Gillian Maxwell: [00:00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=40GTqYYFXntGtE0cIxoFa8v95J8BiTad9VuqJJXC0YRFFUyqG_xOOv6Ij5R5ywgRLTM-Jgw2wamycHYHMKoUqHKC1n4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.27) I'm Gillian Maxwell. I'm welcoming you to our latest webinar, the latest in the series for the Canadian Psychedelic Association's webinar. This week, we're going to be speaking about drug policy, where it came from, and why it's in place these days. It's been over 100 years of suppression and bad policy. And probably a lot of you, maybe on this call on this viewing, don't know very much about the history and why drug policies are like that in the first place. Why do we have prohibition? Why did the war on drugs happen? What was it all about? What was it that the government was really concerned about everybody's health and wellbeing? I wonder about that. We are going to find that out.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:00:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Dq8UuwL_VXHDYzoTT5obRWE7cyk1FovaY_jGlxUoza6nd0N27iD3REWpX911zMKmj875p3KFrq8_4EVpgl00XjVs8cY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=47.23) So I just want to explain a little bit. Canadian Psychedelic Association is based in British Columbia in Canada. We are planning to be a national organization and we have ways and means of doing that, reaching out across the country so that we really do truly represent the country. We're in our early birthing stages at the moment. We're very happy to be at this moment of time offering what we can offer, which is a way for people to be really connected in this wonderful world of psychedelics in service of humanity, making the world a better place.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:01:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2hHzOxLp10cCX150nXe-uwUK51tcOj-QCdVYxb4Cp7so8np5waA0rYugcmu9Kan2fP4Q2RfRad7kedSYSz0JQuNtSJo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=86.96) So I think we'll go to our speakers now. I'll introduce them. First speaker I'm going to introduce to you is Neil Boyd. I'm just going to get his other, okay. Neil Boyd is a professor in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University and Chair of the Board of Directors at the International Center for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy at UBC Law in BC, British Columbia. Welcome, Neil, to our webinar. Lovely to have you here.

Neil Boyd: [00:02:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cG0S915uXgtEfSTxqshbp0pq-tv9-FwmOvYSXGVYmWYPeSuJnxPhoWRfheo_n7kkLeMhdaURGO4C_lc9tS44p_GCPv4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=124.38) Thank you.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:02:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xpV6Wt9fjDdp_73oEIvX63gfTAz5QHCWRdEiYN3CnmlVz1-U-fZANw6a2iTcefV7ac3ydYIC4h3-rhm3nwqjyy1j1FM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=125.23) The next person I'll introduce is Deborah Small. I've introduced Deborah Small a few times before in my life. It's an honor to do that. And I have to tell you that she is the most inaptly named person I have ever met. There is nothing small about Deborah. She is a force of nature and her name is maybe just to fool you for about two seconds. So Deborah Small, lawyer and social justice activist challenging the inequities of the US government's so-called war on drugs. She's the Executive Director of Break The Chains in the USA, working to empower communities of color. Welcome, Deborah.

Deborah Small: [00:02:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CUdYoIZqEfscqpf4Oi0pRa6Pq-uEJXhTuIDzYVde0ND4W3I0UtSKSmWCoGM9qBnorhsGozA-N6VDCmDnSaqHM78GNzc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=166.47) Hi, Gillian. I'm super happy to be here and welcome to everyone else.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:02:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DBEbabxkVPQGijNwmcM5bMcW83CiL4n3G9qIcHawd0SKGnXv1j-I6CRGJtvRoWuoqxNS5IZt9TPWnWC9Q290Cn1TNBw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=171.24) Thank you. I'm super happy to have you here, but just for your information and the audience, Deborah and Neil, and I have known each other for about 20 years now, working on things like drug policy reform and recommending harm reduction and promoting it. These days, it's very hard to go anywhere in healthcare without hearing about harm reduction, so we did it. We really did it. It is part of the system these days, we even have some supervised injection sites are propping up. Not as many as we need. However, we're still having this, almost feels like the same conversation about drug policy and being stuck in prohibition. So my next guest that I want to introduce to you is Phil Mechuskosis L’Hirondelle. Phil is a Cree elder who brings a unique blend of Aboriginal and Eastern tradition to his present day sacred work teachings. He works as an elder for Corrections Canada. Can you imagine? Working inside the system, it's an amazing place to be and it takes a lot of courage to do that, Phil. I would consider that work harm reduction. So he works inside for the Corrections Canada medium security prison in the low mainland of Vancouver, Canada. Welcome, Phil.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:04:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BM-rny6G1sC9CntOmmXu78tG5HRGcHTSbKRqCYs6-vFg1sShd-e2S8-VmHzz_BqkWst6Xn2gCTO-ahmmh99QwzAnMf8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=251.42) You're on mute if you wanted to say something, just to say hi. Yes.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:04:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_JtUXnL1jA0RtJOdsFBeQH5TcVDkmH1_n5UJL9qp2uLs7rfqr__CxiRlRpQgHKAKFBMBsfHPiS6vywxdT-WbHpcRJ34&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=257.46) I guess I have to unmute.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:04:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9CvotnSzvsro5LXM1zTlwMdrK5nwhH7T03MA_0n9nB-hPhz_lXASFEK-0S-h8B3DhL_Zk5IMEizwdbXEcNQD_MyWCv0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=259.05) You do.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:04:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9M_tJevVldQ4K49TVPD2PSBPcbHqTbW149qObt35SIlR0jtA_WrzEvz6c4s24eGxiVzdETxMr0T_zMkW4j9xIBp2RSM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=259.81) Okay. Yeah. Well, it's good to meet some new friends and yeah, that's what you said. I'm kind of working on the front lines right now within the prison. So, I'll have a few words to share later on.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:04:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UXGu6REyV4GFzM0o-9IP-E8PCmUXOwJxzYdneSgZYN0J8IED9tyXbny-bW0HChpS0IunZ6ZHDaO47Lywj32PWhHOb5Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=273.76) Thank you. So we're going to talk about drug policy. Just to give you some context for the psychedelic world and what the Canadian Psychedelic Association is up to. We're at the moment, really promoting our petition to decriminalize nature. If you want to go and sign that petition, please sign that petition if you're in Canada, decriminalizenature.ca, and that is all about what it says, decriminalizing any plant medicines that ... how can you criminalize nature, really? What an odd thing to think you could do.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:05:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1DL0Nlo7n2u90recbbfe0UlsnCBvzjsMLaKecdo1a9jAM4XcUvOt8JEd5oQu7DsUEzD-iOTjYFalZNLCLStY1w9Er7A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=308.3) However, it's been in place for probably 40 years or so and needs to stop. So there's a petition started by an MP, a member of parliament in Canada, Paul Manley, he's the representative for [inaudible 00:05:24] Ladysmith in British Columbia, and he's started this petition. Anybody in Canada can create a petition about anything to be read into parliament.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:05:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=71jatM2HL2RikxnyLUDmWu6UxcFI6lyBojWpK-shWA66eLRh8PqRKrnHpu-XPEr4scXRRd1w2wBQ1SNiQB6WUGiQNsM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=333.67) All you need is 500 signatures. We've got nearly 9,000 signatures and we're going for 10,000. We have until August the 14th in which to do that, so please help us get there. It's really important to speak to those people in power and have them know that their support in their communities and their constituents, otherwise they just simply won't listen. So the more we get, the merrier.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:05:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=16pktzlABOo8TCGJoGWt_JhuGCMgfW72oXstsU_GSrZpKpvBfhbtMMZ8e6ogQzBr4_WdAhW9YKaHF0qzKuZx2WHXX08&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=359.5) And just so you know, with that petition, when you sign it, you tick on it and then it has to be confirmed. So, an email comes to you right away and says, "Confirm that this is what you did." So you actually have to do it twice, just so you know. Make sure you do. Thank you. So that's part of one of our big things that we're working on at the moment with the CPA, and it's perfectly positioned inside of this conversation about why do we have prohibition in the first place? So we're going to go to Neil first to talk about the history and we'll be hearing from Deborah and Phil also about the impact. So please go ahead, Neil.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:06:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XqgUWlLwt0oxSLsE0lHG4Qys-d_i0SjK7OzO2dcFg0BIgmOZiJDn1RZZA6T_ahDuhZlJhep3mHU3oatBgv_X7pInu9U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=401.47) Oh, you're muted. Muted. Can you unmute yourself?

Neil Boyd: [00:06:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JJnVPcqt-ynY0AUGQyv5GRwegAUs5TYIlIybsZNrmPmRbppQIcoxLuElY-UPYIb5hz4F25VqL2cFMYKwGiWkOihJ3Qo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=407.9) There we go. I'm un-muted. I guess one of the things that might surprise people is to recognize that the criminal prohibition of certain mind active drugs is an experiment of a little more than 150 years. If we go back in time, we can go to the British India opium company, which conducted two wars to basically impose British Indian opium on China in the 1850s. At that time there was no thought about global prohibition, though there was concern by the Chinese about the approach of the British India opium company.

Neil Boyd: [00:07:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aDoAKAP5A1xEQ8B-KfeaLCP-rlDmKi9-_yo_8pyx4l3KJNMiQjsPUW6Dcjf7s7tKzfITT2igaJ1Kvyq9kEdOxhTp5mk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=457.14) Well, if we can just fast forward to the United States and Canada in the latter part of the 19th century, we had Chinese immigrants coming to Canada and the United States, they were able to make 10 times what they would make in China for similar kinds of work, and they brought with them smoking opium. It was something that they had grown up with, that was a part of their culture. So in Canada, for example, they set up smoking opium factories in Victoria, Vancouver, in New Westminster. These factories were not a concern of the police. They were not a concern of the newspapers. In fact, there were advertisements in the newspapers for Laudanum, which was actually a mixture of alcohol and opium, but it was clear that that wasn't a concern.

Neil Boyd: [00:08:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OafXvcjshLlsPlpzFerQOT1y9Nh1lLECSB2tHj3UXdgeBkXA-9jNy4jr64hyL9qB_Mkf9_q3Gn41VUAoL0FUHWsDd2A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=507) In 1885, there was actually a judicial inquiry struck to determine whether or not these smoking opium factories posed any risks to British Colombians. And they concluded that, no, that the saloons of that day were a much greater risk and the harms that came about from saloons seemed much more significant. So you have the Women's Christian Temperance Movement, which formed at that time because of the sort of awareness of the beatings of women at the hands of drunken husbands.

Neil Boyd: [00:08:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=r9heRMuMhD33kdvL5wV5YwD9v9h2RWmgsJaF5mckP7WZqQyq2eRZrcqwVPM9fBYeqNIoitJaeroYIZ1k0X83f73_aBI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=539.36) So, already we begin to see in the 1870s, 1880s, 1890s that the dangerous drug in terms of these two, smoking opium or alcohol, appeared to be alcohol. But one of the points I really want to emphasize is that when we talk about drugs, we often exclude alcohol and tobacco from the mix. There's no sense in which alcohol and tobacco should be excluded from the mix. As police officer went said to me, Neil, if it wasn't for alcohol, I don't have a part time job. And there's actually some truth to that. So the question then becomes, well, how did we get to somewhere around 1870 with smoking opium factories in Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster to criminal prohibition?

Neil Boyd: [00:09:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ct5yqPD-wfoEl0V_HFd8tx0zbAvJNdtA43QYhkIy3ZMDZlVlSBH4jmYXS1AtKRinQ9whT77UIGmggXEQn6E4lGY1iWA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=589.83) Well, if you look carefully at how that first legislation in Canada, it was similar in the US, how it came about, there was no concern initially because cheap labor was needed to build the industrial infrastructure of the West. So, the Chinese were welcomed. They were a source of cheap labor. They would work for 50% of what white trade unionists would work for. That changed about the turn of the century. So, the first decade of the 20th century, between 1900 and 1910, what had been a labor shortage was now a labor surplus. We began to see the formation of the Asiatic exclusion league, and Canada imposed a head tax of $50 and then $100 and then $500 for anybody who was immigrated from Asia before they could come into the country.

Neil Boyd: [00:10:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fe8sbcjlz46fLz_7RBmaThBQ1NnZarygBkFJKW7Bg4dgJfN_xOUMY8HzqpLRFLbsXHszSpUfrL-Il1f2KAOlfVg0HJU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=642.29) It was a plainly racist head tax, but it was motivated by this labor shortage that had turned into a labor surplus. The labor surplus of the early part of the 20th century then resulted in the very well known anti Asiatic ride of 1907 in the city of Vancouver, where 10,000 people converged on City Hall, which was then about where the Carnegie center is. At the end of the meeting, after listening to deputation of conservative politicians and Chinese clergymen and merchants urging an end ... sorry, mostly at this particular event, trade unionists and conservative politicians urging an end to all immigration.

Neil Boyd: [00:11:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HClEywyk9sBiBxVWa-gIB4QHci98DuHULKmQc3Z_aqCWdG_fA-rHJ_x8P9axiwZqxe8C1dZu3-J8S0MA9e68qYPvPVk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=688.92) They drifted into what the Chinese and Japanese corners of the city of Vancouver. They beat people up. They destroyed the businesses, and the response of the federal government was, "Well, these two, Japan and China are trading partners. There's a lot of documentation. So, we've got to do something." So initially in the fall of 1907 they went out to ... the government sent Mackenzie King out to Vancouver to settle claims from the Japanese for losses, and King wrote at the time, "Why aren't we settling claims from the Chinese? It seems as if fear and not justice is the motive." The Prime Minister shot back say, "Well, Japan's that important trading partner and China isn't that important."

Neil Boyd: [00:12:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_xtzWWhnsSkqeWV671Op_fVHD4lgLG0CVAuSjyG7rpwqA_Kvfw9yX1WDj3cLAPwP0Bxxwk_iiWVyzEfZ3rShLlfQXCA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=730.88) But ultimately his view prevailed. He went back the following year, May of 1908, and he had a request from the [inaudible 00:12:21] Opium Company. And he said, "I will look into this drug business. It's very important that if Chinese druggists are going to carry on business in the same way as white druggists that they'd be licensed in a similar manner. Then he received deputation of local Chinese clergymen and Chinese merchants who were interested in anti-opium legislation, and he said to the Vancouver province the next day, "It should be impossible to manufacture this drug, smoking opium, anywhere in the dominion. We will get some good out of this riot yet."

Neil Boyd: [00:12:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yxtgU3DqjNB55QN5lXm6zQmaNpekgwTPDAuRgi-bwFSBtc2Ab4le9n2wR8uo6KlMQoMRgzjO49mfxsA8o88Npqi7SdM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=774.22) Now what's interesting about this is that when the first legislation was introduced, it was as a consequence of a racist riot in the city of Vancouver. The legislation was not introduced by the Minister of Justice or the Minister of Health. The legislation was introduced by the Minister of Labor after ... I mean, there was a transparent kind of obviousness after all. We were trying to get some good out of a racist riot in the city of Vancouver.

Neil Boyd: [00:13:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vE6DiivACs_NfitPj1TV0pVRlbJ7JMVW9hQp3bvTwO0Q3iemlzNKc5Ybd_3J2fVDIhN7u1rdu-LRItjRJj4KuLf5p3s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=801.74) That's the context in which drug law began. There was racism behind the law, and to pass it through the Minister of Labor? And today, we have to recognize as well that tobacco and alcohol were never criminally prohibited. Alcohol was for a very short time in Canada and for a longer time in the US, but what we saw over time from the initial legislation in Canada in 1908, we see the very first penalties imposed, merchants were given six months to sell off the existing stocks they had of smoking opium. The maximum term was six months in prison for the manufacturer or sale of smoking opium.

Neil Boyd: [00:14:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZxWGormISzFm2R-Kii10mv0vDnkYMYRJzgzn6Psk1bu2us0XvPqm8UF8829WUUDZdj_rVLxtRQR2S0g1IWuKFAyfPX0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=856.28) Over time, those penalties grew. They grew to the point where in 1961 with the passage of the Narcotic Control Act ... and by that time, by the way, cannabis and cocaine had been added to the schedule of prohibited drugs. So really this is about first world drugs versus the drugs of the developing world. Tobacco and alcohol, regardless of the harm that imposed, were never part of this agenda.

Neil Boyd: [00:14:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gtAocLkypbOQXSSFdQ2jiFFcbEd-gKWBBKmnFxgDbLnzLcp2MODqDmbiL8SXWq1-07ThpRpNmP3GeIanlAP_RTRLTLk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=882.72) So we've got this hypocrisy that basically undergirds the legislation that we have today. I'll just sum up a little here by saying, in 1961 the Narcotic Control Act, there was a lengthy debate about whether people who trafficked in narcotics, which were then defined as cannabis, Coca, and opiates, whether they should receive the death penalty. That was somewhat narrowly rejected by just almost a two to one margin, the death penalty, but in its place, life imprisonment as a possible maximum penalty for those who trafficked in cannabis, cocaine, or opiates.

Neil Boyd: [00:15:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2nBsXWpofGss0QGLFWtkeWJUxhSK3ksCG5tJzteYQjDXFOvDr7xkijr2sR3pSYznYAslICD0BwLaLIGwanRlT8oDcNM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=921.01) Now the irony of that, the toughest penalty in place in Canada at any point for any kind of drug offense by 1965 ... I should add, no more than 1000 persons charged in any year from 1908 to 1961. By 1965, with this draconian legislation in place, we see 1000 people convicted of cannabis possession. Half of them went to jail. The first attempt was, get tough with these cannabis users, put them in jail. But by 1975, 40,000 people. Didn't stop people from using cannabis. So the irony is that either we didn't know ... I can say we didn't know what we were doing, but there was lots of correspondence between politicians of 1907, 1908. One I remember particularly where it was said that Mackenzie King would learn of the way in which the Indian people used hashish and the context of smoking opium, and that it was very much like Lord Morley who would smoke a cigar or have spirits as a libation.

Neil Boyd: [00:16:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=03bLSnDrXvH-iA3Q2qudmH2nJTWDangfuw6Lcxr0_AXjsA0PB5YbwXYeZ23Xei_HI52YjfTKuU9hta1ME-aOP74Mrrg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=998.07) So that view is out there, but this was a view that I would impart privately to Sir Wilfred, the Prime Minister of Canada, but not to the people of North Waterloo. In other words, you tell the Prime Minister one thing which happens to be the truth, and you tell your constituents something that's simply not the truth, something completely different. The suggestion that the line that we've drawn between legal and illegal drugs makes some sense, has something to do with public health. It never had anything to do with public health. It had to do with cultural difference. It had to do with the bad drugs of the developing world. It had to do with racism. And that remains today with a person like Donald Trump and America. We have a few conservative politicians of a similar kind, but I'll stop there. I've probably used up a fair bit of time and hope to chat further.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:17:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7cancFMb75HlhhDjre_lb3BdSdvc6BjLF914rQlZ3nKSSE7WGTE08xPV3bNI6rsUmJZbaWDJnqj1CK8rbg9u7eVddyI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1051.31) That's wonderful, Neil. Thank you. I do have a question for you while we're just doing the opening remarks, and that is, in the 60s with Nixon and the administration there it was the same thing, they created the war on drugs for the same reasons as keeping people oppressed and identifying particular groups. Could you speak a little about that?

Neil Boyd: [00:17:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EQQvSZlFQt8t5l_aysXarviEFVHMh2TpbC4kK6sQ5IEYMbxJ2euuLFWCHqp-9JLK9dFxrMzAj_2f4IzpRgBTZYRh0Lw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1078.43) Yeah, I think I've talked really about the period that led up to, the origins of criminal prohibition, but in America with first Nixon and then Reagan and the Three Strikes, You're Out and the various get tough on drugs approach, we had a massive boom and imprisonment, and drugs became a currency by which the black population in the United States was oppressed. One of the most famous examples is the distinction between crack cocaine and powdered cocaine. And of course, crack cocaine was treated very differently for reasons that had nothing to do with health and had everything to do with who was using what.

Neil Boyd: [00:18:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eukCMby6wMQkEjxC2-6B64q-mzva7zqgsTS5YAa7J3Ps1OFR3Z_xH2zCEyZHp0o-9-3mnVKgfPNKBFaXljG2j0Txjg8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1123.89) America since the 60s and 70s has been in a much worse place than Canada in terms of oppression and in terms of the drug war. We've recently legalized cannabis. Of course, Colorado, Washington are similar, but we continue to talk about alcohol and drugs as if alcohol is not a drug. So one of the things I really try to convey to my students all the time is that the line between legal and illegal drugs has nothing to do public health. Let's start talking about all the drugs on the same page. That's the only way we can make sense of this.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:19:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hrZJQcBAcoUquQBC3Our4TlM9gcR9xq5ENOP6AhdUuWCYRFgfkMgXPfZQlwOAlLm_QP-NFe-V4G2W8XqzuJlKVLZSpU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1164.93) That's wonderful. Thank you. It reminds me of a guy in London before he was fired, actually. He worked for the government. They did not. And he did his study on the most harmful drugs, and of course, guess what came out on top? Alcohol. Yeah. Then he got [crosstalk 00:19:45]-

Neil Boyd: [00:19:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=K2H69NDVm_jiQFQdhRkhe0vNgQ9G9eZObUl1o-fiNPx1oo09ynJWiiwkV0sRAQTTDSiaCFjlhTekdylyq6RfuuqyV4M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1184.96) Tobacco a close second, perhaps.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:19:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GBCmaaLsO-eITIEVSc9snoOmz-i2y5UY-SZAssUJN6_arYHfL9loAEMEPC-klW8xsRkStA_kUGZhyFqaZrLYydmULwg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1187.64) Yes, exactly. Those two legal ones. Okay. We're smiling. It's not really a funny topic, but we're relating to each other because that's what human beings do, but it's a tragic tale. It really is. And so ...

Neil Boyd: [00:20:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MG-LCT6Bduf1babHgGlZQwo6-_0nb4dBVpXfmsLbZ3JuBy9KJZaLkNRgf7CVeZvYBf0Oe_AAeMDkbLnXYK8hA_SAYKQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1201.51) It is, I mean, and the human cost is enormous. When I was in law school, we did a survey of the graduating class at Osgood. 70% said they had used cannabis, but none of those people, none of my ... I've never been in any sense victimized as a consequence. Of course, that has a lot to do with our culture and the hypocrisy that undergirds all of this.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:20:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-B3r-iLG8CCcp4ohayurrZEnQZEWkcGgwgZUnR02gqNzShF4rDEFVpjDJLvS8nHTvM_SW4HJxidOEpZRbCKxDRNJId4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1233.72) Yeah. So we'll leave it there for now, and go to Deborah. I just wanted to tell everybody that's watching, by the way, the best way to watch this, to get the full experience, is simply to put yourself on gallery view. From time to time, we'll be flipping around. If a speaker is on for a while, we'll be focusing on them. But gallery view means you can just set it at that, sit back and enjoy.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:21:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uFkIlwkoQ3u1bfJJkQvQHUareUw4hk0cw_erNtqNNzAfkIG4yIG2FUR8hDa58mv2yoFQgGpeSxE2fEGuw09Wy3SF_Eo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1261.4) So, and the other thing I wanted to say of course, is I don't know if you've noticed, but we actually have two lawyers and a Cree elder. Now, if this is anything like my experience of talking to lawyers and people that tell wonderful stories in the indigenous tradition, they could talk for hours. So I think we'll be okay between four and six, but let's keep our fingers crossed that we get everything in there that everybody wants to say. Deborah Small, you are up next. So you've heard the introduction with how it started in the first place. Please continue on with where you would like to go.

Deborah Small: [00:21:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EeiBHH05ayi5iCHI1DWkcV-PryxiRDZpg5mrg5tT-sf41bF-yHnGACKme_EycB3S8ZQlRNlbuGOlsf3hVOCaedPcpag&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1299.77) So I kind of want to build on some of the things that Neil talked about just now, but I also want to dig a little deeper into the exceptions made for tobacco and alcohol. I think that you have to remember that, at least in the US, our early economy was built on promoting and selling addictive products for profit. The early colonies, their main staple was sugar, rum and tobacco. The reason that Africans were stolen from Africa and brought the colonies was for free labor to actually produce these products.

Deborah Small: [00:22:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FQLCO5Wdl7dvDkhUfbB57XrekVN91hZ4fPTOZtHbB2LpQuYMx_-nFnT9VWvcaE-dPS28lqGDvxUKlpkhEP-uIbKMhg0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1345.23) The reason that the settlers wanted the land, which they drove the indigenous people off of, was so that they could develop a market for these products. That was how they built the economy. So I think it's really important to remember the important role that drugs in general, including sugar, which I see is also a drug, which is also addictive, played in building the economy of what became the United States of America. So there's something particularly noteworthy and perverse about a country that built its wealth on promoting addiction for profits and now have a whole system of punishment that's based on punishing people for their addiction. So I'll start with that.

Deborah Small: [00:23:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=We1AXq_tf2SuQdp4HgOpSYMUdd0X4bUEoSLevxGPOdD9aq4O-JrJ7-OHNY8EZee3kyICBs9rYbh0yGgduIXD4UrkTuI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1392.57) Then I think it's important to think about the lessons that were learned from alcohol prohibition that relate to drug prohibition. Alcohol prohibition was ostensibly about protecting women from violence, from men who beat them under the influence of alcohol. And yet in reality, that was a conversation that was talking about immigrant people, not the majority of Americans, and throughout the entire period of alcohol prohibition most of the law was directed at poor communities, immigrant communities, not wealthier communities, which never stopped drinking.

Deborah Small: [00:23:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=527eb_CIBnYuWHEHE7GoNP0PyODU6y_IJghAVjfev5Fj9On58K_SfH50afKJsiZtSoRhDt387abmhCKLpqaJmqjTGKw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1433.7) Now, I don't believe that domestic violence is exclusive to poor people. And yet the experience of the narrative around alcohol prohibition was very much around controlling immigrant communities, controlling their behavior, criminalizing their behavior for other reasons that had very little to do with their consumption of alcohol or their behavior while under the influence of alcohol.

Deborah Small: [00:24:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=e_xD_YB2KeHCbrRx7JCAokbjCCfiU3yta74NS0EHwV9sHofiaGg80Fa-TwPDY1vvRTvr4bWqr1Wd0staRLnU-j7BNRY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1459.06) One of the reasons we were able to get rid of alcohol prohibition in a relatively short time in comparison to drug prohibition was because of the growth of the political power of immigrant communities who had the ability through their vote to force elected officials to change the law. And it's not surprising that the cities that had the largest immigrant communities, like New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston were also the ones who led the charge against alcohol prohibition. There were bitter, bitter battles in the country around that, similar to the kind of battles that we're thinking today about drug prohibition. But I also want to pointed out that, at least in the United States, each drug that was the made illegal was done so for a combination of what Neil pointed out as being economic anxiety and racial animus, economic anxiety around people of color who were now competing with white workers for jobs, plus racial animus, that said that we should always have a position of superior power over these people.

Deborah Small: [00:25:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jHOMWSDbou6ORuK0J1i_C7FQ6dZ904bAjZmrac_5DfPxfPsNrH9xlzoltGU-DbzTJ2ar1xkQZyU4JGb9kO1_r3wW6W8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1533.09) Now, it was not easy. In fact, except in the South, it was not that easy to just criminalize people on the basis of their color, but you could do it on the basis of behavior. So drugs have been ubiquitous within society from time in which people came together. It's always been a part of human society for people to take drugs that alter their consciousness and to have either positive or negative relationship with those substances, depending on when and how they used them. But the ability to criminalize people for that is a particular phenomenon that I say is rooted in sort of this Calvinistic morality that looks to create categories of people and moral worth of people based on both their color and their behavior.

Deborah Small: [00:26:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SBMDO7fpnEFd0KQLjkiNc4QbyH8xjHEBjVN3q7YKgLCT8OicsZUExrgsHdRhwF_ytddXkfddJyMazg0Z8i8OWnWkuVE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1584.69) Now, we could just as easily for the same basic reason have chosen to criminalized fornication and adultery as a way of controlling behavior that people might see to be harmful and unhealthy. The problem with that is that it's much more difficult to racialize that. If we laws against fornication and adultery, and the only people being arrested and locked up were black people, it would be hard to get the public to accept it because there were way too many multicolored babies in the United States to ever claim that white people were not engaged in fornication and adultery on a regular basis.

Deborah Small: [00:27:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2LkQqGqzhzKJtWcoK1ZKP7utPCOD-hsVja4tPmehpMlw8Tk2Bf483rPk4Y5DrrIjB6OcTAynCYgaVJMKqlnY__xaxMw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1623.24) Drugs, on the other hand, allowed for a little more selective prosecution. It allowed you to criminalize people, not for their behavior, but for their association. So I think it's important to go back and look at what was the narrative surrounding these things. When opium was first criminalized in California, opium smoking, they only criminalized the form of opiate intake that was done by Chinese people. People forget that during the Civil War and the period right after was the greatest level of opiate addiction in America, even greater than today, per capita, because when so many people had been given opium during the civil war to deal with pain, it was in a lot of the pharmaceuticals that were being sold in catalogs, et cetera. It was easy to buy Laudanum, to buy morphine, et cetera. So these things were throughout society.

Deborah Small: [00:28:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4oNqv19OlBLJt3qdy9019qYVTBzYlCNv0lPUkFgmIQZldweylzhlV3y2JqrFvsxMg6BRaTIrSgnQgVLBl0XVXv8xGeE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1682.81) It wasn't until there was a need to be able to control minority populations that what was previously considered to be a health problem became a criminal justice problem. And for those of you who are theater people, I would remind you of the theme of O'Neill play Long Day's Journey into Night that dealt with his own mother's addiction to opiates. So in that context, it was not treated as a criminal problem. It was treated as a public health problem, which was the result of bad medication that she was given by her physician at childbirth. That was the view that Americans had of people who had opiate problems prior to the Harrison Narcotics Act.

Deborah Small: [00:28:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Boe3w-3a0QHMJMqUIJPUYO9_UQFc2UhNroai8DnfK1VJHL5nPCQEryYepihsg6r4f3jSPXYgnAcIRON0evJgQKVSkno&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1727.63) These were people who maybe were misdiagnosed or prescribed. They developed a problem. They needed to be treated. It was not that they were hopeless criminals who needed to be incarcerated or punished out of their behavior. The same is true with cocaine, as again, the people who sort of trail blazed for that were intellectuals, people like Freud. They were doctors like William Halsted who was the first surgeon teacher at John Hopkins University. He was the person who had a long time problem with cocaine and heroin, but those things were not criminalized for him.

Deborah Small: [00:29:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KbTSGWrSObNcyEgV8v7lpzOGIAKplo0vq3vXISw74D54h1M7NJU3_ajOv3PWAXsQHipRjXAUNmvG9lF0yLbC6seKoS4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1769.11) The first time you start seeing cocaine portrayed in a negative light was around the early 19, teens, 12, 13 when it became associated with black people. Now why? Well, in the period after slavery, during reconstruction, when black people were now working for wages, in certain cases, starting in new Orleans, black people were given cocaine the same way that you would give people coffee or some other stimulant today as a way of enabling them to work longer hours without having to take a break.

Deborah Small: [00:30:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DoDdvJVJEqw5uIfmPijtg94cYAMiYEoD2IMw7yFjm3Ce-45yjp41s_mQ-YQliCrzWiGgkkccvh07SXELlVnTdA20qbk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1805.77) It had the additional benefit of making people feel good, but literally there were records that showed that many businesses, plantation owners actually paid their workers partly in money and partly in cocaine. So when there was a decision made at the national level that we wanted to criminalize this drug, all of a sudden you started seeing articles in the newspapers, including the New York Times, talking about, "Cocaine crazed Negroes," who were so out of control under this drug, that police had to use a larger caliber bullet in order to bring them down.

Deborah Small: [00:30:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VeV5LjeNYCZz2xW2K76kz0v1xj3E1FX8KR2WanNptRFj5bqRiTLwk1cQD-KymQHrGq3D9dF1aM8xNQDQwbMueHfBpCA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1846.07) And the other underlying theme that was true, both for opiates, cocaine and later cannabis, was issues not just about racism, but sexual behavior. It was asserted that Chinese used opium as a way of ...

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:31:04]

Deborah Small: [00:31:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iH9Tuy71Dfj_Xk_CiPR5K2Q98yAREm3WkhNZUM7pJpCBm4zL8gqfAOzw4YvoSmA6osCZ2q8rhgTiybDEaoLalLhTaUs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1863.76) ... that Chinese use opium as a way of enslaving white women sexually, that black people were using cocaine as a justification for going after white women. It made them more prone to rape, and it made white women more susceptible to their advances. The same was true with cannabis. In fact, the reason that we call it marijuana today and not cannabis was because of the racialization, at the time that they were passing the law, that associated cannabis use with Mexicans, primarily. It was called that crazy local weed. It made Mexicans forget their place and become aggressive and go after white people, especially white women. And in order to cement that view in the public's mind, they stopped using the term cannabis, or hemp, and started using the term marijuana, which is a Spanish word for the exact same thing.

Deborah Small: [00:31:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=H95j4WGvdOp6HgYGOGrvO37Qs2vbHp0k0AhX4-FAeUPELfM0Ot-ssOYjhT_ui5V0birAKnW51ImPy1DXw0ZXL-vNbXE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1917.67) So, from the very beginning, there was a racial agenda behind the drugs that were made illegal, and therefore, the people who would be prosecuted for using them. And this became even more pronounced in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement. One of the things that Nixon, I guess Nixon's Chief of Staff, John Ehrlichman, admitted years later, was that part of the reason for declaring the drug war was in order to have a way to deal with the group of people that Nixon had seen us as his enemy, which at that point was the anti-war movement and the black nationalist movement, the radical movement represented by the Black Panther Party.

Deborah Small: [00:32:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jl3TE8RWvS4tPHtWQdIafsMf2X9uiWG0kp72_DMfTX_95kMDhDeqoCEwQ4zPxt6nxPdcPhbE9WgQodSIn0dHgQJnzuM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1959.15) And so, as Ehrlichman said, "We couldn't just criminalize these people, but if we could associate them with drugs and then heavily punished that, then that would give us a means, legally, to be able to go after these people, to lock up the leaders, to kill them if necessary," but basically to take away their ability to continue to challenge the government on things like the war in Vietnam, police brutality, and the continuing institutional based at them that we're still struggling with today. And so, it was a deliberate attempt to use the frame of a war on drugs as a way of going after and neutralizing people perceived as enemies. It was very effective in terms of either giving police the justification for killing people, which is what they did with the Black Panthers, or locking them up, which is what they did with the anti- war protesters and many of the black liberation movement leader.

Deborah Small: [00:33:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FFmE853eIgY3gMxz-lUViTe2-8qZlbSY0dyfCvTmFXzcLdwVecsif7K2wPh6clSEJ0SDw_5jQeHnrf7wVjgxL67u0X8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2015.64) How it relates to the issue of psychedelics is that it was during the '60s, as psychedelics became associated with the counter-culture movement, many of the leaders of the counter-culture movement were also alive with the black liberation struggle. In fact, Timothy Leary went to Algeria and spent time with Eldridge Cleaver while he was there when he was hiding out from the government. So, the FBI saw these groups of people as being linked through their drug use and their openness about their drug use, and they saw that drug use as something that provided a door for them to use to be able to use law enforcement and all of the power of the state against them.

Deborah Small: [00:34:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lazFBXCWQEFsPxvuxtH6liCTW203yffb857sTBYC4Af7GJtelkaGebTGNtO5uLXiutR8_QUSDfgZiwEFyj6stCfSJaM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2060.46) The other thing I think is important to remember is the economics, the economic foundation, or impetus, behind having a war on drugs. In addition to allowing you to target people, it also allows you to justify failing to meet their needs. Once you call a person a criminal, because they're using drugs or whatever, you no longer have to address the fact that they live in poor housing, that they don't have access to healthcare, that they suffer from inferior education, that they have job discrimination. Everything now becomes the fault of that person because they're using drugs, and if they'd become addicted, well, that was their choice. And it allows you to ignore all of the other social and economic conditions that you've created for those people, which may or may not contribute to their drug use, but with now you can hang all of the problems on that.

Deborah Small: [00:35:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ybF0afPu4orvVm2cAyDfmT4Cgcm5Ynko7jgifXbu9dXnkGOk8wH6WDyFVfUWyXXgXMdI948i-woZYW8LabY5INlP50Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2115.65) And I find it amazing, actually, quite frankly, that inside of the war on drugs, we are willing as a society to spend more money on a jail cell for people than we're willing to spend to support a family of four. There's not one state in the United States that actually provides assistance to family that is equal to the amount of money it cost to keep them behind bars for one year. And that is still true to this day. So, for people who are locked up for drug offenses, our government acknowledges that more than 85% of the people behind bars for drugs are there for either possession or low level selling. So, we're not talking about kingpins, we're not talking about cartel leaders, we're not talking about people who operate major drug organizations. By our government's own estimate, less than 10% of people incarcerated for drugs fall into what they call a kingpin category, and the majority of our drug arrests are for possession.

Deborah Small: [00:36:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ujv4WkGRhU4f1Rpo9dKxN2jbiH7JxcVkiiim4bbEeTDi0nU9I4MJL3jtWVvnKVNI1rU63SUwdTvVza7wquj--1UNeM0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2186.36) So, basically, we're willing to spend 25,000 a year plus to keep a person behind bars for crimes that aren't even worth $1,000 on the street, but it allows us to ignore the social problems that these communities suffer. It allows us to disinvest in those communities, because, after all, they're crime cells, they're filled with people who were using drugs and who were doing things that we don't approve of, so we don't have to improve their housing, their education, their healthcare, their job benefits, or any of the other things that make life worth living. We can write them off, and then we can use the prisons as a place to disappear the people so that we don't have to listen to their complaints.

Deborah Small: [00:37:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wQ9mi23LwCnRShFo2O-R5jv7AnqmFWH5M1C5QXiM_Ueoas1NBww_YDMgWOFFbZlXAt5mBXh7qwwoid9AXi0Ym89znmk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2229.61) So, I think it's really important to think about the role that the drug war plays in maintaining the economic power structure that exists in our society, that justifies government in action for people that we've already caused to suffer because of discriminatory policies for decades and decades. And to impose upon individuals who suffered many of life's deprivation, the additional burden of stigma, because what we've done is made these people believe that they are the problem. Their drug use is the problem, the reason that they can't succeed, the reason that their family's are falling apart, the reason that they can't keep a job is not because of institutional racism, not because of structural inequality. No, it's because they chose to smoke a joint, because they use cannabis, because they use cocaine occasionally, or because they might want to get high on an opiate.

Deborah Small: [00:38:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iEUMI_pC3Lg-Vc9NXeg_G3vAiQqXxlqSrd31GVT7eHEGMtsZAPBnZGHdulhjHU2bxHaGRwv0LWzT0uYfp-GgCuNPmIA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2287.57) And so, for me, the drug war is one of the greatest hypocrisies that's ever been perpetrated on a society by a group of people who have no intention of applying those rules to themselves. And I'll leave you with the definition of racism from one of my mentors, Ruthie Gilmore, a prison abolitionists. She defines racism as a set of policies and practices that are developed by one group of people to be imposed on another group of people, where the ultimate result is premature death.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:38:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SSg72oxcEfhkkONVLOsNJNI-5WHbTIY3q_FmKo8HsikW_SVKJl60kjIlD_lfHVy10vzOY2sK2iCc1TRvO_3gaUZI2Wg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2324.87) Wow. Thank you, Deborah. I have to say, back in the late '90s, when I was living in the downtown East side, close to it, and just saw all the inequities and just couldn't take it and wanted to do something, I got involved in the drug policy reform world and met Deborah and other people like her. But there's no one quite like her. And I just had to do something, and that's really what propelled me on that journey for the last 20 years or so. It's so unfair and mean and cruel.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:39:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_MXkiWY9fc3jljIVXz0k3DzLiAfj3CiXg7bzjUIVqJ7AGh0-x9QQJcB26uGKo32Tv2g4tFJDBWhz302d0vUi11wSzuc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2357.24) And I'm really excited to have discovered this world of psychedelics. Obviously, it's [inaudible 00:39:25] they have amazing impact on people, as you mentioned, in so many ways, that there's something about the way that they help people feel connected and actually help people feel love for themselves and each other. Because I think a lot of what Deborah is talking about and what also Neil has talked about, too, is that people who are... And look at [inaudible 00:39:47] today, just people who are cut off from themselves and don't feel loved and don't love themselves, and psychedelics are very, very helpful for that and, of course, releasing the trauma that is however they got to that place of not feeling loved. There's trauma there, and psychedelics are so helpful for that.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:40:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LbMKISwUYlsKSPdjz30GVbcZLDoDrqIb5-Lk7-Vrywce0pwyN5-3sGgS3G6rVzyPSpt-5b3dtGvrE4vilhC3EPEk0gQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2404.22) So, I'm excited, again, in my drug policy reform world, to be in this time and place and to be able to really promote this and just make the changes happen. And that's everything you two have just said is why I exist, actually, to have human beings reach their highest potential. So, talking of one who reaches a very high potential in his life, that here comes Phil. Over to you, Phil. Anything you would like to say about the history of prohibition in Canada for indigenous people, and certainly the impacts that you're so familiar with working within the prison system?

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:40:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=itG9KxkceqcIyQUIzuQCpJT7oCcuyY_AOoS8Vzs_1SXXkRBJ9_m-10rKTbsWVKekm3ZL73jinfP3cTjQJnYrVCcxZ7c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2447.33) Yeah, sure. And just a little bit about my history, too. When Deborah was speaking, it reminded me of back in my 20s... I'm 70 now, and in my 20s, I was with the Red Power Movement. And the way the red Power Movement started up here is we actually invited... We had to sneak some of the Black Panthers up here, and they were teaching us how to organize. But the big difference was is that we were in a minority up here, so we have about maybe 3% of the population they've estimated, but yet in the prison system I work, most prisons... If you're looking at the prairie part of Canada, it's up to 50% of Aboriginal people, now they're using the word indigenous people, incarcerated.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:41:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xH44XKUIYBXblx8yTu-lWCeuxKjkFCLRut4ecGz9QYdGdk14AHgfmH9B6Ns7LK1mmsNiHtEJOKPUstHZT5214mI4Xn0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2503.86) So, we're using culture now as part of an approach to tackle some of this. So, when I say I'm on the front line, I've worked as an alcohol and drug counselor in the past. And now in the last few years, there's no manuals with becoming an elder, I'll put it that way, but the more I was assisting people in the community and from the downtown East side in Vancouver, which has been mentioned, and in other places, I was invited to come in and be one of the elders. So, we have about 30 elders in BC, and most of the prisons are in the lower mainland, we call it, of BC here. So we use culture as an approach.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:42:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yXEoFZagrWH-1fQP-HAo2nyFWQuiEh4EZZVrRLotiz3Yzpql_GA8HMvfv3pjOKHUoC1CALG9HgYXb75qI058eSefUD4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2546.98) And when I look at the men that I'm dealing with now... When they first come in, I do an interview with them, and I run a program called the Pathways Program. So, they get more exposure to culture and more one on one time with myself and other elders, as well. So, usually when I'm interviewing a man, though, I'll ask him about their life and how they grew up and if they had any exposure to culture. And there was a lot of shaming that went on, of course, and some of the men are really actually ashamed to be Aboriginal because of all the societal blocks that they've run into.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:43:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vKybzu8imOqid9jld7lPV6FLmiIxTYyRdBTW_lRFPKXoVw9zef_D-gFrDjkgMTL5x9luITIaBva1hzpwbk8m6QMhSy0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2590.1) So, the men I'm dealing with, when I talk to them, the bottom line is trauma, and trauma has always led to some form of addictions. And so, most of the, I would say over 90% is probably alcohol and drug related. Now there's some very heavy drugs that are coming in, like fentanyl and even carfentanyl, which is very powerful. There is talks now of a needle exchange program, but some of the unions are wrestling with it. I was going to say blocking, but I thought I'd better not say that. They're wrestling with it, put it that way, and trying to figure out the safety of that for some of the people in union.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:43:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xmdPosUl1zb9Y0vngkosMMUOSqVuJ2BPXVGE1mdjN6qtAXCz1_ZWsZlnbQ6sKmPNwY2nTv5rGFUEUi1TSAYtSATs59U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2637.98) So, our Aboriginal teachings are very cyclical, and we're working it in a lineal world because it's almost like paramilitary, I guess you would say, the prison system. And so, when us elders have our meetings, we talk about that. It literally is, when you use that term about the round peg in the square hole, sometimes it feels that way when things get down to the policy wonks and all this and trying to do something with the men.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:44:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_vw-PjJHgQ-zNWV9wTRVbk6PxcvLxuqwghOCicSAUuOa8Bq5HY5auTKxHKNxrCEoRCc0lmb4O3x3iaBgbYDDM_Zadfg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2671.7) The men that I've mostly talked to, though, it started with alcohol for most of them, and then it was a graduation. Oh, I would also say that probably a good percentage... It's hard to say one percentage, but I'd say over 80% have also been wards of the government at one time. And this is a intergenerational thing that I'm talking about now, because you have to look at a layer of things. There was residential schools where children were literally taken away from their families and family units broke down and parenting skills got lost. And of course, those parents, too, they turned to drugs and alcohol to kill some of that pain, you might say.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:45:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Li5ZDNvxvIAy-v9_FkeA48B72bawQMDmt5OIqmS16095K0NfxXc358Io6H6MWNQRIR13KFGIT9anRK9QDN-os6sMQCM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2719.87) And so, a lot of these kids have grown up in foster care by non-native parents, and most of them have run away more than one time. It's almost like a schooling system. They go from foster care to juvenile youth detention center to a provincial jail for minor things like B&Es, and now I'm dealing with very serious things like murder and different kinds of abuse. But when I talk to the men, though, they'll always say they started using, and I'll say, "Well, were you drunk or stoned at the time of your crime?" And usually they would say, "Yes." and a lot of them don't even remember because it was mostly a blackout or something like that.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:46:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Llr5XBEG4BbG9wQ6f7V7E2oGH38YVypzPUOIbTURi7q9ZD6SjpyRt9FRML8cOhNPLvOGZGWPsUqTyRCzkT1Bk2eZhy0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2768) So, what I'm getting at is that most of the crimes go back to a base of some kind of trauma in a man's life. So, sexual abuse has been a big one, and it's taken for a while for some of the men to even talk about that. But usually when I do a little bit of digging, I find out that it started usually in their youth somewhere that there was some abuse of some kind, and of course, a lot of them taken away from their parents. What bigger abuse could that be? So, no role models to grow up with.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:46:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=k_Zn8ujSCSvvomIiXN8rf9e7pPygXuuemaCPCBGiApTznib4ijX9v1I7gqNPt6pvr-bn7eV_Z9gzAkEw8SYJsJwKQFI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2802.7) So, when I think about drug use, a lot of it is to respond to something that's coming from the outside, to kill pain, and now when I talk to people like Jillian and the other panel members, I can see there are drugs, too, that make you look more within, instead of responding to outside stressors. And so, some of the ones I think are still being experimented with, a lot of them have come up from South America that are in Canada now. There are ceremonies. There's Ayahuasca ceremonies that go on up here and teepee ceremonies of different kinds. So, some of the healing of that has been recognized. It's still moving very slowly in [inaudible 00:47:28] communities and cautious, because I think people still relate the drugs like cocaine and heroin, they don't see the difference when you start talking about medicinal kind of drugs that could be used in settings... for healing people, put it that way.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:47:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CxKAvHr0dE34We5Cbuxzr_m08U0X9KVs7JA1jAtUaHtVQs6KPQid2jPMfOQT2Bw9HcVBauJY-eMknKtERH2ssi45kFk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2867.7) When Deborah and other panelists were talking about things like tobacco, I'm a pipe carrier, as well, and I do quite a few ceremonies, but I don't smoke cigarettes. I'm a nonsmoker. But I was just listening to a friend, [inaudible 00:17:01], and he was talking about even alcohol and other things have been used ceremonially. And when they're used in ceremony, I'm not addicted to the nicotine, but I do so many ceremonies where tobacco is involved. And of course, tobacco we've been taught growing up, by my dad, that it was used for ceremony and to give thanks, and it was an intermediary between us and the spirit world. So, when you grow up with that kind of teaching, it's totally different than smoking a cigarette.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:48:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KyCuatrSXs8HRpx6Kjtd1lvjvK2cIn-g08eqovuH-OT9VTEqii-Eja3WBdPHXdrrEiRkHVbNwu1FJ8ld9-nbMX1LHSU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2915.48) So, I'll give you an example when I was a drug and alcohol counselor. I was given this woman, she was in my office, and I was giving her some teachings about the energy of tobacco and how it can be used. And after she heard me talking, she says, "I never thought that when you smoke and you blow the smoke out of your mouth, you can say a prayer." And where does that smoke go? We say it goes to the ether or the spirit world. And she said, "Well, that's so powerful." She said, " I used to curse my boyfriend or my husband." She said, "I wish that effing guy was dead." And she said, "And I was smoking a cigarette when I said that," and she realized the power of her words. And same with my son. He was getting pretty addicted to nicotine, and I said, "Well, just try this." I said, "Every time you smoke, say a prayer for someone or something, or think of someone or something." And I actually watched his smoking habits change in those ways.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:49:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NwBmUihYr41f7a6EJvg0dtHX_OSZbvRCk5AZrzNHQ95DMre3L8fUKmSOr-lgU5mZwK2ql9VVhcpwwUczWTNIt9oR2S0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2976) [inaudible 00:49:36] maybe I'll leave that as an intro anyway. And I've been doing this for quite a long time, dealing with men and women now. I'm really grateful that there are elders on the inside. I can run a sweat lodge now on the inside of a maximum security prison, which I have many times now. We have an experimental village. It's got an Aboriginal name. It's called [foreign language 00:19:04]. So, it's a healing village. And this was a grandmother, her name was grandma Rita Leon, and she's the one that she said, "I don't want to see any guns, I don't want to see any uniforms, I don't want to see any fences for these men."

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:50:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CqbFJvuqI57rFO6ack50hMe9LeEVfYA3ZyR_bub4UrEokwUTzVI79NN1a0bxzc2L2SND4YT47YFXWzJC89lw15dQ1iQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3019.34) So, it was experimental at first, but now we've seen a great success. They're the only one that has an actual long house on their property. I worked there for a few years, as well, and I ran ceremonies there, as well. And it's a combination, because even amongst our Aboriginal communities, there's differences, like longhouse people are quite different than prairie people. The makeup of my men that I'm working with are largely from the prairie, from Cree and down East they call them [inaudible 00:50:50] people. And we can see that as the treaties and as Indian affairs, I guess, organized and came across the land, the highest gangs right now on are on the prairies, and we haven't seen the long house people get as much into gangs as the people from the prairies. And it has to do with poverty, if people were marginalized.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:51:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oibafC0lzzGRSQ06D9P_6XcnvP6Ldxv3ATy99BfpeZbMWJ4o2izww-23XJlyZvZ_KiYtgKPFuP59vhvkOpXOANHmFnQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3073.57) Oh, I got to tell one little story before I finish here. I met two elders... Deborah, this might interest you because... He said, "Four white men came," and he said they were from a place called South Africa. And they wanted to see how our reserve system was set up. I guess they came up, I think it was late '50s early '60s, and they wanted to see how the reserve system in Canada was set up so they could go back to South Africa. They called them compounds there, and it became Apartheid because the big difference was is that we were, again, we were in a minority in Canada. But to just to think that the whole thing about Apartheid and setting up those compounds, and you had to get permission to leave those compounds... My dad still remembered that, having to get permission from the Indian agent even to leave the reserve, and we couldn't vote until the '60s. And I was a little boy by then, so I remember my dad... My dad was an alcoholic, but he quit. He quit... I have to use the word white man way. He went to AA and things like that, but then he started to go to traditional things and slowly they see that these traditional ways are starting to come back now, because they were so squashed before that. They had to be taken underground almost to do ceremonies. So, he-

Gillian Maxwell: [00:52:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fyjAKuVokTQ1-HmWnHgM5_0HuUFBYKcRz5NNFB7-36zmg0hzQtNxTBJgiHeUnzJTKwafxM7A7-FO-rYkwkaLAuxe8EA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3163.33) Phil, do you have any knowledge of a traditional use of medicines, plant medicines in your tradition in Canada?

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:52:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vMyrtfj41OP8woahSswYgxNfuffAlRxRcB4onk5A6HRvI1TAhccqRDKnvXwzaHH4a2CxsgJrAvdk8VOBFdUcys0T9Rg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3174.53) Not so much in the prairies. They came up more from the South. The main ones were nothing illegal, I'll put it that way, that was termed illegal, because things like peyote and Ayahuasca started to come up... Well, peyote, I think, started to come up more in the, probably late '60s and early '70s, it came into Alberta, the province that I was in at that time, to a reserve called Hobbema up in that area. And Ayahuasca, I would say, started to come up just within the last decade, I would say, more to British Columbia and places across Canada here. I know [inaudible 00:53:42] to some of those ceremonies, so I had to be very experiential myself to see, "Well, I can't talk about this to men unless I understand it in my own way."

Phil Mechuskosi...: [00:53:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ccMK8NKmZXObWghi5omT3mNTrrYnPb6aJZBbd1nSIBMavMsDpxYfHAxmEvN8hvSfwIewnOe7hnu2GFXxRbFIGZaZNV0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3235.34) And I can see there's some medicinal... I can see where it takes you very deep, and I can see where it's helped some addicts. I know from the history of talking to other elders and other scientists and doctors, that they use this now in practice, and some of it is still hidden. I mean, it's not used openly, and I know there is this push by you and others to legalize some of the different medicinal [crosstalk 00:54:23].

Gillian Maxwell: [00:54:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sf1itqE6m27iPE9UKpcMApZ240icToyH9co9XQdAx7HP9PDI0ovU-EUiafIiglLTlhHHbxmv1yTdbzZzW98MuW34FIc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3264.63) Thank you for the segue. Absolutely. That's what the Canadian Psychedelic Association is all about. Welcome to new viewers who weren't here right from the beginning. I'm Gillian Maxwell. I'm a founding board member of the Canadian Psychedelic Association, CPA. And please join us as a member. $50 if you're a student, $100 for everybody else. And we really do need support to get a lot of things changed in the world and to expand our scope at the moment. We've been working as a volunteer board for the last six or eight months, and now we're about to expand and hire people because it's necessary to get where we want to go. And we're very interested in bringing all the plant medicine carriers and the therapists together under one umbrella, and we are the guiding light for them.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:55:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UFZ5JdLNbd6_g4LN8bIEOY97oO-axW88g1tlIyYun193dQLuaZ0g0k70ncXhePNSqiYrBTvnv0RRqxI3BxFE3oEiC1g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3323.32) You're talking, Phil, about people who have lost their connection with their culture and their traditions, and so one of the big pieces is to keep that connection to the traditional medicines going as we move into this decriminalizing and legalizing world, because it could so easily not happen as it has, actually, with cannabis, people that knew about cannabis got thrown under the bus. And so, we really want to, in Canada that is, we really want to... Our stand is, actually, that everybody moves forward and that we have standards for practice and that kind of thing. And so, we're pretty passionate about this, and if you want to support us, psychedelicassociation.net is our email... Sorry, is that website. We also have a petition to decriminalize nature, decriminalizenature.ca. Please go to that if you haven't signed it already, if you live in Canada, and put your signature on there to support a petition to be read in Parliament later this fall.

Gillian Maxwell: [00:56:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ko8FekEl_JkMmZdBzsk2yQGLEtCpcJ_yA2_ipP1oJvZnV-1vWMSx5DsmMptGjXh-Sv5PAaGA5we7upHLHxcF8kEbmuo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3386.04) So, here we are. We've got lots of questions that people are asking, but I just want to ask you guys before we go to those questions, given what you've all said, anything you'd like to add or say to each other while we're just talking amongst ourselves? But we'll be opening up the questions really shortly. Deborah?

Deborah Small: [00:56:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U1ayWeZu1QeVg3vTG8FXJJ6AlV461te5f9KqKNbDCRsypU2hSoWvWzVLJhRoKJT25lCPik605roIGOuII8SLsSxo2oQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3413.25) So, I just wanted to follow up on the comment that was made by Phil and Neil, about the ways in which people use psychedelics. Well, first, I want to also say that there are traditional ceremonial uses for coca, as was practiced in Bolivia and other places. People have chewed coca leaves for years without developing an addiction to it. And one of the consequences of prohibition is that it's made each of these drugs more dangerous, in terms of how people use them. But that's another conversation.

Deborah Small: [00:57:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=082YegOv6DoLWtsi5FZrgxKt-0XNkdyPxCxjrNc9MjCTPYtamjz8-OxQ1nVfJovdMD-f_eIuwfHk-e6xI9r1LsYoqtE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3455.11) I wanted to actually highlight the fact that in the early anti-war movement, the counter-culture movement, starting from the '50s with the Beat people, Allen Ginsberg and others, who used drugs consciously as an avenue to expand their consciousness, to think of other possible ways of being. And one of the reasons why the movement was so threatening to government wasn't only because they were against the war in Vietnam. It was also because you had a whole generation of young people coming of age in the '60s who were questioning whether the legitimacy of having a [feature 00:58:16] that was about them becoming a cog in a corporate machine. That they began looking at, what would their lives be like? What would be possible if their basic needs were met, if they didn't have to worry about food and shelter and the basic necessities.

Deborah Small: [00:58:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_KGNwyQgPlvUU6TvzdOilx3V75t06OjSeWirLabZidKR4moQ7DR6vcxNBl__A5-6Tg0qSJsxx4V1CR2yQS17XvEDlX8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3512.04) So, the early hippie movement in California, particularly in San Francisco, was about creating an environment where people could have those things and could think about who they wanted to be. There's nothing more threatening to a country that's based on promoting capitalism, free market capitalism, above everything else then having people, particularly people from the majority coaster, who are rejecting that priority, who are questioning that. And so, the fact that drugs became an avenue for people to have that conversation, you couldn't criminalize all the people, but if you criminalize the drugs, then you close off their ability to be able to use those ways as the avenue to greater consciousness.

Deborah Small: [00:59:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6j9MvROJ8ovoTwk7EG5uLlQXR20ALWifyfwJppsJdTfNBfi-U05ga0Qlkr9hkEjb9CrW1QzReOpVyEYJQpb86UhNn90&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3559.58) Where we are today, is people dealing with trauma. We know that these drugs are also good for helping people to manage and overcome trauma. My hope is that part of the response to COVID, and all of the habit that [reaved 00:59:36] on people, both from health to the economic, et cetera, will have us reexamine the use of psychedelics to help people to deal with that, deal with the loss of their loved one, of their jobs, of their livelihoods, of their sense of self. So, it's a different way of getting people to question, a different set of circumstances, but leading to the same result. Having people question the standard order that we live in and seeing how dysfunctional it is and say, "Hey, is there some other better way that we can organize ourselves, that we can exercise power, that we can make our government be accountable to us, that we can have a life that's worth living, as opposed to one that we're just trying to survive?"

Gillian Maxwell: [01:00:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VSceuvVm4O9LTgmwfTfVMUPQC_afEXwNyDY6PExu7te2l8ZptK-gPeXlmCFl0RjRNYDRLt7EVirzEJOMsvVOWx8Qzd8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3623.66) Exactly. Thank you, Deborah. Neil?

Neil Boyd: [01:00:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=64bDaiCIqeI3NhrQV2AHGUkAp-bd8OYCtW6fGT4a9MA1vY7zzErC712uYLgtpPRlN33MIpml8Opnv3qfLWFYdgmeA-c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3626.46) Yeah. I very much agree with that. When I think back to... It's an era I grew up in, the late '60s and early '70s, and the introspection that cannabis afforded in contrast to alcohol was quite striking out. And of course, that's true as well of a range of other substances, and it does present a threat to a way of life that existed at that time and, of course, continues to exist, to a very significant extent. It's interesting now to hear talk about the medical benefits.

Neil Boyd: [01:01:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JuI_Fw1d93XLDcmOyn0H7OPRHH7BISmH3iSCv0FvVaWGuqko8hQPe00yJn-pnUgddWSjHm0TSJlHFL2vaqatCxBKQ_A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3666.55) People have often said that the way in which cannabis was legalized was through the Trojan horse of medical use, and there's a little bit of truth to that in the sense that it's really difficult to say to somebody, "Oh, you're using that drug for relief from pain in order to help yourself, to benefit yourself as a person and medically? Well, no, we're going to prohibit that. But if you're using a drug purely in pursuit of pleasure, that's worthy of criminalization." And so, for people to come forward and say, "No, cannabis is of tremendous benefit to me in a medicinal context." I think that was very difficult to stop. I mean, the only drug that I suppose we've endorsed in terms of the use of pleasure is alcohol. The legalization of cannabis, there are many things that-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [01:02:04]

Neil Boyd: [01:02:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0nKfNy2jWWMdCigxz2F5bGVzM1umhRhF77tHGf7eqimCnUMNkIni1DJ6kXXEAUu1_-1FLAPNru_9xU3RvWQP6CbVJMs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3723.261) The legalization of cannabis, there are many things that are not great about it. But ultimately I think it's a very important step forward. There's still racialization. There are a lot of things that need to be fixed, but I think that it's a move in the right direction.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:02:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=IExYkZYfi4q4aoK5dQNusS8L_x_VVr5edXth2D7B7F6QayP1oSNHEeQMyVInwWkOrKiqbDco_vg2p05IIWY6i-RstN0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3751.85) Whoops, can't hear you.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:02:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6xklcihVrm3dHuPey2eB2QjuuEaR7cWDtO0KMGl74YtInop0FW8PnKBT0_hOwx1vgUQwIlGIbDqfNRkRdEzQ7RN--cY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3757.13) That would be because I'm muted. Anything you'd like to say Phil before I start to take the questions from our viewers?

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:02:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=f8oC1VtTItoSKDJZKFrrRbH6sujpjHwC88PPOMP-yqGpCv7833g9uLXuwLdOycKvNFgjaWP6OY7UUSJx5A2A5wIA_oc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3763.93) Well a while ago you asked me a question about medicines. And I remember now I used to be a program coordinator at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre And one time some people from down East were traveling through, I think it was a walk they were doing across Canada for sobriety. But this man offered me some tobacco and he said, "This tobacco strain," he said, "is a thousand years old." It's grown by the [inaudible 01:03:09] people and I remember when we used it in ceremony it had quite an effect, put it that way. But he didn't say what it was, put it that way. He just said it was a strain that was developed for a long time.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:03:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EiUDW7XXvXEBzZfesqGxIY2QNv_jSXQqaYZZQLx3GqTpNLBx9n4udeqhimwT3ZtUqQ131Al-MPEpgWgRe4oBlqGpf-o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3803.7) And so I just remember that doing something ceremonially has such a difference than doing it recreationally, put it that way. So it takes a person deeper and it answers a lot of problems. And again I have to keep going back to things like PTSD. I think I'm dealing with a lot of men that have experienced that in their life, but they don't even know they have it, put it that way. So I've seen some benefits for cannabis that way with working with men.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:03:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cZAideQQxadLfOggpkmmuTrsS4tRewV2SGjYl-efJ1e6R34CmUeK80RKjS2zX5we6gbFTxMlEh2F-727dyDQ4i2dYUY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3839.75) Well, thank you. There's great research these days on the benefits of MDMA or ecstasy, for instance, for PTSD and psilocybin, magic mushrooms, for end of life anxiety and depression. LSD was very successfully used in research trials, before it was banned, to help people with alcoholism. In fact Bill Wilson, who started AA, tried it and was considering having it as the 13th step and it never happened. I can't imagine why that didn't happen. So yeah these, I call them medicines drugs. They have a lot to offer us and goodness knows we need it at this moment in time in humankind, so human history.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:04:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ukGrKlxZ4LCU9v1JCts4pJzFlFbNIFeoyOPaqIdc3JTb6mlSdnBdmJ3R9qYydPrKu6z6282SadvwovfMzHj6ginjwks&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3885.59) So here I'm going to flip through some questions here. Let's see if we can answer this question from Dana. Hello Dana. Can plant medicine being legalized through spiritual or religious traditional uses? Is this a legal route that is possible? I have a little bit of information about that. Does anybody else want to weigh in or I can say a few things?

Neil Boyd: [01:05:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8GM9Mn6a1QiiG-uTdTyMEthpNxCRKdSSdmWwCHmSj3BproqScNE9o4YA4uMdu5lo3bNRQtAcl_jIGl1Ar-qo7U5TYq4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3909.83) Yeah, it has. There have been some successes, more in the United States, around Navajo use of peyotee. I think in Canada there have been a few cases that haven't been particularly successful. I can't recall the name, but there was one in Vancouver Island some time ago.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:05:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=h3Tgexq8599isEmM6dMG5Jsc64Yv9PsyiKrYRVUmC74VOzGtHtLNlUhhtfWHk12yJzveI4hCkVTzQQF1FPL1KUtDexU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3928.66) Yeah, yeah. The Center [inaudible 01:05:31] in Montreal is the only successful one in Canada, but that requires ... it's not that easy and it requires actually starting a church and it can't be a pretend church. It really must be a real, whatever those requirements are. And so I think it's a possibility, but I think it took them many, many, many years of toing and froing with Health Canada to get that exemption. So probably not a route that is expedient. Another question-

Neil Boyd: [01:06:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gtYwaUfGp43kRiTqZU4C0t6YDd3C71cW8KRYVxyOHnzRQAdKNrw3pZGny19Fo0Kroyjlu2DfIw2bUOIazq0nXNXP1sQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3962) [crosstalk 01:06:02] conscience, I guess. But again as opposed to freedom of religion and one could classify this under that rubric of freedom of conscience as opposed to a freedom of religion. But not particularly successful to date.

Deborah Small: [01:06:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=L8d-qz7MG8DYvou5FMnQlhEWQIYY_GCsLSaNtRj0I6RmUNUKd2wTsdmj_ILy6M5GjZgN8KoMIifuCl6lPyGis_aREiA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3976.83) It didn't work for the Rastafarians.

Neil Boyd: [01:06:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=q45l3fWnFWlaf8mWgyRZqhRJv4YEE03jwmwa2-uxU6pixZkO2_bvO8Sjjq2eDQA52gr-r4Ned2IPb6wLbvtX0MdCYaU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3979.3) No, no.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:06:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xKNsJgq_h7SwieQeO60hCbgXxozcLDKegXMXaY-6NcK5yDbH93YUeF9_VlnsAT34Lulp3IilGeVsCAbsLZGwAecbspA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3980.7) Right, right. True. Okay. This is from Michael Couchman, a question for you Neil. If decrim is successful in Canada, do you think it's possible Canada might eventually band together with a group of other like-minded states such as Portugal to push for decrim at the international level through the revision of the UN Drug Control Treaties? So go for it Neil, this person is talking about decriminalization. Of course there is a conversation to be had about criminalization versus legalization. Deborah and I have been involved in that for many years, but please go with the question and then we'll see where we get to.

Neil Boyd: [01:07:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HXCzStYNeFdwjCHWOIZjN6tPV04umpErrCfkcE9dB2oWr-9paqY24itMq5KP_8Xw-i44lGgtwJYM1K2waquw25ABo28&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4021.51) Yeah. I don't think ... decriminalization can be helpful and it's certainly being argued for right now in British Columbia. For example, the major drug crisis is around a safe supply of opiates for people who are dependent opiate users. And in Vancouver people are not charged. They may be hassled in various ways for sure, but that can happen. But the bigger issue is really one of regulation of supply. And I don't ... that may happen. I mean it's been really striking that more people have died of overdose deaths in a very significant margin over Coronavirus and we're paying a lot more attention to coronavirus in Canada. And that's understandable and desirable, but it's as if the lives of the people who are dependent opiate users are not valued.

Neil Boyd: [01:08:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oO3p2UQ8O1xiCVEXMvQe1O_qSNZhrAaI5KtNVpnqBG_5gNwzuz1HhKBXNZ0jpeID4uBcJVT8Nyf9Yq_smfEmzOLMhkc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4084.7) And there are ... I think again we have to go back to the origins of criminalization. It was a huge mistake and decriminalization ... Portugal is not the answer. The kinds of things Portugal has put in place would never work in British Columbia or in Canada. They're far too authoritarian. I think we have to look at regulatory models and that means giving people access. In China when there was legality in areas where there was widespread use, maybe 20% of the men would smoke opium. And as someone said earlier, I don't know if it was Deborah or Phil, but the types of opiates that were used ... I think it was Deborah. The types of drugs that were used at one time were much less dangerous for people than the drugs, the fentanyl and carfentanyl that we're now seeing as part of the pattern of use for dependent opiate users. And so I think it's a regulatory model. Public health, I mean I just believe this is all about public health and the criminal laws should never have been put into this area. It was a big mistake.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:09:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=rPUXAS1ecmfy8UTSApaMaCGDBj9Otd_JCMyv7wH9Nkmi2qrzBxfU37_rF-tvE4mL1t1xn3n_WtqBr4ESxkG_-EiX6B8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4163.99) Deborah, would you like to comment? Thank you.

Deborah Small: [01:09:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7cT7IK7RK9c6L0LlSc-0bmB3kkc1Yw-LDrpqStwa7CNc9kIy2s8f2KWoyilx5fubuP34E0yKKuwQj_BsAAmXEzO-WF4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4167.58) Well I couldn't agree with Phil more. And I would just say that we got to think about who were the people who forced this policy on the world. I mean the Anglo American empire, that was the one that invented drug prohibition, are the same people who exported drugs around the world and moved people around in order to make money from them. And so for me it's not just looking at the mistake of prohibition, but looking at whose interests are served by prohibition. Who is actually winning from this? Because it's clear it's not a war that we can win if the goal is to have a drug free world, which is what they put into the treaties. It's certainly not a win if it's about improving public health and reducing death and harms because we're not doing any of that.

Deborah Small: [01:10:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=npMkVkNvyS_fhf8OCtH97ZT6OwJXN23sh_Zsz_ShUOsbPOYX11MHiGEEkslELVeS-dWc6JOejX6gnZkE0m8zg8hmciE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4214.04) But it is a win if you want to continue to profit from people you consider expendable by making money from blocking them up and using their labor that way. If you want to be able to reduce government spending on social needs by criminalizing people who need things so that you don't have to spend the money. If you want to profit from a pharmacological industry that makes billions of dollars on promoting all kinds of drugs to people that may or may not be healthy because your goal is not about health, it's about profits. If it was about health we'd have more money invested in preventative healthcare in this country instead of treating sicknesses just before you die.

Deborah Small: [01:10:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mwlnTcK-gs4d4bfCV5HMa9vHvJ0Rb7JwPcI_bfPbOrWMxNZ8Dhv7nF2JPgEDi8PHGLIgluGyR9603kwbE5Af68RIwOU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4252.47) So I just feel like for me I'm looking at who is actually benefiting from this and how are they able to manipulate the levers of power to do that? And for the public it's a question of, why is it that people think that it makes sense to prioritize drug abuse as a focus of law enforcement and not environmental degradation, not financial chicanery, not the kinds of abuses of workers that we're seeing happening all over? I've come to think of it as a form of genocidal capitalism that we're living in. And this is just one more tool in that arsenal of killers because these are policies that kill people not help people. But they also help some people make a profit and allow them to hold onto power. So that's the ultimate evil because they're essentially anti-democratic and anti-people, anti-humane.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:11:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8xJqI1Wk27zBbRjUOTKmjhOnT_SxFH0wJSMaCk0kUoFgkQG33KJUnW5u3SFMWuieNab892dg0ngyr1hGTgiU7qzaaAo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4316.52) Hi everybody. I disappeared for a minute. Are you still all there?

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:12:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dtby_8ssArJAWQsfov42lr0QFWhsqQxl6GcAUYzRNV_qPKdIq62hBZ9m3mfYgxy0TGun6GKVOKcNWCAIt_M0X7ohBUc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4330.76) Yes, we're still here.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:12:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0BD3sgGxAEATPGHYp_YP_0ImGpTjR5RLZWzYoygm5WzHgBVSf1-frOxZKFjG307G_Y2Q3FmdRQcOyovKSDuAOAh_ijM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4331.59) Okay. Okay. I'm back. So Deborah I sort of disappeared in the middle of you speaking. So would you mind? Would you mind whatever you were saying to complete what you were saying about legalization?

Deborah Small: [01:12:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-tHh76ZFhHdTn3gw2L571kfJcFiNsib42tTaq_sQuCO0L32yz7CkQANcb9icwiyblFrSyF9RU6PjXWnPXv-PO-ypq08&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4346.12) Well so this is the bottom line for me. I no longer believe that treaty is the safer side. Under this administration we've pulled out of the environmental treaties, we've pulled out of our peace treaties, we're pulling out of the nuclear accord. So what makes the drug convention so goddamn sacred? We're willing to relook at all of these other things that are actually useful and helpful, but we want to hold on to the one set of treaties and policies that has never produced any of the results that it purported to do. So I believe that we need to end prohibition. Not reform it, not make it easier, not take some drugs out of it. We just need to repeal prohibition period and stop trying to use punishment as a way of controlling or modifying people's behavior. Because it doesn't work and it's anti-humane.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:13:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=S5lo0lbE8hZeVkiORsVs001kuPmk0FURKaMZlsjB8PowHTxOTEE2l3XOyaGpHYc02Z2vh4GLRuVGiWlJ7RQKUTCzKGg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4398.38) Got it. Okay, great. Thank you. And just to finish that question about the treaties, there are international groups and geos working on that. They go to Vienna every year and little by little, it's very incremental, drives me crazy, but some of them have the patience for it. So that's happening. But really we decided many years ago in our conversations that you can actually opt out of being part of the treaty if the health or the wellbeing of your constituents and the people that are living in your country are more important than being part of the treaty. And if they're in harm, then you can opt out of the treaty. And I think that's actually really what's going to happen. People will just say, "Screw the treaties. This is killing our people. We don't need to do this anymore." And I actually think that's how it will end up changing.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:14:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DtrnoxDnazoUiNrNjkO99E2g4Xbrsey5ZTJTM3-qqfCLSdxhpWVjMxnAKRCg81csPkdzUl_beMhXQ0Az2cGLPT5xsvU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4457.41) Somebody asked, what parallels do you guys see between legalizing cannabis and legalizing psychedelics? Any comments on that? Neil perhaps.

Neil Boyd: [01:14:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YcNYWVxXGltEMIqp5zYMCGs8uqz1WON2puE6jvlSgv8Zj4KJj8ThLpHOFDrpZSGtGww0ix3sTznvg8-_Nb-EUq3boxY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4470.13) Well I think one of the differences between cannabis and psychedelics is that people might use cannabis as part of an almost daily routine whereas psychedelics ... drugs that have more predictable experiences tend to be drugs that are more commonly used. Every time that you take it you can typically expect X, Y, or Z to happen. And there are similarities in terms of the kind of expansion of consciousness. I think back to Andrew Weil's book, The Natural Mind, and the way in which he wrote about cannabis, he wrote about psychedelic use. But I think that the issue of dependence, you could talk about cannabis dependence as an issue for some people in some circumstances, not in a manner similar to say tobacco or alcohol typically.

Neil Boyd: [01:15:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vSiaT-UTf0xaRGCCWsgwemqNDUQVsD_xahbYr3EMTvw2dHcPT-viDg012405RJfjYHTr5qQZXvDUBbiNbxcuzPgV2hI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4541.4) But it's much more uncommon with psychedelics to put the issue of dependence into the equation. And so I think that does bring up the possibility of help for PTSD of a range of possibilities for psychedelics that's beyond something, an alteration of consciousness that people engage in as part of their ordinary waking lives that tends to enhance for most people in most circumstances. And so I think in that sense the psychedelics are perhaps different from cannabis and different from drugs like alcohol or cocaine, which might be more regularly consumed by people who are committed users to one degree or another.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:16:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=d_meGCFf-h4-F6Qw2uTNeiYsltOHmBegf0sziBTaWISyxmS8VXcW_L9gWW01lbVWgx9xCPvAUP3msyh5yYxonrm0uMc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4601.86) And certainly when we've been talking over the years about legalizing, there will be different ways of doing that depending on what drug or medicine you're talking about.

Neil Boyd: [01:16:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8MOBzEAGRYtZuZ496UwVn2MVh_8enQWZrg5HE550wg_QdZM0EnwcGz4BK5R3y7c0-vWHm6sNB5B9A0XkKi3gJml-Vds&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4613.18) Yeah, I think that makes a lot of sense.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:16:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hd-EXW4G5n6iU1QuFeXY2MXbf8KfrKxzSyXUYBmvmlUwq-GdPXGoZFyDkc-lz24sqTXFF0YCgKiuawsuKulUdsRuY58&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4614.26) What harm can it cause.

Neil Boyd: [01:16:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HeVYwIW0ijHIKUzdoDXztY4yIg5OgsUUrY60pELJcjmasbFOhVKxqVXhf_VecULu5WsLwrL8a0KZEpJ6ekRs0Xomafk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4616.02) Yeah. The regulations we have in place around tobacco are very different from the ones we have in place around alcohol because of the intrusiveness of tobacco. But again we're not talking about criminalization, criminal prohibition, we're talking about everyday regulation.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:17:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KuT3eFTaixSwV0_v3QimjzM6MqfSw00_1AEUXc6MQ2gsOL3RcU5PbmtL6x7VC4sZQ4BOt8AWiBR82cwGUNvaKY2UwuU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4633.45) Yeah, yeah. Phil I have a question for you, but also could be for you guys as well. Is it possible the memory of historical traditional use of psychoactive plant medicines in Canada, but I think that's also true in the US, has been erased by colonization?

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:17:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UpCEVOl933ky5lMR-h9tlVDF0TcU1AkFyfLRVa8zKgktxIfXQgYLOVSldONFNzr3rmJjRnbJyVxITQOjxTPGMacKkCA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4652.8) You kind of faded out the last part of it.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:17:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=R62oNhRSTsPg7QLLCE81cPS2QtbAJCgdqfep52665DM3mb5hqITTN3HsANLrM7go5dAhCZWDAepdKk7YadIWUpjGR44&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4655.43) Is it possible that the memory of historical traditional use has been erased by colonization?

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:17:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=H4m1x7cFlTNzZAEpu-Xh4s_H95f16kL-2mX7ksbxwhr_pRpeSdBK_p8-Qy3TIUzDFCkV0FaLACR64thW8fZubuGaqH8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4665.6) Yeah. Because it is the dominant culture, I think, that usually sets policy. I was going to piggyback a question on that to some of the other panelists. My understanding is, and maybe correct me if I'm wrong, I thought drug companies kind of set policy about what ... they fund research, put it that way. That was my understanding. And usually there's lobbyists, like they want to see a scientific testing of maybe 100, 200 people try something and then the results of that, like a scientific kind of approach so. It's beyond my knowledge, but that was my understanding. So if any of the other panelists or yourself Gillian know and have any comments on that.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:18:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7GGg-p5DFbpgKgOEJSeyq1Anjm38ps60crY_0ADB83AdZg8pG-Auwhc6VxN_aWs3AUj3UXtEmGLDtcVkacZldyphiV0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4715.21) But yeah, colonization has had a very ... to answer your question, it has a devastating effect on all the aboriginal cultures across Canada. Because a lot of it goes back to the land base and people were literally marginalized, put in small reserves. And then it compounded from there because everything from housing to education to employment. It was a domino effect. When I graduated from school, and I still remember the headlines in the newspaper, it was Edmonton journal. It said .0001% aboriginal people make it through the school system. So in my lifetime I've got to see that change. Now we actually have people at university levels and doctors and lawyers. And so things are starting to change and resource development is a big one, of course.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:19:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Np68vpEPahGKmpNHHCN9MtI4PTQwUxDd1sFwf3f6MmqOeetTMG3T2U6RdamwCgXtfTcrypw8w2o09aee2KYEkB1Oxuc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4775.03) And this is all connected, I think, when you talk about why people turn to drugs, put it that way. So yeah colonization is a base, a very big base for a lot of the problems. Because it's not just one answer. When I was with aboriginal organizations, we literally had to tackle every front. We had to talk about housing, we had to talk about education, we had to talk about medicine. Health is a big issue and that's probably where drugs fall more into. But I guess my other question about drug companies funding research and if anybody wants to make a comment on that.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:20:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=keQzR4KASrlmfLdkdm_SeV6S58pLOn77wPy7w65iG315AlghZX1_gG6SJ5a6cUuYQ1pDOTWd8g1Qm5w8dac262ZT0Z0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4815.33) Yeah. Please Deborah.

Deborah Small: [01:20:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zEkbvyIaI40v9MjZhc4vjr4qONUMalCa6ZGjvtCQVTxFHTxdLg0oefX_48ZIfM7mnBjQYQA36nbGkgrhB-SjOCfTYag&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4819.13) So the similarities that I see between legalizing cannabis and legalizing psychedelics, at least here in the US, is that both will be accelerated by our horrible healthcare system. One of the reasons that medical marijuana became a rallying issue is because we do not have a healthcare system that engages enough around preventive care. And tends to focus on illness, but only from a particular frame. And so the fact when you have large numbers of people who were like, "We can not get access to the things that we need to relieve our pain or to manage our glaucoma or to help us deal with the nausea of chemotherapy, et cetera." It was very difficult. It became more difficult for government to resist that because that was true and it was affecting a lot of different people. I think that part of what will accelerate that shift with respect to psychedelics is the combination of our aging population and the role of psychedelics in supporting people during end of life care and the level of trauma that we're having within our military community in particular, but now even more broadly in the population.

Deborah Small: [01:21:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pTT3ofBb1IenDB9pqfMboLwylFnZc-X3WnqXKN5U40RqaoEanr6lwbE50ZQ-NwJ_bDX7R57wFNnbLNbF07dC7_n7-nA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4895.16) I think that the fact that we don't have enough mental health services to help people, that we don't do enough to support people who are suffering from various types of mental health be it from depression or bipolar disorder or whatever, is going to make drugs like psychedelics more ... how can I put it? More favorable to the public. And once you get something that people who have access to political power want and are willing to fight for, in this case the elderly have a lot of political power voting wise in the United States. They actually vote regularly, they support a lot of candidates. Their views about things are taken seriously by politicians. And in the same way that there was a significant part of older people who wanted to have access to medical marijuana, you'll see the same thing with respect to psychedelics. And my hope is that the fact that once you put something in a regulatory scheme you have the ability to control its purity, is what's going to support legalization.

Deborah Small: [01:22:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NqA-3_Q4CeUBNOBZ8ZUjGgPwK_beSujtUMN0QpiKGr7d71N9mc_mHMBeLfnffKwkb6ijxd_3AOXt48HYSXjhjLNAs44&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4963.86) People have been smoking cannabis nonstop all throughout the era of prohibition. The difference now isn't even the price, because legal weed costs as much as illegal. But at least you know what you're getting, at least you know that it's not contaminated with something else, at least you know where it was grown and under what conditions, et cetera. And so to me the desire of people to have access to unadulterated drugs that are effective for them will be the biggest thing to move us along within the legal frame to supporting people's ability to have access without punishment or penalty.

Neil Boyd: [01:23:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iH-uS2nW6mkMFslKiVjBSnci_57jlcGQ0Dgpx-eTpmcBy5y3W5QdnSjFDSvt86lvmUZx5nE9oPDntoE9W5Yts6LnoMM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5004.41) I agree. I think we also see some of that dynamic in Canada as well, although we don't have the dystopian healthcare system that you do in the United States. But we had the same kind of push for these changes. And I totally agree that one of the great benefits of legalization is being that we now have a much more educated discussion about cannabis. So we have not only THC and CBD, which were hardly talked about a decade ago, but now we're talking about terpenes, about THC not being the driver of the high, of the experience. We're actually learning something so that's what he needs to do with, I think, all drugs really. Is put them into that kind of a microscope and in that frame.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:24:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CoE-7JxIfv9CPFgbHYKEsLuk_L0vZ2wJGOyooY_tE0Llq0pt6ZA8fl36HwGNbQa9Ahfbw_uOA9SnXl_Cr_qPKs483rU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5050.59) Wonderful. I have another question, which I think may be ... well actually a question earlier on, so what would it take? The question actually was, so if everybody understood the origin of drug policies surely everything will be easy to change. Hey, Deborah. Hey, Neil. So what exactly would it take to make this shift happen? What do we need to do? You're the experts. You know.

Neil Boyd: [01:24:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=b3M0KF3bwnGcvIpxfjRQXaO86i8aMxu8sUsEpBObMorVAOhex9PkdSII-JqV1omJcgfMvVcI0fRn6GQhe-R-88w6VjQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5082.79) Well you've got Donald Trump as the president of the United States. I can't imagine anybody more dystopian or more dysfunctional as ... I don't know. There are times when I despair of the possibilities. But what Deborah was just saying about the aging population and making the case for these ... that's a big part of it. We've talked about opiate maintenance programs and they seem to work. When you start to get your head around cocaine maintenance or methamphetamine maintenance, the picture gets a whole lot more muddy. So I'm not sure, but at the same time I don't support the use of the criminal law with any of it. I think we need a regulatory environment and we need to focus on public health as the driver. In British Columbia, over the last number of months, Bonnie Henry who has focused on public health with COVID has become a media star and it's with her mantra of, "Be kind, be calm, be safe." So there's a desire for these kinds of changes within the public.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:25:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ohtoRiF1bZnz7gphph5_KsBjwEqIRfDR180SmKNiYcXuu7o5e_n6OjfZCZc1aiElUPiVLrfmjEL5FvzoSkbROFeHL84&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5157.53) Bonnie Henry called for safe supply last April.

Neil Boyd: [01:26:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6UymZM34CapGXoAhFn8nJukkn89PSm2dU_JXtk_Cji58yN2FINqekeqp71FhYNuaslITPcWPq1IrK6EJQXqV9g0s3CI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5161.65) Yeah, no. Yeah. And then she's ahead of the government on that one as well.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:26:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fPx17QVrOCuh7DPDDkYGKmUJwwhSAspd50opVvkeoYi0ZUTxY_AQe_ZC-Ve2A6BUTHsR9CfMAUS_73MpQ8k5Yvna73A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5165.51) She certainly is. Yeah. Deborah, did you have something to add to that?

Deborah Small: [01:26:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wwasCufieHnZCD-sVcKLZyNH9YvgM_lBaz1hGmZaMrmB5tao8UaxfwPzmH-hZMnsnqIIUEpwqPV3tK9MB2xhbxygK14&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5170.86) Well I think that we have a dual dynamic going on. Because from my perspective drug prohibition also serves as a get out of free card for mostly white people with money to be able to use drugs and even abuse drugs with impunity. And I'll use cannabis as the classic example of that. So many of the people who are prominently engaged in the legal cannabis industry are not people who are new to cannabis. There were people who were using cannabis, who were buying cannabis, who were selling cannabis for decades. But because they weren't black or brown they didn't have to worry about being criminalized for their activities so they don't have convictions, they don't have barriers to getting credit, and the other things you need to be in business. Because black and brown people have been serving their sentences for decades. And there's a certain, whether people are willing to acknowledge that or not, there's a certain understanding that the racialization of the drug war allows the drug abuse to continue in majority communities without the same onerous impacts.

Deborah Small: [01:27:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=44jQZbZE-k-oSuyeqHv91sMm9-Lm9OyMQZk_KVH6yePF2fmR0WC96T-FWHsxJmi5s6mTTh9N04MZ07oQGHmY2txnPsY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5243.5) Now there's a ying and a yang to that. The ying is that you don't go to prison, the yang is that you're able to pretend that you don't have a drug problem in your community until people start dropping dead at large rates, which is what we're seeing now with opiates. But that's not a new problem. Neither is the problem of stimulants. For decades blue collar workers have been using drugs in order to make it possible for them to stand on their feet for the hours they have to stand on their feet to do the jobs that they have to do in order to feed their families, sometimes two or three jobs. And there was an understanding about that, but as long as it was only happening in certain communities that we choose not to criminalize, people were going to look the other way. So there's that.

Deborah Small: [01:28:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2jzY37XvNazP46RUOkJVYvoFBvVNnZszJJ1MWxtWACPhBxxZrN3yo8mskU1iO4lYa7ctKplHPxG72eDmEkCPLyJA7ps&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5287.69) On the other hand you have what I call the social conditioning to mass death, which also kind of undermines and makes it harder to actually get public response. For that I'll use the issue of guns. There is no question about the impact and the long term effects of gun violence in our society. That there are way too many guns, that it's too easy to get them, it's too easy to use them, and that we could reduce the level of deaths in America tremendously if we just did something about guns. But instead we continue having a conversation about second amendment rights and freedoms, et cetera, which somehow your right to have a gun trumps my right to live.

Deborah Small: [01:28:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SpKqLX1UIESQiwheIsWKjAxSd0cIaQEL4FhH5iw4o5P09KGcnuXTInNPqIqUOy3xEr-SPOzbN8EHZtmPQGHOteZc05c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5332.35) And so there's these ways in which people have seen these issues as part of their identity. So for conservatives they pretend that they don't use drugs in the same way that they pretend that they don't have people around them who are LGBTQ until they get outed by folks. But it allows them to be able to hold onto an identity that justifies the oppression of other people for the things that they themselves are doing. That's a form of privilege. Class privilege, race privilege, et cetera. It's hard to get people to give up their privilege.

Deborah Small: [01:29:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nWtSX9n79jCq27hi-1269B5F0ZDO6YelGKRUDXUX0OhN9hTshbocozciJxLIb0d8pURAMvLD7TyyfJlukHJ5N7-u73E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5366.42) At the same time culturally I've watched, over the same amount of time that I've been doing this work around drug law reform, the way culturally Americans are being programmed to accept mass death, a you're on your own instinct. I say it starts with programming like Survivor has gone on through things like Game of Thrones and The Walking Dead where we now have become inured to watching programs where hundreds and thousands of people die at the same time. 15, 20 years ago having 76,000 people die in one year from preventable overdoses would have been considered a national emergency and responded to as such. Now we just click it off the same way we do with the high levels of suicide, with the high levels of other forms of preventable death.

Deborah Small: [01:30:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ji8Br2JjRgPnlWSJG8hWX0VAQew58YaATboJ6xwHDZYhyntAN5jKmpJdYW6DUsokk9j2nIlDMVMljRo9RSQq7GMpKjg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5422.87) And so on one level I feel somewhat despairing because I don't know what's the magic number that's going to get people to actually take things seriously. We're not even willing to take coronavirus seriously even though we got 4 million cases here in the United States. So you've got these competing dynamics happening, but ultimately I trust in people. Because quite frankly lobbyists are not the reason that we have legal cannabis. Lobbyists are not the reason that we have medical marijuana. The reason that we have it is because people on a grassroots level started organizing, agitating, and forcing change until they could not be ignored.

Deborah Small: [01:31:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=t1kLa4HWE4LJfDVK-FqMJ4yHmYpLm2x7BNLZVvFmo1ZpZywJUMZH3ALkt8ku6mn-frcxM4tyTHfCoGpBJaR271Z6RiY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5461.03) Now it didn't hurt that the government found a way that they could make money from these changes and I expect that any further reforms in the area of drugs are going to follow that. And I'll just leave people with something that Chris Rock said that I think is right on the money. He's like, "A lot of these laws are because the places where these drugs come from are brown and black drugs. If America made great cocaine and great heroine, we might be more willing to make it available to people." It's certainly been true with cannabis because originally 20 years ago the majority of the cannabis that was consumed in the US came from outside of the US. Now we have perfected the art of cannabis cultivation, marketing, et cetera. And so that's a lot more acceptable because we can do it well and be competitive.

Deborah Small: [01:31:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1nfQSSJtj439pyU45lKluKPg5R9Mc3rZm-itfUNFp7r6oO8mo3SXOfx3OvhkzSvpO0UDMV7a01e3Rn9FPXlA32yuMCs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5511.92) So on one level I think it's important to have groups like yours that are shifting people's conversation about the accessibility of psychedelics and sparking interest into it. And unfortunately one of the keys to change will be the adoption of these drugs by capitalists who see the opportunity to profit from it and who will then use their incredible power and financial influence to push it along. I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing. But unless we sort of change the economic dynamic around how decisions are made, that's what I see in the future moving forward.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:32:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xvOJ6XwTQXEMQ3xfKi1avg_ivdzNR-gO1EP491n10g_5LI3azwZxNviC9dU4QhgZXEuvRDwqKY7xaE0LNtFgx5dvm50&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5549.2) I think that is another webinar. That is a big, big question and a big issue that we're talking about at CPA all the time, and people around us are, is how not to have that happen. And to have the healing of people's trauma be somehow made into some capitalistic investment opportunity. And so stay tuned for that and maybe we'll bring you back for that Deborah. Jennifer said, "Do we think that Canada legalizing assisted suicide end of life for terminal patients is a good start to pave the path and-?"

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:33:04]

Gillian Maxwell: [01:33:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KCBXapg7qWOnEGsA0EGG-2vuOSd2ZxvhOChnUrAr3thPh9ooCWMcYhHbzaD2kwIKKa9-n6UwsvYnFTlzsGVTkpVRNzQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5583.481) Terminal patients is a good start to pave the path. And what that made me think is, as you said, you feel a little disheartened sometimes, Deborah. There is this big monolith that you just can't get their attention, but so how can we find ways in? And so, one thing that we're looking at is PTSD, [inaudible 01:33:23] in the U.S. are really getting very skillful at this and we're going to be doing this in Canada too. So, post-traumatic stress. So, who has post-traumatic stress? Well, many people do, but first responders certainly do, vets from the army do, police do, part of the first responders and firemen.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:33:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cHiKIZFgVMi-RxkF1vMGWu8Yp06KyD0dtqyeLZub09jlkRxo-Al_a2AoA1kRnZNjUV_WWaJ36iUMX5FhR7Vmd1D7ZnI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5620.99) And so, what if we were able to do a trial within their groups to help their members with their post-traumatic stress? Then that's a way in that isn't forcing them. It's just saying, "Hey, we think we can help. Your people are really hurting and why don't we give it a try? It cannot hurt them." So, that's a way that I see and CPA is wanting to promote. Any comments on that or shall I go onto my next question? We've got a few here. Phil, you good over there? You haven't said anything for a bit.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:34:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-3oJcdvqCJjc5SlTRsNhEM6kSNEIR7dtplVJdg1dQkROPo537HL5hV52h44K2YcGCS1UqjIz-_KKTOrADDZ_FKObXzE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5656.13) Also, of course, the inmates I work with. I would say more than half of them, well, it's more than that, suffer from PTSD. And not only that, it's the staff too because it's the correctional officers. I think there's a few alcoholics in there. And with our Aboriginal population though, if I was to ask a room full of people, who's here suffered trauma in their life, you'd probably get about every person in the room raising their hand, put it that way. So yeah, I think the medicinal approach is one way.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:34:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=df5Qnx254UOqKPd05I2aNZEJaQAks0g2K_0I8UtZ8B31Qa_DfT0te9pJVOzyDLzf4nc0SpU1hOO6WDGAe2albYDMIl4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5689.87) One of the Aboriginal approaches I use is I use the medicine wheel and when I'm working with men, so we say body, mind, emotion, and spirits. And that also might be another way to present some form of legalization for the healing properties of medicinal drugs, because you have the recreational users, but you have quite a large number of elderly people that use marijuana, for example. I've noticed just in my lifetime more and more children with ADHD and they're prescribed things like Prozac and other things. So, I know that some of our relatives have tried medicinal marijuana for their children and stuff, and it's worked wonders on those levels.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:35:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hhYjwWL7BmdqGPxybjGgFzMVicax9BHl9WvQagowI32S4SrA8hXlYdG_WpnRVDVFBl-Bh6D7oUP51rbcvWWLhEBr5wo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5739.64) So, that medicine wheel approach might be a way to look at it because I know when I was listening to [inaudible 00:02:46], he was talking about the spiritual uses too. And of course the emotional one is the one that most people don't talk about. There's been so many allusions to Donald Trump. You can imagine the childhood that he had, there was probably some PTSD there, put it that way, that he comes out in big ways to mask it of course. Yeah, those are just some comments I would like to say. I think the medicine wheel approach might also work in part of the legalization of some of this.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:36:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fN9h59Cjx2XLyT2D-BEj_URbxOuKmM3OGVb2Dg7dIQSJhwH5260jxq9FI4sMRT9UIjl-R1PyKCaLI1mpjpIeFZczQ8k&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5778.24) In the small town that I live in, on a more microcosm, the first marijuana shops to open up were on reserves here. And lawmakers didn't know what to do with it because it's called federal land, but they're also have their own autonomy. And it turned out, the clientele I've talked to and I know a lot of the people that go to these shops of course, and it is quite a cross-section, from young people to old people. You can see the mainstream society's views changing. The little town I live in used to be called the Bible Belt here. And now Molson's Brewery has just opened up one of the biggest breweries, so we're the pot and the booze capital all of a sudden here from being the Bible Belt just in the last few years.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:37:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=29FrZGNsMiujzoyjXhmG0Dp-_nuETv9wGJfjkLe0bQC-6ft9bMLCtkxmYCS6gzr0EyiLyLwpPYgZjLouD_x2NnaU0BQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5831.21) Thank you. Oh, I just lost it. Where did that go? Yeah, this is from Terry Robertson. Hi, Terry, "Spirit plant medicines are the purview of the traditional caretakers and stewards of the land." Absolutely. "They have the original relationship with them. So, how does the CPA see non-traditional peoples working alongside indigenous, brown, black bodies of culture?" So obviously that's a question that you guys may want to weigh in on, but I would say that's another big reason. We actually met for our strategic planning up here in Kaslo, BC last week and plotted our roadmap, and that's a really big part of it is reaching out to all of Canada, but absolutely reaching out to the traditional and people of color and all the people that aren't represented that need to be. And how do we do that? So we're very open to hearing from all of you as time goes on, but sooner than later would be best because we're reaching out at this very moment and looking at the ways to do that effectively because that's really important for us and inclusion is one of our core values and it's just what has to happen.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:38:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=y6P8qW33ySZtsl6HG5cGLR_PA9ZjACo7l74WQOFYMfWYPz4Nfva-VLaYzC8FuuI-G0m12yVDiVC-TkHKZhp4stX-oSc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5905.89) But I also must add that it isn't just plant medicines that we're talking about with psychedelics. There're also chemical compounds, such as MD, MA, and LSD. And so that isn't the purview of traditional peoples, however they can be very helpful for them. So, that's what we're doing. All right. "Is it possible to medicalize psilocybin for the general public while decriminalizing for the indigenous tribes who have been using them ceremonially and responsibly for generations?" Any comments on that?

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:39:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QxCfe6jGm2sR3P_60OwulA3B36hCBo7DDMZm7Xn2gg4k3lxhsDnqSkhKeKYWndvY92XvOV7SgOUDq8UZrNT8LkPfXQM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5943.8) I have a small comment.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:39:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=t19tWLnPzp9VAM0Ob_ZBfzdBeNERVN9muAWZ9vL3BG_E5WdFtlFHubRjqRJfpZgbAJSAVDGOIwQwaZuHwmjOM3wpEiY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5945.82) Please.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:39:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=e-H44wlvDCpOlfVton4C7PqGdZPDMs12W7Qr9yjJFD-4KNvtWa_N8I1FCIWFbBAx_CEC1ZLfgitkRzxXmmKkZOvuLYE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=5947.33) Well, one of the ways I got off of drugs and alcohol, I met a very traditional man. His name was Rolling Thunder, he was from the States. So he was one of these elders that could talk to plants and that's how he would find the healing values, and there's still a few elders around like that. I have a little bit of that, but there some people that specialize, I would say almost, in that. So, to be able to actually communicate with the plant and say, what's it going to be used for? Because he was saying there was some scientists saw that he was curing cancer with a certain plant. And of course the drug companies got very interested right away and they said, "Well, what plant is it?" So Rolling Thunder just shook his head. He said, "They won't know how to use that plant because they don't know the prayers that go with it. They don't know how to talk to it." So I just wanted to say from that point of view, an Aboriginal point of view.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:40:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xJlRp9LhsFmBqCJK_crC9_NuZ-nAtO5bLfpToEnhLxom8vMpyzsCOCfL9RIVVnfX3KfuUtRToeN0CTfygWJ_oZq7u8s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6002.46) All I can say is absolutely. That's the challenge of moving forward to bring everybody with us, but also to bring the healing properties with us too. There was a company that was looking at using cannabis, but taking out all the things that would make people feel happy and trying to use it for medicinal purposes only. It's a plant, it's been put together by a bigger being than any of us and for good reason and why was picking it all out and trying to analyze it and strip it down seems to me slightly crazy. So we're definitely a stand for that at the Canadian Psychedelic Association. I have a question from Richard Kay. He says, "Can you regulate a plant?"

Deborah Small: [01:40:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ENmk-6MouSE4_No8mW3y3qkwn5p4If4WmpeVTH3EnTSye7OCVZo-Vsid3VtbDPYLPwT_ddq6nJ45-oPajHsIyPv6oYg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6059.56) Clearly not. Okay, the whole point of prohibition was to produce a "drug-free world," meaning no more coca, no more opium, no more cannabis, none of the precursor drugs that are used for meth. Well, how well has that worked? For a hundred years, those plants are still growing, they're as plentiful as ever, they're part of our natural environment. So I don't see us ever being able, through any government or legal scheme, to eradicate these plants. What we can do is develop a healthier relationship as a society to them, which prohibition doesn't allow us to do.

Deborah Small: [01:41:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=e1agXug6grgrmg-MvGXOaxDJFExvERVwL6IBqHxwilBkK_NAkfBAyFUA_KvndXYc5-_eSUJV_Tmnqsi5Kd_CtQippuk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6102.39) But I also want to speak for drugs for escapism. I don't believe that there's "responsible drug use" and "irresponsible drug use." There's "drug use." Some drugs use becomes problematic, but there are many, many ways that people who develop problems with drugs can deal with them. None of them are enhanced or made better through criminalization and punishment. There've been many, many studies looking at people who use cocaine, people who use crack, to look at how people manage their drug use without necessarily having to go to a traditional treatment place. So I just want to point that out. And I also want to say, the truth is, and this is one of the things about prohibition, is that it doesn't allow us to distinguish between non-problematic drug use and problematic drug use. We treat all of it as if there's something wrong with it because it's criminal. But the vast majority of people who use all drugs, from opiates to psychedelics, use them without developing significant social problems.

Deborah Small: [01:42:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=o8JoIQMssHLfk9iQT1uqDoKmYXyOx9aie2Isj-8GU4wfpt1sd3VkIIZEmhucZW7wkbYyFOUojQcORBfzaYZ5JkasZ5s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6170.65) Prohibition makes it worse because if you're a poor person, being able to have access to a drug that's illicit is going to require a greater stretch for you than it does for other people, but that's not about the drugs. That's about the scheme that we've set up for the drug. The other thing that we know is that when given the opportunity and the right information, people naturally use drugs, all drugs, in the least harmful way. And that's been true for opiates, cocaine, magic mushrooms, whatever you want to call it. People, when they have the information and the ability, they use drugs as safely as possible. I use alcohol as the classic example. Most people do not go and buy over-proof alcohol, even though it's legal, even though it's there. Most people prefer to use alcohol that they can manage better within their body and more safely.

Deborah Small: [01:43:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=j152bg2fVv1JdQzkBkcwHfPLu7XMz3vCW79xO_Cpheu3K5-iigf6ItaSIIhftG4gt2Srjrju1PVGabsF06hDGhY49ig&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6225.07) And then the third thing I want to say is that for those people who are problematic drug users, we all know a lot of that is attached to trauma. And my feeling is that if you're not going to address the underlying conditions that people are using drugs to escape from, then you should let them escape with drugs. So this notion that we want to force people into treatment because they have a problematic relationship with drugs, but we're not going to do anything about their homelessness, about their unemployment, about their lack of healthcare, about whatever psychological or mental health problems that they're dealing with, is ridiculous to me. What's the point of living a miserable life sober. If you want people to do that, then you have to be willing to improve the conditions of their lives that they're using the drugs to manage. But if you're not, then give them the drug that they want because in the long run, it's actually cheaper.

Deborah Small: [01:44:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4-IqiVpWBXjxtE05KX_XAGH9EwAIQBJmv2u-eoR7fxeR2uq7wu8ZdgzxmfaPOIhVmfOsSp4ryAdJCcN3EemRe1w5fL0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6279.86) And we've seen from the examples in Switzerland and the Netherlands, et cetera, that giving pharmaceutical grade heroin to people with little or no cost, supports their health, society's health, reduces crime, and many of the diseases and other things we associate with illicit drug use. So I'm for letting go of this thing between good drug users and not so good drug users. There's just drug users.

Neil Boyd: [01:45:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VDuDhe7X-I7M5FQ1_hAiBhkpRrAePFRImx-w14SXdgg15DI022GVs14dpc-7SwY7qaIWc7KUgTTUW_4Br21eYv-5XEs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6309.02) Yeah, I would agree with that. And I also think when we talk about a drug-free world, there's so much hypocrisy in that statement because alcohol and tobacco are usually edged out of the equation, along with a whole range of drugs that are advertised on television and produce changes in behavior. You can think, "Oh, that's kind of like cannabis. Oh, that's kind of like cocaine." The line doesn't make any sense. And as I agree with you, that if you give people more options, more choices, they'll make better decisions. Some people will get into difficulty, yes. But for the reasons you cited, trauma, sometimes just really serious injuries, people have difficulty coping with life circumstances, quite understandably.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:46:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UcpoR23bCFScC8f9aRlUeBVeT7Xa1tbukB0acKrmh2m8Z_sqB8udXcThBB9CtGLNF8MlfYcrE30Ypv4d5qlkup5AueI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6362.09) And these days, people who have serious injuries and are given Oxycontin thrown at them to help with their pain relief, and then as soon as they get addicted to it, which everybody knows they will, they're cast out as an "addict" all of a sudden and no one's there to help them. Yeah, it's a bad picture in many ways which is why we're having this conversation. Was someone going to say something then?

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:46:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YK0E0L9ALEp8KQY8iyOVv-rx2GEQyX5ES6Xg8BCswAdu8cqh-mbFhrcD7Ha2HdEqGIZjOvWlgzU_SJOmfJ0u682Yf64&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6388.02) Well, Oxycontin was another big one that really hit most of the reserves in Canada because especially the more north you went, it seems like doctors was prescribing them for just about every ailment.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:46:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NeiBntGMGwYw0GW0cH2QrBEK-lho2bJNtmqXTsot8wz1XKuiCl2c3SNICw_zjcsGVlovlMzxVQ72t4Rct9ZmQ9JusOo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6399.95) It's a racket.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:46:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=i_PB6j6JD_b8eRH4C7LFSRTLivWYVxc9YEkPHvkD17VRN6-yQFeALsECwpFRWQLeLcjh2A_gSIKMSFH06ZG_WKU0-eI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6402.03) Whole communities got addicted. And I'm thinking of things like sugar. That's probably one of the biggest killers and coffee. I know when I quit coffee, I had headaches and I had a major withdrawal. It's hard to even define a drug these days.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:47:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EGuJUq9iiS3kW4fXj_98cEVl07GcCeOHXcuOC-RcvvvUk9mpcGzBC34aQU2SwYeUHmGpoqVVnfWXiXIMddGsJBZ1ULo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6426.37) We have come back to where we started with talking about sugar. Absolutely. So we're actually, which is what I predicted because you three is just such amazing panelists and we've run out of time to get to all the questions. There were a couple of things that I want to talk about at the end. And actually Phil has a song or a prayer for us at the very end, which I'm really grateful for. So, there's one question here, there's two more I'm going to read out. This is from Daniel, "The political left tends to be more open to arguments around decriminalizing. What would be the best angle to reaching conservatives?" Now, you could take the harm reduction approach which is meet them where they're at, but you guys go ahead.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:47:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=a2UinqN_qi9QLo9x0cfex1DL9AK-bO-riTZn86UOXczIv1nf0ZigTEXy906lafdm4iQP4YcIcGs6nRoLMVp9yDRrqRY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6475.27) I think you need some influential people first and you need lobbyists, that's for sure.

Deborah Small: [01:48:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HJTFlcjHECII9_y1RWbRDmXKolaNarm6g-ggVjI4SHG1b_u9iIaxIeIDpiSfkdNlzS8Pw4L1aMaQbpQta1pMc9lbpXk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6488.72) So I want to just point out that support for cannabis legalization crosses party lines. That wasn't always the case, but it definitely is now. And I think a lot of it has to do with people's experiences, but I also think that you can't discount the role of culture and cultural conversations. So again, I'm old enough to have seen a lot of major changes culturally in my country. 25 years ago, the idea that we would allow same-sex marriage was considered unthinkable, particularly by conservatives. Now, it's not a big deal and it's something that people from both parties support, both parties know that they know people from the LGBTQ community, and we have a culture, in terms of music and television and all of that, that celebrates these people's lives. I've watched in the 15, 20 years that I've been doing drug reform, a real shift in public attitudes that reflects the advocacy of our community.

Deborah Small: [01:49:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1HidFo2cd4qGcd9N_mJOD0Y6bJVHfoKk9tPklzuHi8Ob_dfI9C-xALDw7DUmcEYfRKVZ_6Zn3NJwOPZbkzB_vY8Z6_E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6561.91) So when I first started doing this work in the late nineties, nobody wanted to hear about showing mercy and support for people who were addicted to crack. They were considered to be, like people say, "Crack is whack." If you're doing it, you've taken yourself out of the community equation. By the time we got to the place where Congress was considering a reform of the laws, many of the very same leaders, particularly from black and brown communities who were willing to write these people off, were out there lobbying on the Capitol for it because they began to recognize that the laws were causing more harm to the community than the drugs that they were trying to protect people from. And so I believe that people are capable of change, even the most conservative person is capable of change. The thing that we all share together is grief, grief over a loved one that we feel like we've lost either to overdose or lost to addiction or lost to the criminal justice system. That's not a partisan issue.

Deborah Small: [01:50:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZZ120fufFlKD8Pps7--Ix6lwBcmalNo1eEx4peuJ5aiMiPmJGcJYE6qbPxj2AzbcxUpbiNDevMlHvc_5ytpZWjBVAdY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6628.14) And I think one of the things I've learned as a organizer, and I guess this is a harm reduction approach, is to talk to people about the things that they share with you. I don't even want to call it a positive thing, I'll just say one of the things that has come out of the opiate crisis that we're in right now, is a greater awareness of people across the social and economic spectrum in the United States of the cost of these policies in terms of lives lost and lives damaged. And when you bring people together, whether they're Democrat and Republican, if they've lost people, that's what they're present to, the loss. Not what their political affiliation is. So to me, if you organize people around the things that they share in common and that they feel deeply, you can have them actually look across their differences in ways that allow them to make substantive, meaningful, and long-lasting change.

Neil Boyd: [01:51:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qogMVpyGwCvfbLA6yozMtAQxDZf7vI6ruayjGu3v1ruyDsFHnxFtGPGv2DIOce7nKjkvybEtdFiYN0AL2azxYnRadlw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6688.09) Yeah, I think that's really important, to find commonality. 40 years ago when I started talking about cannabis and saying it should be legalized, I had people calling into radio saying I should be fired, one guy said I should be shot. It was really, really quite ugly. And here we are, some 40 years later, and cannabis is legal. If you had asked me then that this would happen, it's such a significant and positive change. We've also got medical assistance in death and it's been used by hundreds of people. So there are many senses in which we've moved forward.

Neil Boyd: [01:52:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8s3zPAf9zQshJRlR2e9G5urOfrtjJpKmvHnyseS5B3kDrHTWPJxdUobLIdQxYvz0lJAu25KAGreFavkRgvJ_q9OBdOk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6723.73) On the other hand, the toll of death that we see from opiate overdoses in the last couple of years is something that is just abominable. But maybe, as Deborah was saying, maybe this is something we are waking up to as a culture. And for me, when I was 25 and I started teaching, I wanted to tell students what my point of view was and really get that across. Now, I want to have them see a whole bunch of different points of view and hope that the more they think about something, we'll find a common way, we'll find a common ground. And as you say, it's often in shared grief.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:52:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wNz53TYLR0giIRFM0jbX-P6SlfCeyTma3uLJCWP0E1CQWfuqWZyABOmHPvBvdA1QRr_8m08jsOD51Lrr8LumQJzKYzU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6767.75) And because I work in the prison system like that, Debra had alluded to that earlier, that I think it costs around 60 to $70,000 just to house one prisoner. So, we haven't talked too much about economics and the dollars, which I think that's how part of the reason marijuana got legalized because they wanted to see how the country would handle the tax dollars and everything like that. So I think you have to look at prevention is a very important thing. For our native community, the only way we found prevention for different issues was to back it up as far as we could down the line. So we went to the youth, but then we said, well, no, we've got to look at the parenting skills. Right from the beginning, people have to be taught about either benefits or deficits of something. And it has to start at a very young, young age if there's going to be change in the long run.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:53:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6ObPTkUONHIrjaXgMrhNcf09ewurhgUGD-M18gbQEwrhrIEewnaj6ap9_P5ieNu0Nr5IIhZ-pKQrUJ9ZYDa-nK9ccpc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6828.49) Thank you all. So we're coming to a close, just a few more things. There was a question that said, "The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police have called for decriminalizing personal drug use. How can we leverage that recommendation?" And so the answer to that is, they taking that stand has opened up the opportunity for a conversation and a dialogue with them. And actually we know one of them reasonably well and have started that conversation, so it's in place. Okay, five more minutes.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:54:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sEE7Sv2t3HGZlbckb1BTFv8pXZDayKU28M8goLt-U4Uc6oI2EgRGYSWtXyIqdlihWutxhgkHgy4uRbdUf9sceDML3n0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6861.57) I would just like to say, we want you guys to sign the petition decriminalizenature.ca. Don't forget to sign it twice. We would love you to join us as members and friends, psychedelicassociation.net. We would love you to support us, send us money, $50 or $100 can get you a membership, but we actually are holding the space for $1 billion because there are billionaires out there and just one donor could give us one of their billions and we could do an awful lot of good work with that and help an awful lot of other organizations do too. So keep that in mind when you're thinking about us, we like to think big, and we include everybody. I think that's all I have to say about all of that.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:55:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=o8SwZ_-TwmEZ5MdhXjM_TJ0AaA1Vl-bLFzeqyImI2eGCG9vwqN2Q187sN9RZJ9Srm3BXsM9A6L0cLcGYnVNqcIwCRXM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6911.84) Our next webinar is on August the 14th. It's going to be riveting. It's Trevor Millar, one of our board members, will be speaking to three people who had a severe addiction of some kind, probably to opioids, and was able to let that addiction go by using ibogaine or iboga as their treatment. And iboga is a plant that originally comes from Africa and helps people when they're going through the withdrawal to not experience the pain and suffering of the withdrawal symptoms and it's amazing. And so he will be talking to three people who have had that experience and how their lives are going now. Just a couple of more minutes. So that's August the 14th and we'll be promoting it too.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:56:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=q0JFWu4fHXM8zPqx4m76sJYEY4w9NEE0VvxSCK23_lb965oOoZjefzo3qs8sU-bkGdEz3_Zi5rf4MXDyNeETxDsMVHM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=6964.26) So one thing I would like to do is thank you. Neil, thank you so much for just your depth of knowledge and your work on the International Law Reform Committee and everything else you do in the world. Thank you so much, Deborah. You're just one of my guiding lights and really good friend. Well I do, I love to listen to you for hours on end, so let's do more of that. And thank you for being the stand that you are in the United States of America for people of color and just for humanity and for love and peace. And Phil, thank you so much for the work that you do and how you have contributed to our community already, our Psychedelic Association. Before it was born, you were there and you and Giselle, your wife, you work together and we think very highly and love both of you. And just thank you for that amazing work that you do. It's tireless and you don't ask for anything. You just do it because that's who you are, really appreciate that and the wisdom that you bring.

Gillian Maxwell: [01:57:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NSTCWlsVPmm_TfHUmHuzWwBgNtTr-Gm308K4aY0dcWRie9oJppcm7LyWHblXM22k1ZWjNDZg2N4Vf7yxPAnqDWUNJzg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=7029.02) So I know you have a prayer to sing to us or to say to us, but I would like to take half a minute, please, of silence because this week was the International Drug Users Memorial Week. We had a special day on Thursday or a couple of days ago in Ottawa, and it was a few days ago before that internationally. So I will time it. I will ask you to be silent for a period of time. I'll tell you when it's over. And then Phil, if you could go into your closing piece, that would be lovely. Thank you all of you for joining us. Well, thank you everybody for those moments of silence, and now over to you, Phil, to take us home.

Phil Mechuskosi...: [01:58:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=D30jrFHHI8IkXxrhMjSWCy3XvxRyG6Rm_hjeWlB34mEA_ojd2oNQ3YYohH97sqCKECywKWlgTd5rkW49f-EBJAAIYhE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=7128.99) Okay. [crosstalk 01:58:49] You'll hear a word in this song, it says [foreign language 01:58:51]. It's a Lakota word, means the spirit of the north. And when you hear the word [foreign language 01:59:00], it just means the sacred being. (singing) And the prayer we say is just to thank everything. We say, we thank the two leggeds like us that have been on here, but we thank the four leggeds, we thank the ones that fly, the ones that swim, the ones that crawl, the rock people, which means the mountains as well, the rooted nations, which we've been talking quite a bit about, and the star nations. And with that, we use the word all my relations. That prayer means we're related to all of those things and everything we say and do affects all of that. And so, that's been part of our conversation today, I think. So, it was very beautiful to meet some new relations today, all my relations.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [02:00:52]