



# Electronic Dance Music (EDM) Events in Edmonton



## Research Findings July 2018 to February 2020

City of Edmonton, Citizen Services  
[isdresearch@edmonton.ca](mailto:isdresearch@edmonton.ca)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public and business concerns around electronic dance music events date back over two decades in Edmonton. In 2017 and 2018, serious safety issues at events caused a significant draw on Edmonton Police Service and Alberta Health Services Emergency Medical Services. As a result, the City of Edmonton was directed to establish an Electronic Dance Music Events Administrative Advisory Committee. Its purpose was to meet with EDM event industry experts, venue operators, event producers and harm reduction representatives to explore approaches for regulating and enhancing safety at electronic dance music events in Edmonton.

The information in this report presents research conducted to better understand electronic dance music events. From this research, the City of Edmonton has established a permitting system to regulate large-scale electronic dance music events in Edmonton with 1,500 or more attendees.

The City of Edmonton and the Electronic Dance Music Events Administrative Advisory Committee (now the Electronic Dance Music Events Interagency Panel) are thankful to the many people and organizations that provided their perspectives and supported this work to improve safety at large-scale electronic dance music events, including industry professionals, local venues, emergency services and medical professionals, police services, harm reduction agencies and experts, academics, other municipalities, EDM events participants, artists/DJs, staff members and volunteers.

## BACKGROUND

On June 6, 2018, the Edmonton Police Service submitted a report to City Council recommending a moratorium on electronic dance music (EDM) events in Edmonton. This recommendation was in response to a recent spike in medical transfers and presentations at hospital emergency rooms from large-scale EDM events that negatively impacted police and emergency medical service levels throughout the rest of the city. Instead of proceeding with a moratorium, City Council directed administration to:

1. Meet with venue operators, electronic dance music event organizers and other stakeholder agencies to discuss further harm reduction strategies for electronic dance music events and other mechanisms for improving the safety of these events; including an ongoing administrative advisory group.
2. Explore the effectiveness of all approaches (Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, etc.) for regulating electronic dance music events and raves from other jurisdictions and provide possible improvements to these approaches.

City of Edmonton administration formed an integrated EDM Events Administrative Advisory Committee to work on the Council motions.

City of Edmonton	Citizen Services department	Civic Events and Festivals, Community and Recreation Facilities
		Integrated Strategic Development
		Public Safety Compliance Team
		Community Standards and Neighbourhoods
	Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development department	Development and Zoning Services, Business Licencing
	Office of the City Manager	Law
	Communications and Public Engagement department	Integrated Marketing Communications Engagement
Edmonton Police Service		
Alberta Health Services	Emergency Medical Services	

## RESEARCH APPROACH

### Consultation & Research Methods

The Strategic Design section of Integrated Strategic Development, Citizen Services, led research for the Council directed motions to improve safety at electronic dance music (EDM) events in Edmonton by providing an objective research approach to the project work.

Through the research process, it was noted that safety at large-scale EDM events in Edmonton had been a long-standing concern as the issue had repeatedly been brought before City Council for over 20 years (since 2000).

A comprehensive research approach was undertaken from July 2018 to February 2020. This included extensive consultation and engagement with industry professionals, venues, emergency services, medical professionals, harm reduction agencies and EDM events participants/attendees (i.e. participants, artists/DJs, staff members, volunteers). The research included qualitative research, quantitative research and observational/field research. This report provides an overview of the findings from all aspects of the research process with perspectives from more than 2,300 people. The exploratory research process included:

- Stakeholder sessions (*3 sessions with 24 participants*)
- Interviews (*24 interviews with 40 people*)
- Focus/conversation groups (*3 groups with a total of 23 EDM events participants*)
- Events data from venues of interest from January 2016 to February 2020:
  - On-site medical services presentations
  - Transports to the hospital by Alberta Health Services (including severity category of condition when transported)
  - Event ejections that required Edmonton Police Service (EPS) interaction
  - EPS arrests
- Municipalities survey (*9 responses*)
- Participant/attendee survey (*2,240 responses*)
- Observational/field research (i.e. attendance at EDM events and informal interviews at events from September 2018 to February 2020)
- Environmental scanning
- Participation in the EDM Events Administrative Advisory Committee (from July 2018 to February 2020)

## RESEARCH SUMMARY

There was a largely positive response with the engagement and consultation for the EDM events research, including a large number of responses for the online participant/attendee survey. Throughout the research process, people were highly engaged to provide their insights and feedback with the purpose of enhancing safety at these events and with a desire for wider systems change. There was a general acknowledgment of the reality that people choose to engage in high-risk behaviours at these events. It was also noted that prohibition is not the solution, but that the implementation of harm reduction measures, including education and risk mitigation, can improve and have an overall positive impact on the safety of patrons, staff, volunteers and the public.

The strength of this work was the collaboration of the interagency working group and the collective experience and wisdom brought to the table. This included listening and learning to understand the current state from a multitude of perspectives including the EDM community and subject matter experts, as well as through considering the desired state for large-scale EDM events in Edmonton. A Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens was applied to this work.

The process resulted in developing and drafting the regulations and reasonable practices, with decisions based on data and evidence from the research process. In the development of the bylaw and permit applications, there was transparency throughout the process - five stakeholder sessions and updates were held (between July 2018 and November 2019) and iterations were made where possible from the consultations and wider engagement.

### **Wider Societal Issues**

Many people that were a part of the research process believed that issues with drugs and alcohol, sexual assault, sexual harassment and harassment are wider societal issues that are not just specific to large-scale electronic dance music events. This finding came through

many different aspects of the research process, including the stakeholder sessions, interviews (with industry professionals, venues, emergency services, medical professionals, harm reduction agencies), focus groups, a municipalities survey and the participant/attendee survey.

### **EDM Events Industry**

Edmonton's official population on April 1, 2019, was 972,223 and the population has increased by 72,776 since the last Municipal Census in 2016. Edmonton is considered to be a young city, and the demographics of the patrons attending EDM events are also reflective of this, with 74% of the survey participants between the ages of 18 to 29 years. Industry representatives in Edmonton indicated that there is a positive economic benefit from the EDM event industry. In 2019, the economic impact for three events over six days at two venues (the Edmonton EXPO Centre and the Edmonton Convention Centre) was approximately \$1.9 million. Information for a third venue in Edmonton is not available. Electronic dance music is a growing, global industry - people travel all over the world to attend EDM events and people also travel to Edmonton to participate in EDM events. Nearly nine in ten respondents to the participant/attendee survey plan to attend large-scale EDM events in the future. The research conducted with industry professionals showed a desire to further grow the EDM events industry in Edmonton.

### **EDM Events Culture and Experiences at Events**

The research found that there is a strong culture with EDM participants. Participants expressed experiencing a sense of community at these events, and that events are inclusive/welcoming to many diverse groups. The research indicated that participants at these events are generally not violent (this was a view expressed by participants, staff, volunteers and emergency services). There are many socially desirable elements about the events including looking out for one another, having fun, being with friends and enjoying the music. However, there is also higher risk behaviour present at these events, in part from the alcohol, drugs and the co-consumption of alcohol and drugs, but also from aspects such as harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Some groups do not experience safety in these spaces in the same way (e.g., safety concerns expressed were higher for women and for those who identified as LGBTQ2S+). Some of the safety issues that came through in the research were due to the nature of the environment (i.e. EDM events have long periods of dancing that can lead to dehydration and overheating), crowded spaces that attract predatory behaviour, and a number of participants expressed concerns with having access to options for getting home safely.

Even with the sensitive and controversial nature of some of the topics for the EDM events research, participants were forthcoming with their feedback, including the interviews, focus groups and survey responses. When responding to the participant survey, respondents were open in their responses, including questions that were optional to answer. This rich feedback allowed the project team the opportunity to gain a valuable understanding of the current state at large-scale EDM events in order to be able to propose further safety interventions for these events in Edmonton.

### **Comparative Feelings of Safety at Events**

Focus group participants reported feeling safe at large-scale and smaller-scale EDM events compared to their feelings of safety at other types of music festivals, concerts or at bars or nightclubs. This was further corroborated through data from the subsequent participant/attendee survey where respondents reported high levels of safety at large-scale EDM events (88% felt safe, somewhat and very) and at smaller scale EDM events (86% felt safe, somewhat and very). Of note from the survey is the significantly lower levels of feeling safe at a bar or nightclub (48% felt safe, somewhat and very). Also noteworthy was that nearly a third (31%) felt unsafe (somewhat and very) at a bar or nightclub, compared to EDM events of large and smaller-scale where 7% and 5% felt unsafe.

### **Alcohol and/or Drug Consumption**

Alcohol and/or drugs (both legal and illicit) are consumed by a majority at large-scale EDM events. From the participant/attendee survey, at large-scale EDM events

- 59% indicated use of both alcohol and drugs
- 19% use alcohol only, and
- 14% use drugs only
- 4% use neither alcohol or drugs
- 4% preferred not to answer

From those respondents that indicated the use of alcohol and/or drugs at large-scale EDM events, most consume during the event:

<i>Note: Of those respondents who indicated that they use alcohol and/or drugs at large-scale EDM events</i>	<b>Alcohol Use</b>	<b>Drug Use</b>
In the hours just before the event	90%	58%
<b>During the event</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>88%</b>
In the hours just after the event	37%	40%

Of the survey respondents that use drugs during large-scale EDM events, the top drugs indicated were ecstasy/MDMA (92%), cannabis (72%), LSD (45%), cocaine (43%), psilocybin (39%), ketamine (29%) and MDA (20%). Of those that use drugs at large-scale EDM events, the majority (65%) indicated that they had taken more than one type of drug at the same event. Nearly all (97%) educate themselves on the potential effects/side effects/interactions of the drugs they plan to take. More than half (59%) test their drugs, but almost all (96%) would test their drugs if substance testing was available. Just less than one in three (29%) had a negative experience (e.g., vomiting, overheating, unconsciousness or overdose) just before, during or just after a large-scale EDM event. At an event, if they experienced a negative experience from taking drugs, most (90%) would go to a friend for help. The other most frequent mentions of where they would seek help were from first aid/medical services (81%) or a harm reduction agency (66%). This was followed by event staff (31%), event security (25%), police (11%) or other (2%).

Some survey respondents indicated they had difficulty in remembering what happened at an event because of their drinking (19%) or because of the drugs they took (17%). Injuries

caused to either themselves or someone else at a large-scale EDM event because of their behaviour from their drinking were indicated by 4%, or by 6% because of their behaviour from the drugs they took.

Just over one in ten survey respondents (11%) felt like they may have been drugged at a large-scale EDM event (e.g., experiencing a lack of sensations or that their drink had been spiked, etc.).

### **Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment**

One notable finding from the engagement with focus group participants was the acceptance of sexual assault and harassment as a societal issue that exists everywhere, not just at EDM events; this issue is often referred to as ‘rape culture’. As defined on the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton website, rape culture is “*a society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse*” (Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, n.d. <https://sace.ca/learn>). This behaviour was noted by focus group participants as more prevalent in bars and nightclubs.

Due to the sensitive nature of questions on the survey, questions about harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment were optional to answer. However, a high percentage (89%) of respondents elected to answer the optional questions. Just less than half (46%) had personal experiences of harassment, physical violence, unwanted sexual behaviour or sexual harassment at large-scale EDM events, and two-thirds (66%) had witnessed experiences.

Of those that had *personal experiences*, the most frequently mentioned experiences were of sexual assault and sexual harassment:

- 29% Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against you repeatedly)
- 21% Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks or genitals
- 20% Unwanted attention (e.g., aggressively being “hit on”, followed or stalked)
- 17% Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments)

For *witnessed experiences*, the most frequently mentioned experiences were:

- 47% Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against you repeatedly)
- 33% Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments)
- 33% Unwanted attention (e.g., aggressively being “hit on”, followed or stalked)
- 29% Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks or genitals
- 20% Other physical violence (not related to race or sexuality)
- 19% Other verbal harassment (not related to race or sexuality)

Of those with personal experiences, most indicated that the perpetrator was a stranger (91%). Of survey respondents who told someone at the event about their personal experience, the majority told a friend (68%) or event security staff (16%). Of those who

witnessed an incident, just over half (52%) told someone, usually a friend (44%) or event security staff (28%).

### **Harm Reduction Approaches**

All of the best practice harm reduction approaches were desired by most survey respondents (84% to 99%) to be available at large-scale EDM events, including:

- 99% Free water
- 97% On-site medical services
- 96% Chill spaces (areas to go when feeling overstimulated/anxious)
- 93% Drug information
- 92% Substance/drug testing
- 90% Signage and communications about drug and alcohol safety
- 90% Safe spaces (sanctuary/non-judgemental spaces)
- 90% Bystander intervention (trained people roaming to intervene with participants who need help)
- 86% Amnesty bins (for safe disposal of unwanted drugs)
- 85% Sexual assault or harassment information
- 84% Signage and communications about harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment

### **Approaches from Other Municipalities**

All of the cities that responded to the municipalities' survey had regulations that applied to EDM events, but these regulations are not necessarily specific to EDM events. Similarly, a number of the municipalities surveyed have instituted oversight or advisory groups, but these groups were not necessarily specific to EDM events. A review process for applications for large-scale EDM events takes place in other jurisdictions, and a number of strategies are employed to mitigate negative impacts from events including unified command, the use of private medical services, meetings with event organizers, and providing transportation options.

### **Incident Data Analysis (Medical Services and Police Services)**

Alberta Health Services - Emergency Medical Services and Edmonton Police Service incident data were analyzed for large-scale EDM events between January 2016 and February 2020. Incident data was compared to before and after the June 2018 Council Committee directed motion to research ways to improve event safety and event producers' voluntary implementation of elevated safety practices. This analysis conveyed a marked decrease in hospital transports for both "serious/life-threatening when transported" and "stable when transported" as well as a decrease in event ejections requiring Edmonton Police Service interactions.

Presentation to on-site medical services at EDM events increased in this time period. The research found that on-site medical resources (with an appropriate level of care) should be made available and used to assess and treat event attendees on-site, as required, rather than transporting to the hospital unless absolutely necessary.

Incident data from future events will continue to be monitored.

## BYLAW 19166 - ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC EVENT BYLAW

As a result of the research, and the various internal and external engagement activities, the City of Edmonton has developed Bylaw 19166 to regulate electronic dance music events and improve safety at these events in Edmonton.

On February 19, 2020, [Bylaw 19166 Electronic Dance Music Event Bylaw](#) was approved. The new bylaw will require organizers to:

- Apply for and obtain a permit from the City of Edmonton to operate an electronic dance music event with 1,500 or more attendees
- Have a valid City of Edmonton Event Production business licence
- Provide attendees with unrestricted access to a supply of fresh water at no cost
- Provide attendees with unrestricted access to a “chill space” area where noise, light temperature, crowding and other stimuli are reduced
- Provide a dedicated space for an incident command post (for medical, police and security)
- Submit an event deposit for the permit at least 14 days before the event

With the permit application, the applicant must submit four ***Event Control Plans***:

1. **Medical Plan:** outlines the medical response plan for the event that includes, but is not limited to, the number of medical staff on-site, their shift schedules and their qualifications.
2. **Safety / Security Plan:** outlines the emergency response plans for any security incidents and includes information such as patron numbers, site layout, ingress, circulation, egress and crowd management plans (line up, searches, prohibited items, crowd movement and security), entry requirements, emergency evacuation plans and smoking area.
3. **Patron Welfare Plan:** outlines patron welfare strategies related to harm reduction (drug education), safer spaces (patron conduct and education and information related to sexual assault and harassment), and festival health (patron well being, ear protection, post-event transportation strategy).
4. **Noise Control Plan:** outlines how the event will control the impact to surrounding communities if the event is outside or the venue is within close proximity of residential areas.

## EDM EVENT APPLICATION & PERMIT APPROVAL PROCESS

Event Applications and Control Plans will be reviewed by the newly formed ***Electronic Dance Music Events Interagency Panel*** which replaces the EDM Events Administrative Advisory Committee and includes representation from the City of Edmonton, Alberta Health Services - Emergency Medical Services and Edmonton Police Service. The Panel will provide advice and guidance to the City Administration, Community Standards and Neighbourhoods, who will be responsible for issuing EDM Events permits as of March 1, 2020, as per Bylaw 19166.

Panel members will continue to meet with event producers and venues pre- and post-events; collect, monitor and analyze event incident data; and meet with stakeholders to discuss permitting processes, trends and reasonable best practices. Further research and engagement are also planned for late 2020/early 2021 to assess the impact of this work.

## APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT / ATTENDEE SURVEY RESULTS**

### ***"PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AT LARGE-SCALE EDM EVENTS"***

#### **Background**

The City of Edmonton's Citizen Services' branches of Integrated Strategic Development and Community and Recreation Facilities, together with the Electronic Dance Music (EDM) Events Administrative Advisory Committee developed a survey for participants/attendees of large-scale (over 1,000 people) electronic dance music (EDM) events. The participant/attendee survey was built upon feedback received during the exploratory research conducted prior to the survey.

#### **Survey Distribution**

The online survey was promoted in a number of ways.

- City of Edmonton's social media accounts via Facebook and Twitter, as well as on edmonton.ca/surveys
- To all of the stakeholders and interviewees, some of whom also pushed the survey out to their networks (this included industry, producers, venues, harm reduction companies, medical professionals, academics, etc.)
- City of Edmonton's Women's Initiative/Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton committee and NextGen committee
- Participants from the three focus/conversation groups
- Jurisdictional contacts who participated in our municipalities' survey
- Posters and handbills at the December 28, 2018 'Get Together' EDM event
- The survey link was also provided in media coverage [City of Edmonton launches public survey in effort to improve rave safety](#) (however, there were errors in the article as the survey was developed and opened prior to the incidents referred to in the article - the survey opened December 14, 2018).

#### **Who Participated**

The survey included responses from EDM participants, artists/DJs, staff members, volunteers and other attendees. As EDM events are very inclusive spaces attended by a wide range of people who may experience safety in different ways, questions were also included about gender and sexual orientation to better understand elements of safety from various perspectives.

The online survey was available from December 14, 2018 to January 11, 2019. A total of 2,240 completed surveys were received. The surveys took an average of 23 minutes to complete.

The survey contained four mandatory questions (conditional logic moved respondents to relevant questions based on their answers to these mandatory questions):

- Whether the respondent had ever attended a large-scale EDM event
- Future plans for attendance
- Type of attendance (participant, artist/DJ, staff member, volunteer, other)
- Use of alcohol and/or drugs at large-scale EDM events

All other survey questions were optional to answer.

Due to the sensitivity of the issues and explicit nature of the questions asked on the survey (including alcohol use, drug use, harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment, harm reduction, etc.), the following caution appeared on many pages of the survey:

NOTE: This survey explores highly sensitive issues related to perceptions of safety at large-scale electronic dance music events. These issues may be triggering and/or may be offensive to some people. The information will be used to help inform the next steps toward improving our systems and processes for holding events in Edmonton.

The survey also included messaging about contacting local support agencies and/or local law enforcement if the respondent needed support:

NOTE: In Edmonton, the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE) provides trauma-informed services and information to people who have experienced sexual violence. If you need support, please contact their 24-Hour Support & Info Line Number: (780) 423-4121.

Of note is that respondents were honest and open in their responses, especially considering the sensitive nature of the questions. In addition, there was a high completion rate of the questions which were optional to answer.

## HIGH-LEVEL SURVEY RESULTS

Survey dates: December 14, 2018 to January 11, 2019 (just over 4 weeks)

Responses: 2,240 completed surveys

\*\*NOTE: These are the high-level results, more detailed results follow

### Demographics of Survey Respondents

- Age category: Majority of the respondents were between the ages of 18 to 29 years old (44% were 18 to 24, and 30% were 25 to 29) (n=2,199)
- Gender: Majority of the respondents were female (54% female, 44% male and 2% identified as Two-Spirit, non-binary, other or prefer not to answer) (n=2,207)
- Sexual orientation: Majority of the respondents identified as heterosexual (79% heterosexual, 18% LGBSTQ2S+ (combined categories of gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, queer, Two-Spirit) and 3% identified as other or prefer not to answer) (n=2,182)
- Residence: Majority of respondents (72%) were from Edmonton and the surrounding areas of Sherwood Park, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Fort Saskatchewan and Leduc, 11% from Calgary and surrounding area, 8% from elsewhere in Alberta, 7% from elsewhere in Canada and 1% from outside of Canada) (n=2,207)

### Large-Scale EDM Events Attendance

- Attendance at a large-scale EDM event [*This was a required question*]: 92% had attended a large-scale (i.e. more than 1,000 people) electronic dance music (EDM) event/rave or festival (n=2,240)
- Type of attendance at large-scale EDM events [*Multiple responses allowed*] [*This was a required question*]: Majority have attended as a participant (98% have attended as a participant, 18% have attended as volunteers, 14% have attended as staff, 7% have attended as an artist/DJ and 2% have attended as "other") (n=2,051)  
*[For those didn't attend as a participant, but as at least one of artist/DJ, staff, volunteer or other, they were skipped to the Non-Participant section that begins with Harassment, Sexual Assault and Harassment - witnessed experiences]*
- Number of large-scale EDM events attended: The majority (56%) of respondents had attended one to ten events (30% attended one to five events and 26% attended six to ten events). The most frequently mentioned number of events attended was ten (14% of the responses) (n=2,006)
- How long they've been attending: 42% of those who responded have been going to large-scale EDM events for five years or more (n=1,937)
- When attending as a participant: 32% usually attend with four or five people, followed by an additional 31% who usually attend with two to three people (n=1,993)
- Reasons for attending as a participant [*Multiple responses allowed*]: Most frequently mentioned responses were for the music (96%), to have fun (92%), to dance (90%) to see the DJ/artists (89%), to be with friends (84%) and for the overall experience (83%). (n=1,999)
- Future attendance [*This was a required question*]:
  - Of those who have previously attended any large-scale EDM events, 89% plan to attend large-scale EDM events in the future (n=2,051)

- Of those who previously haven't attended any large-scale EDM events, 56% are not planning to attend any in the future (n=195)

### **Comparative Feelings of Safety at Events** (n=1,994 to 1,996)

- Respondents reported high levels of feeling safe at large-scale EDM events (88% felt safe, somewhat and very) and at smaller scale EDM events (86% felt safe, somewhat and very).
- Respondents reported significantly lower levels of feeling safe at a bar or nightclub (48% felt safe, somewhat and very); and nearly a third (31%) felt unsafe (somewhat and very) at a bar or nightclub, compared to EDM events of large and smaller-scale where 7% and 5% reported feeling unsafe.

### **Use of Alcohol and/or Drugs at Large-Scale EDM Events** *[This was a required question]* (n=1,999)

- Majority of respondents (59%) reported use of both alcohol and drugs
- Additionally, 19% use alcohol only, 14% use drugs only, 4% use neither alcohol or drugs and 4% preferred not to answer.

*[For those that reported "neither alcohol or drugs" or "prefer not to answer", they were skipped over the subsequent alcohol and drug use sections]*

#### **Alcohol Use**

- When going to a large-scale EDM event, 90% of respondents reported using alcohol in the hours just before the event (n=1,543) and 87% of respondents reported using alcohol during the event (n=1,545). The majority of respondents (60%) reported no use of alcohol in the hours just after the event (n=1,509.)
- Typical number of alcoholic drinks consumed at an event: 31% typically consume five or six drinks, followed by an additional 29% who consume three or four drinks and 16% typically consume seven to nine drinks (n=1,561).
- Difficulty in remembering what happened at the event because of their drinking: 80% answered "no" to ever being unable to remember what happened at the event because of their drinking and 19% answered "yes" (n=1,560)
- Injuries from their drinking behaviour: 95% said "no" to either injuring themselves or others because of their behaviour from their drinking at a large-scale EDM event, whereas 4% said "yes" (n=1,561)

#### **Drug Use**

- When going to a large-scale EDM event, 58% of respondents report using drugs in the hours just before the event (n=1,416) and 88% of respondents report using drugs during the event (n=1,435). In addition, 59% of respondents report no use of drugs in the hours just after the event. (n=1,394)
- Difficulty in remembering what happened at the event because of the drugs they took: 82% answered "no" to ever being unable to remember what happened at the event because of the drugs that they took and 17% answered "yes" (n=1,484)
- Injuries from their behaviour from the drugs they had taken: 93% said "no" to either injuring themselves or others because of their behaviour from the drugs that they had taken at a large-scale EDM event, whereas 6% said "yes" (n=1,456)

- Types of drugs taken [*Multiple responses allowed*]: The most frequently indicated drugs consumed by participants when attending a large-scale EDM event were ecstasy/MDMA (92%), cannabis (72%), LSD (45%), cocaine (43%), psilocybin (39%), ketamine (29%) and MDA (20%) (n=1,444)
- Usage of more than one type of drug: 65% indicated that they had taken more than one type of drug at the same large-scale EDM event (n=1,449)
- Education about the drugs they will be taking: 97% educate themselves on the potential effects/side-effects/interactions of the drugs they plan to take (n=1,455)
- Testing of their drugs: 59% test their drugs (n=1,437) and 96% would test their drugs if substance testing was available (n=1,450).
- Negative experiences from using drugs: 70% indicated never having had a negative experience from taking drugs (e.g., vomiting, overheating, unconsciousness, or overdose) just before, during or just after a large-scale EDM event, whereas 29% said "yes" (n=1,453)
  - If they had a negative experience from taking drugs while they were at a large-scale EDM event [*Multiple responses allowed*]: Most (90%) would go to a friend for help, followed by those that would go to first aid/medical services (81%) and those that would go to a harm reduction agency (66%) (n=1,388).

#### **Experiences of Being Drugged** [*Note: This question was asked to all respondents*]

- Most (87%) didn't feel like they'd ever been drugged (e.g., experiencing a lack of sensations, that their drink had been spiked, etc.) at a large-scale EDM event, but 11% said "yes" (n=1,368)

#### **Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment - Personal Experiences**

- Personal experiences of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment at a large-scale EDM event: 54% of respondents indicated "I have never experienced harassment, physical violence, unwanted sexual behaviour or sexual harassment at a large-scale EDM event" (n=1,777)
- Types of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment personally experienced [*Multiple responses allowed*]: The respondents who answered this question most frequently experienced unwelcome forceful dancing (29%), groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals (21%), unwanted attention (e.g., aggressively being "hit "on, followed or stalked) (20%) or unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments) (17%) (n=1,777)
- For those who experienced harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment at an event, in most cases (91%) the perpetrator was a stranger (n=803)
- Telling people about what they'd experienced:
  - 64% of respondents told someone (e.g., a friend or reporting it to an authority) about what they'd experienced but 29% did not tell anyone (n=796)
  - At the event, if they told someone about what they'd experienced, the majority told a friend (68%). Event security staff (16%) were the next most frequently indicated response.
  - After the event, if they told someone about what they'd experienced, the majority told a friend (70%), followed by family members (15%).

- Acknowledgement/appropriate addressing of the experience
  - When they told someone about what they'd experienced, respondents were asked if they believed the harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment was acknowledged and appropriately addressed, less than half (47%) said "yes", 24% said "no", 23% said "don't know/not sure", and 6% said "other". (n=504)
- Accountability of the perpetrator
  - If the experience was reported to security or an authority, respondents were asked if the person(s) responsible for the harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment was held accountable, 65% said "N/A - it was not reported to security or an authority", 13% said "no", 11% said "yes" and 11% said "don't know/not sure". (n=491)

### **Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment - Witnessed Experiences**

- Witnessed experiences of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment at a large-scale EDM event: 34% of respondents indicated "I have never witnessed harassment, physical violence, unwanted sexual behaviour or sexual harassment at a large-scale EDM event" (n=1,780)
- Types of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment witnessed [*Multiple responses allowed*]: Of the respondents who answered this question, the most frequently witnessed experiences were of unwelcome forceful dancing (47%), unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (33%), unwanted attention (e.g. aggressively being "hit "on, followed or stalked) (33%) and groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals (29%). (n=1,780)
- Telling people about what they'd witnessed:
  - 52% told someone (e.g., a friend or reporting it to an authority) about what they'd witnessed but 35% didn't tell anyone (n=1,187)
  - If it was at the event that they told someone about what they'd witnessed, the majority told a friend (44%). Event security staff (28%) were the next most frequently indicated response.
  - If it was after the event that they told someone about what they'd experienced, the majority told a friend (58%), followed by family members (14%).
- Acknowledgement/appropriate addressing of the witnessed experience
  - When they told someone about what they'd witnessed, respondents were asked if they believed the harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment was acknowledged and appropriately addressed, less than half (46%) said "yes", 20% said "no", 31% said "don't know/not sure", and 4% said "other" (n=603)
- Accountability of the perpetrator
  - If what was witnessed was reported to security or an authority, respondents were asked if the person(s) responsible for the harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment was held accountable, 33% said "N/A - it was not reported to security or an authority", 32% said "don't know/not sure", 22% said "yes" and 11% said "no" (n=586)

## **Harm Reduction Approaches**

- Awareness: Respondents were most aware of on-site medical services (94%), chill spaces (86%), free water (84%), safe spaces (72%) and signage and communications about drug and alcohol safety (64%) at large-scale EDM events.
- Usage: All of the harm reduction approaches were scored highly (from 84% to 99%) for potential usage or for what respondents would like to see available at large-scale EDM events. The top five that scored the highest were: free water (99%), on-site medical services (97%), chill spaces (96%), drug information (93%) and substance/drug testing (92%).

## **Attendance As Non-Participants (Artists, DJs, Staff, Volunteer, Other)**

There were **52 responses** from people who were not participants but who were artists/DJs staff, volunteer or "other". They were asked for their perspectives as "non-participants" on a selection of questions regarding safety at these events.

- Witnessed experiences of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment (Non-Participants): 26% of respondents indicated, "I have never witnessed harassment, physical violence, unwanted sexual behaviour or sexual harassment at a large-scale EDM event" (n=47)
- Types of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment witnessed (Non-Participants) [*Multiple responses allowed*]: Of the respondents who answered this question, they witnessed experiences of unwelcome forceful dancing (49%), unwanted attention (e.g. aggressively being "hit "on, followed or stalked) (43%), and flashing (i.e. of genitals) (40%).
- Harm Reduction (Non-Participants): 77% to 96% indicated that they would like to see the leading harm reduction approaches available, with the highest ratings for having: free water (96%), on-site medical services (96%), drug information (90%), amnesty bins (88%), chill spaces (86%) and drug and alcohol safety signage and communications (86%).

## DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

There was a large response to the online survey - Perceptions of Safety at Large-Scale EDM Events Survey by participants and attendees including artists/DJs, staff & volunteers, with 2,240 completed surveys received.

**Note:** In interpreting the results, respondents were NOT asked about EDM events that were specific to Edmonton.

Large-scale EDM events were defined in the survey as events where attendance was over 1,000 people.

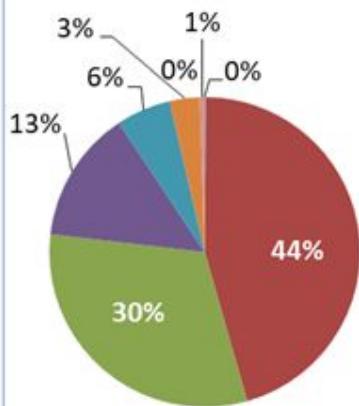
**It is important to note that analysis of gender and sexual orientation results found notable differences for a number of questions. These differences demonstrate that different groups of people experience safety in these spaces inequitably.**

## Demographics of Survey Respondents

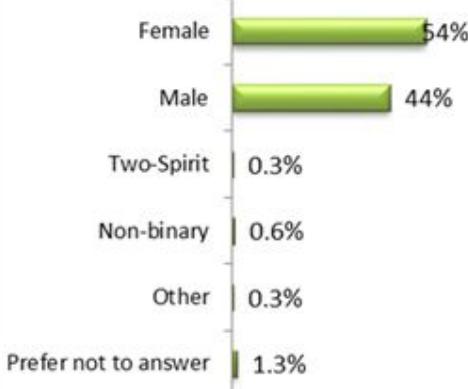
- Nearly three-quarters of the survey respondents (74%) were between 18 and 29 years old (44% were 18 to 24 years old and 30% were 25 to 29 years old).
- More females (54%) responded to the survey.
- The majority of the survey respondents were heterosexual (79%), with an additional nearly one in five (18%) who identified as LGBTQ2S+.
- The majority of survey respondents (72%) were from Edmonton and the surrounding area. As many EDM participants travel around Canada and the world to attend EDM events, information about where respondents live was useful to know. Survey participants from outside of Canada included respondents from China, Spain, Netherlands, Ireland and the U.S. (including Denver, Seattle, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York, Houston, Idaho, Montana and Wisconsin).

**Age (n=2,199)**

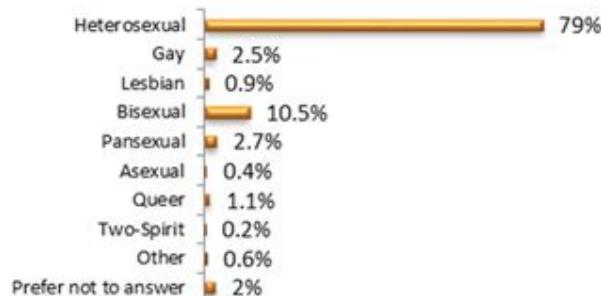
- Under 18
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 29
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 39
- 40 to 44
- 45 to 65+
- Prefer not to answer



**Gender (n=2,207)**

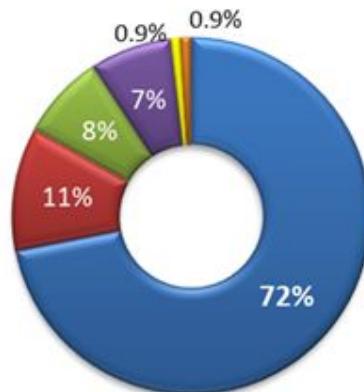


**Sexual orientation (n=2,182)**



**Residence (n=2,207)**

- Edmonton and surrounding area (Sherwood Park, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Fort Saskatchewan, Leduc)
- Calgary and surrounding area (Airdrie, Chestermere)
- Elsewhere in Alberta
- Elsewhere in Canada, other than Alberta
- Outside of Canada



\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

## Large-Scale EDM Events Attendance

Of the 2,240 responses to the survey, 92% had attended a large-scale (i.e. more than 1,000 people) electronic dance music (EDM) event/rave or festival. *[Note: This was a required question]*

Have you ever attended a large-scale (i.e. more than 1,000 people) electronic dance music (EDM) event/ rave or festival? (n=2,240)	
Yes	92%
No	8%
Don't Know/ Not Sure	1%

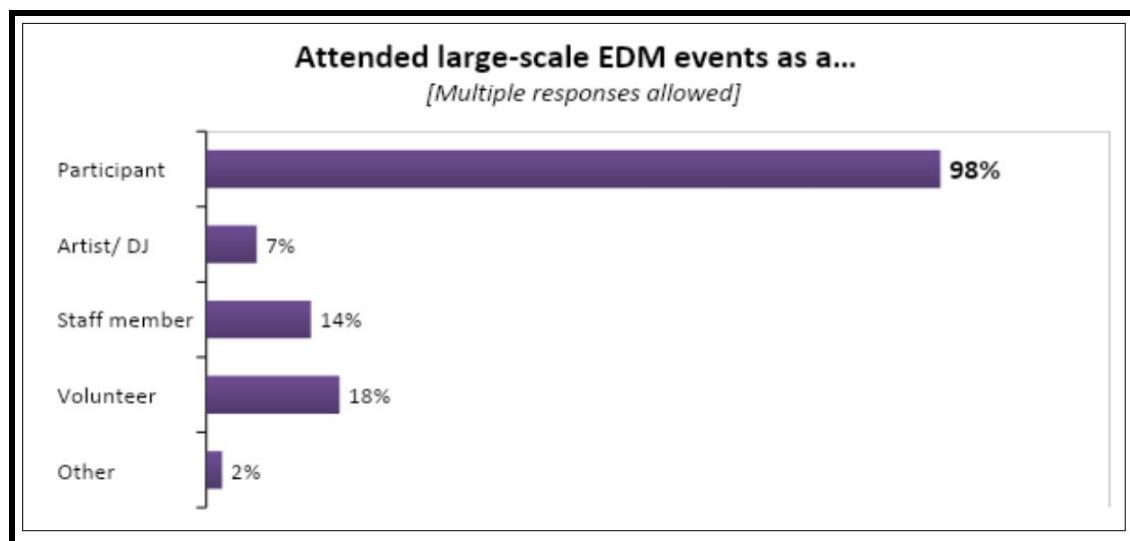
\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

### Type of Attendance

Nearly all of the survey respondents who had attended a large-scale EDM event/rave or festival (n=2,051) attended as a participant (98%). Respondents also indicated being volunteers (18%), staff (14%) and/or artists/DJs (7%). Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

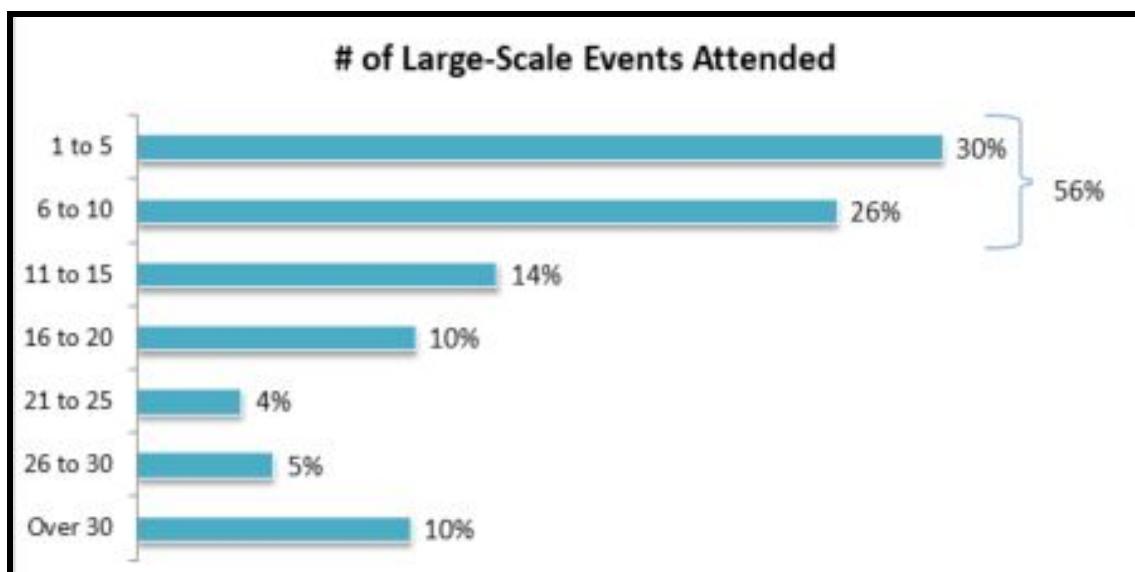
- o There were 52 responses from people that were not participants (i.e. artists/DJs, staff, volunteers or "other")

Males were more likely than females to be artists/DJs (12% vs. 2%), staff (17% vs. 11%) or volunteers (19% vs. 16%).



### **Number of Large-Scale EDM Events Attended**

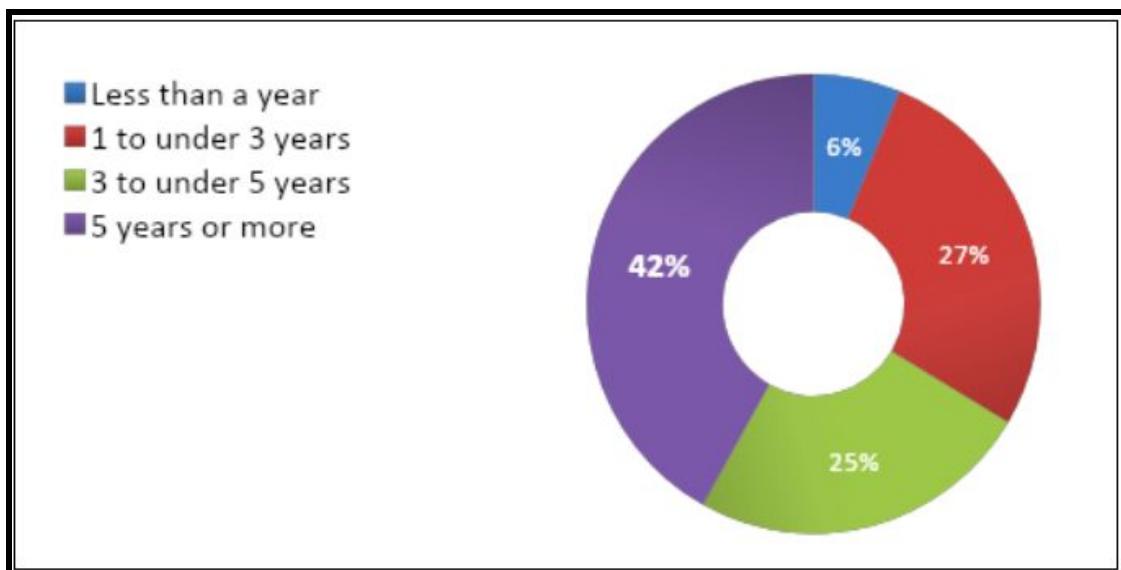
Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents who answered this question (n=2,006) had attended one to five large-scale events, and just over a quarter (26%) had attended six to ten events. The most frequently mentioned number of events attended was ten large-scale EDM events (14% of the respondents).



\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

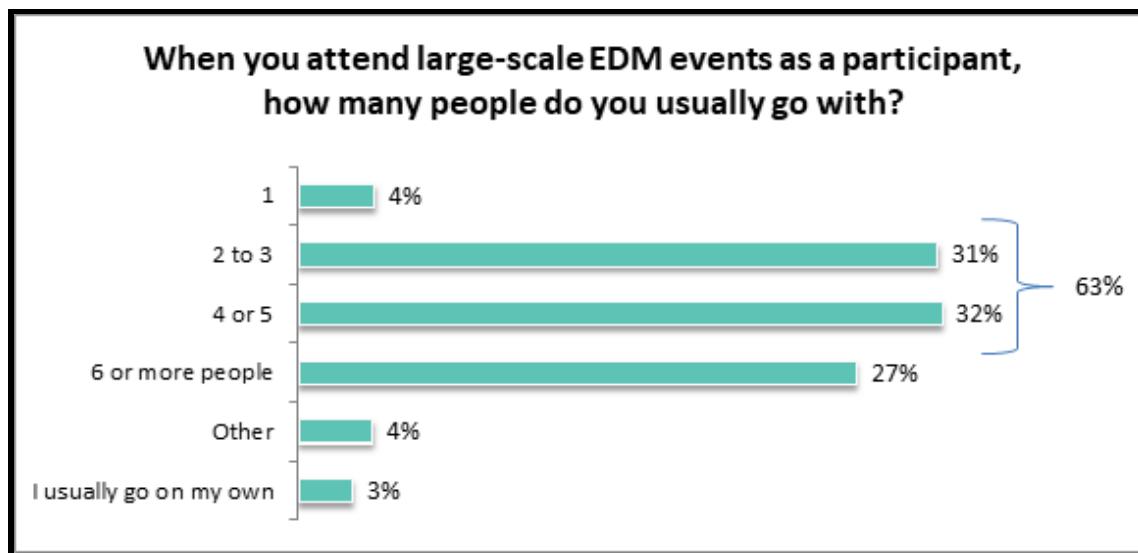
### **How Long They've Been Attending**

Forty-two percent (42%) of those who responded to this question (n=1,937) have been going to large-scale EDM events for five years or more. Males were more likely than females to have been attending for 5+ years (49% vs. 34%).



### **How Many People Do They Go With?**

When attending as a participant (n=1,993), most respondents (63%) usually attend in a group of two to five people: 32% usually attend with four or five people, followed by an additional 31% who usually attend with two to three people.

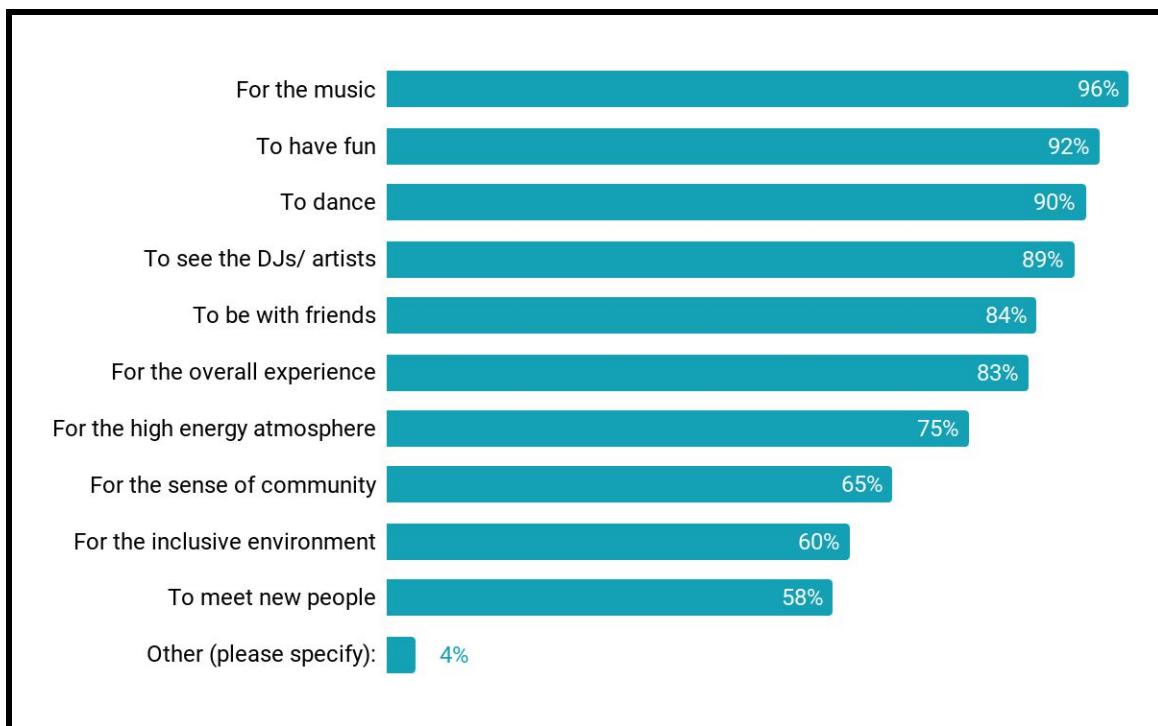


\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

## Why Do They Participate?

The top three reasons for attending as a participant (n=1,999) were:

- o For the music (96%)
- o To have fun (92%)
- o To dance (90%)



## Notable Differences in the Results:

- Females were more likely than males to say they attend to dance (94% vs. 86%)
- LGBTQ2S+ were more likely to participate than heterosexuals for the following reasons:
  - o For the sense of community (74% vs. 64%)
  - o For the inclusive environment (68% vs. 58%)
  - o To meet other people (63% vs. 56%)

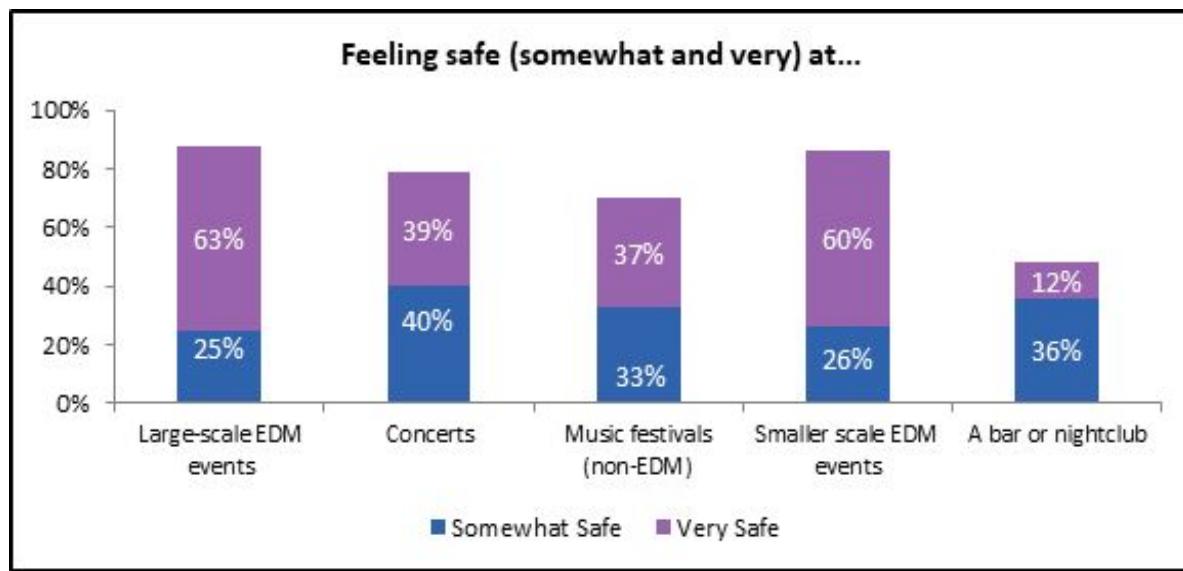
## Future Attendance *[Note: This was a required question]:*

Of those who have previously attended a large-scale EDM event (n=2,051), most (89%) plan to attend large-scale EDM events in the future. Of those who previously haven't attended any large-scale EDM events (n=195), 56% are not planning to attend any in the future.

## Comparative Feelings Of Safety At EDM & Non-EDM Events

A large majority of participants at EDM events, both large and smaller-scale reported feeling safe – 88% feel safe (somewhat and very) at large-scale EDM events, and 86% feel safe (somewhat and very) at smaller-scale EDM events. These were higher reported perceptions of safety than indicated for concerts (79% safe) or music festivals (71% safe). Significantly lower perceptions of safety were indicated at bars/nightclubs (48% safe), with notably nearly one in three (31%) reporting feeling unsafe at bars/nightclubs.

	Unsafe (somewhat and very)	Neither safe nor unsafe	Safe (somewhat and very)	Don't Know/ Not Sure
<b>Large-scale EDM events</b> (n=1,995)	7%	5%	<b>88%</b>	0.3%
Concerts (n=1,996)	7%	11%	<b>79%</b>	3%
Music festivals (non-EDM) (n=1,996)	8%	11%	<b>71%</b>	11%
Smaller-scale EDM events (n=1,995)	5%	7%	<b>86%</b>	2%
A bar or nightclub (n=1,994)	<b>31%</b>	20%	<b>48%</b>	0.6%



\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

### **Notable Differences in the Results:**

Notable differences at large-scale EDM events were with the reported feelings of safety between females and males as well as between heterosexual and LGBTQ2S+:

- Females were *less likely* than males to say they felt safe at large-scale EDM events (87% vs. 90% safe) and *more likely* to say they felt unsafe (8% vs. 5% unsafe)
- Females were *less likely* than males to say they felt safe at non-EDM music festivals (68% vs. 73% safe) and *more likely* to say they felt unsafe (9% vs. 6%)
- Females were *less likely* than males to say they felt safe at a bar or nightclub (43% vs. 55% safe) and *more likely* to say they felt unsafe (37% vs. 24%)
- LGBTQ2S+ were *less likely* than heterosexual people to say they felt safe at a bar or nightclub (39% vs. 50% safe) and *more likely* to say they felt unsafe (41% vs. 29%)

Analysis of the 472 open-ended comments about safety about any of the above types of events found that a number of respondents said they felt that large-scale EDM events are safe (182 respondents), or safer than at bars or nightclubs (46 respondents). Respondents made many comments about how most large-scale EDM events take physical safety and medical health very seriously. They commented on the security or police presence, medical staff, and harm reduction, as well as overall organization, as aspects of EDM events that make them feel safe.

***"As a young woman, I feel safer at an EDM event because of the people and security around. People care about others and take care of everyone when at a bar people don't care about others that much."***

***"I find EDM events to be safer and happier compared to other large concerts, the culture is one of love and including people."***

***"Overall, I've always felt safe at raves that I've been to. The people who end up in the hospital or unsafe put themselves into those positions. The drug tests are a fantastic addition and should be explored further."***

The respondents who said they felt safer at EDM events than at bars, concerts or nightclubs noted that alcohol, which is more prevalent at bars, makes people more violent and aggressive. Respondents commented that the risk of being sexually assaulted or harassed at bars and nightclubs was greater than at an EDM event. Specific responses indicated that over-serving alcohol and bad bouncers contributed to feeling unsafe at bars and nightclubs. Some respondents indicated that alcohol causes more safety problems than drug use (31 respondents), regardless of the venue.

***"A large scale EDM event has a great atmosphere and other than the odd trouble maker I feel there is a much lower chance of fighting than at a normal bar on any given night."***

***"At music festivals/EDM shows, I never have to worry about being hurt, taken advantage of or anything of that nature. At bars, I'm constantly having to watch my surroundings and worry about the people around me to make sure that me/the people I care about aren't hurt in any way."***

*"I feel the least safe at bars/nightclubs because every time I have been sexually harassed or otherwise deliberately made to feel uncomfortable, it occurred at a bar or nightclub and never at a large scale EDM event."*

*"Personally, I find bars and nightclubs to be, BY FAR, the most unsafe & unpredictable environments out of these options."*

*"Generally speaking, I've found people at events where alcohol is served to be a bit more disorderly than at events where it's either prohibited or BYOB (e.g., some music festivals). Events where alcohol is the primary intoxicant (i.e. where other drugs are not common/expected) also tend to be a bit more rowdy, in my experience."*

Some respondents noted specific actions that could be taken to improve safety. Twenty-eight respondents made suggestions related to security, often specifically about ineffective body searches. There were comments about how easy it is to bring in illegal substances or weapons, and that if the initial pat-downs were more effective, that might reduce issues, especially with weapons. Some comments noted the differences in security between specific events or venues (31), while others made comments based on the size of an event.

*"I believe that at any event and nightclubs should do a more thorough check of pat-downs and bag checks to search for weapons."*

*"Large scale EDM shows - we were barely even patted down, bags barely looked at. Better searches will help with safety in regards to drugs."*

*"Safety depends a lot on the level of security, the venue and the style of event."*

Many respondents reacted positively to the harm reduction approaches (32) that take place as EDM events, such as testing of drugs (28), safe spaces or chill spaces, medical staff and security that is not there to arrest you. Many respondents would like to see these harm reduction approaches enhanced or improved upon.

*"Harm reduction needs to be in place so these events can become safer. Drug testing needs to be an option. Raves will happen either way so let's make them safer and keep them going so they don't become underground again."*

*"Having harm reduction in place helps everyone, especially young people new to the scene."*

While some respondents (15) reported that they "never feel unsafe", almost the same number (13) acknowledged that there is always some risk in going out, no matter where it is, especially if there is going to be drugs and/or alcohol involved or that safety is different for females.

*"I've never once seen a fight at an EDM event, both large and small."*

*"As an early 20's female going out anywhere at any time becomes unsafe."*

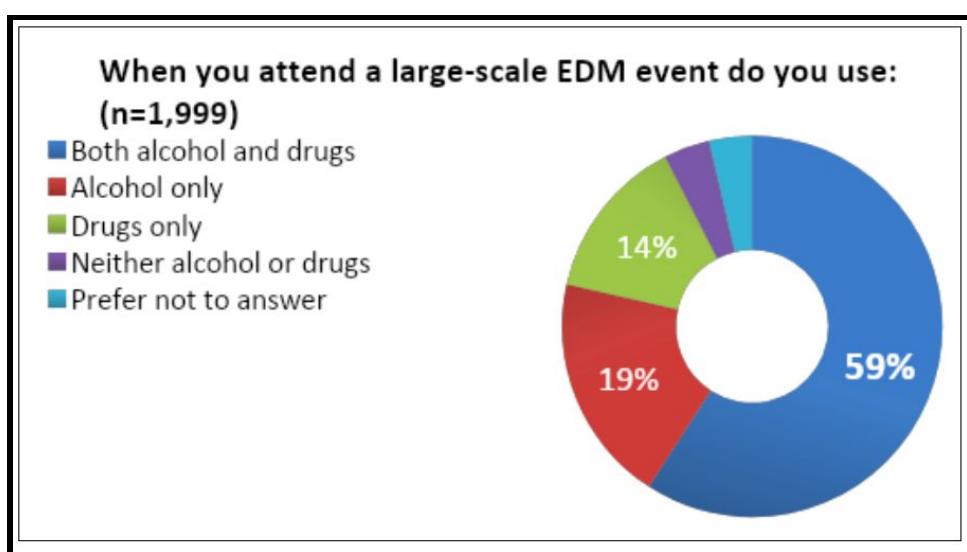
*"Craziness happens at every large scale event. Assaults, overdoses of both alcohol and drugs. If you plan on banning one style of music event then you are going to have to ban all public performances."*

Some respondents indicated that it is when they are leaving EDM events (as well as other events) and waiting for a ride, Uber, transit or getting to their parking lot, is the time that they feel the least safe. This is because they are on the city streets, and no longer within the venue.

## Alcohol And/Or Drug Usage At Large-Scale EDM Events

*[Note: This was a required question]*

Participants were asked about their consumption of alcohol and drugs when they attend large-scale EDM events. Nearly six in ten (59%) said they use both alcohol and drugs, a further nearly one in five (19%) use alcohol only, and 14% use drugs only.



When you attend a large-scale EDM event do you use... ? (n=1,999)	%	Count
	%	Count
Both alcohol and drugs	59%	1,182
Alcohol only	19%	388
Drugs only	14%	278
Prefer not to answer	4%	78
Neither alcohol or drugs	4%	73

**Therefore, when considering combined categories:**

**79% of the respondents reported consuming alcohol at large-scale EDM events**

**73% of the respondents reported consuming drugs at large-scale EDM events**

\*\*\*Limitation: The question did not ask whether the consumption of drugs was of illicit or recreational drugs.

\*\*\*If the respondent indicated that they didn't use alcohol or drugs, or if they preferred not to answer, they were skipped over the sections about alcohol and drug use.

#### **Notable Differences in the Results:**

There were notable differences between female and male respondents:

- Females were more likely than males to use alcohol only (21% vs. 18%)
- Males were more likely to use both alcohol and drugs (62% vs. 57%)

### **Alcohol Use At Large-Scale EDM Events**

**\*\*\*NOTE: ALCOHOL USE QUESTIONS WERE ONLY ASKED TO THOSE THAT INDICATED THEY USE EITHER "ALCOHOL ONLY" OR "BOTH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS" WHEN THEY ATTEND A LARGE SCALE-EDM EVENT. QUESTIONS WERE OPTIONAL TO ANSWER.**

#### **Alcohol Usage Timeframes**

Participants were asked about their alcohol consumption timeframes around large-scale EDM events. Of the respondents that indicated they used alcohol when they attend large-scale EDM events (79% indicated they consume alcohol), most consumed alcohol in the hours just before the event (90%) and during the event (87%). The majority (60%) did not use alcohol in the hours just after the event. However, of the 37% that consumed alcohol after the event, males were more likely than females to consume alcohol after the event (41% vs. 33%).

<b>When you go to a large-scale EDM event, do you usually use alcohol...</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't Know/ Not Sure</b>
In the hours just before the event (n=1,543)	<b>90%</b>	9%	1%
<b>During the event</b> (n=1,545)	<b>87%</b>	12%	1%
In the hours just after the event (n=1,509)	37%	<b>60%</b>	3%

### **Amount of Alcoholic Drinks Consumed**

When participants go to a large-scale EDM event, the majority of respondents (60%) consume between three and six drinks. This includes alcoholic drinks consumed in the hours just before the event, during the event and in the hours right after the event.

Typical amounts of alcoholic drinks consumed when going to a large-scale EDM event (n=1,561)	
0	1%
1 or 2	11%
<b>3 or 4</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>5 or 6</b>	<b>31%</b>
7 to 9	16%
10 or more	13%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

### **Difficulty Remembering What Happened at the Event Because of Their Drinking**

Most respondents (80%) answered "no" to ever being unable to remember what happened at the event because of their drinking but just less than one in five (19%) answered "yes" to being unable to remember what happened (294 responses of "yes").

After attending a large-scale EDM event, have you ever been unable to remember what happened at the event because of your drinking? (n=1,560)	
Yes	19%
<b>No</b>	<b>80%</b>
Don't Know/ Not Sure	2%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

### **Injuries From Their Drinking Behaviour**

Most respondents (95%) said they had not either injured themselves or others because of their behaviour from their drinking at a large-scale EDM event.

Have you or someone else you attended a large-scale EDM event with been injured because of your behaviour from your drinking? (n=1,561)	
Yes	4%
<b>No</b>	<b>95%</b>
Don't Know/ Not Sure	1%

## Drug Use At Large-Scale EDM Events

\*\*\*NOTE: DRUG USE QUESTIONS WERE ONLY ASKED TO THOSE THAT INDICATED THEY USE EITHER "DRUGS ONLY" OR "BOTH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS" WHEN THEY ATTEND A LARGE SCALE-EDM EVENT. QUESTIONS WERE OPTIONAL TO ANSWER.

### Drug Usage Timeframes

Participants were asked about the timeframes for drug usage around large-scale EDM events. Of the respondents that indicated they used drugs at large-scale EDM events (73% of respondents indicated drug consumption), over half (58%) said they consumed drugs in the hours just before the event and 88% consumed drugs during the event. The majority (59%) did not use drugs in the hours just after the event. Males were more likely than females to consume drugs before the event (61% vs. 55%) and after the event (42% vs. 36%).

When you go to a large-scale EDM event, do you usually use drugs...	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Not Sure
In the hours just before the event (n=1,416)	<b>58%</b>	40%	1%
<b>During the event</b> (n=1,435)	<b>88%</b>	11%	1%
In the hours just after the event (n=1,394)	40%	<b>59%</b>	2%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

### Difficulty Remembering What Happened at the Event Because of the Drugs They Took

Most respondents (82%) answered "no" to ever being unable to remember what happened at the event because of the drugs they took.

After attending a large-scale EDM event, have you ever been unable to remember what happened at the event because of the drugs that you took? (n=1,454)	
Yes	17%
<b>No</b>	<b>82%</b>
Don't Know/ Not Sure	1%

### Injuries From Their Behavior From the Drugs They Took

Most respondents (93%) said "no" to either being injured themselves or injuring someone else because of their behaviour from the drugs they had taken at a large-scale EDM event, whereas 6% said "yes" (92 responses).

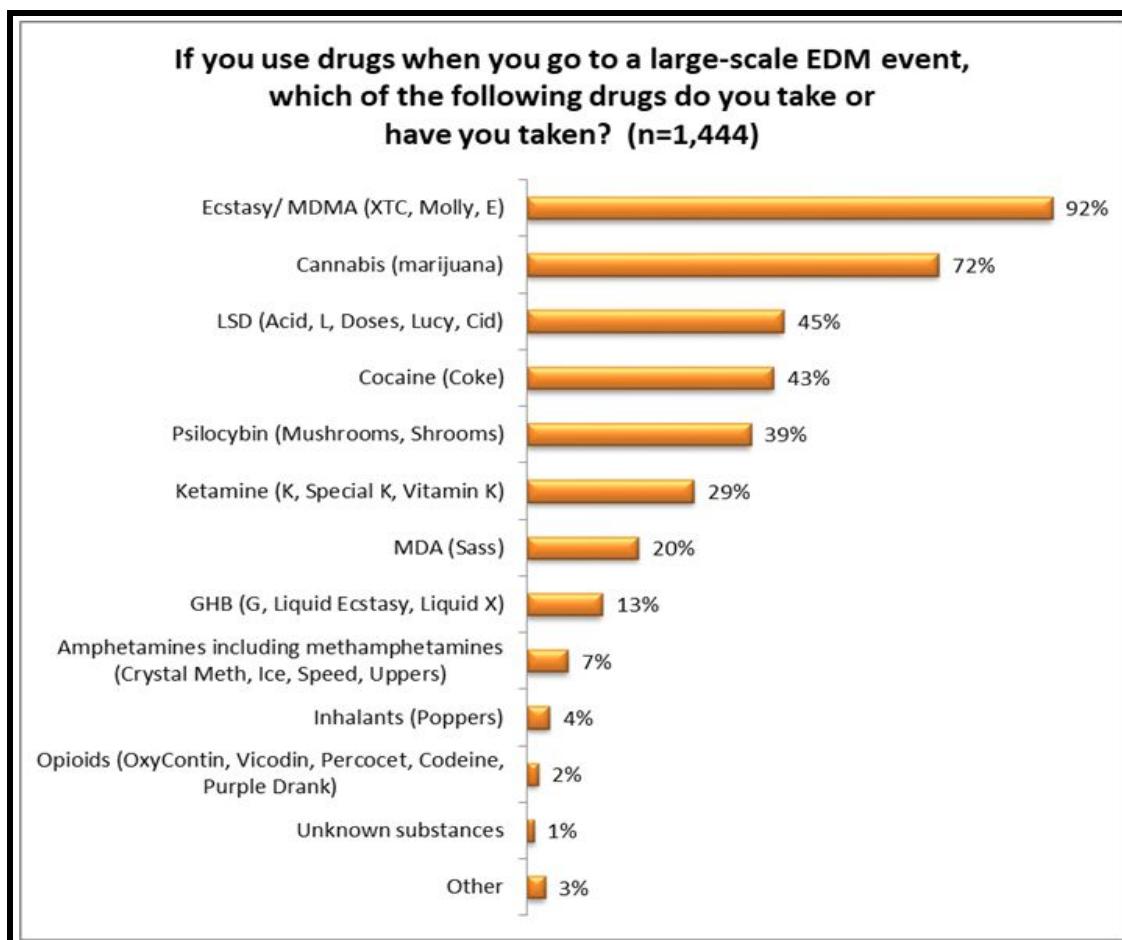
Have you or someone else you attended a large-scale EDM event with been injured because of your behaviour from the drugs you had taken? (n=1,456)	
Yes	6%
<b>No</b>	<b>93%</b>
Don't Know/ Not Sure	1%

## Types of Drugs Taken

The five most frequently indicated drugs consumed by participants when attending a large-scale EDM event were ecstasy/MDMA (92%), cannabis (72%), LSD (45%), cocaine (43%) and psilocybin (39%).

Males were more likely than females to take the following drugs: cannabis (76% vs. 67%), LSD (51% vs. 40%), psilocybin (43% vs. 35%), MDA (24% vs. 15%) and amphetamines (9% vs. 5%).

\*\*\*Limitation: The question did not ask whether the consumption of drugs was of illicit or recreational drugs. The question on alcohol and drug use was mandatory, but the option of "Prefer not to answer" and "Neither alcohol nor drugs" were available. *Of the respondents who answered that they took "Both alcohol and drugs" or "drugs only", or "alcohol only" (total of 1,848 respondents), there were 449 that indicated "alcohol only", or "both alcohol and drugs" and indicated cannabis only but no other drugs, or "drugs only" and indicated cannabis only. Therefore, of those that provided responses, there were 24% who consume legal substances (with a rough assumption that 76% consume illegal substances).*



### **Usage of More Than One Type of Drug**

Sixty-five percent (65%) indicated they had taken more than one type of drug at the same large-scale EDM event. Males were more likely than females to take more than one type of drug at the same event (71% vs. 59%).

<b>Have you ever taken more than one type of drug at the same large-scale EDM event?</b> (n=1,449)	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>65%</b>
No	35%
Don't Know/ Not Sure	1%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

### **Education About the Drugs They Will Take**

Nearly all of the respondents who use drugs educate themselves on the potential effects/side-effects/interactions of the drugs they plan to take (97%).

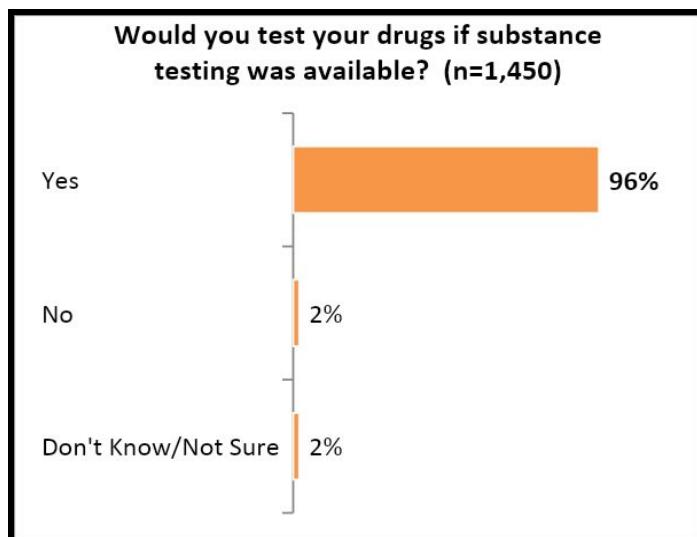
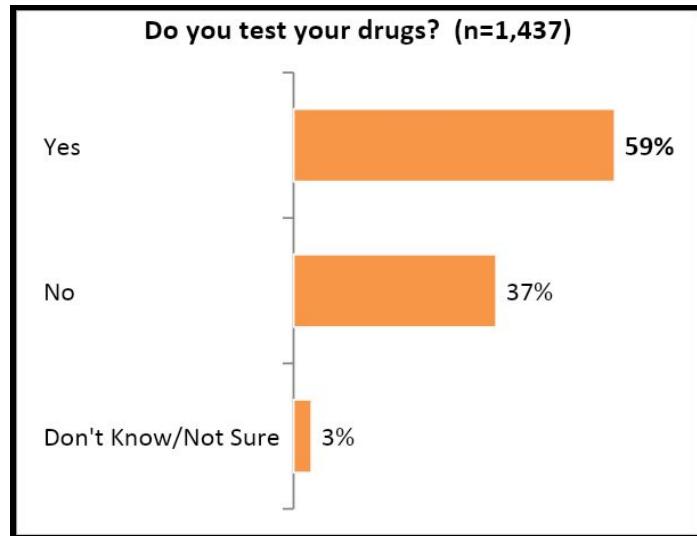
<b>When you plan to take drugs, do you educate yourself on the potential effects/ side-effects/ interactions of the drugs?</b> (n=1,455)	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>97%</b>
No	2%
Don't Know/ Not Sure	1%

Further analysis is recommended for the following open-ended question:  
*"Where do you go to find information about drugs that you might take or have taken?"*

## Testing of Drugs

More than half (59%) test their drugs but almost all (96%) said they would test their drugs if substance testing was available. Males were more likely than females to test their drugs (65% vs. 55%).

\*Note: A question on substance/drug testing was also asked to all respondents later in the survey (see Harm Reduction Approaches section) and 92% would like to see substance/drug testing available.



### **Negative Experiences From Using Drugs**

Although 70% indicated they have never had a negative experience from taking drugs (e.g., vomiting, overheating, unconsciousness or overdose) just before, during or just after a large-scale EDM event, nearly three in ten (29%) said “yes”. Females were more likely than males to indicate having a negative experience from taking drugs (32% vs. 25%).

<b>Just before a large-scale EDM event, during the event or just after the event, have you ever had a negative experience from taking drugs (e.g., vomiting, overheating, unconsciousness or overdose)? (n=1,453)</b>	
Yes	29%
<b>No</b>	<b>70%</b>
Don't Know/ Not Sure	1%

If they had a negative experience from taking drugs while they were at a large-scale EDM event, most (90%) would go to a friend for help. Females were more likely than males to go to a friend for help (92% vs. 89%), but males were more likely than females to seek help from first aid/medical services (83% vs. 79%) or event staff (34% vs. 28%).

<b>If you had a negative experience from taking drugs while you are at a large-scale EDM event, who would you go to for help? [Multiple responses allowed] (n=1,388)</b>	
<b>Friend</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>First aid/ medical services</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Harm reduction agency</b>	<b>66%</b>
Event staff	31%
Event security	25%
Police	11%
Other	2%

## **Experiences Of Being Drugged At Large-Scale EDM Events**

*[Note: This question was asked to all respondents]*

At a large-scale EDM event, most respondents (87%) did not feel like they'd ever been drugged, although over one in ten (11%) said "yes".

\*Of note is that females were more likely (i.e. twice more likely) than males to indicate they felt like they had been drugged at a large-scale EDM event (14% vs. 7%)

<b>When you were at a large-scale EDM event, have you ever felt like you had been drugged (e.g., you experienced a lack of sensations, you felt your drink had been spiked, etc.)? (n=1,368)</b>	
Yes	11%
<b>No</b>	<b>87%</b>
Don't Know/ Not Sure	3%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

## **Harassment, Sexual Assault And Sexual Harassment At Large-Scale EDM Events**

Each page of the harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment section contained the following warning.

**NOTE: This survey explores highly sensitive issues related to perceptions of safety at large-scale EDM events. These issues may be triggering and/or may be offensive to some people. The information will be used to help inform the next steps toward improving our systems and processes for holding events in Edmonton.**

Skip over any questions that you do not want to answer.

In addition, support information was included on two pages of the survey:

**Please contact a sexual assault support agency in your area and/or local law enforcement if you need support.**

**In Edmonton, the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE) provides trauma-informed services and information to people who have experienced sexual violence.**

**If you need support, please contact their 24-Hour Support & Info Line Number: (780) 423-4121**

### **Definitions - Harassment, Sexual Assault & Sexual Harassment**

The survey included the following definitions:

**Harassment** is a form of discrimination. It includes any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates you. Harassment occurs when someone

- makes unwelcome remarks or jokes about your race, religion, sex, age, disability or any other of the grounds of discrimination;
- threatens or intimidates you because of your race, religion, sex, age, disability or any other of the grounds of discrimination;
- makes unwelcome physical contact with you, such as touching, patting, or pinching.

(Canadian Human Rights Commission <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/what-harassment-1>)

**Sexual assault** is any unwanted sexual contact without voluntary consent.

**Sexual harassment** includes unwanted sexual behaviour that does not include touching of sexual body parts.

Consent is a voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity.

(Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton <https://www.sace.ca/learn/>)

## **Personal Experiences and Witnessed Experiences (Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Harassment)**

From those that responded to these questions,

**46% have experienced and 66% have witnessed harassment, physical violence, unwanted sexual behaviour or sexual harassment at a large-scale EDM event.**

**\*Note:** Responses below are colour coded according to the definitions provided from the [Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton](#) and the [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)

Sexual assault	Sexual harassment	Harassment		
Of the respondents that had personal or witnessed experience(s) of harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment, the following are what was experienced: <i>[Multiple responses allowed]</i>		Personal Experience (n=1,777)		Witnessed Experience (n=1,780)
<b>Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against you repeatedly)</b>	1	29%	1	47%
<b>Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals</b>	2	21%	4	29%
<b>Unwanted attention (e.g., aggressively being "hit on", followed or stalked)</b>	3	20%	3	33%
<b>Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments)</b>	4	17%	2	33%
<b>Other verbal harassment (not related to race or sexuality)</b>	5	8%	6	19%
Unwanted kissing	6	6%	7	15%
Flashing (i.e. of genitals)	7	6%	8	13%
<b>Other physical violence (not related to race or sexuality)</b>	8	5%	5	20%
Homophobic/biphobic verbal harassment	9	4%	10	11%
Racially based verbal harassment	11	3%	9	11%
Unwanted sexualized photography or recording	12	2%	11	7%
Transphobic verbal harassment	13	1%	12	7%
Unwanted sexual penetration while conscious or awake	14	0.9%	17	1%
Racially based physical violence	15	0.8%	13	5%
Homophobic/ biphobic physical violence	16	0.6%	14	4%
Unwanted sexual penetration while unconscious or asleep	17	0.3%	18	1%
Transphobic physical violence	18	0.1%	15	3%
Other	10	3%	16	2%

## **Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment - Personal Experiences**

The following are the five most frequently indicated personal experiences of harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment:

(Note: There were 18 response categories, detailed results are found in the previous table).

- 29% Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against you repeatedly)
- 21% Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals
- 20% Unwanted attention (e.g., aggressively being "hit on", followed or stalked)
- 17% Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments)
- 8% Other verbal harassment (not related to race or sexuality)

## **Notable Differences in the Results:**

Notable differences (in descending order of indicated occurrence) of personal experiences at a large-scale EDM event include:

- Notably more females than males indicated they had personally experienced harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment (54% vs. 34%)
- Females were more than 2X as likely than males to indicate they personally experienced:
  - Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against them repeatedly) (38% vs. 16%)
  - Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks or genitals (28% vs. 12%)
- Females were more than 3X as likely than males to indicate they personally experienced:
  - Unwanted attention (e.g., aggressively being "hit on", followed or stalked) (29% vs. 8%)
  - Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments) (25% vs. 7%)
  - Unwanted kissing (9% vs. 3%)
- Males were more likely than females to indicate they personally experienced other physical violence (not related to race or sexuality) (6% vs. 4%)
- Males were more likely than females to indicate they personally experienced homophobic or biphobic verbal harassment (4% vs 2%)
- Males were more likely than females to indicate they personally experienced racially-based verbal harassment (4% vs. 2%)
- Notably more people that identified as LGBTQ2S+ indicated they had personally experienced harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment compared to heterosexuals (59% vs. 42%)
- LGBTQ2S+ were more likely to indicated they personally experienced the following compared to heterosexuals
  - Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against them repeatedly) (40% vs. 26%)
  - Unwanted attention (e.g., aggressively being "hit on", followed or stalked) (31% vs. 19%)
  - Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks or genitals (31% vs. 12%)

- Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments) (25% vs. 15%)
- Unwanted kissing (10% vs. 5%)

### **Perpetrator - Personal Experiences**

For most of the respondents who personally experienced harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment at an event, the perpetrator was a stranger (91%). Females were more likely than males to indicate the perpetrator was a stranger (94% vs. 87%).

<b>When you experienced harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment, who was the perpetrator? [Multiple responses allowed] (n=803)</b>	
<b>Stranger</b>	<b>91%</b>
I don't know (i.e. I wasn't able to figure out who the perpetrator was)	11%
Acquaintance	10%
Friend	3%
Romantic partner	2%
Other	2%

### **Telling Anyone About Their Personal Experience(s)**

Sixty-four percent (64%) told someone (e.g., a friend or reporting it to an authority) about what they'd experienced, but 29% did not tell anyone (231 of the people who responded did not tell anyone). Females were more likely than males to tell someone about what they'd experienced (68% vs. 59%).

<b>Did you tell anyone about what you'd experienced (e.g., a friend or by reporting it to an authority)? (n=796)</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>64%</b>
No, I didn't tell anyone	29%
Don't Know/ Not Sure	7%

### **Who They Told About Their Personal Experience(s)**

At the event, if they told someone about what they'd experienced, the majority told a friend (68%). Event security staff (16%) were the next most frequently indicated response. After the event, the majority told a friend (70%), followed by family members (15%).

Who they told about what they'd experienced	At the event	After the event
<b>Friend</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>70%</b>
Family member	3%	<b>15%</b>
Event security staff	<b>16%</b>	5%
Police	1%	1%
Harm reduction staff	6%	4%
Medical services	2%	2%
Social services agency (e.g., sexual assault centre)	0%	1%
Other event staff (e.g., bartender)	3%	2%
Other	1%	2%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

Further analysis is recommended for the following open-ended question: "*What would make you feel comfortable telling someone about what happened?*"

### **Acknowledgement and Appropriate Addressing of What They'd Experienced**

When they told someone about what they'd experienced, respondents were asked if they believed the harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment was acknowledged and appropriately addressed, less than half (47%) said "yes" and nearly one quarter (24%) said "no".

<b>When you told someone about your experience(s), do you believe the harassment, sexual harassment or sexual assault was acknowledged and appropriately addressed? (n=504)</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>47%</b>
No	24%
Don't Know/ Not Sure	23%
Other	6%

### **Accountability of the Perpetrator - Personal Experiences**

When respondents were asked if the person(s) responsible for the harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment was held accountable, 65% said: "N/A - it was not reported to security or an authority". Females were more likely than males to indicate they did not report what they experienced to security or an authority (69% vs. 58%).

<b>If reported to security or an authority, was the person(s) responsible for the harassment, sexual harassment or sexual assault held accountable? (n=491)</b>	
<b>N/A - it was not reported to security or an authority</b>	<b>65%</b>
Yes	11%
No	13%
Don't Know/ Not Sure	11%
Other	1%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

Further analysis is recommended for the open-ended question: Additional comments about what they'd experienced.

### **Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment - Witnessed Experiences**

The following are the five most frequently indicated witnessed experiences of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment:

*(Note: There were 18 response categories, detailed results are in the table on page 38).*

- 47% Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against you repeatedly)
- 33% Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments)
- 33% Unwanted attention (e.g., aggressively being "hit on", followed or stalked)
- 29% Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals
- 20% Other physical violence (not related to race or sexuality)

### **Notable Differences in the Results:**

Notable differences in witnessed experiences at a large-scale EDM event include:

- Females were notably more likely than males to indicate they witnessed:
  - Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments) (35% vs. 30%)
  - Unwanted kissing (16% vs. 12%)
- Males were notably more likely than females to indicate they witnessed :
  - Other physical violence (not related to race or sexuality) (23% vs. 18%)
  - Flashing (i.e. of genitals) (16% vs. 11%)
- LGBTQ2S+ were more likely than heterosexuals to indicate they had witnessed experiences of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment (74% vs. 64%)
- LGBTQ2S+ were more likely than heterosexuals to indicate they witnessed:

- o Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against you repeatedly) (54% vs. 45%)
- o Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments) (44% vs. 30%)
- o Unwanted attention (e.g., someone aggressively being “hit on”, followed or stalked) (41% vs. 31%)
- o Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals (34% vs. 27%)
- o Other verbal harassment (not related to race or sexuality) (23% vs. 17%)
- o Unwanted kissing (22% vs. 13%)
- o Homophobic/biphobic verbal harassment (21% vs. 8%)
- o Racially based verbal harassment (18% vs. 9%)
- o Flashing (i.e. of genitals) (16% vs. 12%)
- o Transphobic verbal harassment (15% vs. 5%)
- o Unwanted sexualized photography or recording (11% vs. 6%)
- o Homophobic/biphobic physical violence (9% vs. 3%)
- o Racially based physical violence (8% vs. 4%)

### **Telling Anyone About What They'd Witnessed**

Just over half (52%) told someone (e.g., a friend or reporting it to an authority) about what they'd witnessed but 35% didn't tell anyone. LGBTQ2S+ were more likely than heterosexuals to tell anyone about what they'd witnessed (60% vs. 50%).

<b>Did you tell anyone about what you'd witnessed (e.g., a friend or by reporting it to an authority? (n=1,187)</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>52%</b>
No, I didn't tell anyone	<b>35%</b>
Don't Know/ Not Sure	13%

### **Who They Told About What They'd Witnessed**

At the event, if they told someone about what they'd experienced, they were most likely to indicate they told a friend (44%) or event security staff (28%). After the event, the majority told a friend (58%).

<b>Who they told about what they'd witnessed</b>	<b>At the event</b>	<b>After the event</b>
<b>Friend</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>58%</b>
Family member	2%	<b>14%</b>
Event security staff	<b>28%</b>	13%
Police	5%	3%
Harm reduction staff	8%	5%
Medical services	5%	2%
Social services agency (e.g., sexual assault centre)	0%	1%
Other event staff (e.g., bartender)	6%	4%
Other	2%	2%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

Further analysis is recommended for the following open-ended question: "*What would make you feel comfortable telling someone about what you had witnessed?*"

### **Acknowledgement and Appropriate Addressing of What They'd Witnessed**

When they told someone about what they'd witnessed, respondents were asked if they believed the harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment was acknowledged and appropriately addressed, less than half (46%) said "yes", 20% said "no", and an additional 31% said "don't know/not sure".

<b>When you told someone what you'd witnessed, do you believe the harassment, sexual harassment or sexual assault was acknowledged and appropriately addressed? (n=603)</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>46%</b>
No	20%
Don't Know/ Not Sure	<b>31%</b>
Other	4%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

### **Accountability of the Perpetrator - Witnessed Experiences**

If what was witnessed was reported to security or an authority, respondents were asked if the person(s) responsible for the harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment was held accountable, one third (33%) said "N/A - it was not reported to security or an authority", 32% said "don't know/not sure", 22% said "yes" and 11% said "no".

<b>If reported to security or an authority, was the person(s) responsible for the harassment, sexual harassment or sexual assault held accountable? (n=586)</b>	
<b>N/A - it was not reported to security or an authority</b>	<b>33%</b>
Yes	22%
No	11%
Don't Know/ Not Sure	32%
Other	2%

Further analysis is recommended for the following open-ended questions:

- Additional comments about what they'd witnessed
- Ideas for prevention of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment

## Harm Reduction Approaches At Large-Scale EDM Events

### Awareness of Harm Reduction Approaches

Respondents were most aware of on-site medical services (94%), chill spaces (86%), free water (84%), safe spaces (72%) and signage and communications about drug and alcohol safety (64%) at large-scale EDM events.

Awareness	Yes	No	DK/ NS	N/A
<b>On-site medical services</b> (n=1,975)	<b>94%</b>	4%	2%	0%
<b>Chill spaces</b> (areas to go when you are feeling overstimulated/ anxious) (n=1,982)	<b>86%</b>	10%	4%	0%
<b>Free water</b> (n=1,977)	<b>84%</b>	13%	3%	0%
<b>Safe spaces</b> (sanctuary/ non-judgmental spaces) (n=1,982)	<b>72%</b>	18%	9%	1%
<b>Signage and communications about drug and alcohol safety</b> (n=1,973)	<b>64%</b>	25%	9%	1%
Drug information (n=1,974)	61%	28%	10%	1%
Bystander intervention (trained people roaming to intervene with participants who may need help) (n=1,977)	49%	38%	12%	1%
Sexual assault or harassment information (n=1,975)	45%	34%	20%	2%
Signage and communications about harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment (n=1,970)	42%	37%	19%	2%
Amnesty bins (for safe disposal of unwanted drugs) (n=1,980)	40%	44%	15%	2%
Substance/drug testing (n=1,977)	39%	48%	11%	3%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

LGBTQ2S+ compared to heterosexuals were notably more aware of the following:

- Sexual assault or harassment information (50% vs. 44%)
- Signage and communications about harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment (47% vs. 41%)

### Potential Usage or Harm Reduction Approaches They'd Like Available

All of the leading harm reduction approaches were scored highly (from 84% to 99%) for potential usage or for what respondents would like to see available at large-scale EDM events. The top five that scored the highest were: free water (99%), on-site medical services (97%), chill spaces (96%), drug information (93%) and substance/drug testing (92%).

Would Use or Like to See Available	Yes	No	DK/ NS	N/A
<b>Free water</b> (n=1,959)	<b>99%</b>	0%	0%	0%
<b>On-site medical services</b> (n=1,957)	<b>97%</b>	1%	1%	1%
<b>Chill spaces</b> (areas to go when you are feeling overstimulated/ anxious) (n=1,953)	<b>96%</b>	3%	1%	1%
<b>Drug information</b> (n=1,951)	<b>93%</b>	4%	3%	1%
<b>Substance/drug testing</b> (n=1,949)	<b>92%</b>	3%	3%	2%
Signage and communications about drug and alcohol safety (n=1,947)	90%	5%	4%	1%
Safe spaces (sanctuary/ non-judgmental spaces) (n=1,951)	90%	6%	4%	1%
Bystander intervention (trained people roaming to intervene with participants who may need help) (n=1,942)	90%	4%	5%	1%
Amnesty bins (for safe disposal of unwanted drugs) (n=1,945)	86%	6%	6%	2%
Sexual assault or harassment information (n=1,937)	85%	6%	7%	2%
Signage and communications about harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment (n=1,939)	84%	6%	8%	2%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

### Notable Differences in the Results:

There were notable differences between males and females in terms of awareness and what they would use or like to see available for harm reduction.

More males than females were aware of the following harm reduction approaches:

- Sexual assault or harassment information (49% vs. 41%)
- Signage and communications about harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment (46% vs. 38%)

- Drug information (65% vs. 59%)
- Amnesty bins (for safe disposal of unwanted drugs) (44% vs. 37%)
- Substance/drug testing (44% vs. 35%)

More females than males would use or would like to see the following harm reduction approaches available:

- Chill spaces (areas to go when feeling overstimulated/anxious (97% vs. 94%)
- Safe spaces (sanctuary/non-judgmental spaces) (93% vs. 86%)
- Amnesty bins (for safe disposal of unwanted drugs) (88% vs. 84%)
- Bystander intervention (trained people roaming to intervene with participants who need help) (91% vs. 88%)

### **Other Harm Reduction Approaches**

When asked about other approaches, there were 507 responses. Drug testing (208 responses) was the most frequently mentioned harm reduction practice suggested.

***"I really think having drug testing available and lots of education would be the best harm reduction. You can't stop people from doing drugs but you can give them the right information to make the right choices."***

***"With the ongoing opioid crisis in Canada, non-judgemental drug testing is the most important item on this list. Security at events is too focused on harassing and ejecting people for possession of drugs for personal consumption, which makes partygoers distrustful and drives drug use into secrecy which causes more overdose issues. If people could safely and non-judgmentally test their drugs, this issue would be greatly reduced."***

Providing free or inexpensive water was also a frequently mentioned response. Some responses indicated the importance of cold water, since the rooms are often hot, and people are dancing.

***"Free water. Not out of fountains, but in bottles. Raise the ticket cost to account for it. It's not that difficult and it saves lives!! Also, crank the ventilation. High temps can be a problem."***

***"Proper COLD water supplies. Most water is warm after the first few hours and people usually need to lower their core temperature at some point during the night."***

Harm reduction was mentioned specifically and often mentioned more than one type of activity (e.g., drug testing, water, Naloxone, safe spaces and education). Some respondents mentioned specific organizations or events that have best practices that could be emulated.

***"There are a few great examples of people doing harm reduction around the world. I would reference their work and consult them on nightlife policies. DanceSafe and TRIP for example."***

***"Look at what Shambhala does."***

Some survey respondents indicated that they would like to see more help and support. This can mean having special tents or areas where people can speak to a counsellor or get information on drugs or sexual assault, and some specifically mentioned "bystanders", which are staff or volunteers that are dressed in plain clothes, who roam the dance floor and help anyone in need of assistance, non-judgmentally.

*"I LOVE bystander intervention volunteers. Have seen some lately. I like it because perpetrators aren't fully aware of their locations due to regular clothing etc. Bystander interventioners can easily float around looking like partygoers and are also very proactively willing to check on you if things seem uncomfortable for you from a distance."*

Further analysis is recommended for the following open-ended questions:

- When they feel safe - when preparing to go to an event, during an event, and after leaving an event
- When they feel unsafe - when preparing to go to an event, during an event, and after leaving an event
- Feeling safer
  - What would make them feel safer at large-scale EDM events
  - What would make large-scale EDM events safer for those who identify as... women, men, non-binary, LGBTQ2S+
- Focus areas for more safety efforts (physical areas or times during the event)
- Avoiding going to an event
- Additional comments

## Non-Participant Perspectives At Large-Scale EDM Events

(I.e. Only Attended As Non-Participants – Artists/DJs, Staff, Volunteer)

*There were 52 responses from people who did not go to large-scale EDM events as participants but who identified themselves as artists/DJs, staff, volunteers or "other" - these non-participants were asked for their perspectives on a selection of questions regarding safety at these events.*

### Witnessed Experiences of Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

From those that responded to these questions (those who attended as non-participants),

**74% have witnessed harassment, physical violence, unwanted sexual behaviour or sexual harassment at a large-scale EDM event**

**\*Note:** Responses below are colour coded according to the definitions provided from the [Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton](#) and the [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)

Sexual assault	Sexual harassment	Harassment
Of the respondents that do not attend large-scale EDM events as participants and indicated that they have witnessed harassment, sexual assault or sexual harassment, the following are what was witnessed: <i>[Multiple responses allowed]</i>		<b>Witnessed Experience (n=47)</b>
<b>Unwelcome forceful dancing (e.g., someone rubbing or grinding up against you repeatedly)</b>		<b>49%</b>
<b>Unwanted attention (e.g. aggressively being "hit on", followed or stalked)</b>		<b>43%</b>
<b>Flashing (i.e. of genitals)</b>		<b>40%</b>
<b>Unwanted sexualized language or sexualized verbal harassment (e.g., cat calling, unsolicited body comments)</b>		<b>36%</b>
<b>Other verbal harassment (not related to race or sexuality)</b>		<b>36%</b>
<b>Groping or unwanted touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals</b>		<b>30%</b>
Unwanted kissing		28%
Other physical violence (not related to race or sexuality)		26%
Unwanted sexualized photography or recording		19%
Racially based verbal harassment		19%
Racially based physical violence		19%
Homophobic/biphobic verbal harassment		15%
Transphobic verbal harassment		11%
Unwanted sexual penetration while conscious or awake		4%
Unwanted sexual penetration while unconscious or asleep		2%
Transphobic physical violence		2%
Homophobic/ biphobic physical violence		2%
Other		6%

## Harm Reduction Approaches (Only Attended As Non-Participants)

### Harm Reduction Approaches They'd Like Available

From the survey respondents who did not attend large-scale EDM events as participants, 77% to 96% indicated that they would like to see the leading harm reduction approaches available, with the highest ratings for having: free water (96%), on-site medical services (96%), drug information (90%), amnesty bins (88%), chill spaces (86%) and drug and alcohol safety signage and communications (86%).

What They'd Like Available (Non-Participants)	Yes	No	DK/ NS	N/A
<b>Free water</b> (n=52)	<b>96%</b>	0%	2%	2%
<b>On-site medical services</b> (n=52)	<b>96%</b>	2%	0%	2%
<b>Drug information</b> (n=49)	<b>90%</b>	6%	0%	4%
<b>Amnesty bins</b> (for safe disposal of unwanted drugs) (n=51)	<b>88%</b>	4%	4%	4%
<b>Chill spaces</b> (areas to go when you are feeling overstimulated/ anxious) (n=51)	<b>86%</b>	6%	4%	4%
<b>Signage and communications about drug and alcohol safety</b> (n=49)	<b>86%</b>	4%	6%	4%
Sexual assault or harassment information (n=48)	85%	4%	6%	4%
Substance/drug testing (n=48)	85%	6%	6%	2%
Signage and communications about harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment (n=49)	80%	8%	8%	4%
Bystander intervention (trained people roaming to intervene with participants who may need help) (n=49)	80%	6%	10%	4%
Safe spaces (sanctuary/ non-judgmental spaces) (n=51)	77%	10%	10%	4%

\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

## Overall Safety (Only Attended As Non-Participants)

Further analysis is recommended for the following open-ended questions:

- Additional comments about witnessed experiences of harassment, sexual assault and sexual harassment and ideas for prevention
- What would make large-scale EDM events safer for those who identify as... women, men, non-binary, LGBTQ2S+
- Focus areas for more safety efforts (physical areas or times during the event)
- From their experience, additional comments to make these events safer

## APPENDIX 2: MUNICIPALITIES' SURVEY RESULTS

### Background

A link to an online survey was emailed to a number of jurisdictions. The municipalities survey explored what approaches other jurisdictions have in place for large-scale (over 1,500 attendees) EDM events/raves and the effectiveness of those approaches, such as bylaws, procedures, etc. Responses were received from nine cities that have large-scale EDM events of 1,500+ attendees within the jurisdictions of:

- Seattle, Washington
- Victoria
- Vancouver
- Kelowna
- Winnipeg
- Toronto
- Ottawa
- Montreal
- Halifax

Penticton, Saskatoon, Mississauga and Oakville did not have large-scale EDM events.

### Highlights of Results

- All nine of the cities have regulations for EDM events but the regulations do not seem specific to EDM events.
- Privately owned facilities go through the same regulations in three cities.
- Five cities had large-scale EDM events where the hours go beyond 2 a.m.
- Oversight stakeholder advisory committees or collaborative bodies were utilized in six cities, but don't seem specific to EDM events. These groups are led by special events committees.
- Their review process was provided by a number of cities.
- The most frequently mentioned negative impacts resulting from EDM events were from citizen complaints; this was followed by drug use necessitating advanced medical care and/or hospitalization, alcohol use necessitating advanced medical care and/or hospitalization, co-consumption of drugs and alcohol necessitating advanced medical care and/or hospitalization, sexual assaults, and general injury.
- Six of the cities use the term "harm reduction" in their work.
- Eight of the nine cities indicated the types of approaches used at large-scale EDM events in their jurisdiction. All eight jurisdictions offered chill spaces, safe spaces, sexual assault education, drug education and on-site medical services. Amnesty bins are provided in five of the eight cities, security cameras in four cities, bystander intervention in two cities and scanning/biometric security in two cities.
- Private medical services were utilized for large-scale EDM events in six cities. Medical services provided included emergency care, first aid, Roc Doc, BCAS, St. John's Ambulance, Odyssey Medical and Canadian Ski Patrol. The cost is borne by the event producers, promoters and organizers. Feedback from cities where private medical services were on-site found that these on-site medical interventions lessened the demand for off-site and hospital emergency medical care - the industry has developed and become further established with private medical staff that includes doctors and registered nurses who are able to provide on-site medical care. This

- results in increased medical interactions at the event but decreased medical care off-site.
- Unified Command is used in six cities and is led by private security, RCMP or police. Costs are born by events producers/organizers, the venues, and police.
- Other ideas/best practices were provided for consideration.

## **Experience With and Yearly Numbers of EDM Events**

Experience with EDM events ranged from four to 30+ years. There was a wide range in the number of EDM events that occurred in the year, depending on the size of the event, and ranged from one to 50. Comments included:

- EDM is throughout our club scene.
- Most EDM events are small scale events that happen in night clubs. The larger events are associated with a multi-venue festival.
- Very difficult to calculate - five to ten large scale electronic music festivals in an average year with easily hundreds of live performances that could be deemed electronic music ranging from local acts to international touring acts.
- One large outdoor festival and a number of smaller indoor events.
- Under 1,500 people happen weekly.

## **Involvement / Interaction with Large-Scale EDM Events or Festivals**

Involvement and interaction with large-scale EDM events or festivals within their jurisdiction included:

- Working very closely with events and producing a music safety gathering inspired by issues in the EDM and festival scene.
- Navigation of political minefields and orchestrating permits for large-scale EDM events.
- Working closely with event organizers and the city's internal technical committee to review public safety and nuisance impacts to permit the use of public space for large scale events and collaboratively develop safety, security and harm reduction plans.
- Working with the event organizer or venue management to determine security plans.
- We deploy officers to provide dedicated police presence on a cost recovery basis.
- Direct involvement. Collaborating with organizers and local stakeholders (i.e. police, health, bylaw, businesses, etc.) to identify successes and challenges and address appropriately.
- The office assists event organizers in identifying and obtaining any permits and requirements for their event.
- The City regulates those that occur on City property.
- Our office facilitates the special event permit process. We coordinate the advisory team and their review of / participation in the event.
- Planning of the events regarding security and police staff.
- It varies. We've hosted over 50,000 EDM fans in one space. We also sit on a Special Events Task Force which has approved a few EDM festivals.
- Our division was responsible for creating the Canada 150 Deadmau5 Free Concert as part of our annual Canada Day celebrations. We were the creators of the entire event start to finish.
- We sit on a taskforce to work with private organizers on multiple indoor/outdoor electronic music concerts.

## Regulations for EDM Events

All nine of the surveyed cities have regulations for EDM events, but they don't seem specific to EDM events only. Comments included:

- Our permitting events in public space process regulations are not specific to EDM events but rather identify safety and security concerns.
- We have several regulations specific to this event which have evolved over the years. We work very closely with all stakeholders to establish plans to mitigate public impact, emergency responses, and unlawful activity.
- Same as any other concert. In my personal view, there is nothing inherently more dangerous about one style of music vs another. Safety and security concerns are identified through estimated attendance, building and fire code, presence of liquor, etc. not musical instrumentation or tempo.
- There's no set rule just for EDM concerts. A rave could be looked at differently. As long as they present to the taskforce and adhere to noise bylaw issues (under 110 DB and music done by 11pm, they're ok). However, based on their site plan and expected attendance they will require certain # of police, medical staff and road closures based on the location of the concert. I think it's very wrong to put EDM in any different category than a rock concert with a beer garden. We have noticed much less issues with EDM vs Classic Rock events. Our main security company will always say they prefer an EDM crowd over a Rock or Country Music crowd. The #s of police issues when we've booked rock music vs EDM were much higher.

Regulations provided by other jurisdictions included:

- Bylaw that regulates all large outdoor festivals and events in the city:  
<https://ottawa.ca/en/special-events-public-and-private-property-law-no-2013-232>
- Noise bylaw: <https://ottawa.ca/en/noise-law-no2017-255>
- Business licence requirements:  
<https://ottawa.ca/en/business/permits-business-licences-and-applications/business-licensing#all-night-dance-event-license>
- <https://ottawa.ca/en/business/permits-business-licences-and-applications/business-licensing#amusement-place-license>
- Permit guidelines <https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/culture/permits.html>
- COV License By Law 4450 - Late Night Dance Event (Section 5 - 19.2.) - defined as an event involving dance or music and any part of which occurs between the hours of 0200 and 0600. These events are known in the industry as RAVES which are typically EDM.

Privately owned facilities follow the same regulations as public facilities in three cities. For cities where private facilities do not follow the same regulations, reasons included:

- It depends on if they want to serve alcohol. If they do not want to serve alcohol and they have the proper occupancy permits to allow the large number of people in the space, there are no other regulations that would trigger a review of these types of events.
- We work with them to improve safety practices, but most of our clubs have EDM shows. With the huge events, they are happening in our sports arenas or our

- massive outdoor arenas, so these private facilities have strong safety protocols that they implement directly.
- They have to follow provincial liquor laws and fire safety. However, if they don't take place on public land, they don't always end up presenting to the taskforce.
  - They go through some of the same processes. Specifically, if liquor is served, they would need a license.
  - This depends. If the event is on private property and outdoors, the event must go through the same review process. If it is indoors, the Special Events Bylaw does not apply, although many of the same stakeholders are engaged regardless of the bylaw.

## **Later Hour EDM Events**

Five cities have large-scale EDM events in their jurisdictions where the hours of the event extend beyond 2 a.m. Four of those cities were unsure if there was a different demand on resources or a negative impact, and one city said they didn't experience any differences with later hour events. Comments about issues experienced include:

- The late-night events happen on private property.
- These would be indoor events which are outside of our operational mandate. Unsure if these indoor events are larger than 1,000 people, but it is possible.
- Our events do not go beyond 2 a.m. but other venue's events have; this type of event is becoming less popular in our jurisdiction.
- With any event occurring into the late night we do notice more public intoxication. Noise is once again an issue as well.

Municipalities were asked if different mitigating strategies or approaches were used for later hour events:

- Not really. We just make sure that they've got good on-site medical services and that our trauma center is aware of the event. The real issue is the dates - two of the largest EDM events of the year occur on Halloween and New Year's Eve when emergency services are already strained and in high demand.
- In order to extend hours past 2 am, the establishment would require an Amusement Place licence and an All-Night Dance event licence. If they are serving alcohol, they would have to extend their hours with the province. Police paid duties are usually a requirement.
- We include Drug Unit Investigators, Youth Squad Investigators, Gang Crime Unit members (all in uniform) in our cost recovery deployments to these events to take advantage of their familiarity with traffickers and gang associates.
- Noise permitting for outdoor events restricts outdoor from being an option. Liquor service for extended hours would need to be approved by the Liquor, Gaming & Cannabis Authority.
- There is always police and emergency services in the general area of our main nightlife hubs.

## **Oversight Stakeholder Advisory Committees or Collaborative Bodies**

Municipalities were asked if there is a stakeholder advisory committee or collaborative body that has oversight over large-scale EDM events. Six cities have oversight groups, but they do not seem specific to EDM events. Stakeholder groups involved in these collaborative groups included:

- Special events committees or groups including:
  - [https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/recreation/programs-activities/SpecialEventsPlanningGuideApril2016\\_0.pdf](https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/recreation/programs-activities/SpecialEventsPlanningGuideApril2016_0.pdf)
  - Leads from all relevant City departments are informed of all events that flow through our office, identifying concerns and providing approvals where necessary.
  - Interdepartmental and interagency
  - Police, Fire, Paramedics, Bylaw (noise, parking, business licensing), Emergency Management, Public Health (food), Public Health (healthy communities), Transit, Traffic, Corporate Communications, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, Technical Safety and Standard Authority (propane food vendors), site representatives, Building Code, Business Improvement Area, area Councillor
- We have a Special Event Technical Committee, but this group only meets to review events that are held in public space. They do not review indoor private events. The committee includes police, fire, bylaw, health, liquor/cannabis control, parks, public works, culture and other public property managers.
- We have an 'Outdoor Event Committee' comprised of all relevant stakeholders. The OEC measures capacity and feasibility of all events. Members include: Parks, Transit, RCMP, Ambulance, Fire Dept., Communications, Risk Management, Bylaw, Transportation, Liquor Board, etc.

## **Review Process**

Review processes for applications to be approved for large-scale EDM events in their jurisdictions included:

- Same as any event - request is received and relayed to the committee, all permit needs and any additional requirements are identified, any concerns are addressed with the organizer, and once concerns are mitigated, permits are drafted, paid for by the organizer, and issued. Depending on the request, proper insurance, safety/security plans for event staff and volunteers need to be reviewed, letters of approval, and neighbourhood notification plans need to be in place.
- Depends on where they are happening. If they are a new event on public property, then they come before the committee. If they are on private property, then those events do not require our approval, but we are often looped into the safety planning process.
- As with all events... proposal, organizer presentation, ensure all stakeholders provide feedback, ensure organizer's ability to implement required actions. If unfamiliar with an event, seek references from other municipalities, etc.
- This is only for outdoor events in public space. There is no formal review for indoor private events, most of which take place in small night clubs with a 650 max. capacity. For large outdoor events in public space, the committee would need to review their application and plans at least 3 months in advance.

- For small scale events - 200-300 people held in a hall, we meet with the promoter. The promoter is required to have a Business License (police background check required). We require the promoter to obtain a Special Event Permit. No liquor sales are permitted.
- Post event debrief with venue management. Pre-event meetings. Police operational planning participates in both.
- Each show or festival is analysed before the permit is given.
- There is no set review process. We work with each organizer separately and coordinate their municipal requirements to host a concert.
- <https://ottawa.ca/en/business/permits-business-licences-and-applications/planning-outdoor-special-event>
- Organizer must provide the permit application documents: application form, draft site plan, draft emergency plan, alcohol management plan and noise mitigation plan. The special events advisory team reviews the event with the organizers. Requirements are laid out. If subsequent meeting needs to take place to address particular issues, they are coordinated by Event Central. Event Central tracks the requirements and sees that the organizer is meeting them. An invoice for estimated City services is issued to and paid by the organizer. Event Central issues the event permit and monitors the event. A debrief report is compiled with information from all related services and stakeholders. Event Central reviews debrief with the organizer and tracks issue resolution for the next event.

The timelines for the review process in municipalities varies from one week to three months, or is dependent on the size of the event:

- Minimum of 90 days
- For a new special event on public property, the timeline is 90 days.
- Initial application received at least 3 months prior to the event. The plans and procedures would be agreed upon in a collaborative approach between the committee and organizer.
- Usually it takes 1 - 2 months to be able to sit down in front of the entire taskforce. We host monthly meetings but can also host an emergency meeting if needed on short notice.
- 5 - 6 weeks
- It depends of the scale of the show or festival
- Varies depending on size and scope.
- Depends on the request but can usually be completed well within a week.

Groups that are involved in the review process include:

- Police, fire department, medical services and municipal officer
- Police, Fire, EHS, Security, Health and Safety, Waste Management, Risk and Liability Division, Civic Events, etc.
- Police, Fire, Metro, Public Health, Dept of Transportation, Office of Film + Music (we lead this process), etc. It's 32 departments and agencies.
- Police, fire, venue operations, venue security, event producer, Roc Doc management, BCEHS, Vancouver Coastal Health, etc.
- Emergency Management, Police, Fire/Paramedic, Health (food), Liquor, Gaming & Cannabis Authority (liquor), Parks, Public Works Traffic Management, Traffic Services,

Parking Authority, Risk Management, Water & Waste, Zoning & Permits, and any other bodies that would relate to the request.

Applications may be rejected for the following reasons:

- If the safety and security plans are deficient, there would be recommendations to upgrade these plans. If they do not adhere to the minimum standards, they would be rejected.
- Late applications
- Failure to accept responsibility for security and medical resources
- Not meeting set requirements
- Outstanding issues from previous events
- If the organizer had a balance owing with the City, we would not proceed with the application until the balance was paid in full.
- Unpaid permits
- Event type, ages requested, venue requested, promoter inexperience
- If the event is deemed to be unsafe to the public or against the public good overall.

## Negative Impacts from Large-Scale EDM Events

Of the cities who responded to the survey, negative impacts resulting from large-scaled EDM events were from citizen complaints (seven of the nine cities), followed by drug use necessitating advanced medical care and/or hospitalization (five cities), alcohol use necessitating advanced medical care and/or hospitalization (four cities), co-consumption of drugs and alcohol necessitating advanced medical care and/or hospitalization (four cities), sexual assaults (one city), and general injury (one city).

Nature of Negative Impact	# of Cities Surveyed Who Experienced This Impact
Citizen complaints (e.g., noise, traffic, mischief)	7
Drug use necessitating advanced medical care and/or hospitalization	5
Alcohol use necessitating advanced medical care and/or hospitalization	4
Co-consumption of drugs and alcohol necessitating medical care and/or hospitalization	4
Sexual assaults	1
General injury	1
Overcrowding	0
Weapons	0
Violence	0

## **Strategies Implemented or Tried for Mitigating Negative Impacts**

Strategies that have been implemented or tried include:

### **Annual Safety Gatherings**

- An annual safety meeting that convenes law enforcement, frontline medics, medical directors, EDM producers and promoters, private security, drug research academics and public health officials. The goal is to have honest conversation about issues and best practices in the EDM and festival scene.

### **Noise Mitigation**

- Organizers made significant financial investments in high-end speaker technology that directs sound towards participants. To mitigate complaints further, we are looking into an early end time for events as well as bylaw officers on site to continuously take noise readings in the neighbouring communities.

### **Meetings with Organizers and Municipal Staff**

- Meetings between municipal representatives and event producers
- Notes kept for organizer and event to be considered as learnings to take forward for future event consideration.
- Daily debriefing with relevant stakeholders
- Special Events Advisory Group
- Annual reviews of the events through a special event permitting process. The review process is a minimum of 90 days in advance of the event. All impacted stakeholders and services also contribute to a post-event debrief report.

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### **Special Event Reviews**

- Reviews by a special event permitting process

### **Fines**

- Applying fines for when necessary

### **On-Site Plans**

- Comprehensive on-site emergency and security programs

### **Hours of Operation**

- Extended hours for some establishments
- Limited operating hours

### **Medical Services**

- On-site Public Health nurses for prevention and education
- First aid providers for initial assessments – they see the majority of patients
- On-site paramedics for treatment and rehabilitation, paid for by organizers

- On-site coordinated tiered medical response

### **Harm Reduction**

- In partnership with public health, full on-site harm reduction has been implemented, including education, medical assistance, amnesty/ recovery space and testing of drugs
- ‘Party Safe’ messaging
- Free water

### **Amnesty Boxes (*Note: Edmonton now refers to these as “Prohibited Items Boxes”*)**

- Police deploy a drug amnesty box outside of the gates.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention**

- Sexual assault safety audits of the event site and implementing recommended changes

### **Police and Security**

- On-call police and private security to do checks, private drug dogs
- Gang squad to eject inadmissible patrons
- Enhanced security and role clarification of police officers
- On-site paid duty police

### **Parking**

- Local parking only and increased bylaw program

### **Transportation**

- Shuttle service
- Event tickets include free transit

## **Strategies That Have Not Been Implemented**

Strategies cities have not implemented:

- Ice baths as a part of harm reduction - the demand on hospital visits has not been too extensive to require such a service on site
- Choosing not to cancel events or deny permits – the staff work closely to address challenges with organizers

## **Changes in Demand on Services**

There were differing reports on whether service levels increased or decreased in the last five years during and after large-scale EDM events in their jurisdiction for police services, ambulance services, fire services, emergency hospital visits, other medical services, other services such as sexual assault centre services, and citizen complaints (e.g., noise, traffic, mischief), this could vary depending upon the perspective of the respondent. Therefore, the answers to these questions are not included.

"Other medical services" impacted included:

- As large-scale EDM event producers have increased their on-site medical services, it has lessened the demand for off-site and emergent medical services.
- On-site medical plans have resulted in decreased emergency visits to hospital. However, medical encounters on-site, and especially off-site (after the concert is finished) continue to be busy.
- Ambulance services, first aid providers
- Large DJ concerts typically have Roc Doc or BCAS on call at the event to intervene on site. "Roc Doc" is a private provider of First Aid to outdoor music festivals and large concerts. (There are other companies that provide the same services.) Their staff includes doctors and registered nurses. This industry has developed and become well established in BC.
- Public Health nurses attend the event for prevention and awareness. This is an in-kind service.

"Other" services (e.g., social services like sexual assault centres) impacted included:

- More women report been touched during the shows
- The Sexual Assault Network is engaged in the review process of the event.
- Harm reduction providers
- An "app" to allow patrons to advise security of an issue (whether the patron is reporting that they are being threatened or bothered, etc.) was first used at a festival this year (this event was not an EDM but a concert for 25 year + crowd)

Citizen complaints received primarily concerned noise. Comments included:

- We have seen noise complaints decreasing each year over the past five years.
- Noise complaints as the festival moved into the downtown core near residences.
- We have a lot of new residential construction near the areas and they make more complaints about the noise.
- Noise has always been a complaint during concerts. No matter what the music we receive calls on noise.
- Noise has always been an issue with our community and concerts. We constantly receive reports of noise and we notice a slight increase with Electronic Music due to the constant production required.
- Citizen complaints are steady. Main source is adjacent neighbourhood where undesirable activities and noise are more prevalent. We have implemented a bylaw plan; however, some residents continue to be more affected than others.
- The events have regularly involved a robust screening process prior to entry to prevent (as much as possible) illicit drugs being brought in. There have been complaints that the assigned police members were denying entry to ticket holders inappropriately and/ or using police information inappropriately to assist security. Work has been done to clarify that security drives their screening process and to clearly define the roles of our assigned members.

Additional comments included:

- My office has not been advised of any significant increases in these incidents with regards to a specific type of music. We relay the event details to our emergency services contacts, and they prepare appropriately. If their plans change based on genre, I'm not aware of it.
- These results are specifically related to the large-scale festival events.
- We are very proactive with EDM event producers and would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about this directly.
- The event has an increase in demand over events of a similar size. The resources deployed to the event have remained relatively consistent the past 5 years.

## Harm Reduction

The term "harm reduction" is used in their work by six cities. Harm reduction was defined by jurisdictions as:

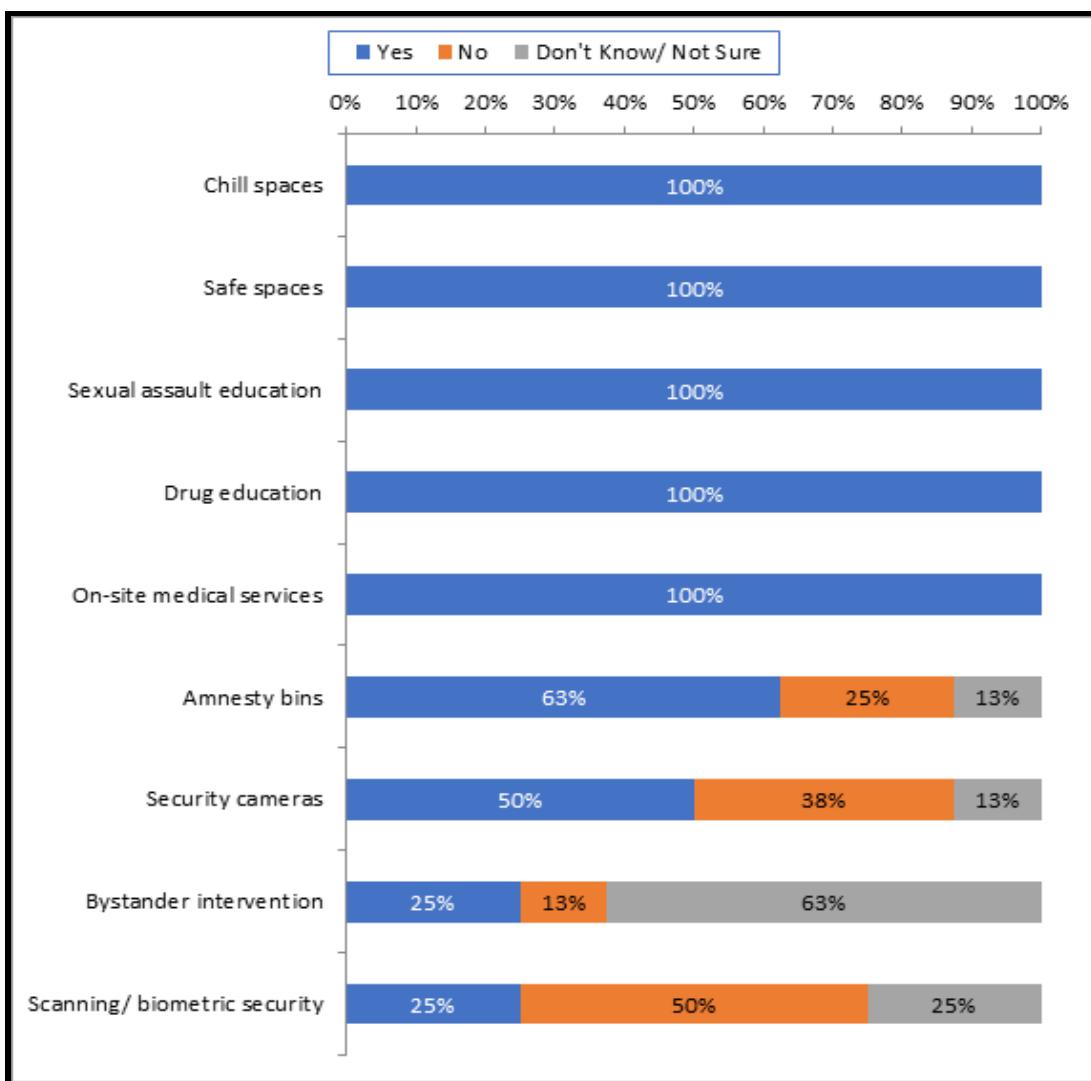
- Every day we use this - it is a focus of our work. Harm reduction = measures taken to reduce harm.
- Providing services that will reduce the risk that patrons may experience at large public events, including over intoxication or the use of illicit substances.
- Strategies in place to possibly prevent the occurrence of OD or to assist in terms of medical help where needed.
- <http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/harm-reduction-services-in-ottawa.aspx>
- 'Harm reduction' is designed to provide early identification of distress, provide opportunity for participants to seek assistance, and implement an effective triage system.

Harm reduction was used:

- During specific events
- Public Health uses the term in context of 'Party Safe' messaging.
- Roc Doc has a space where patrons can rest and be observed during the event.
- Police officers do not go into the harm reduction area unless requested and patrons are not automatically evicted from the event because they go into the area.
- We don't require it anywhere - it's just a part of our vernacular. Our police department motto used to include the words 'Harm Reduction' as well, but that was under our previous Chief of Police.
- The only time that we require harm reduction services is for large-scale music events.

## Approaches Used at Large-Scale EDM Events

Eight of the nine cities provided the types of approaches they used at large-scale EDM events in their jurisdiction. All eight jurisdictions offered chill spaces, safe spaces, sexual assault education, drug education and on-site medical services. Amnesty bins were provided in five cities, security cameras in four cities, bystander intervention in two cities and scanning/biometric security in two cities.



\*Note: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

## **Private Medical Services at Large-Scale EDM Events**

Private medical services were utilized for large-scale EDM events in six cities. Medical services included:

- Emergency care - we essentially have a mini-ER on-site at huge EDM events. There are levels of medical care available, with this being the least used one.
- First aid
- Roc Doc
- BCAS
- St. John's Ambulance
- Odyssey Medical
- Canadian Ski Patrol

The cost of private medical services is borne by the event producers, promoters and organizers.

## **Unified Command at Large-Scale EDM Events**

Unified Command is used in six cities. Unified Command is led by:

- On-site private security
- RCMP, or
- Police

The costs of Unified Command are borne by event producers/organizers, the venues, and police.

## **Other Ideas/ Best Practices**

Other ideas or best practices they had awareness of but may not have experience with using, but felt should be considered in terms of regulating or permitting EDM events included:

- Engage earnestly with the safety teams producing the EDM events
- Take your public officials to see these events firsthand
- Approach these events as if these are your community's young people, not some freaky scene, because these are your community's young people. EDM is the fastest growing genre of music in the world.
- Testing of drugs
  - We have never approved this, but it is a process we've seen happen at private festivals and events
  - Drug testing can be effective in reducing the risk associated with the consumption of unknown substances.
  - Many music festivals have started to provide drug testing on site to ensure that whatever drugs people are consuming are not combined with more dangerous drugs such as fentanyl. This is not a strategy that the City would employ but is rather up to the event organizer to coordinate.
- We assess prior to the event to identify and address all concerns, event organizers plan to keep their events as safe as possible, and emergency services handle any situations that arise.

- Harm reduction areas
  - Encourage harm reduction strategies that keep the crowds safe
  - We have never practiced this but once again it is happening around the world
- Create quiet spaces - very common to have a well-lit safe area away from the noise and lights to relax audience members. These are separate from First Aid stations. They are just relaxing areas with volunteers who may be serving tea, providing ear plugs etc.
- Hydration areas
  - Spray zones and water stations are super key to these style events
  - Promote free water availability and patrons bringing their own bottles (dehydration is a serious issue)
- Consent groups - we have a team known as "Consent Kitties". We have never worked with them yet, but multiple private companies have. They provide signage and also roam the crowd looking for any possible sexual assaults happening.
- Medical - having on-site physicians will decrease the impact on your hospitals and your emergency transportation systems. Oftentimes, the primary need is to cool the internal temperature of the person in distress. This can be done with ice baths or on-site intravenous cooling.
- Volunteer event safety teams that can engage and interact with the crowd can be helpful as well.
- RCMP or local police involvement. Local ambulance involvement. Local hospital notification. Gang task force. Strict consequences. Roving security and medical personnel.
- Safer spaces - we have been working towards creating safer spaces within the event. The most effective location, format, etc. has not been found, but it is an initiative we continue to pursue with the event organizers.
- Change locations with less residential apartments nearby

## **Other Research to Guide Our Work**

Literature, research or reports were requested to help guide our work. The following were provided:

- There's not a lot of research out there, but there's some. We are compiling our own body of research. I'd love to know what you find and what people send to you.
- I would refer you to the work of Dr. Caleb Banta-Green. He is a drug researcher, focused largely on opioid addiction treatment strategies these days, but a few years back, he was very focused on 'Molly' usage in the EDM scene.
- The City of Seattle has led a conversation about safety at EDM events in the Pacific Northwest over the past five years.
- The United States of Consciousness has a "Conscious Crew" of people that assist with harm reduction outreach at their events.
- WILD: Collaborative Harm Reduction Services is the service provider that offers harm reduction services at events in Victoria <https://www.instagram.com/wildchrs/?hl=en>
- There are many organizations working on safe spaces strategies but that is not exclusive to the genre of EDM

## **Additional Comments**

Additional comments on the survey included:

- This is important work that you are doing. I applaud your Council for not putting a moratorium on these types of events. These events are going to happen regardless. It is important to take a collaborative harm reduction approach and not force these events underground.
- I look forward to seeing the results of your research.
- I can't wait to talk with you! I've heard great things about the work Edmonton is doing both with EDM and other music events. A couple of detectives that I work with regularly sing your praises. I also had a very enlightening conversation with an Edmonton officer several years ago.
- I feel like my answers would be very different if the survey weren't specifically about one genre of music. Basing your planning on genre is not effective. If this strategy was to be followed, concert promoters would simply label the event as another type of music. There are electronic aspects to most of the acts that play at our festivals and all concerns that exist for an EDM event would still be a very real risk at the Folk Festival. Just work on making your events safe regardless of the quoted style.
- The large scale "rave" EDM seems to be less popular than in recent years.
- We are conducting a similar exercise for our event. Happy to discuss further.
- We would be happy to set up a call to discuss our experiences further if you like.

## **APPENDIX 3: INCIDENT DATA ANALYSIS (MEDICAL & POLICE SERVICES)**

There were positive gains shown from the analysis of available medical and police incident data comparing the data from the 22 large-scale EDM event dates from January 2016 to June 2018 (and the June 2018 Council Committee directed motion to research ways to improve event safety and event producers' voluntary implementation of elevated safety practices) compared to the 18 large-scale EDM event dates from July 2018 to February 2020. Incident data from events will continue to be monitored.

### **Medical Incident Data Analysis**

Through knowledge obtained during the research process (through interviews and observational research) for this project, on-site medical resources should be used when possible and transports to the hospital should be conducted if and when necessary (i.e. the availability of on-site medical services may avert potentially unnecessary ambulance transports to the hospital). Patients may have previously been transported when they could have been stabilized on-site if appropriate resources were available. Also, by having medical services on-site for a period of time after the end of the event, this measure may be effective for diverting unnecessary hospital transports.

Although the number of transports to the hospital was not at zero, there was definitely positive movement in terms of the available data. From data analyzed from July 2018 to February 2020, presentations to on-site medical services at large-scale EDM events in Edmonton increased whereas transports to the hospital decreased. As total transports to the hospital decreased by 61%, including decreases for both serious/life-threatening when transported and stable when transported, these are positive outcomes.

### **Transports to the Hospital by Alberta Health Services (AHS)- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

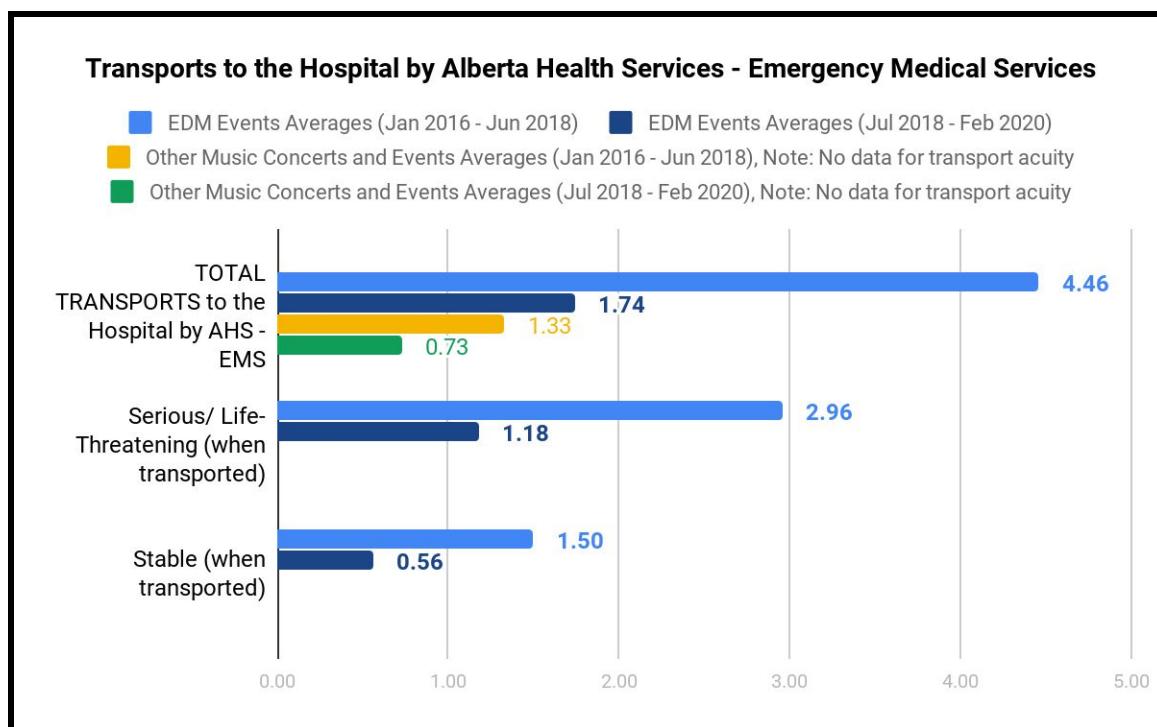
Analysis of the medical transports from large-scale EDM events by Alberta Health Services (AHS) - Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to the hospital from January 2016 to June 2018 (*before* the June 2018 Council Committee directed motion to research ways to improve event safety and event producers' voluntary implementation of elevated safety practices) compared to *after* (July 2018 to February 2020) at large-scale EDM events in Edmonton indicated:

- **Total transports to the hospital decreased 61%**
  - Before: average of 4.46 people
  - After: average of 1.74 people
  - ↓ This is a decrease of 2.72 people
- **Serious/ life-threatening when transported decreased 60%**
  - Before: average of 2.96 people
  - After: average of 1.18 people
  - ↓ This is a decrease of 1.78 people
- **Stable when transported decreased 63%**
  - Before: average of 1.50 people
  - After: average of 0.56 people
  - ↓ This is a decrease of 0.94 people

From January 2016 to June 2018, transports to the hospital by AHS - EMS ranged from one to 14 people over the course of 22 EDM event dates. From July 2018 to February 2020, there was a marked decrease with zero to six people transported over 18 EDM events dates.

Incident data for transports to the hospital from large-scale EDM events in Edmonton was also compared to data from other music concerts and events in Edmonton.

- From January 2016 to June 2018 (*before* the June 2018 Council Committee directed motion to research ways to improve event safety and event producers' voluntary implementation of elevated safety practices), transports to the hospital by AHS - EMS from large-scale EDM events were notably higher than from other music concerts and events, with an average of 4.46 transports from EDM events compared to 1.33 transports from other music concerts and events.
- From July 2018 to February 2020, there were an average of 1.74 transports from large-scale EDM events compared to 0.73 transports from other music concerts and events.

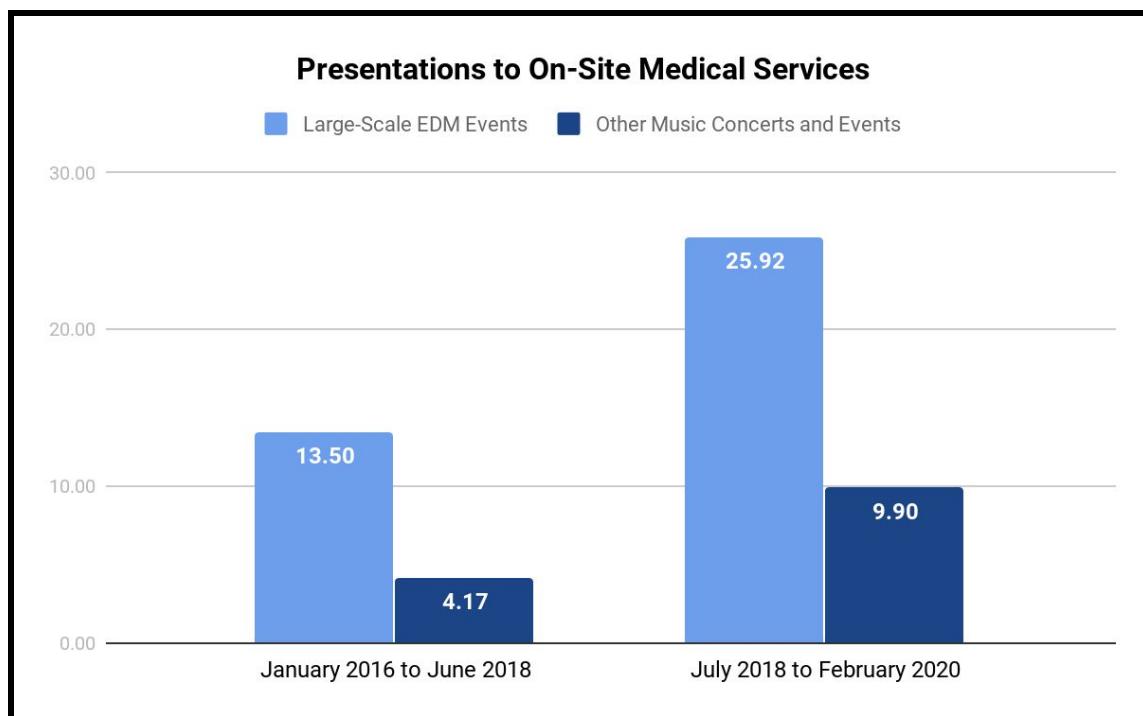


## **Presentations to On-Site Medical Services**

Analysis of the available presentations data to on-site medical services at large-scale EDM events in Edmonton from January 2016 to June 2018 (*before* the June 2018 Council Committee directed motion to research ways to improve event safety and event producers' voluntary implementation of elevated safety practices) compared to *after* (July 2018 to February 2020) indicated:

- **Presentations to on-site medical services increased 92%**
  - Before: average of 13.50 presentations
  - After: average of 25.92 presentations
  - ↑ This is an increase of 12.42 presentations

Data from large-scale EDM events in Edmonton was also compared to available data from other music concerts and events in Edmonton and showed that usage of on-site medical services is higher from large-scale EDM events. Note that the research found that on-site medical resources should be used when possible and transports to the hospital should be conducted if and when necessary (i.e. the availability of on-site medical services may avert potentially unnecessary ambulance transports to the hospital).



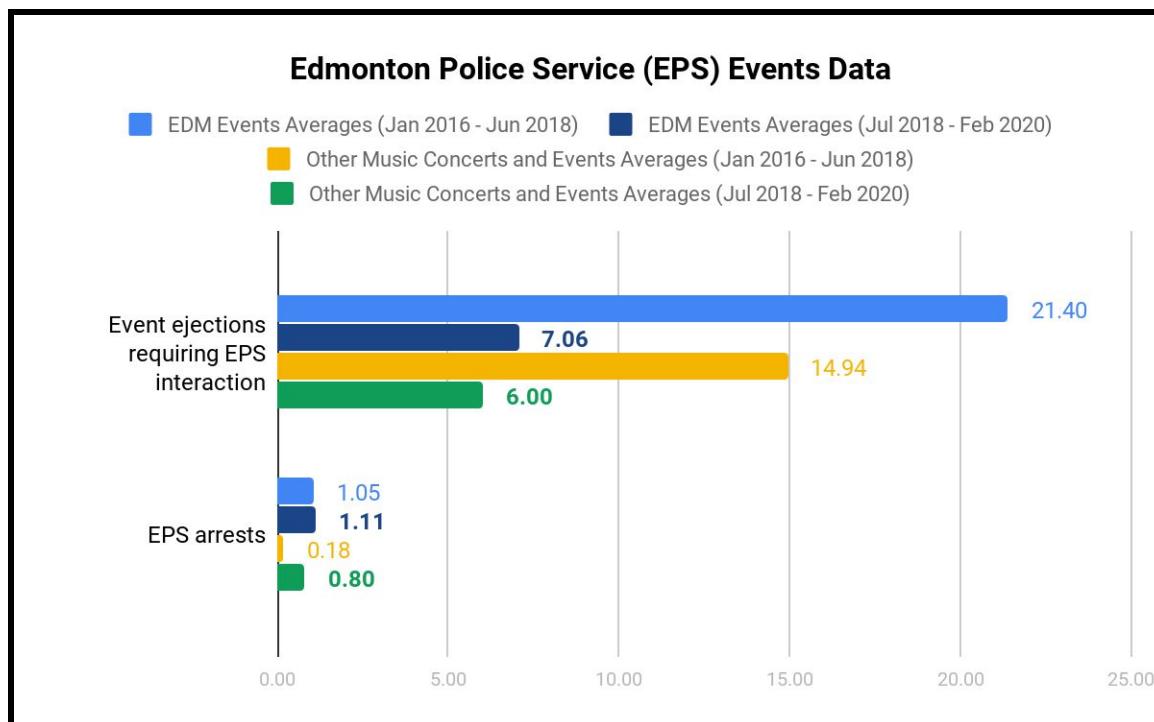
## Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Incident Data Analysis

There were decreases in this time period for event ejections requiring Edmonton Police Service (EPS) interactions and a slight increase with arrests at large-scale EDM events. Analysis used police service events data from January 2016 to June 2018 (*before* the June 2018 Council Committee directed motion to research ways to improve event safety and event producers' voluntary implementation of elevated safety practices) compared to *after* (July 2018 to February 2020) which indicated:

- **Ejections that required EPS interactions decreased 67%**
  - Before: average of 21.40 people ejected
  - After: average of 7.06 people ejected
  - ↓ This is a decrease of 14.34 people ejected
- **EPS arrests increased 6%**
  - Before: average of 1.05 arrests
  - After: average of 1.11 arrests
  - ↑ This is an increase of 0.06 arrests

Data about ejections from large-scale EDM events in Edmonton that required EPS interaction and arrests was also compared to data from other music concerts and events in Edmonton.

- Event ejections requiring police interaction from July 2018 to February 2020 were higher from large-scale EDM events than from other music concerts and events (there was an average of 7.06 event ejections that required EPS interaction from EDM events compared to 6.00 event ejections from other music concerts and events).
- Arrests from July 2018 to February 2020 were slightly higher from EDM events than other music concerts and events (from EDM events there were an average of 1.11 arrests, whereas at concerts there was an average of 0.80 arrests).



## APPENDIX 4: STAKEHOLDER SESSIONS

City of Edmonton administration held five stakeholder sessions with industry and service providers including producers/promoters, event venues, the music development industry, the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, harm reduction agencies, Alberta Health Services, Edmonton Police Service, the City of Edmonton's Community Standards Branch, and the Public Safety Compliance Team. The two hour stakeholder sessions were held on July 18, 2018, September 19, 2018, April 2, 2019, September 24, 2019 and November 5, 2019. The sessions were facilitated by City of Edmonton administration.

At the first session, the goal was to define electronic dance music events, clarify issues, understand current best practices and generate ideas and strategies to mitigate concerns. Ensuring safe electronic dance music events was a priority issue. This included the safety of event patrons, staff and agencies supporting the events as well as for the general public who may be impacted by on-duty medical and police service resources being diverted to electronic dance music events.

At the second session, administration shared back what was heard from the first stakeholder session and discussed best practices (including what is working and what has not worked) with the goal of keeping events safe and sustainable. There was shared interest in working towards collaborative solutions.

At the third session, information that was shared included the high-level results of the participant survey, best practices review and the event review process. A proposed new business license and bylaw was discussed. Feedback and perspectives were sought to ensure that the proposal and processes align with industry expectations and best practices. The proposed definition for electronic dance music events was tested and refined.

The fourth session specifically discussed revisions to the business license. Stakeholders present at the session included several event promoters who host large-scale (over 1,500 attendees) events within Edmonton. Feedback was sought to ensure that the proposed amendments to the bylaw align with operations of these event producers.

The fifth session was an EDM events bylaw update. Proposed requirements were discussed, including having: an event medical plan, an event safety/security plan, a patron welfare plan and a noise control plan. Best practices were also discussed.

## APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEWS

Twenty-four personal and telephone interviews were held with 40 people. These interviewees were from a number of areas across Canada, the U.S. and Australia. The interviews included a multitude of perspectives from:

- Industry professionals, including producers and promoters
- Venues in Edmonton that have hosted large-scale EDM events, including the Edmonton Convention Centre (formerly called the Shaw Conference Centre), Edmonton EXPO Centre and West Edmonton Mall
- Emergency services, including Alberta Health Services and the Edmonton Police Service
- Medical professionals, including the Medical Office of Health and private medical service providers
- Harm reduction agencies
- The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE)
- Academia

There was appreciation expressed for the City of Edmonton undertaking this project. Those interviewed were engaged in the process and interested in providing their perspectives. Safety interventions were believed to be needed at different types of events, not just EDM events:

***"These standards should be applied everywhere. Harm reduction strategies can be applied across industries." - Interviewee***

A number of themes arose from the interviews (although a number of themes overlap):

- The industry is interested in providing safer environments
- EDM events are a growing, global industry
- EDM events have a positive economic impact
- Some regulation and oversight is required to improve safety
- Harm reduction measures should be provided including:
  - Chill spaces and safe spaces
  - Free water and freely accessible water
  - Education (general education, alcohol use, drug use, and co-consumption of alcohol and drugs)
- Sexual assault and harassment prevention and support measures are needed
- Events data tracking
- Security and enforcement
- Environmental factors
- Occupancy limits
- Testing of drugs
- Amnesty bins
- Consideration is needed for the entirety of the event
- On-site medical and health services
- Evolution of the industry

## The EDM Events Industry is Interested in Providing Safer Environments

- The industry indicated genuine interest in keeping patrons and the public safe and furthering improvements to this industry in Edmonton.
- There was genuine interest from all of the interview participants in being a part of the research process. Many were also interested in being continually involved beyond the research.
- Integration and collaboration between industry, the City of Edmonton and service providers is desired by a number of interviewees. It was stated that there is opportunity to collaborate with provincial partners as well as across jurisdictions.

***"Promoters have always tried to do the right thing." - Interviewee***

- It was stated that the City of Edmonton has the opportunity to be a leader. It was believed by a number of interviewees that the industry will be driven underground if this issue is not handled well as EDM events will still occur resulting in negative draws on emergency services resources.

***"If you ban events, they WILL go underground - then you can't reach people with services." - Interviewee***

## EDM Events - A Growing, Global Industry

Interviewees stated:

- That there is demand for these events and interest in further developing the industry in Edmonton. This growth includes the desire to produce more outdoor events and larger venue events. EDM is currently one of the most popular types of music globally and the demographic attending these events are young adults, generally ages 18 to 30. These events bring in people from all over the world.

***"Find the healthy balance of not overregulating this but having reasonable rules in place that won't cause a monopoly. Cities don't evolve. You want young people to stay. Keep evolving. Be open, keep that going like with safe injection sites." - Interviewee***

- That people from Edmonton and Calgary like to party and that Edmonton crowds like to consume a lot of alcohol. With this industry, Calgary was stated to be a few years ahead of Vancouver, with Edmonton further behind than that. However, Edmonton is seen to be growing in the EDM scene. It was stated as important that the City of Edmonton becomes more actively involved in what is going on with the industry.

***"Young people have a ton of money, they spend more - they go harder but are not as educated and well-behaved." - Interviewee***

- To enhance the nighttime economy, it was stated that the City should explore the possibility of a Night Czar, Night Mayor or a nightlife council.
- That Edmonton is seen as a progressive city. It was stated "***important to do these events and do them right***" - Interviewee. These events were believed to add to the vibrancy of our community, "***making the city a better place to live***".

***"Edmonton has been a fabulous arts and culture community - the entertainment-side has always been big." - Interviewee***

## **EDM Events - Positive Economic Impact**

Interviewees believed:

- There is economic benefit to these events and the community experiences other spinoff benefits as people travel to Edmonton to participate in these events (this information was derived from the residence data from event ticketing).

***"EDM has become a billion dollar economy worldwide." - Interviewee***

## **Some Regulation and Oversight is Required to Improve Safety**

Interviewees indicated the following related to regulation and oversight:

- There should be regulations on the EDM event industry to make it safer.
- It was stated that over the years, there has not been consistent oversight. The industry has not been able to regulate themselves and at times was thought to have become complacent as the issue of safety at raves/EDM events has been a focus brought before City Council in Edmonton on a number of occasions in the past 18+ years.
- It was expressed that caution needs to be exercised with how restrictive to make the interventions:

***"The more restrictive you are, the more underground you'll drive it, and the unsafer it will become." - Interviewee***

- A review group is needed and should consist of emergency medical services, Edmonton Police Service, the City of Edmonton, and others (e.g., Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis, Edmonton Fire Rescue Services).
- Safety plans should be developed and followed for EDM events.
- Safety procedures need to be easy to follow (e.g., it was stated that a huge detailed binder of procedures for some events is not useful or efficient in an emergency situation).
- Unified Command at events is required to ensure integration and communication is maintained between service providers, venue operators and event producers/promoters.
- Mandatory pre-event meetings and post-event debriefs with the City, emergency services, venues and event producers are beneficial in terms of learning and continuous improvement.
- Best practices aren't standardized and it is believed that there is not a good understanding yet of what the best ratios are for on-site services. It was stated that Edmonton has an opportunity to help establish these standards.

## **Harm Reduction**

Interviewees indicated the following related to harm reduction:

- In order to provide safer events, a health perspective must be taken rather than a moral perspective. Some believe that there is negligence in not providing services to keep people safer and healthier, just as the case with supervised injection sites.
- That there is more support for harm reduction in Europe. No one was believed to be regulating harm reduction or best practices in the US or Canada: ***"It would be a dream!" - Interviewee***

- Harm reduction is required at events, including people roaming and proactively working throughout the crowd and in the stands to look for medical and health incidents. Staff and volunteers must be highly visible to participants.
- That scare tactics to patrons are not effective.
- Mental health issues can create further issues at events, as well as when these issues are combined with alcohol and/or drugs (such as legal cannabis or illegal substances).
- There is an opportunity for peers to become involved in helping each other (i.e. peer-to-peer support) and youth involvement with volunteering at events.

### **Chill Spaces and Safe Spaces**

Interviewees indicated the following related to chill spaces and safe spaces:

- Chill out spaces (that are maintained at a lower temperature) and places of sanctuary for all genders (including females, non-binary and males) as well as other vulnerable populations such as LGBTQ2S+ should be provided.

***"Super important that you are including the LGBTQ component to this work."***

***[Previously] They couldn't get home - Edmonton Transit Services stopped operating when events were done, also they couldn't go home - it wasn't safe." - Interviewee***

***"Creating a safe environment for people who didn't have a safe environment at home." - Interviewee***

- Best practices should include sanctuaries with trained individuals to keep people calm and stop them from 'freaking out' - it was stated that these individuals should first go through a medical screening.
- Edmonton should learn from the work of others, some examples that were provided included:
  - Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies ([MAPS](#))
  - [Zendo Project](#) who provide supportive services and education that reduces the need to transport to the hospital.
  - Mental health support developed for a festival in California [Project #OpenTalk Provides Peace of Mind After the Dancefloor](#)
- *"In the last couple of years, we noticed an increasing number of people in our medical facilities that didn't have a medical problem," says Maren Steiner, Insomniac's Director of Health and Safety and cofounder of Project #OpenTalk. Motivated by a troubling spike in fans seeking support for a variety of psychological issues, Steiner felt that EMTs offering support in the sterile medical tent wasn't the right solution to this problem. A lot of people attend who are not having medical issues, but they are anxious. Their job at Project #OpenTalk is to talk to the participant and keep them grounded. The participant could be lost, but they provide support to keep the participant safe or make them feel safe.*

### **Free Water and Freely Accessible Water**

Interviewees indicated the following about providing water at events:

- Dehydration is an issue as people are dancing for extended periods of time at EDM events. Although bottled water is profitable at events, there needs to be free water available and the water needs to be freely accessible and convenient to access at the

site/venue. It was stated that events resist offering free water as patrons then consume less alcohol.

***"Water is a huge revenue stream." - Interviewee***

***"At a minimum, allow people to refill their water. Some venues were taking the caps from the water bottles so people couldn't refill them (i.e. don't take the caps off water). Don't ban camelbacks." - Interviewee***

- When dancing for extended periods, it was stated that people need to consume a pint an hour of water. However, it was noted that there have been a number of hyponatremia (i.e. consumption of too much water) fatalities; females were stated to be more susceptible to hyponatremia.

## **Education**

### **General Education**

Interviewees stated a number of general perspectives about education:

- Education is paramount - better education is needed for patrons, promoters, and staff.
- Education can alter and change people's behaviours.
- Accept the fact that partying is not new and that people will inherently take risks and engage in risky behaviour.
- Education is needed so that people do not party alone and buddy up for safety.
- Communications and messaging about education is needed before events. At the event, if there are issues with bad drugs that arise, this can be communicated by on-site communications boards and screens. This can also be used for health messaging. Social media can also be used before and after events.
- Messaging can be paper flyers that are handed out - it isn't that high tech but it also doesn't need to be.
- Social media should amplify and support the educational outreach, leading up to (a week or two before), during and after the event. Messaging basis is:

***"We are here to answer your questions about... drugs, sexual health, staying hydrated, availability of free water, drug related harm reduction." - Interviewee***

- Messaging can link to other websites, such as the Drug Policy Alliance '[Help Save A Life.](#)' Understanding the risks of using, and if using, be safer. ['Safer Party'](#) [program social media posts \(Drug Policy Alliance, New York\)](#) (Note: The Drug Policy Alliance has provided permission to use these posts in Edmonton). DPA has connections to the festival community but the concept is portable and should be applied anywhere there is alcohol and drugs.
- That Shambala, a festival near Nelson, British Columbia, is an excellent example - they have an educational element, safety and drug checking.

## **Alcohol Use**

Interviewees indicated the following about alcohol use at events:

- Alcohol can have many negative effects - it was stated that there may be more issues experienced from alcohol. It was questioned as to why alcohol is being treated differently than drugs. Some believe there is more danger with the use of alcohol which is a legal substance; more concern was expressed for depressants as the level

of consciousness is impaired. However, alcohol is legal but drugs have a stigma associated with them. It was stated that intoxication is sometimes what is seen the most at some events. Notably, alcohol sales were noted to be profitable and are large revenue generators for events.

***"Drugs get the bad rap, but alcohol gets a pass." - Interviewee***

***"Not only about drug use. There are more acute alcohol poisonings.***

***Especially when combining with other drugs, especially GHB and depressants. With psychedelics and MDMA, getting drunk affects your decision-making ability." - Interviewee***

- That when you limit alcohol, people may consume more drugs.
- Harm reduction for alcohol was considered as, or thought to be having a drink of water if they have consumed an alcoholic beverage.
- That cut-off time for alcohol must be earlier if the events extend until 4 a.m. or 6 a.m.

## **Drug Use**

Interviewees indicated the following about drug use at events:

- Effects of substances taken are amplified by the lights, lasers and music at EDM events.
- That you cannot stop drugs from getting into events - the drugs will get in despite best efforts. People attend who are involved in high risk behaviours. It was stated that the fact is that people consume drugs. However, there is a role for mitigating the risks.

***"Not condoning, but not condemning.' It makes drug use more dangerous if you don't have open conversations. In Portugal, 17 years ago they decriminalized all drugs. Fatalities dropped over half. It opened up the public conversation and public services. Conservatives feared there would be increased drug use. Zero tolerance approaches are much more dangerous." - Interviewee***

***"Harm reduction cuts down on transports. You can't stop young people having drugs and going to an event but you can mitigate at the event. But not around that - you won't stop the drugs." - Interviewee***

***"Drugs will be with us forever. It's not only about drug use." - Interviewee***

- There is biased information about drugs - balanced data is needed. Some drugs have benefits. There needs to be realistic and truthful drug education. Medical facts must be linked to science.
- A huge education piece is needed. There is a lot of stigma with drugs and the rave scene - the industry has been stigmatized and stereotyped. There is stigma and misconceptions that everyone at raves does 'hard' drugs.
- That there should be consideration for 'Drug, Set and Setting' and effects can vary on different people.

***"Drug - What is the drug? It could be alcohol.***

***Set - Includes physical, mental, emotional health, origins, ethnicity***

***Setting - The environment. People can take the same drug and may not experience the same effects." - Interviewee***

- The effects of 'party drugs' (intoxication syndrome) are not widely taught in the medical curriculum - specialized knowledge is required for training.
- Concern expressed as some people consume unknown substances that they find on the ground at events.
- Drug sniffing dogs have been found to make people panic and then consume all of their drugs before entering the event which results in more harmful outcomes.
- Participants who buy drugs on-site often have no relationship with the dealer and may be buying substances that may be of poor quality and laced with other harmful substances.
- That there is lots of misinformation with MDMA and there is a battle with the media. MDMA is a mild stimulant. There are many risks, such as hyperthermic reactions and death. It was also stated that overdoses may not be from the consumption of large doses. There is a subset of people who are sensitive to hyperthermia. Fatalities have been correlated with these conditions. At events, people overheat as they are dancing and it is a warm environment. They need to chill out and they need water. MDMA and the euphoria experienced from MDMA masks their symptoms, then they overheat and this causes seizures. There may be heatstroke when MDMA is involved and additional environmental conditions can affect it.
- That with the 'darknet', acknowledge that drugs are around and available.
- That events in another jurisdiction have rigorous searches where shoes and socks are removed during searches. They have attributed massive success to this security measure.
- A case study from Bogata, Colombia was provided as an example of harm reduction  
<https://www.facebook.com/echelecabeza/>  
<https://twitter.com/echelecabeza>  
<https://www.instagram.com/echelecabeza/>
- Harm reduction in Colombia is supported and funded by the government - there is policy that says services must be provided. This is for any type of music festivals, rock concerts, etc. This is set up in the city, even for street drug use; there is no separation of types of places this must be offered. They message through social media streams.

### **Co-Consumption of Alcohol and Drugs**

- The combination of alcohol and drugs was stated as a problem. It was expressed that edible cannabis may pose to be a new challenge in the future.

## **Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention and Support**

Interviewees indicated the following perspectives about sexual assault and harassment at events:

- Some believe that the leading issue with EDM events and festivals is sexual assault and harassment. However, issues of sexual assault and harassment were stated as not being isolated to EDM events and festivals. Awareness in society was also stated to be heightened as a result of the #MeToo movement.
- That strong policies are needed around sexual assault and harassment.
- That there is a lack of available incident data about sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence at music events and festivals is an under-researched area.
- Sexual violence was stated as a

***"microcosm of what is going on in society. It is not the festivals but a manifestation of a broader problem." - Interviewee***

- Sexual assault and harassment is experienced by females, as well as by non-binary and people from a number of sexual orientations.
- That females who are wearing little clothing does not imply consent.
- An exit strategy is needed in terms of sexual assault prevention; this may be in the form of people interacting with the patrons as they are leaving and distributing sexual assault prevention information pamphlets to patrons at the end of the event.
- There are issues with sexual assault reporting (i.e. allegations vs. pursuit of reporting and charges). In terms of credibility, situations become more complicated when alcohol and illegal drug consumption are involved for the people who are reporting sexual assault and harassment. It was stated that better mechanisms are needed for reporting sexual assaults and harassment. Prevention is required but also care and support services must be provided for those who have experienced sexual assault.

***"[The] worst part is living with this [experience of sexual violence] - it causes the most damage." - Interviewee***

- Protocol needs to be in place if an incident happens.
- There are increased reports in Edmonton but the city has grown in population, i.e. we have more people so there may be more reports.
- Lots of sexual violence crimes go unreported. A goal is to increase reporting, and to provide support and understanding.
- Bystander intervention is needed.
- Predatory behaviour must be actively watched for in terms of safety. Raves are dark, loud, and congested. The 'mosh pit' and crowded areas are places where sexual violence is experienced - these are opportunistic spaces as perpetrators are 'relatively anonymous' and the victim doesn't know who touched them.

***"Sexual assault is a crime of opportunity." - Interviewee***

- It is important to have signage and informational messaging at events regarding the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- People in visible clothing must be positioned throughout the event site to watch for sexual assault and harassment.
- Alcohol and drugs facilitate sexual assault and harassment. Intoxication is used as an excuse and responsibility is minimized. Perpetrators may incapacitate victims with drugs and target those who are incapacitated.
- That there are a lot of repeat offenders.

***"Or people can be friends for years - drugs and alcohol have them make stupid choices." - Interviewee***

- Interviewees asked if there is a potential role for specific sexual assault prevention training for City of Edmonton facilities to set a standard - this would establish a values system and an intolerance for inappropriate behaviours at facilities.
- Educate people for safety but don't victim blame. Educate the people running the events to watch out for incidents to make it a safer environment.
- Safety is a community issue. It needs to be talked about. Community accountability is required - everyone has a role to play.

## **Events Data Tracking**

Interviewees indicated the following perspectives about data from events.

- More transparency and better communications is required regarding events data. This includes communications between producers, promoters, venues, service agencies and the City to share information for learning and improvement opportunities (i.e. sharing information about medical transports and the acuity of incidents and issues arising at events. It was stated that some data wasn't known to promoters and to others involved in EDM events until the information went to City Council in June 2018. Those involved in the events should know how many transports they have per event.)
- Comparator data is needed for all types of events, not just for EDM events. Data integrity is needed in terms of consistency of data collection and accuracy of reporting.
- Determine what is important to measure in terms of outcomes, i.e. what is being evaluated? There can be a number of different considerations: type of event, demographics of the participants, attendance (predicted and actual participants, staff, volunteers), proximity of the event to acute care facilities, patient presentation rate (PPR) on-site (including health presentations, medical), ambulance transfer rate (ATR, of how many ambulances left the site), ambulance transfer to hospital rate (ATHR, includes people who presented to the hospital on their own or through another form of transportation but not from the event site), percentage of patients transported by ambulance (PPTA, this will depend on the level of care available on-site), and hospital aversions.
- Safety plans should be driven by the data available.
- That there is opportunity for further research with data and to partner with academia. Some transports would be unnecessary if the right people/services are available on-site - compare data from when interventions are implemented to data from before.

## **Security and Enforcement**

A number of perspectives arose from the interviewees about security and enforcement at events. It was stated in the interviews that organized crime exists at raves as there is access to a large market of people.

### **The Differing Roles of Police vs. Security**

Interviewees indicated the following about the different roles of police and security personnel events.

- There are considerations for staffing needs as there are different roles that are required for security and for police in terms of safety, security and enforcement mandates.
- The biggest expense at events was stated to be for police services. It was believed by some that EDM events do not require a heavy-handed approach. There are differences between the roles of police and security, i.e. enforcement and safety. This puts police in a predicament as patrons may be taking illegal drugs. There are different approaches in terms of trafficking of drugs vs. personal consumption. It was stated by some that police should stay out of certain areas of events at events.

*"Police services across the country have been woefully slow in understanding youth culture and how they've evolved – drugs, drug testing kits, amnesty boxes, active drug testing on-site – you would want to have those kits. The police said they would charge promoters as they know that people are going to take pills. So [promoters] upped their security, provided cool down rooms, safe rooms – asked for this to be regulated for all promoters and pushed the envelope on this – amnesty boxes – the police didn't want this – they thought this was promoting drug use." - Interviewee*

- That there is reluctance [from participants] to interact with police as they have an enforcement approach. An example of this reluctance is if the participant has been drinking or has taken drugs. As there are different styles of policing, it was stated that further education is needed, especially in terms of responding to those who have experienced sexual violence. It was also stated that some participants may consume all of their drugs before the entrance gate to avoid enforcement officials.

*"Used to have community policing and have gone away from that. Special duty used to come with that. Extend to all police officers in their training – police don't have these skills." - Interviewee*

### **Other Security Issues**

Interviewees indicated other security issues as follows.

- People may throw items over fences for later pick-up by patrons - controlling and securing outer spaces is required (for substances as well as to prevent entry by other people).
- That tight control must also be maintained for 'back of house' where staff, promoters and equipment are brought into the event.
- Security considerations are needed for monitoring bathrooms and changing areas.
- That violence is not usually an issue at EDM events.

- A number of interviewees referred to a “bro culture” in Edmonton which has contributed to issues of safety at EDM events.

*“Violence is not part of the [EDM] culture. They aren’t aggressive – they are dancing. PLUR – peace, love, respect, unity. They want to be peaceful, respect the people there and the unity of the gathering. Doesn’t apply once you add in alcohol - early on in the days, to be economical you had to add alcohol. Societally, alcohol is part of the deal.” - Interviewee*

## Occupancy Limits

Interviewees indicated the following about occupancy limits at events:

- A best practice indicated occupancy maximums should be set using fire department regulations.
- That venues may have too many people in relation to heat and mobility in the event people needed to fight their way out of a facility, but that every venue is different.

## Environmental Factors

Interviewees indicated the following about environmental conditions at events:

- Environmental elements add to safety concerns including heat (e.g., internal at the venue and external outdoor temperatures) and weather conditions (e.g., rain, humidity).
- Considerations are needed for hyperthermia and hyponatremia.
- At EDM events participants are dancing for long periods of time which leads to dehydration and overheating concerns.

## Testing of Drugs

Interviewees indicated the following perspectives about the testing of substances:

- A number of interviewees stated that testing of drugs is needed and is an area that should be investigated. It was stated that drugs are not always pure and may be laced with other drugs that cause different effects to the user.
- Drug checking would be seen to be *“a game changer” - Interviewee*.
- An ideal would be to have private spaces where substances could be tested; this could be called a ‘Health Monitoring Space’.
- Drug checking provides the opportunity to talk about harm reduction and education about risky behaviour. At the point of contact, people are given advice about what was found in their sample. They are told the risks: *“Here are some things you can know” - Interviewee* so that they may make informed decisions about consuming or about not consuming the substance. People are offered free counselling about dosing, drug mixing, do’s and don’ts. This builds trust.
- That drug testing *“does not aid and abet drug use” - Interviewee*. It was stated that there is an evidence-base to testing drugs - a public health approach in the absence of drug regulation like there is with cannabis. Testing of drugs is *“a crucial harm reduction intervention after clean drinking water, food and beverages” - Interviewee* and regulated so that risks are mitigated.
- *“Prohibition won’t stop drug use - people will seek out drugs.” - Interviewee*
- That with drug checking in place, a shift happens in the drug market as there is

*"a modicum of accountability - [dealers are] selling what they say they are selling." - Interviewee*

- That at Shambala (in B.C.) they run four spectrometers. These run 12 hours a day and there are lineups of up to two hours. Drug checking has been implemented there for 10 years. They have a legal exemption - a Public Health Emergency declaration was made. There is an Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) status for drug checking, Health Canada section 56 and a "handshake agreement with police". In regards to liability, *"there is a greater liability of NOT providing drug checking - knowing the service [is available]" - Interviewee*.
- That testing of drugs poses liability issues as giving drugs back to the patron is seen as trafficking by law enforcement.
- That there can be false positives with testing of drugs and that the tester must be adept at screening.
- That by having drug checking, trends can be tracked.
- That consideration to move towards offering 'front of the house' (i.e. testing of drugs), but start initially with 'back of the house' drug checking. That by testing drugs discarded in the amnesty boxes and drugs that have been confiscated, if you find something at one event, then you can initiate alerts that can provide messaging for the next event, e.g., the pill that you think is MDMA and it's not. For substances that have a greater medical emergency and may still be out there -warnings can be provided. Drug checking can identify these trends. Create alerts at the event that the same pill might be out there (they may have a similar baggie, it looks the same as that drug) - this will reduce the number of medical emergencies.

## Amnesty Bins

Interviewees indicated the following about amnesty bins:

- A number of interviewees were interested in having amnesty bins available at events to discard unwanted items and drugs.
- That these bins should be located both outside and inside the event for unwanted substances.
- That at the end of some events, substances from the amnesty bins were sorted and tagged.

**NOTE: Edmonton now refers to Amnesty Bins as "Prohibited Items Boxes"**

## Consideration for the Entirety of the Event

Interviewees indicated that the event as a whole must be considered in terms of safety - before, during and after the event:

- Considerations included:

*"Are people making it home safely? Are people couch surfing? Where are underage people going? What transportation are people using and having access to so that they can get to go home safely? When you turn people away from the event, how do you know they are safe?" - Interviewee*
- There are many considerations including legal, moral and reputational.

## **On-Site Medical and Health Services**

Interviewees indicated a number of perspectives about medical and health services availability on-site:

- On-site personnel (staff and volunteers) must have the right experience and qualifications - personnel must have the proper training and education in order to provide specific treatments to those in need (e.g., if they are volunteering).
- That what can be treated on-site and what requires transport may vary by service provider. The availability of on-site medical services will divert transports from the hospital.
- At some events, the doctor is not on-site until later in the event (as they potentially aren't required at the beginning of the event).
- That extended hours of service is required as a lot may happen at the end of the event. People may overconsume alcohol and drugs near closing time. This can be when patients are being unnecessarily transported (it was suggested to further investigate this).
- That transfer of care (physician to physician transport) can pose challenges (it is unknown if this is a challenge in Edmonton). In some areas, ambulances are required to be on-site and costs are borne by the event organizer.
- That non-medical emergencies may result in transports. It was stated that strapping a person to a gurney may create even more issues for the patient as they may just need to work through what they are experiencing on-site.
- One interviewee stated that the best model they saw had:
  - A sanctuary tent for people on bad trips, next to harm reduction which is right next to medical - all in the same location
  - Volunteer groups - 'PLUR patrol'
  - PLUR angels - roving teens - if they see people nodding off they can bring them to medical services
- That "Ground Control" are paid staff equipped with radios and are an extension of medical services. They provide 'customer service' that can be anything - directions, free water, where the parking is; their job is to walk through the space and call for help if needed, they are trained to be friendly.
- That an app that connects to emergency services or distress services would be beneficial to providing a safer environment.

## **Evolution of the Industry**

- It was stated that events have become more mainstream. Different artists/DJs draw in different types of people, maturity levels of participants as well as different types of risk behaviours.

## **APPENDIX 6: FOCUS/CONVERSATION GROUPS**

### **Approach**

Three 90 minute conversation groups/focus groups took place on November 13, 20 and 21, 2018 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Over the three nights, 23 people participated in the focus groups. In order to provide a natural setting to facilitate conversations with this community, Church of John in downtown Edmonton was chosen as the venue as it regularly hosts small scale electronic dance music events and is well known to the EDM community. Light refreshments and snacks were provided, and participants were entered in a draw to win a \$50 iTunes card in recognition of their time and feedback. The focus groups were facilitated by a staff member from the City of Edmonton's Integrated Strategic Development (ISD) branch. Due to the nature of the conversation topics, a registered social worker from the City of Edmonton's Citizen Services Community Safety, Social Development branch was also present and available for the participants. As well, each of the focus groups had notetakers from Integrated Strategic Design and Communications/Public Engagement.

### **Recruitment**

Initial focus group recruitment was through social media from City of Edmonton Facebook and Twitter social media, Women's Initiative/WAVE, NextGen and through social media promotion from stakeholders. Social media recruitment advertisements invited people who had attended a large-scale (i.e. more than 1,000 people) EDM event or festival in the last 12 months to participate in a conversation about safety, including drugs, alcohol, sexual assault and harassment to understand their perceptions of safety at EDM events to provide feedback that would help the City of Edmonton provide recommendations to increase safety at these events. Following low attendance for the first focus group and to mitigate further anticipated low commitment levels from participants, Chvrch of John helped with recruitment for both the second and third focus groups by extending invites to known members of the EDM community.

### **Process During the Focus Group Sessions**

Once at the sessions, participants were given some brief information about the history of the project including the report brought forward to City Council in June 2018 that recommended a moratorium on electronic dance music events in Edmonton. Participants were informed that administration was researching strategies and approaches to make these events safer, as well as looking at what other cities have in place for regulating these types of events. Participants were informed that they would be asked about their feelings of safety at events, pre-event safety and post-event safety and about how their information will be used. Focus group participants were provided with an email address [isdresearch@edmonton.ca](mailto:isdresearch@edmonton.ca) if they had questions or further information they would like to share for this project after the session and were also provided with the registered social worker's contact information (phone number and email) in the event they needed to talk to someone about their experiences.

## **Focus/Conversation Groups Research Findings**

### **What Are Events Called**

Participants refer to these types of events as raves, massives, and festivals.

### **Why Participants Attend**

Participants were asked what the draw is for them to attend EDM events. Participants expressed that they enjoyed the music and dancing, there was a good feeling from attending EDM events, a sense of community was experienced and that events provide an inclusive environment where everyone fits in and is accepted - whether they are in a wheelchair or have autism, etc. EDM events were likened to the hippy movement. Participants said that it's a fun thing to do with friends and there is a good vibe to the events. A number attend for the artists/DJs. Participants found the events energizing and said they bring them happiness and joy. Some said the events are an antidepressant in their lives. Participants said

**"Music is a drug"**

and that EDM events were non-judgemental spaces - people said they can dance with no judgement. They carry fuzzies as a sense of comfort.

This is a worldwide activity - ravers said they travel all over the world to go to events. Some places mentioned where participants have been to events outside of Edmonton included Calgary, the U.S. (including Las Vegas), U.K. (including London), India, BC for Shambala, and Europe). As well, people travel to Edmonton to attend EDM events from other areas of Canada and from all over the world.

### **General Quotes from Participants**

**"A moratorium would be the worst idea. People will do drugs anyhow, you can't stop that. Can't stop the drugs from coming in. Provide harm reduction."**

**"Going to a bar you will have similar problems."**

**"It's not just the rave scene, we are just in full view right now."**

**"This is needed in other places as well"**

**"More comfortable at a rave than a bar. Might be venue specific."**

**"Why only EDM?"**

**"As a generation we are facing stigmatization. So when we participate in social programs we are instantly stigmatized. Why can't we address the double standard?"**

**"Bar culture it is "acceptable" to approach people but in the rave community people are there to consume media."**

Women, especially, expressed safety concerns at music events, especially bars

**"I feel safer at a rave than a bar."**

### **Perceptions of Safety**

#### **Feeling Safe**

Events were seen as safe spaces, but some said that you need to make choices so that you are not in areas where it isn't as safe (i.e. in the crowded areas at the front). Participants said of the EDM community

**"Generally, you will look out for each other, even if you don't know them."**

The EDM community was said to be a supportive, helpful community.

Aspects that made participants feel safe were:

- The visible presence of police
- Knowing where the first aid station is located
- Knowing where water is available
- Having on-site staff and trained people stepping in if there are issues
- Having enough physical space
- Having a visible harm reduction presence
- Keeping people out of the stage area
- People checking in on others
- Taking care of people when they are "messed up"
- The presence of lots of medics
- Substance testing, and
- Amnesty (no judgement) boxes

When events were felt to be unsafe were when people were acting inappropriately or in an unsafe way. These are other issues that made them feel unsafe.

### **Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, and Harassment**

- One notable finding from engaging with focus group participants was the acceptance of sexual assault and harassment as a societal issue that exists everywhere, not just at EDM events. The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton refers to this as 'rape culture', defined as "a society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse" (Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton).
- Sexual assaults and harassment were mentioned as more prevalent in bars, nightclubs and even at concerts.

*"It happens once per night on average - no different than going to a concert or club."*

- They like to have a little bit of space, and "When you cram people into this environment like sardines, you don't know what someone is going to grab or reach." To avoid this issue, some stated that they generally stay to the back of the crowd.
- People wanting to fight
- People pushing can escalate situations

### **Design of the Event Site and Amenities Available**

- Areas outside the venue (e.g., parking areas) that lack a security presence
- Overcrowding (especially if a fight breaks out)
- Having a hard cut-off for selling out the event (limits are needed)
- The floor design at the venue
- Cool off spaces that are too small
- A lack of fans (participants stated that misting stations could be used)
- A lack of water
- Having to pay for water
- Need available earplugs for the sound (participants stated that there should be a bylaw for over 85 decibels)

## **Security**

- Some people are said to get scared and panic when they see someone in uniform. This is especially the case if they are under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

## **Alcohol and/or Drug Use**

- Some stated that alcohol abuse isn't that prevalent in the EDM community - regular rave people don't go to get super drunk.
- Participants stated that there was a noted difference with different groups of people attending and with the different types of drugs used by these groups. There is "a bro culture" who are aggressive from their consumption of cocaine and/or alcohol. This was said to be in contrast with the people who use drugs that make them happier, in which the same aggression is not exhibited. Issues occur with  
**"Guys that are all 'jacked up' and drink too much and get aggressive."**
- Participants mentioned that some people do their own substance testing so they know what drugs they are taking and whether their drugs have been 'cut with' other drugs.
- Overheating issues with consumption of 'Molly' together with dancing

## **Safety Preparations - Before the Event**

### **General Safety Preparations**

Having the following in place was felt to make them more safe:

- A fully charged cell phone
- Money for a cab or other transportation home
- Letting someone know where they are going and sharing their information/itinerary with people who aren't attending so they know where they are going
- Arranging a meeting point with friends or "lost spots" to find their friends if lost
- Earplugs
- Electrolyte packages (to replenish body salts)
- Gatorade
- A fanny pack
- Not taking anything expensive with them

### **Alcohol and Drug Consumption**

- Bringing a naloxone kit (which must be checked at the entrance to the event). The kit is carried either for themselves or for others encountered either on the way before or after the event as medics aren't outside the venue.
- People said they pre-drink and binge drink before they arrive at events.
- Regarding mixing drugs and alcohol, they time when they start drinking. Then they do drugs before they go into the event.
- Pre-planning - knowing what drugs their friends are taking
- They consume all their drugs before an event to avoid law enforcement. It was stated that it would be safer if they didn't have to do that.

## Safety Issues - At the Event

A number of items came up in the focus groups that would make events safer for participants.

### Testing of Drugs

- Substance/drug testing was brought up numerous times by focus group participants (but they stated this would require amnesty from security and police). It was stated that access to substance testing should be similar to medically supervised injection sites.
- A participant noted the importance of drug testing by mentioning that an article from Indigo Harm Reduction stated that 90% of the cocaine that was tested in Edmonton was found to be meth.
- To improve safety for participants, drug testing was stated to be successful at Shambala in BC.

***"Also drug dealers don't bring cut drugs when they know this (drug testing) is there."***

### Security

- Friendly security staff as opposed to an authoritarian approach
- Female security at raves - some participants find it easier to approach female security if they are in trouble. Female security guards are perceived as less aggressive by males when ejecting someone from an event:  
***"People don't really want to fight a female security guard."***
- Security screening is needed for both drugs and weapons
- Security should be visible, but the presence of metal detectors would make them wonder what happened there
- If security is overaggressive, then incidents tend to escalate.
- Timeliness of security response:  
***"I have seen people get punched and then it takes ten minutes for security to show up."***
- Some stated feeling scared for their friends if the police were around.

### Medical Services and Harm Reduction/ Festival Health

- On-site medical staff are needed.
- Roving medical staff and roving harm reduction should be at events - sometimes people simply have questions. They should be very visible (e.g., with light-up umbrellas) and be approachable and friendly.
- In Calgary, there are highly visible volunteers with balloons tied to them who walk around and make sure that people are okay.
- Harm reduction training programs are needed.
- There should be educational ads for drinking water.

### Alcohol and/or Drug Use

- Some stated feelings of being less safe around really drunk people:  
***"Problem is the drunk guys."***
- Overconsumption is a huge issue - why can't we promote moderation?

- Alcohol and drugs don't mix. Alcohol overconsumption - people get cut-off but their friends buy them more drinks. Then if they take drugs, they get into fights.
- Participants weren't expressing that there shouldn't be alcohol at events, but stated that if people had to wait longer in line for alcohol, this may slow consumption.
- For big events, drinking age could be 21.
- Little cards are available to test your drink on so you know if it has been spiked - can the venue offer those?
- Aggressive people who use cocaine
- When bringing in legal drugs (for medical issues), a participant stated that they have had trouble with bringing them into events.
- Easily accessible naloxone kits.
- Being able to take Narcan into a site would make them feel safer
- Place to go where you can find out information about substances if they are a 'baby raver' (i.e. new to raves)
- Don't share supplies
- Drug education
- LSD - someone was outside the bar area with LSD
- Give water, gum or diet pop (for "Molly")
- Legal situations - being arrested and prosecuted can have real consequences. Regular consumers know how to hide their substances, new users/occasional users get caught. Lawyer bills are an issue.

### **Stigma**

- Some people panic (especially if they are under the influence) when they see someone in uniform - there is a fear of being judged and potentially kicked out
- Stigmatization from security, medical, police - there is so much stigma with drugs:  
**"Don't judge people for doing drugs."**
- Better communication and working together is needed between paramedics, police and harm reduction - the participant was working for harm reduction at an event and said emergency services  
**"hated them as they think they are promoting drug use."**

### **Safe Navigation Through the Site for Medical and for Safety**

- Lack of access for medical staff - to get to the front is very difficult - security has to push people out of the way.
- Routes to get out and through a crowd (e.g., escape paths).  
**"If you are in the middle of a crowd, and your friend ODs, you need an escape path."**

### **Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment**

- SACE (Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton) resources are needed.
- Drugs are a gateway to sexual assault.
- People don't know what consent means.  
**"[Choice of] clothing does not mean consent."**
- At Vanilla Ice, girls who were drunk were throwing themselves at guys.
- Fine line with what sexual harassment is
- People need to take responsibility for their behaviour

- Participant stated she "**Gets her ass grabbed a lot**"
- Feel safe when no one is "hitting on" you or doing weird things and acting inappropriate
- Consent signage is a best practice. At the Astral Harvest festival there were signs saying if a person is drunk they cannot give consent. This signage served as a good reminder to participants.
- Bystander intervention is needed
- Security was stated to manhandle women - security was being aggressive as they can "get away with it" - they assault women.

### **Staff Education/Training**

- Properly educated and trained staff to spot issues. Participant stated that they had one drink at an event and suspects that it was likely spiked. Security threw her out - she should have been taken care of and not thrown out.
- Better trained staff at the venues - friendly security rather than strong authority so that people feel safe to approach them.
- Recognizing people in distress
- De-escalation training
- Training for everyone about drug interactions, including security
- Educate the bar service that when someone is high, don't serve them.
- Educate security, patrons, promoters, venues
- On-site education - men on how to behave, drugs, how to be an ally, health promotion, challenging the predatory culture
- Raves training for staff - how to recognize what the patron has taken or how high they are, how to help somebody

### **Chill Spaces**

- Cool down spaces (chill spaces) - at raves. The go-to drug is Molly - as people are dancing, a big enough cool down area with fans is needed in each corner or there needs to be misting stations.
- Overheating, cool down room or being allowed outside in a secure area. People get anxious. Ice packs are needed for cooling.
- Having a place to chill. In Shaw they are told to move along.

### **Other Spaces**

- Social spaces are needed to make connections. These spaces serve to reduce tensions if event spaces are too small. If there are no spaces, tensions tend to occur.  
***"Re-think loitering... we are trying to create community not consumerism."***
- Seating spaces
- Smoking area outside
- Separate outdoor space for non-smoking

### **Breaks in Music Sets**

- Every hour or so, have the DJ take a short break (e.g., 3 to 5 minutes) where there is a health reminder to check your neighbours and friends.
- Overstimulation from music, lights - breaks are needed

### **Design of the Space and Environment at the Event**

- Temperature control in the venue (so that it is not too hot)
- Places to sit to get away from the music
- Orientation to the site so that people know where everything is located (e.g., washrooms, harm reduction, first aid, medical area, etc.)
- Overcrowding - concerns if a fight breaks out
- Think about the floor design
- It was stated that at Edmonton Conference Centre (formerly Shaw Conference Centre), a massive space feels less safe

### **Free Water and Freely Accessible Water**

- Free water needs to be a requirement
- Free water in accessible places, e.g., available near the middle of the site. In 'commercial' spaces they are more interested in selling water.

### **Communications**

- Texting friends - there is a delay at events. People need to add extra time to allow for texts to go through.
- Communications boards and signage are useful, e.g., "**This drug has been found.**"

### **Other General Considerations**

- Bathrooms - only allow one person per stall. Have attendants in the bathrooms for security and harm reduction.
- There is a difference between the rave community and the party community.
- There are some people who attend to pick a fight (this can even be guys toward girls)
- Hard cut-offs for selling out tickets are needed.
- People feed on the energy of the music.
- Drones
- Food and snack availability. Salty snacks help absorb water.
- Rovers that are easily visible (like with light-up umbrellas as other events have used) who are approachable, friendly, and easy to talk to
- Ear plugs should be given out as they are necessary as the sound is too loud. Edmonton Conference Centre charges \$4 for earplugs.
- Be more proactive with patrons than reactive
- Changing the time to 6 a.m. allows the crowd to better disperse.
- Sell health supplements instead of cigarettes/vapes.
- Conscious Crew volunteers were mentioned as providing good harm reduction.

## Safety Issues - After the Event

### Transportation/Getting Home

- Help people find ways to get home. After events it was seen as difficult to get transportation home (e.g., Uber) when everyone is leaving at the same time.
- At Interstellar Rodeo and Bluesfest, school buses are used - patrons pay a donation and the shuttle takes you to where you are parked.
- Shuttle service is needed as LRT is closed. LRT should run later.
- Lack of transportation options - after West Edmonton Mall events, people are walking around in their wet bathing suits - previously there were buses organized at WEM. Organizers should work with Uber and the City as hundreds or thousands could be leaving at the same time.
- Driving while intoxicated is an issue.
- Issues with being forced out in the winter when you aren't properly dressed and it's hard to find a cab.

### Security

- After events was seen as a time when there are safety concerns as there are people with drugs combined with a lack of clothing being worn. Guys will say "**Come see my drugs! - [and it's] GHB.**"
- Security is needed outside the venue, including the parking areas.
- Police were stated to cost a lot of money

### Leaving Times

- Everyone leaves at once - can leaving times be staggered?
- For safety, tell someone when they are leaving.
- Leaving at 4 a.m. or odd hours does not feel safe.

### Messaging/Communications

- Folk Fest has a board, Motion Notion had a message board on their app.
- Communications and messaging can be as simple as having posters.
- App - Shambala had "forest fire leave" but also continual updates. Folk Fest had an app but it kept crashing. Cruise had an app and you could add people to your group with locations/beacons. Could have interactions with others without giving out your personal info.

### What Happens After the Event

- After hours parties were stated to be even more unsafe.
- Some participants wait until after most people leave as fights break out and people run into the street.
- People directing patrons after the event is needed.
- Dark walkways and narrow paths allow people to sneak up on you - they are breeding ground for unsafe activities. Staff are shuttled into these areas.
- People are waiting outside to prey on people coming out of the events (i.e. panhandling, drugs, to meet women)

***"It's not safe to walk alone as a girl."***

## APPENDIX 7: OBSERVATIONAL / FIELD RESEARCH

A number of Edmonton EDM events were attended for observational research from September 2018 to February 2020: Bomfest, Stacked, Scream, Get Together, and four Soundwave events. A number of considerations arose from the observational research including:

- Should an emergency transport be necessary, the positioning of medical services should be near the access point for ambulances and away from smoking / cannabis areas
- Harm reduction and festival health should be adjacent to medical services in the event that a person needs to be transitioned to or from medical services.
- Free drinking water must be available and be easily accessible.
- Washrooms and change areas (if applicable) should be continuously monitored by security and harm reduction personnel. Only allow one person per stall and watch for people in the bathroom who may be sick.
- Site layout should not allow for specific areas to become too congested in the event of an emergency / incident (i.e. consideration for bar areas, free water access points).
- Crowd management principles and practices should be applied for regular Ingress, circulation, egress and in the event of an emergency.
- Safety considerations in the mosh pit/ front of stage areas
- Roving festival health/ harm reduction services are important to help identify people in need of assistance from harm reduction and intervention
- Educational information on drugs, alcohol, harassment and sexual assault should be available and accessible.
- The best practices as outlined in the bylaw and control plan requirements are reasonable and are important in ensuring appropriate response in the event of an emergency