

Substance Misuse Prevention Resources for Schools: Cannabis, Alcohol and other Drugs

Toronto Public Health Liaison Public Health Nurses (LPHNs) work with school communities to support the growth and development of children and youth through comprehensive, evidence-informed health promotion strategies that promote mental health, enhance resiliency, and reduce risk factors for substance misuse.

Using the Foundations for a Healthy School approach, LPHNs work with educators, students, and parents/caregivers to build capacity through consultations, resources, curriculum support, student engagement and workshops to further develop their knowledge and skills.

Toronto Public Health Services

The following are examples of programs and services your LPHN can offer in your school:

- **School Staff Cannabis Literacy Workshops:** LPHNs can deliver an interactive workshop (90-120 min) for school staff to increase their cannabis literacy. This workshop aims to build the capacity of school staff to create and continue open, non-judgmental conversations with youth about cannabis based on facts and evidence. School staff will increase their knowledge and understanding of the potential health impacts related to cannabis use amongst youth and learn about key messages to share with youth to help keep them safer from substance related harms.
- **Youth Leadership Initiatives for Grades 7/8 & Secondary School:** Working in collaboration with a school staff advisor, LPHNs will support existing or new groups that engage student leaders. The goal is to increase their capacity to identify health issues, develop and implement a plan of action, evaluate and build on their successes, through leadership development, knowledge and skill building, using a whole school approach. Topics of interest may including mental health and well-being, alcohol and binge drinking, cannabis, impairment, risk reduction, impaired and distracted driving.
- **What's With Weed (WWW):** A peer leadership education program developed by Parent Action on Drugs specifically for secondary students. WWW is based on a harm reduction model to engage youth in identifying issues related to cannabis, and to inform them of effective ways to reduce problems associated with cannabis misuse.
- **Kids Have Stress Too!:** Consists of three sessions to help parents and other caregivers better understand stress and to help them teach their children strategies to manage it. This program also helps parents improve communication with their children ages 4-9.
- **Middle Years Parenting Series "Love, Limits and Live it":** Consists of three sessions available for parents/caregivers of children 10-14. Sessions focus on positive parenting strategies to help children/youth deal with challenges, cope with worry and stress, and make safer choices around alcohol, cannabis and other drugs.
- **Connecting with Your Teen:** Provides parents/caregivers with an overview of the common developmental issues that teens face and ideas for improving communication with them. The ultimate goal is to support parents in being a positive influence for their teens and in turn, assisting them in avoiding substance use.

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Background Information and Resources for Teachers/School Staff

- OPHEA - Health and Physical Education Curriculum Support Documents www.ophea.net (Teachers can access directly through TDSB web and TCDSB web)
- [Ontario Student Drug Use Health Survey \(OSDUHS\)](#)
- Parent Action on Drugs www.parentactionondrugs.org

Additional Cannabis Information/Resources

- [Your Cannabis Questions Answered, Get the Honest Facts](#) – Government of Canada
- [Government of Ontario Cannabis Legalization](#) – information about the proposed laws in Ontario
- [Cannabis Talk Kit](#) – a resource for parents/caregivers to help initiate and continue conversations with their teens about cannabis
- [Cannabis: What Parents/Guardians and Caregivers Need to Know](#) – developed in partnership with School Mental Health Assist and CAMH
- [What's with Weed](#) - Based on harm reduction principles this website includes information to help youth assess their cannabis use and develop strategies to prevent, avoid or reduce problematic use

Support for Students (Professional Support Services, Phone Help Lines, and Community Agencies)

- School Guidance & Professional Support Services
- Hospital for Sick Children Adolescent Substance Abuse Program 416-813-5097; www.sickkids.ca
- Youth Substance Abuse Program (YSAP); ymcagta.org
- Breakaway Youth & Family Services 416-234-1942 ext. 225; www.breakawayaddictions.ca
- Centre for Addiction & Mental Health Youth Addiction Services Program 416-535-8501 ext. 1730; www.camh.net
- ConnexOntario- Drug and Alcohol Helpline 1-800-565-8603 www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca
- Kids Help Phone www.kidshelpphone.ca
- What's Up Clinics Free mental health and addictions walk-in clinics for children, youth and families:
 - East Metro Youth Services emys.on.ca
 - Skylark www.skylarkyouth.org
 - Etobicoke Children's Centre www.etobicokechildren.com
 - Griffen Centre www.griffincentre.org
 - Yorktown Family Services www.yorktownfamilyservices.com

To obtain the name and phone number of your Liaison Public Health Nurse, please visit our website or call Toronto Health Connections at 416-338-7600.