

YOUTH & POLICE IN BC

The Youth Experiences Project interviewed 449 BC youth aged 16-30 in Victoria, Chilliwack and Prince George to learn more about interactions between police and youth who use drugs (YWUD).

Indigenous youth were...

48%

more likely to have 4 or more encounters with police in the past 5 years compared to white youth

3.26 times

more likely to be handcuffed, arrested or taken into custody vs given a ticket or let go, even after adjusting for other factors

41%

more likely to report discrimination by police/courts than white youth

learn more at yep.cisur.ca



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"I have to divulge details, personal details, and talk to cops and convince them of my story. And it's always been about convincing, convincing, convincing; every incident I've had with cops ...let me just persuade you. Oh no, I didn't start the fight" or "no, I wasn't smoking the weed" or "no, I'm not a drug dealer."

-26-year-old Black male, BC

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"He pushed me to the ground for no reason. I mean, he was just like "I said get up and go!" ... I'm like "Well you keep pushing me down, what do you expect?" And he's just like "Oh, are you talking back? You want to go to the tank?" ... I was pissed. Here he is, this fucking like 45-year-old man pushing me around and I'm only 14 years old. You know what I mean? Like are you that bored? Or are you pissed off at somebody and want to take it out on me?"

-29-year-old Indigenous female, BC

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"They talk to people like they're nothing ... It's like, um, it's like you don't even know the cops and they still manage to get into your head and like make you feel like really shitty or something ... I guess it's mainly like being Indigenous. And like yeah, also being like a, you know, a "drug addict" and also like, um ... yeah, I guess also kind of being like a youth."

-17-year-old Indigenous female, BC

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"This other cop just yanked me down by my leg, and I fell like face first. My nose started bleeding immediately ... At that point he like stomped on my back, took my hands behind my head, and then smashed my head against the ground ... And like, that was like one of the first times I've been like arrested and cuffed and everything. I was like 16 at the time. And I was scared out of my mind. And I'm like ... "I just go to a hockey game, I have 2 beers with my friends, and then this happens."... And I'm like crying, I'm like "I just want to go home. I want to see my mom." Like I'm scared shitless."

-19-year-old Indigenous female, BC

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"I've been kicked in the head on a few separate occasions. By police officers ... there was a chick cop who kicked me in the head awake ... in the head! And I was totally, like, covered in the blanket ... I feel dehumanized ... I felt like I just wasn't worth anything ... It's a hard thing to feel. They can't expect you to, like, be part of a society and it's the kind of society that doesn't think of you as a human being."

-22-year-old homeless white male, BC

5 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUTH

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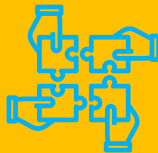
1. RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION & ACTION

2. CHANGES TO DRUG POLICY



3. ENHANCED SCREENING AND TRAINING FOR POLICE

4. ACCOUNTABILITY IF POLICE ABUSE THEIR POWER



5. STRONGER CONNECTIONS TO COMMUNITY