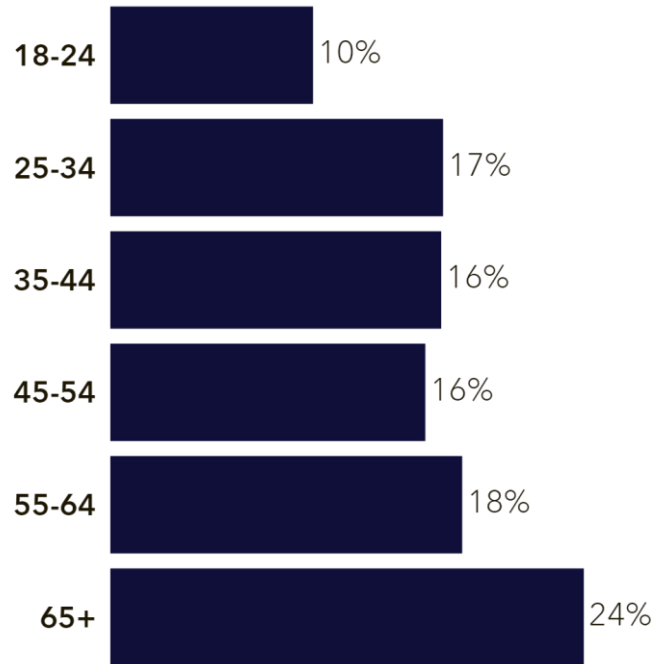


- A total of 1,500 residents of Canada were surveyed online, between March 12th and 14th, 2025.
- The sample was randomly drawn from an online panel of potential survey respondents recruited by Leger Opinion.
- Post-stratification weights were applied to the sample based on 2021 census population figures to ensure representation by age, gender, and region of Canada.
- An associated margin of error for a probability-based sample of this size would be  $\pm 3\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

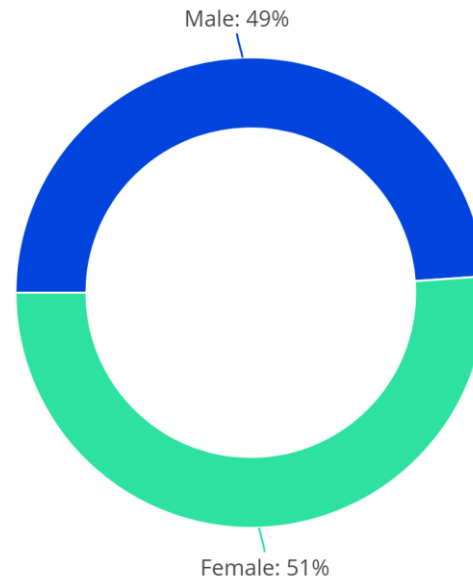
# Respondent Profile



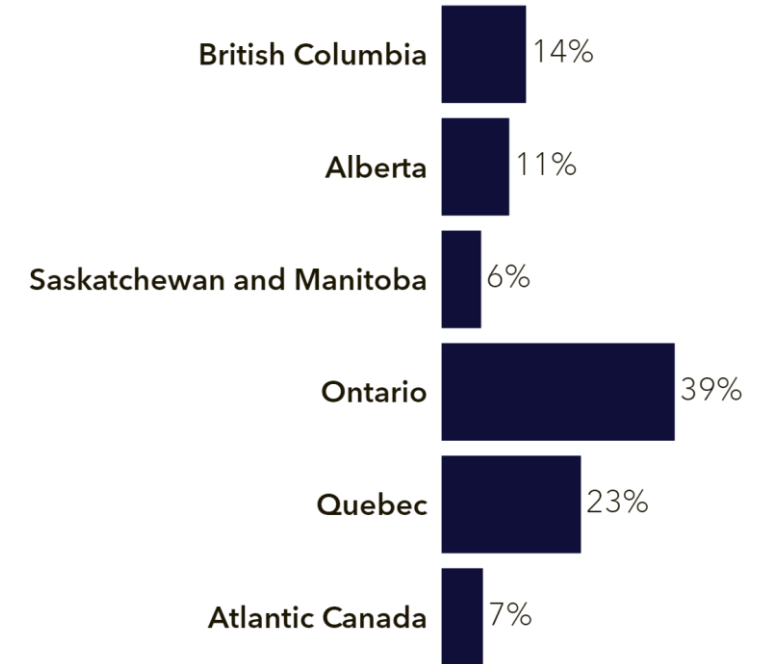
## Age



## Gender



## Region of Canada



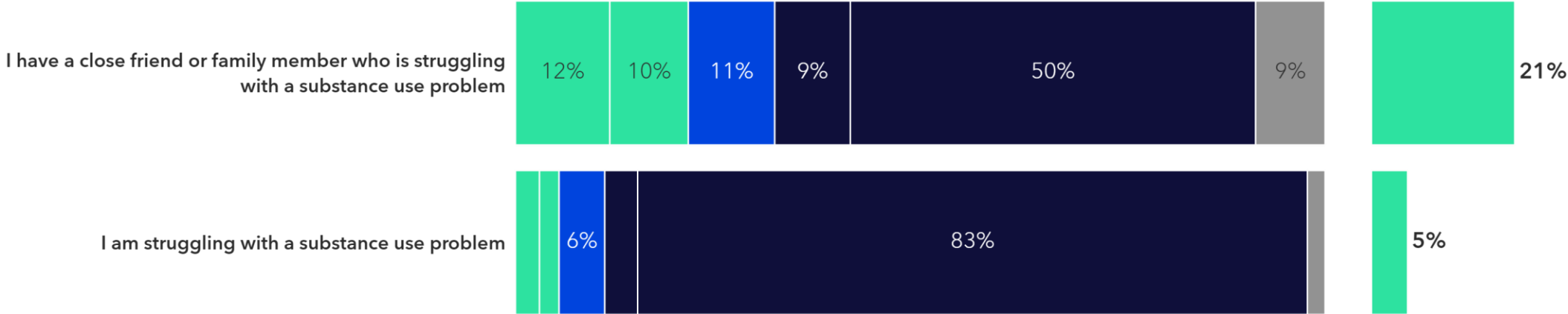
# One in five Canadians (21%) have a close friend of family member who is struggling with a substance use problem.



Agreement battery

5 - Strongly agree | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 - Strongly disagree | DK

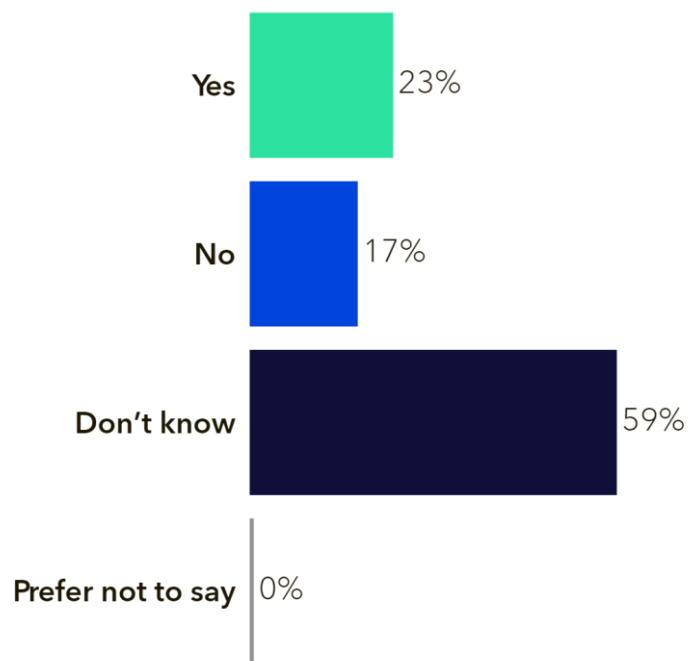
% Agree (5+4)



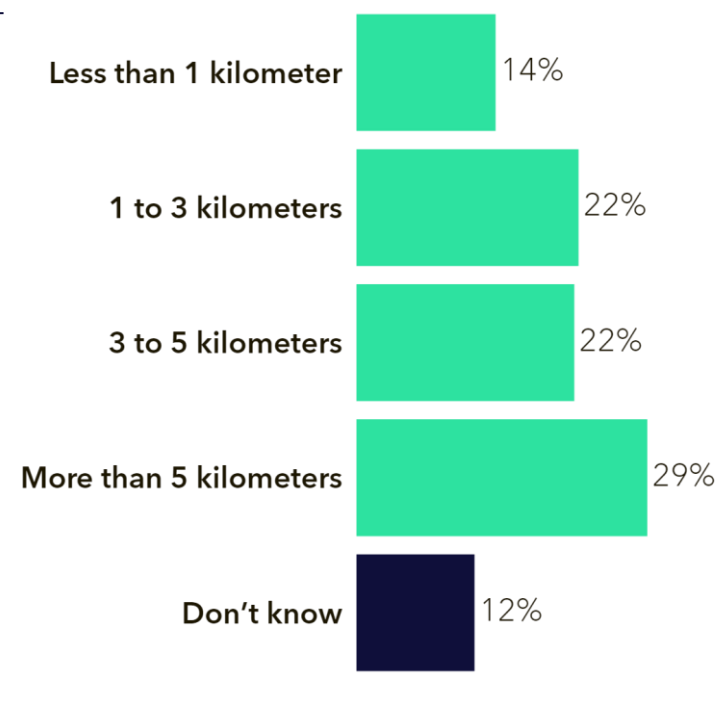
# Many Canadians (59%) are unaware if there are any harm reduction programs and services offered in their community.



Are any harm reduction programs and services available in your community?



Approximately how close do you live to where harm reduction programs and services are available?





**Canadians are familiar with harm reduction programs, however there is still opportunity to further increase familiarity.**

- Three in five Canadians (61%) indicate they are familiar with harm reduction programs and services, with only one in five (18%) describing themselves as very familiar.
- Over one-third of Canadians (36%) say they have only heard the name before, indicating an opportunity to increase familiarity.

**Canadians' support for harm reduction programs and services outweigh the opposition.**

- Half of Canadians (53%) support harm reduction services while only one in five (19%) are opposed.
- Many Canadians (59%) agree that harm reduction programs and services save the lives of people who use drugs whereas less than half (45%) feel they encourage continued drug use.
- Half of Canadians (52%) want to see governments expand funding for these programs and services.

**Canadians want harm reduction programs in their neighbourhood.**

- Half of Canadians (49%) want harm reduction programs and services be available to those in their neighbourhoods who use drugs.

**When it comes to harm reduction programs and services Canadians' opinions are strongly held.**

- Levels of support and opposition remain unchanged when asked again at the end of the survey.



# Detailed Findings

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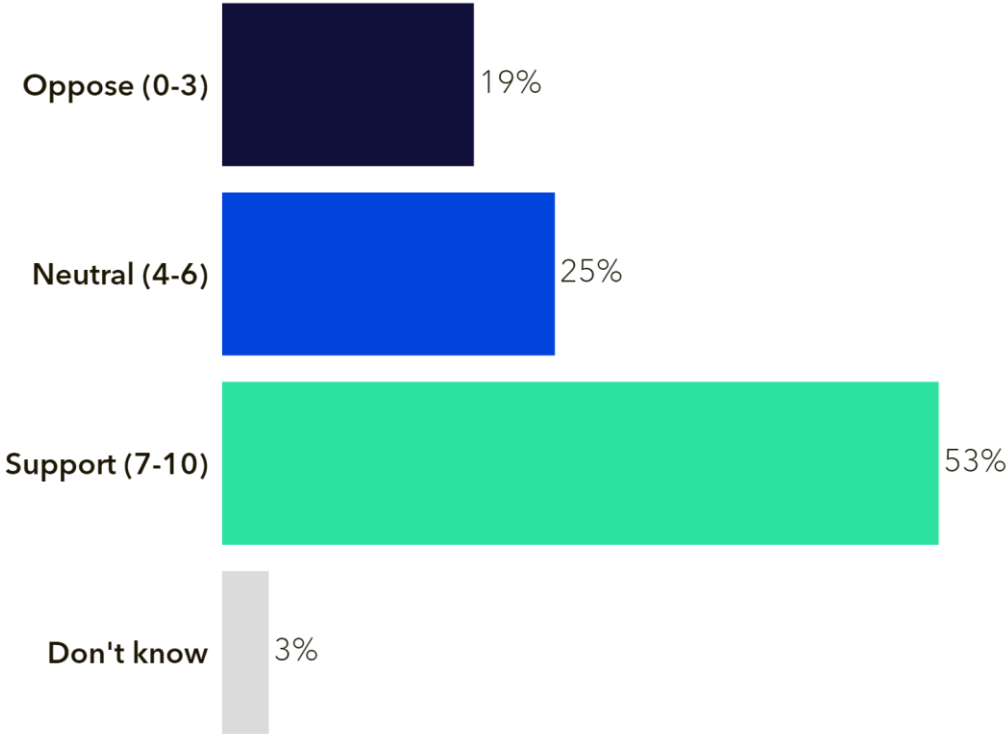




# Public support for community harm reduction programs & services significantly outweighs opposition. Few are undecided about how they feel.



*Support and opposition for harm reduction programs and services in one's community*



Harm reduction programs are health services offered by community organizations to people who use drugs, which include:

- Medically supervised injection and overdose prevention sites.
- Distribution of safer injecting and smoking supplies.
- Education and addiction treatment referrals.
- Methadone prescriptions to reduce or eliminate a person's use of opioids.

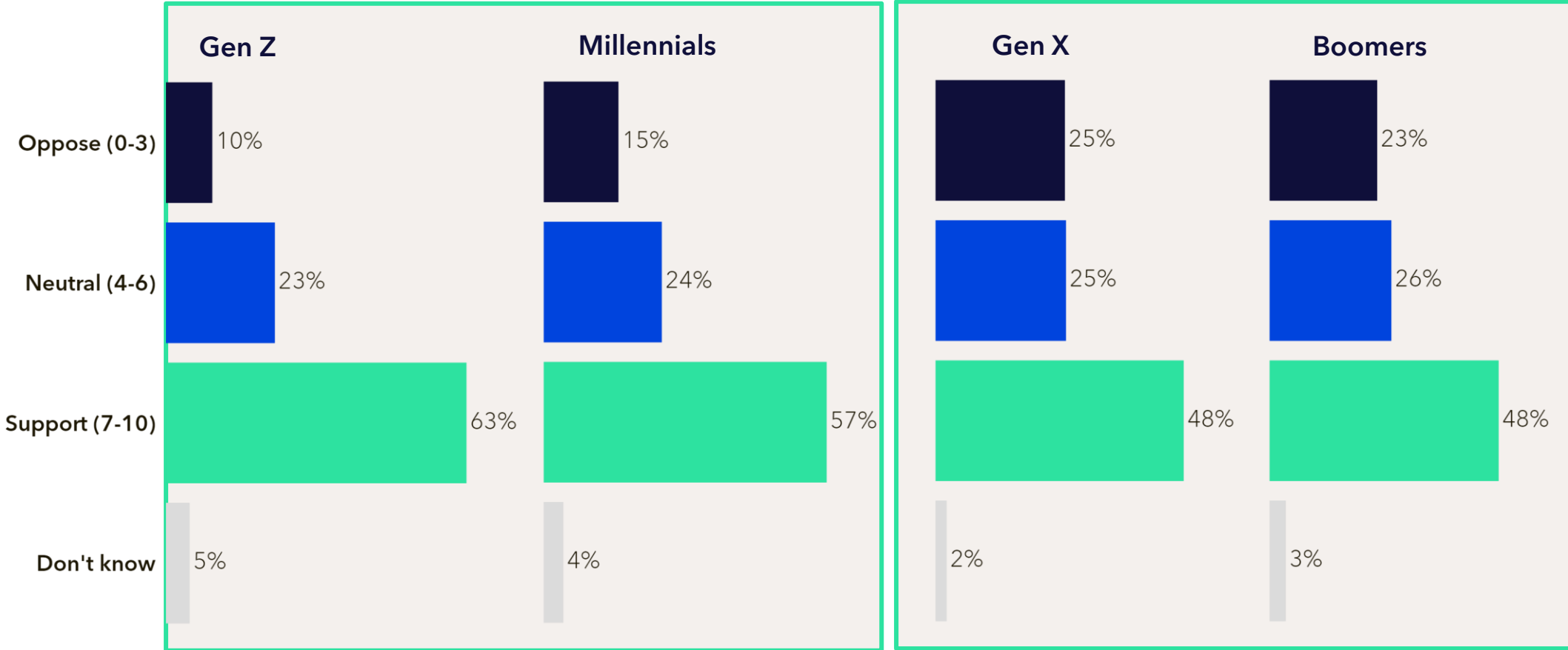
### Demographic Insights

- Women are more likely to be supportive of harm reduction programs and services (57%).
- Those who say they are very or somewhat familiar with these programs and services are more likely to be supportive (57%).

# Support for harm reduction programs is higher among Gen Z and Millennials.



Support and opposition for harm reduction programs in one's community



Sample base: 237

Sample base: 411

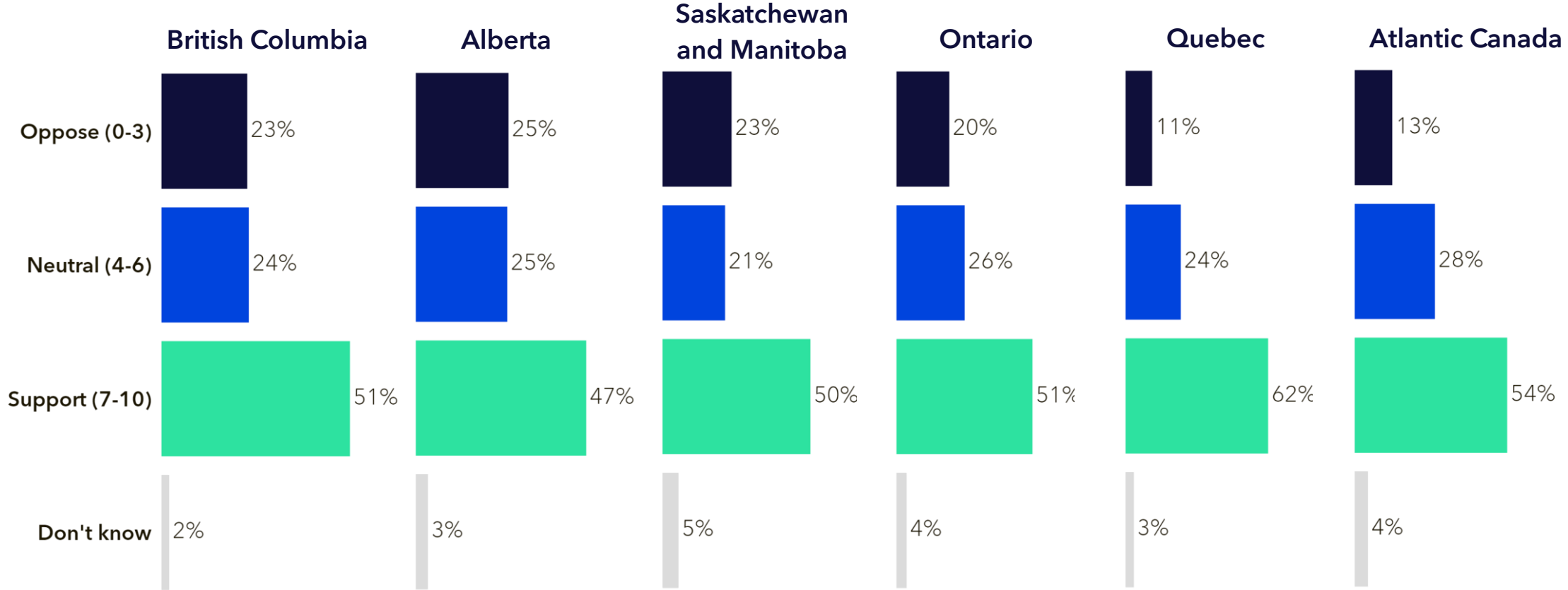
Sample base: 377

Sample base: 439

# Quebec is the most supportive of harm reduction programs.



Support and opposition for harm reduction programs in one's community



Sample base: 213

Sample base: 166

Sample base: 96

Sample base: 579

Sample base: 345

Sample base: 101

# Rationale for Supporting of Harm Reduction Programs and Services



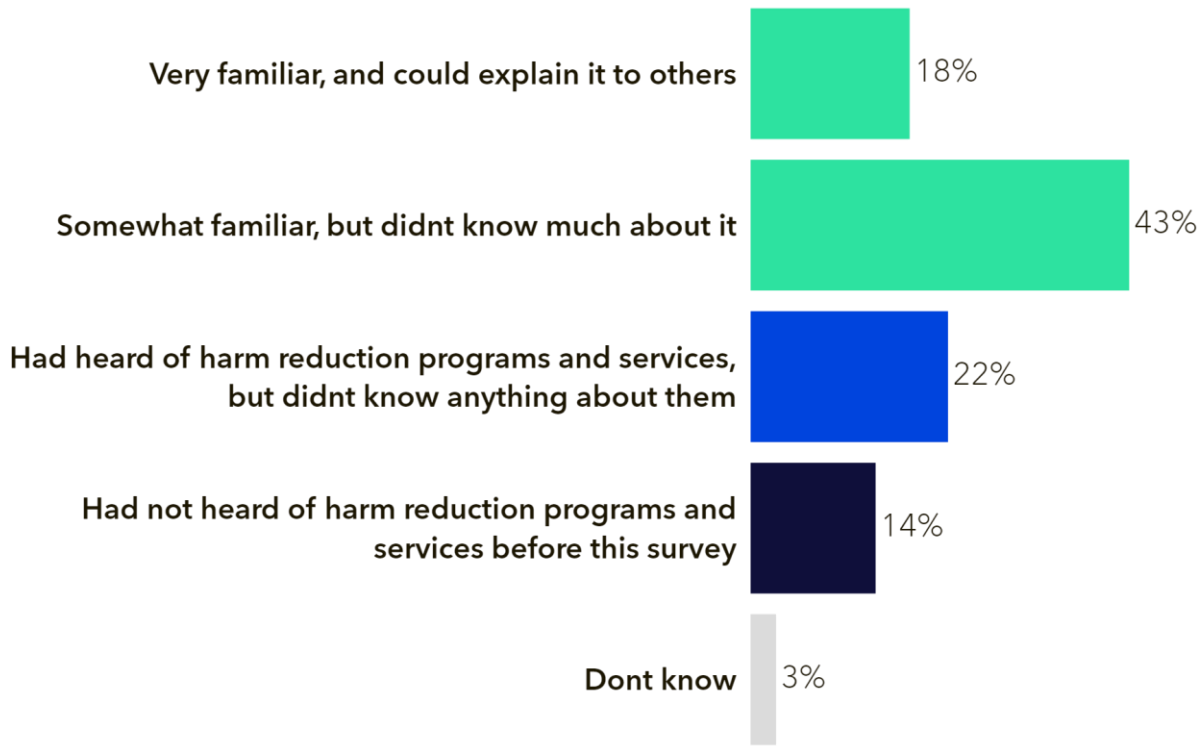
Respondents were asked to explain their thinking around why they are supportive of harm reduction programs and services. While respondents provided a range of responses to this question, a few common themes emerged:

- Harm reductions programs and services save the lives of people who use drugs  
*"By providing support and assistance with safe areas some of the stigma surrounding use of drugs is removed and people's lives can be improved"* (Man, Boomer, Ontario)
- Harm reduction programs improve safety and reduce crime rates.  
*"Harm reduction programs have shown less crime and overdosing occurs on the street. It is also more sanity and safe for those accessing the services."* (Woman, Millennial, Alberta)
- Addiction is a health issue and as such, requires treatment and support like any other illnesses.  
*"Addiction issues are health issues and should be addressed as such, not as criminal issues. Also, people only get better through rehab if they want to, so there needs to be a steppingstone for people who aren't quite ready to go through a rehab centre."* (Man, Millennial, Ontario)

# Six in 10 Canadians (61%) say they are at least somewhat familiar with how harm reduction programs & services work, but less than one in five (18%) describe themselves as very familiar.



*Familiarity with how harm reduction programs and services work*



**61%**  
of respondents are familiar with harm reduction programs and services work

### Demographic Insights

- Residents of BC are the most likely to be familiar with harm reduction programs and services (76%) while those in Quebec are the least familiar (50%).

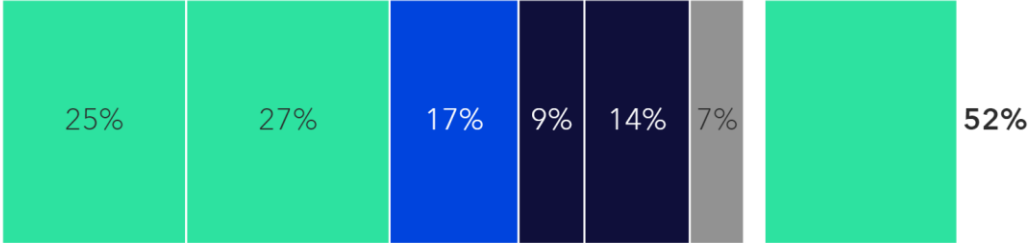
Half of Canadians (52%) believe governments should expand funding for harm reduction programs and services, compared to only a third (33%) who would rather the funding go to policing.



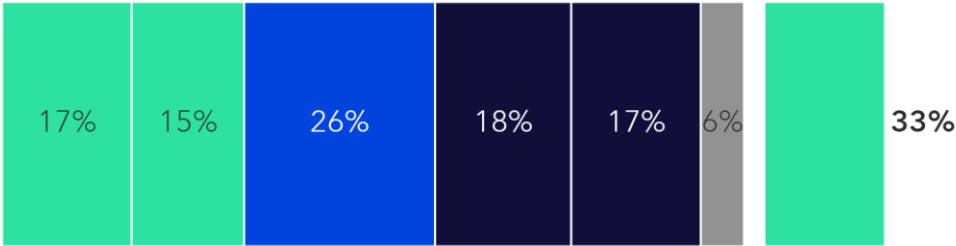
Agreement battery

5 - Strongly agree | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 - Strongly disagree | DK % Agree (5+4)

Governments should expand funding for harm reduction programs and services



I would rather taxpayer dollars spent on policing rather than harm reduction programs and services



Demographic Insights

- In addition to their higher levels of support, residents of Quebec are more likely to agree that governments should expand funding for harm reduction programs and services (60%).

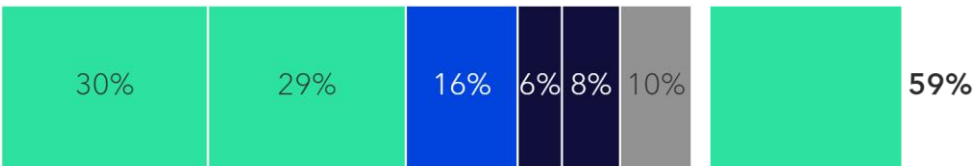
# Many Canadians (59%) are in agreement that harm reduction programs and services save the lives of those who use drugs.



Agreement battery

5 - Strongly agree | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 - Strongly disagree | DK % Agree (5+4)

Harm reduction programs and services save the lives of many people who use drugs



# Half of Canadians (49%) agree they would like to see harm reduction programs and services be available for people in their neighbourhood.



## Agreement battery

5 - Strongly agree | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 - Strongly disagree | DK % Agree (5+4)



## Demographic Insights

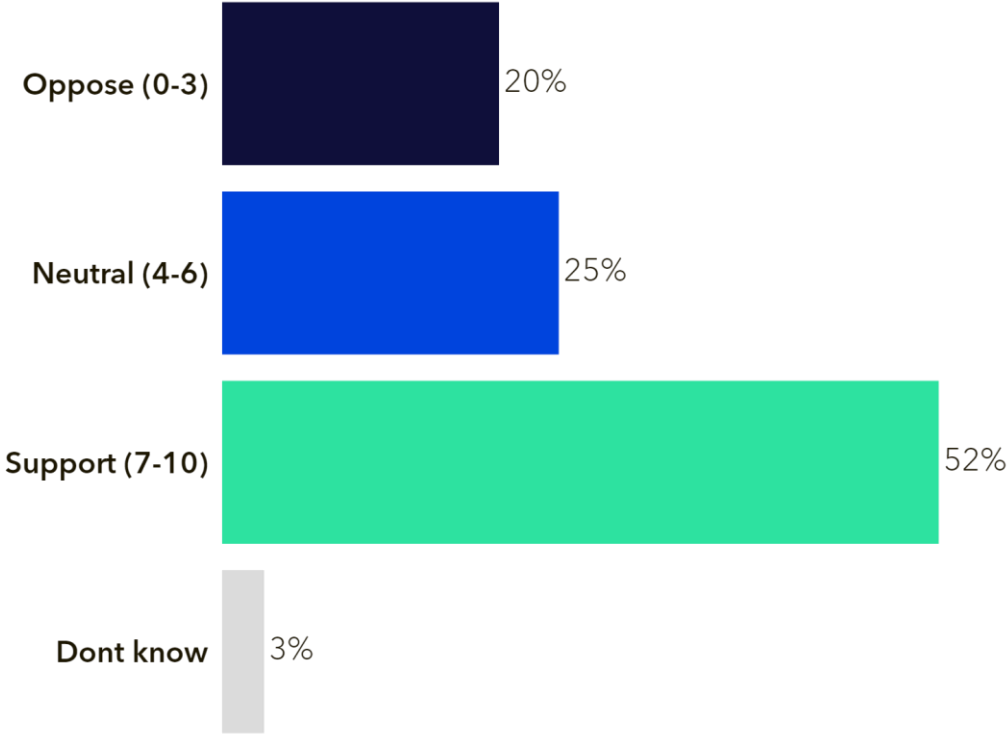
- Gen Zers are more likely to agree that harm reduction programs and services make communities safer (58%).



# When asked at the end of the survey, the level of support and opposition of harm reduction programs remains unchanged.



*Support and opposition for harm reduction programs and services in one's community*



Sample base: 1,500

Q7 Now that you have had a chance to think about the issues some more, how much do you support or oppose harm reduction programs and services for people in your community who use drugs?



**For more information please contact:**

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