

# SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION AND HARM REDUCTION: CURRICULUM SUPPORT HEALTH RESOURCES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (2024-2025)

Successful substance-use prevention education for young people provides age-appropriate, factual, non-stigmatizing information that helps students develop decision-making, relationship, and communication skills. The aim is to integrate substance use prevention messaging into all aspects of school life and connect youth with their community for support.

Our goal is to engage youth and provide opportunities to emphasize their ability to make informed choices, acquire refusal skills, be a positive role model, build resilience and positively influence their peers. The hope is to also help decrease risk factors and increase protective factors in youth.

## MANUALS AND CURRICULUM RESOURCES/AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES/PAMPHLETS/POSTERS/ HANDOUTS/BOOKS/WORKSHOPS/DISPLAYS/SPEAKERS/PROGRAMS

### **Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addictions (CCSA): Understanding Substance Use Educator's Guide**

The [Educator's Guide](#) and the accompanying series of video modules have been designed to support and equip educators with information and resources to promote well-being and reduce substance related harms among youth. CCSA's five [video modules](#) in the Understanding Substance Use video series. The series covers the following topics:

- Understanding Substance Use
- Understanding Stigma
- Understanding Cannabis Vaping
- Understanding Alcohol
- Understanding Impaired Driving

*(Available in French)*

### **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): [Mental illness & addictions index](#)**

Educators can look up clear and reliable information about mental illness and substances, including treatment and recovery. *(Available in French).*

### **MADD Canada: MADD Canada Colouring Book**

This [tool](#) has been developed for younger children and can be downloaded for free. Parents and teachers can work with their children and discuss the illustrations and key safety messages. You have several options on how to produce this tool. *(Available in French).*

### **Media Awareness Network**

Media and web [education resources](#) for grades K-12 to help students understand how media messages about alcohol can influence their attitudes and behaviours. *(Available in French).*

Public Health  
1-877-464-9675  
TTY 1-866-512-6228  
york.ca



## Niagara Region Teaching Tools

These teaching [tools](#) are designed to support teachers in creating comprehensive lesson plans to cover Substance Use Prevention-related content in the classroom. The resources are guidelines and suggestions for teachers to use and considered appropriate for classes.

## Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA): Cannabis Education Resources

A [database](#) to provide educators and administrators access to evidence-informed information on substance use (specifically cannabis) to help students develop the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions to support their health and well-being. (*Available in French*).

## Stigma - Free Society

The Student Mental Health [Toolkit](#) offers a variety of resources to help students improve their mental wellness and combat stigma, especially around mental health. Resources teach students topics related to various stigmas and encourage EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) in the classroom. The Toolkit program is made for youth, educators, school counsellors, and parents/guardians, who want to teach and promote mental wellness for Grades [4-7](#) and [8-12](#). (*Available in French*).

## Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario Substance Use and School: What Youth Want Educators to Know

[This resource](#) is designed for school and system leaders and educators about youth substance use and available resources. This resource was developed by Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO), in collaboration with School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON), the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) team at CAMH, and a Youth Reference Group made up of seven youth from across Ontario. It provides practical recommendations and information for those working with students and supporting substance use education in schools. (*Available in French*).

## York Region District School Board's Drug and Alcohol Continuum Tool Kit

This resource is intended for teachers, guidance counselors and educational assistants. The kit provides information relating to drugs, alcohol use and the Drug and Alcohol Continuum. Additionally, the tool kit supports curriculum expectations outlined in the new Physical and Health Education Curriculum. (Teachers can access this through their internal YRDSB website under Caring and Safe schools).

## York Region Public Health: Elementary School Resource Package

Curriculum matched packages that provide teacher support on information, activities and booster sessions on various substance use prevention topics for Grade 1-8.

## Mini Booklets and Mini Postcards

Resources to assist educators and parents in facilitating discussion around harms and risks associated with alcohol and drug use with youth, including:

- A Matter of Facts
- Weed out the Myths
- Think About It - Youth Brain Development
- Parent Booklet: Parents Matter: Strategies for Parents to Prevent or Delay Alcohol and other Drug Use

## POSTERS

Available posters include:

- Alcohol and Drugs. Be Informed
- High School: Your move. Your choice.

- Talk to your Child Early about Alcohol
- Weed out the Myths

French-language posters include:

- Comment se terminera ta Fête?
- #Parlonsmarijuana
- Parlez Tôt avec votre Enfant au sujet de L'alcool
- Parent Booklet: Stratégies pour aider les parents à prévenir la consommation d'alcool chez les mineurs

## PRESENTATIONS/SPEAKERS

**Changes Ahead:** Presentation for grade 7/8 students on the harms related to substance use, how to respond to peer pressure, positive coping strategies and information to support with the transition to high school.

**Life after Grade 8:** Public Health Nurses train student leaders from affiliated secondary schools to present to Grade 8 students in feeder schools. **Teacher Resource Package** is provided for additional booster sessions and activities. Contact your Public Health Nurse to request support for the following curriculum-matched ***Empowered Youth Empower Choices***. Peer-led Youth Program.

**Addiction Services Central Ontario:** Providing presentations and resources about substance use, problem gambling and mental health in schools and the community. Click [here](#) to book a presentation.

**Accident Awareness:** Provides a motivational [digital media presentation](#) which encompasses fundamental aspects directly related to adolescents and dangerous driving. Accident Awareness has designed a program entitled *Making Sense of It* for students in Grade 7 and 8. This presentation looks at safety issues for young people, with special attention to safety equipment.

**Canadian Mental Health Association - Choices Program:** This [program](#) encourages youth between the ages of 12-17 to make informed and relevant decisions and promotes positive choices in their lives. The Choices Program meet 2 hours/week for over 10 weeks.

**Mixed Company:** Offers [school productions and workshops](#) that have examined difficult social issues such as mental health stigma and support, healthy relationships and consent, and inclusion and equity.

**MADD Canada:** Youth and [school programming](#) have been a key component of MADD Canada's youth services, education and awareness initiatives since 1994. The presentations are designed to communicate directly with young (grades 7-12) people on their level and in their language and encourage them to take a closer look at their values and perceptions.

**YMCA Youth Programs - Youth Cannabis Awareness Program (YCAP):** This is [a free cannabis education and prevention initiative](#) that takes a harm reduction approach for ages 12-24. The program aims to minimize risks associated with cannabis use by providing youth, and adults involved in youth's lives, with the most accurate and unbiased information.

**York Region Public Health:** Our program offers engaging presentations to students, school staff and parents. Topics include alcohol, cannabis and opioids. Please email us at [substance@york.ca](mailto:substance@york.ca)

**YouthSpeak:** This youth-led [interactive presentation](#) helps students understand substance use, addiction and wellness. Youth speakers share personal stories about their challenges with being

accepted for who they are and share a message of empowerment and hope. Students will better understand what they can do to step up in their community and actively create a more understanding environment with their peers.

## TREATMENT AND/OR COUNSELLING

**Addiction Services for York Region:** [Addiction Services Central Ontario](#)

**York Hills Child and Family Services:** [yorkhillscentre.ca](http://yorkhillscentre.ca)

**Centre for Addiction and Mental Health:** [www.camh.ca](http://www.camh.ca)

**Connex Ontario, Drug and Alcohol Helpline:** [connexontario.ca](http://connexontario.ca)

**Family Services of York Region:** [www.fsyrc.ca](http://www.fsyrc.ca)

**Kinark Child and Family Services:** [www.kinark.on.ca](http://www.kinark.on.ca)

**YSSN Streamlined Access:** [Streamlined Access - Your Support Services Network \(yssf.ca\)](#)

**Family Navigation Project – Sunnybrook Health Services:** [Family Navigation Project - Youth Mental Health Service - Toronto - Sunnybrook Hospital](#)

## YOUTH CRISIS SUPPORT

**COPE Crisis Line (24 hours):** [310-COPE](tel:310-COPE)

**Kids Help Phone (24 hours):** [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

This is a reference list (not a comprehensive list) of community resources. To request any resources from York Region Public Health, please call: Tel: 1-877-464-9675, ext. 76683 Fax: 905-762-2091 or email: [substance@york.ca](mailto:substance@york.ca)

For more information, please visit [york.ca/substanceuse](http://york.ca/substanceuse)