

HEALTHY SCHOOLS STUDENT CLUB: SUBSTANCE USE AND HARM REDUCTION ACTIVITY GUIDE—2024-2025



Empowered youth empower choices.

Public Health

1-877-464-9675

TTY 1-866-512-6228

york.ca/substance-use

York Region

Introduction

Welcome to the *Healthy Schools Student Club (HSSC) Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Activity Guide*.

In this guide, you will find ideas and activities with descriptions and step-by-step instructions on how to run substance use prevention activities in your school.

There are also samples of resources you can use to support your activities in the [Appendix](#) section of this guide.

We would like to introduce you to three themes to guide you throughout the school year:

- **Theme 1: Empower by sharing**
- **Theme 2: Empower by doing**
- **Theme 3: Empower by engaging**

Remember these are only suggestions—you can **change** any of the activities or **create** your own to make it fun for the students in your school.

The Healthy School Student Club is a great way to learn leadership skills, engage in discussion with other students about health topics, and collaborate on implementing fun activities in your school.

Good luck and don't forget your health promotion activities can make an enormous difference in informing your peers about substance use prevention!

Be creative and have fun!

Getting started

Your School Champion (teacher or school staff) and Public Health Nurse can help support the start-up of your Healthy School Student Club!

If your Healthy School Student Club is new to your school, or you are looking for additional ideas, ask your School Champion to connect with your Public Health Nurse to learn more.

If you do not have a Public Health Nurse assigned to your school, ask your School Champion to contact HealthySchools@york.ca for support.

When to start?

Discuss when you want to start implementing your activities. You may decide to start Substance Use Prevention activities during a specific month such as November, which is **National Drug Awareness Week** or before March Break, Semi-Formal, Prom or throughout the year.

There are many health promotion days for substance use prevention already in the calendar (see directly below). Consider other fun activities that you can plan throughout the entire school year.

CALENDAR: SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH PROMOTION DAYS

January

- Bell Let's Talk Day

February

- World Cancer Day

March

- Liver Health Month
- [National Impaired Driving Prevention Week](#)

April

- [Alcohol Awareness Month](#)

May

- Mental Health Week
- National Child and Youth Mental Health Day
- [Students Against Impaired Driving \(SAID\) Day](#)

June

- International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

September

- Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Month
- World Suicide Prevention Day

October

- World Mental Health Day

November

- National Addictions Awareness Week - annually, third week of November
- [Drug Awareness Week: Annually – usually the third week of November](#)

For a list of other health promotion days, visit [Government of Canada: Calendar of health promotion days](#).

Theme 1: Empower by sharing

Here is some background information to help you learn more about substances that youth may use.

SUBSTANCE

A drug is any substance that affects the way you act, think or feel. The following provides a description of substances and their effects.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is a drug classified as a depressant. It slows down your central nervous system, making it difficult to think clearly, affecting your behaviour, motor skills and reflexes. It slows down your breathing, heart rate, and lowers your body temperature. Did you know that alcohol can cause at least seven types of cancer? Alcohol is the most common psychoactive substance used by youth. Alcohol use is a major cause of harm in Ontario, with a significant number of injuries and deaths related to motor vehicle crashes, violence, diseases and alcohol dependency (Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: Final Report, 2023).

CANNABIS

Cannabis, also known as marijuana or weed. It has psychoactive or mind-altering effects and can be smoked, vaped, eaten, or topically applied. The chemical composition of cannabis includes over 100 cannabinoids and can be used for both medical and nonmedical purposes. THC is the main psychoactive chemical in cannabis and is responsible for the "high" experienced by individuals. Regular cannabis use can affect mental health, cognitive functioning, including attention and memory, and respiratory and cardiovascular health (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, 2022).

OPIOIDS

Opioids are a family of drugs that reduce the body's perception of pain. Although opioids can help when used properly, there is a potential cause for dependence, overdose, and death. They are currently the drug that is the third most commonly abused by Ontario youth. Prescription opioids come in tablets, capsules, syrups, solutions, patches and suppositories. Opioid use can interfere with success in school, sports and in relationships with friends and family. Research indicates that consuming drugs and alcohol during adolescence can also lead to problems in adulthood, including chronic disease, addiction and mental health disorders. Preventing and treating opioid prescription dependence is a growing and concerning community issue (Drug Free Kids Canada, 2020).

MENTAL HEALTH

Did you know that substance use can trigger changes in brain structure and function that make a person more likely to develop a mental health disorder? Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness and/or substance use disorders than any other age group. These mental health disorders can include anxiety disorders, depression, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), bipolar disorder, personality disorders, and schizophrenia, among others (National Institute of Mental Health, 2023).

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

Now that you've reviewed the information above, it's time to kickstart your activities with Empower by Sharing! This theme lays the foundation for the entire journey, turning everyday moments into opportunities for learning and growth. Get ready to amplify your voice and spread substance use prevention messages!

Activity 1: School PA Announcements

Description: Use PA announcements to share substance use facts, statistics, and reminders about upcoming events.

Instructions:

- Designate one day of the week where a student reads an announcement over the PA system and gives a positive message about staying substance-free.
- Students could create their own messages that are reviewed by a staff member to ensure they are appropriate.
- For sample announcements see *PA Announcements* under [Appendix A](#).

Activity 2: Creative Poster Contest

Description: The creative poster contest invites students to express their creativity while addressing themes related to substance use prevention. This activity empowers students to design impactful posters, while raising awareness within the school community. You can even connect with your schools Art department!

Instructions:

- Assemble a team to plan and execute the contest:
 - Determine the duration of the contest, and whether it will be a one-time or ongoing event.
- Choose a theme or set of themes for the contest (e.g., substance use and mental health, challenging the stigma surrounding substance use, etc.).
- Specify the size, format, and any other requirements for poster submissions.
- Clearly communicate the submission details and any relevant details for participants.
- Appoint a judging panel to assess the posters based on creativity, message effectiveness, and adherence to the theme.
- Consider offering prizes for the winning entries to motivate participation (e.g., certificates, art supplies, or having the winning posters displayed in the school).

Activity 3: Helping Hands Banner

Description: The Helping Hands Banner is a collaborative project that unites students in creating a banner where they can share positive messages and resources related to substance use and mental health. This initiative promotes unity and encourages students to offer a helping hand to one another. The banner serves as a visual representation of the school's commitment to staying substance-free.

Instructions:

- Form a team to plan the creation of the Helping Hands Banner.

- Decide on the banner's size, location, and the materials needed.
- Set up a designated area where students can come and add their positive messages or personal experiences related to substance use and mental health.
- Leave room for students to attach small handprints or cutouts to symbolize their "helping hands".
- Display the banner prominently within the school and promote it using social media and school newsletters.

Activity 4: Media Blitz Days

Description: Media Blitz Days is an initiative where students host movie nights, featuring films, documentaries, TED Talks, or informative videos that address substance use and related topics from a positive and upstream perspective. This activity aims to empower students with constructive discussions and alternative viewpoints, focusing on informed choices, resilience, and personal growth.

Instructions:

- Choose a suitable date, collaborate with student leaders and staff to select content and promote diverse perspectives.
- Use various channels to create awareness, encouraging students to invite peers and friends.
- Ensure a comfortable and inviting space with good audio-visual quality.
- Host post-screening discussions with thought-provoking questions to encourage critical thinking.
- Gather feedback for improvement, consider regular Media Blitz Days with various themes. This initiative aims to empower students to make informed, positive choices and encourage their peers to do the same.

Theme 2: Empower by doing

Have you ever noticed how you remember things better when you are actually involved? Roll up your sleeves and get energized with Empower by Doing! Every activity is a lesson that becomes a part of your everyday life and where every action you take becomes a stepping stone to make informed choices.

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

Activity 1: Substance Use Myth Buster Activity

Description: The Myth Buster Activity is an interactive challenge where students are presented with myth cards and fact cards related to substance use. The goal is to identify the myths and facts, debunking common misconceptions and reinforcing accurate information surrounding substance use.

Instructions:

- Create and organize the myth and fact cards:
 - For sample myth and fact cards see Myth Buster Activity under the [Appendix F](#).
- Divide students into groups and explain the rules.
- Each group will race to identify which cards are myths and which are facts.
- The group with the most points can win a small prize:
 - Prizes can be creative and build on a positive message.
- Encourage students to reflect on the activity and its impact:
 - Discuss how accurate information can influence their decisions and the importance of seeking reliable sources.

Activity 2: Ready, Set, Action!

Description: Ready, Set, Action! is an activity designed to equip students with practical strategies for resisting peer pressure. Collaborate with the drama club or drama classes to bring peer pressure scenarios to life through role-play and improv scenes. These performances can be held during assemblies or lunch hours.

Instructions:

- Assign roles to drama club members or drama class students, conduct rehearsals, and set a schedule for performances:
 - Refer to the [Appendix C](#) for peer pressure strategies and sample role play scenarios.

Activity 3: Jeopardy Game

Description: Host a fun game of Jeopardy with questions covering various aspects of substance use prevention.

Instructions:

- Divide participants into teams and set up the Jeopardy board:
 - Refer to the [Appendix D](#) for more information and resources.

Activity 4: That Word is Taboo!

Description: That Word is Taboo! is an interactive challenge where students are presented with taboo cards containing words that are common with substance use. The objective is to be creative in conveying substance use concepts without using the “taboo” words listed.

Instructions:

- Divide participants into two teams, each team selects a "guesser" for each round.
- Prepare a set of taboo cards (see sample cards in [Appendix E](#)) with words related to substance use prevention.
- The goal is for the guesser to get their team to say the target word on the card without using specific “taboo” words or phrases listed on the card.
- The guesser has a limited time to get their team to guess as many words as possible without saying the taboo terms.
- This activity reinforces substance use prevention concepts in a fun and memorable way. Encourage discussions after each round to ensure that the learning aspect is maximized.

Activity 5: Would You Rather? A Game of Choices

Description: Play a game where students make choices related to substance use and discuss the consequences.

Instructions:

- Participants make choices at various decision points presented in the adventure. Each choice leads to a different section, branching the narrative based on their decisions:
 - Refer to the [Appendix G](#) for the full activity.

Theme 3: Empower by engaging

Transform substance use prevention into a community-wide movement! This may be our final theme, but Empower by Engaging is only the beginning. Work together to move beyond awareness and create a lasting impact that resonates within and beyond the school community.

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

Activity 1: Display Awareness Booths/Workshop/Assembly

Description: Set up an engaging display booth during lunch hours to provide information and resources or invite a speaker or organization for an engaging session that can cover a variety of topics.

Instructions:

- These can be organized by student-led groups.
- Invite community organizations such as York Region Public Health, Accident Awareness, Addiction Services Central Ontario, etc.:
 - Refer to the [Appendix J](#) for a list of presentations and speakers.
- Have inviting displays and consider having draw prizes and incentives for students to encourage participation.

Activity 2: Student Mentors

Description: Train students to serve as peer mentors and provide information on various substances commonly used by youth and provide strategies on peer pressure situations.

Instructions:

- Public Health Nurses can come to the school and train student mentors:
 - Refer to the *York Region Public Health Youth Program Flyer* in the [Appendix I](#).
- Students willing to take a leadership role in raising awareness about substance use and mental health issues can make and wear buttons with the phrase “Ask Me About...”
- Each student can have a button with a different issue:
 - Some examples include cannabis, withdrawal, depression, addiction, etc.
- This activity provides students with a trustworthy source (peer) of information.
- Students can also present to younger classes or feeder schools in a fun, interactive way.

Activity 3: BYOB (Bring Your Own Banana)

Description: Instead of “bring your own bottle,” have students and staff bring in a banana and make banana split sundaes. This activity can help raise funds and awareness about alcohol and safer partying in a fun way.

Instructions:

- Choose a date and promote the event, emphasizing the event's message of safe partying without alcohol.
- Gather the necessary ingredients and arrange a serving area for banana split sundaes with a variety of toppings and ice cream.

- Designate a suitable space, set up tables for sundae stations, and establish a donation booth with volunteers to provide information about responsible partying.
- Participants bring a banana to the designated area, receiving access to toppings and ice cream to create their sundaes. Encourage active participation and promote the event's message.
- Engage students in discussions about responsible partying and gather donations for the cause, highlighting the significance of contributing to a meaningful purpose.

Activity 4: Mocktail Recipes

Description: Share recipes for non-alcoholic mocktails as a fun and safe alternative. Students can make and serve 'mocktails' (fun drinks without alcohol) to students and staff.

Instructions:

- Select a date for the event and promote it during a designated week to encourage alcohol-free party options.
- Create a menu, assemble the necessary ingredients and equipment, and organize a preparation area. Consider recruiting volunteers to help with preparation and serving.
- Designate a space for the event, ensuring a well-organized serving area with labeled mocktails. Set up a booth for contributions to the chosen charity, providing information about the event's purpose:
 - Engage students in conversations about responsible choices and enjoying alcohol-free options.
- For sample recipes see *Mocktail Recipes* under the [Appendix H](#).

Appendix A

PA ANNOUNCEMENT SAMPLES

Question:

If driving high is like playing a video game, what happens when you make a wrong move?

Answer:

In the game world you can learn as much by making wrong moves as you can by making right ones. In the end you'll become a better player. When you take control of a real vehicle you can't go back to the save point if you make a wrong move. Driving high may feel like playing a video game, but it isn't.

Question:

Should I try and stop a friend from using drugs or making other harmful choices?

Answer:

If you try, you may not succeed...but at least you tried...and that's what friends are for. Sometimes we don't agree with the choices our friends have made. If you are truly concerned about a friend—listen to them and do your best to support them through tough times. The final choice belongs to each individual.

Question:

Do you know how to party smart?

Answer:

Life has a lot to offer and being smart at a party is about taking care of you and your friends. Friends don't let friends drive drunk. Saving the lives of your friends is no small favour. Take away the keys. Say "no" and be firm. They'll live to thank you for it later.

Voice One:

Hey, guess how many chemicals Marijuana has in it?

Voice Two:

Hardly any since marijuana is natural.

Voice One:

Wrong! Marijuana has 400 chemicals!

Voice Two:

Wow! I had no clue!

Adapted from the Drug Awareness Resource 2012.

Appendix B

NEWSLETTER SAMPLES

Sample 1: Bite size facts on edibles

Edible cannabis products (edibles) can look like typical food and drinks, but they contain cannabinoids and using them may come with risks. THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) is the main psychoactive compound which causes the “high” and psychological effects. Cannabidiol (CBD) does not produce a “high” or intoxication and is most often used for medicinal purposes.

Unlike the more immediate effects felt from smoking cannabis, edibles take longer (about a half hour to two hours) to start feeling the high. THC effects depend on many factors such as if the person ate other food, THC concentration in the edible and if it was used with other substances (e.g., alcohol). The delayed effect can result in a person consuming larger amounts than intended, increasing the risk of over-intoxication, which can include symptoms of anxiety/panic, nausea/vomiting, psychosis and paranoia. Edibles which look like candy or desserts can be unintentionally ingested by children. Edibles should always be properly labelled and safely stored out of sight and reach of children and pets.

Cannabis can impair a person’s ability to drive safely. Effects from edibles can last up to 12 hours after use. Residual effects can last up to 24 hours. Driving a vehicle while impaired is illegal and dangerous.

For more information visit: [7 Things You Need to Know about Edible Cannabis](#) and [Cannabis: What Educators Need to Know \(camh.ca\) and #HighAndLocked!](#)

Sample 2: How will your party end?

Parties can be a lot of fun; however, it is important to stay safe, especially if alcohol is involved. In 2019, 42% of students in grades 7-12 in Ontario reported drinking more than just a few sips of alcohol. A party can get out of hand if people drink too much, use drugs, or uninvited people show up.

The legal drinking age is 19 in Ontario, but the brain is still developing into the mid-twenties. Youth who drink are at greater risk of harm than adults due to several factors, including greater impulsivity and less emotional maturity, lower body mass on average, less experience doing complex tasks that are made more dangerous by alcohol. Alcohol and other drugs may interfere with brain development, especially those areas of the brain that control learning, memory, judgment, decision making, and impulse control. Delaying substance use is the best choice.

Make your party a success!

- Look out for your friends.
- Make sure food and non-alcoholic drinks are available.
- Encourage your friends in fun activities that does not involve drinking or using drugs.
- Know what is in your food and drink and don't leave your drink unattended.
- Drinking a lot of alcohol in a short amount of time can lead to alcohol poisoning. Watch for signs of alcohol poisoning including throwing up or passing out and get help.
- Get home safely, never drive impaired or let an impaired friend drive.

Resources

- [Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol](#)

Appendix C

PEER PRESSURE SCENARIOS AND STRATEGIES

Scenario 1:

A group of your peers vape cannabis behind the school every day. Jen, one of your best friends, hangs out there on a regular basis. You have been invited to come along many times but never have before. One day you decide to go and find Jen after school. You find Jen with a cannabis vape in their mouth. You are shocked even though you are aware they have tried vaping, this was the first time you have seen Jen vape. Next thing you know, Jen hands you one.

Scenario 2:

Recently, you have had some problems with some old friends. To cope, you decided to become friends with someone you met through other friends. This person is great! They are more mature than other students and much more like you than your old friends. One day, they ask you if you could bring some pills to school; because their parents keep searching their bag. You feel like if you say no, they won't want to hang out with you any more.

Scenario 3:

You're hanging out with some of your friends at a house. They're all drinking, and they want you to join. You're not into drinking, what do you do?

Scenario 4:

One of your classmates is telling you to ditch your last class and meet them outside school. When you say no, they push you and begin teasing you.

Scenario 5:

Before class one morning, you are standing around talking with a group of other students. Two of the students are arguing about which flavour of e-liquid they think tastes better. One of the students suggests that everyone in the group should try both flavours and give their opinion. Two cannabis vaping devices start being passed around the group, with each student taking a turn using them. When you receive one of the devices, you hesitate to use it but feel pressured because everyone is looking at you.

Scenario 6:

You are at a party with a few of your friends who are drinking. You notice that the friend who drove you is drinking as well. At the end of the party, you feel uncomfortable that your friend is getting in the driver's seat and thinks they can drive.

Scenario 7:

You are at a friend's house and you notice that one of your friends has had too much to drink. An hour later, you see them passed out on the floor. You approach them and they are unresponsive. You are unsure what to do.

Scenario 8:

You have just started going to a new school. On Friday, some of the students you've started hanging out with ask you if you want to hang out at a local park and they say they know where to get alcohol. You really want to fit in but don't want to drink.

Strategies for Using Refusal Skills

- Share a harmless joke. Sometimes humour is the best way to respond to a situation, as it can lighten a serious mood. It can also take the attention away from you and onto something else.
- Give a reason why it's a bad idea. Maybe vaping affects your asthma and you want to be able to run for the track team, or maybe you've learned about the negative health effects. Backing up your refusal with evidence gives it more power.
- Make an excuse of why you can't at this time. Maybe you have something else to do, you need to be somewhere at a specific time, you think your parents would be disappointed, or whatever you choose. Say it and stick to it.
- Just say no, plainly and firmly. In some situations, just saying no without any arguing or explaining is the best response. Just make sure your "no" is a strong and determined one.
- Suggest an alternative substance-free activity. There are many activities you can do that don't involve vaping or other substances. By thinking of something better to do, you're offering everyone an "out". You might be surprised by who will take you up on it.
- Ignore the suggestion. Pretend you didn't hear it and change the topic. Respectfully act like you don't think the idea is even worth discussing.
- Take a deep breath and repeat yourself if necessary. Sometimes you might have to say "no" more than once, on more than one occasion. You don't have to give in just because someone asks several times.
- Leave the situation. If you're feeling uncomfortable, you have the option of walking away. With you leading the way, other people might follow you as well.
- Shrug it off and say, "no thanks, I'm good". You can be polite and let people know you aren't interested at the same time.

Use "we" statements over "I" statements. Sometimes "we" feels stronger than "I". Try to find someone who can back you up when you say "no".

Adapted from the [*Physical and Health Education Canada's Refusal Skills*](#).

Appendix D

JEOPARDY GAME



JEOPARDY

Green Stuff	THC	The Blunt Truth	CannaFacts	Brownies & Gummies
<u>\$100</u>	<u>\$100</u>	<u>\$100</u>	<u>\$100</u>	<u>\$100</u>
<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>	<u>\$200</u>
<u>\$300</u>	<u>\$300</u>	<u>\$300</u>	<u>\$300</u>	<u>\$300</u>
<u>\$400</u>	<u>\$400</u>	<u>\$400</u>	<u>\$400</u>	<u>\$400</u>
<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$500</u>

Public Health
Substance Misuse Prevention

Please contact your Healthy Schools Nurse or email Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Team at substance@york.ca for access to the Jeopardy Game and instructions for running the activity.

Appendix E

THAT WORD IS TABOO!

Cannabis Weed Marijuana Green Pot Joint	Cannabis Overdose Paranoia Vomiting Greening Out Hallucinations Heavy Limbs	Opioids Pain Poppy Pills Dependence Heroin
Alcohol Drink Bars Wine Liquor Beer	Peer Pressure Friends Force Say No Try Influence	Prescription Doctor Medication Pills Pharmacy Side Effects
Intoxicated Alcohol Drunk Smashed Booze Judgement	Pills Dose Ecstasy Prescription Swallow Water	Energy Drinks Caffeine Jager bomb Red Bull Rock Star Awake
Impaired Driving Car Alcohol Blood High Illegal	Depression Sad Tired Down Empty Suicide	Caffeine Coffee Red Bull Energy Tim Hortons Starbucks
Tobacco Cigarette Chew Smoke Legal Nicotine	Schizophrenia Psychosis Hallucination Mental illness Treatment Paranoid	Steroids Muscle Body Builder Athlete Performance Testing

Overdose Drugs Pass Out Death Marilyn Monroe Excessive	Vape Nicotine Cannabis Pen Cloud E-Liquid	Second-Hand Smoke Chemicals Harmful Cigarette Asthma Lungs
Binge Drinking Heavy Poisoning Alcohol Shots Vomit	Underage Drinking Young Alcohol Illegal Party Impotent	Anxiety Stress Fear Breathing Heart Panic
Inhalants Toxic Gases Brain Damage Chemicals Sniff	Ecstasy E Pills Raves Party Drug	Alcohol Poisoning Drink Sick Vomit Pass Out Unconscious
Emergency Hospital 911 Ambulance Sick Injury	Shisha Bong Hookah Tobacco Smoke Flavour	Naloxone Intranasal Narcan Treatment Opioids Life-Saving

Adapted from the Drug Awareness Resource 2012.

Appendix F

MYTH BUSTER TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Fact	Myth
<p>Alcohol is one of the most commonly used drugs by youth: Fact</p> <p>After energy drinks, alcohol is the most commonly used drug in Ontario.</p> <p>Source: CAMH 2021 OSDUHS Report</p>	<p>Alcohol affects adults and youth in the same way: Myth</p> <p>The risk of adverse outcomes from alcohol consumption is greater for youth than for adults. This may be due to greater impulsivity and less emotional maturity among youth, lower body mass, less experience doing tasks that are made more dangerous by alcohol, such as driving, and faster drinking speeds.</p> <p>Source: CCSA Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: Final Report</p>
<p>Alcohol poisoning = alcohol overdose: Fact</p> <p>Drinking too much too fast can lead to alcohol poisoning (an overdose of alcohol) where your body begins to experience the following symptoms: vomiting, passing out, slow shallow breathing, mental confusion, seizures, cold and clammy skin, coma and maybe even death.</p> <p>Source: Health Canada: Health risks of alcohol</p>	<p>It's safe to drive high: Myth</p> <p>People may think it is okay to “smoke-up” and drive or ride in a car with someone who is high. The effects of cannabis include euphoria and relaxation, changes in perception, time distortion, deficits in attention span and memory, body tremors, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. Cannabis impairs the cognitive and motor abilities necessary to operate a motor vehicle and doubles the risk of crash involvement.</p> <p>Source: CCSA Cannabis Use Driving Report 2022</p>
<p>Delaying your first drink = Healthy brain development: Fact</p> <p>The teenage brain develops well into the mid-20s. Early alcohol use can cause:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with school performance; • Memory and learning difficulties; • Depression and anxiety; and • Poor judgment <p>Source: RethinkYourDrinking Strategies for Parents to Prevent or Delay Alcohol and Other Drug Use</p>	<p>Prescriptions opioids are safer than street drugs: Myth</p> <p>Many young people mistakenly believe that prescription opioids are safer than street drugs. They think that because they are prescribed that they are not as dangerous as cocaine and other street drugs. This is a myth. Opioids are powerful medications and misusing them can be extremely dangerous and have serious consequences, including addiction, overdose and even death.</p> <p>Source: DrugFreeKidsCanada Let's Talk Opioids</p>

<p>Energy drinks are not safe to consume: Fact</p> <p>Energy drinks usually have high amounts of caffeine, added sugars, additives, and legal stimulants. These drinks are often used to provide an extra boost in energy. However, healthcare providers report observing many conditions that may have been related to drinking energy drinks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehydration • Increased heart rate • Anxiety • Seizure • Agitation • Stroke • Insomnia <p>Source: CDC The Buzz on Energy Drinks</p>	<p>You can't overdose on cannabis: Myth</p> <p>Cannabis and cannabis products that contain high levels of THC can cause over-intoxication (cannabis overdose). Over-intoxication can take the form of anxiety and panic, nausea and vomiting, and symptoms of psychosis (paranoia).</p> <p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCSA Edible Cannabis Extracts and Topicals Report 2020 • CCSA 7 Things About Edible Cannabis 2019
<p>There is link between schizophrenia and cannabis use: Fact</p> <p>Regular cannabis use is linked with experiencing psychotic symptoms and developing schizophrenia, especially among those who have a personal or family history of psychotic disorders.</p> <p>Source: CCSA Cannabis Use and Mental Health Report 2019</p>	<p>When a person consumes edibles, they feel the effects right away: Myth</p> <p>With edible cannabis, the intoxicating effects or "high" do not kick in for about 30 minutes to two hours. This timing differs from smoking or vaping cannabis, where the effects start to be felt within a few seconds or minutes. This makes it difficult to predict when you will feel the full effects of edible cannabis. Because it can take longer to feel the full effects, consuming more edibles can cause over-intoxication.</p> <p>Source: CCSA 7 Things About Edible Cannabis 2019</p>

Appendix G

WOULD YOU RATHER? A GAME OF CHOICES

Storyline:

Start:

Page 1

You're starting at a new school and deciding what clubs you should join. You choose:

- To write for the school newspaper. (Go to page 2)
- To play for the school basketball team. (Go to page 3)
- Clubs aren't really your "thing", you'll find something else to do. (Go to page 4)

Page 2

Everything is going great but unfortunately the school newspaper doesn't have many writers. You find yourself struggling to complete this week's edition and to make matters worse, you are experiencing writer's block and don't know where to begin. You're stressed and the obvious solution is to:

- Turn to drugs like cannabis to help induce some "creative thinking". (Go to page 5)
- Take your new friend up on their offer to go for a smoke break, he says it helps him out when he's stressed. (go to page 6)
- Talk to the head of the school newspaper and ask for help. (go to page 7)

Page 3

The team really wants to win the championship this year but you've still got a fair amount of training to do and being a rookie, you don't want to let the team down. To help train, you:

- Decide to shoot some hoops on your break instead of watching TV. (Go to page 8)
- Work on your conditioning outside of practices. (Go to page 9)
- Figure you'll speed up the training process by taking anabolic steroids. (Go to page 10)

Page 4

A couple of weeks have passed since the sign-up for clubs and other extracurricular activities and you're finding yourself bored after school. One of your classmates who also didn't join any clubs asks if you want to hang out after school. They seem nice enough, so you go. When your new friend asks if you want to join them outside for a smoke, you:

- Tell them you'll pass, in fact you should be getting home. You should probably be studying for the big test on Friday anyways. (go to page 11)
- Want to look cool and don't want to offend your new friend so you tell yourself "just one won't hurt" and go with it. (go to page 12)
- You join your new friend outside but tell them you'll pass on the cigarette. (go to page 13)

Page 5

It took a while to finish your share of the newspaper, but you did get it finished on time. Although at first it made you feel very anxious about the situation, you think the cannabis helped you write somehow, plus it helped you mellow out and feel relaxed.

- Despite your experience experimenting with cannabis, you know it's not for you and don't do it again. (go to page 14)
- You want to try doing this again the next time you're feeling stressed. (Go to page 15)
- You decide you want to start using it on a regular basis. What's the worst that could happen? (Go to page 16)

Page 6

The cigarette helped relieve some temporary stress, but now this has become a habit. You're underage and finding yourself craving another smoke, but you don't have money for it and you don't know where to get a pack.

- You search for a part-time job to make some money, you'll figure the rest out from there. (Go to page 17)
- You approach a friend, family member, teacher, etc. and tell them you've made a mistake and need help quitting. (Go to page 18)
- You try and quit cold turkey, independently. (Go to page 19)

Page 7

You and the head of the school newspaper figure out a way to finish the paper as a team, and it ends up being a huge success this semester. To celebrate, the newspaper club decides to throw a B.Y.O.B. party at the end of the semester and you want to go but are a bit nervous since you're underage and have never drank alcohol before.

- You decide to be the designated driver for the night so you'll have an excuse not to drink. (Go to page 20)
- You go with one of your good friends who also doesn't drink. Power in numbers. (Go to page 21)
- You arrange for your older brother to drop you off and pick you up, that way if you somehow manage to have a drink you'll be responsible by not driving. (Go to page 22)

Page 8

You're playing against your team's rivals, there's 5 seconds left, you're standing outside the 3-point arc and all your players are blocked. You are debating on what to do. 3 seconds left, what the hay? You go for the 3-pointer. WHOOSH, game over. YOU SCORED THE WINNING BASKET! You may not be the best one on the team but all that extra practice paid off in this case!

Page 9

All that hard work you put into practice plus the extra conditioning you're working on in your spare time really pays off. Your coach says you've really improved and that you're going to be on the starting line up next game.

Page 10

With the boost from the steroids, you've caught up to a lot of the veterans and are able to keep up with their game. Your team makes the playoffs and the officials are organizing drug testing. You are kicked out of the game because they found traces of steroids in your urine.

Page 11

Your friend thinks it was kind of weird that you had to leave at that moment but doesn't really think too much of it. This happens on a couple other occasions and you're beginning to run out of ideas. Slowly your friendship fizzles and you grow apart.

Page 12

You really didn't enjoy the cigarette and it made you feel dizzy and nauseated but you "toughened up" and finished it off. You don't know many people and don't want to lose the few friends you have made.

Page 13

The second hand smoke you are exposed to smells awful, gives you a headache and makes you cough.

You have made a good choice by deciding once was enough. Cannabis is a gateway drug that can often lead to further substance misuse. After writing a few more columns for the newspaper you realize that it wasn't the drugs but it was your talent that helped you get through the paper!

The big unit test in math is coming up and you feel overwhelmed. There's so much to know! You decide to take a study break by getting high. When you return to studying, you're having more trouble focusing and are even more frustrated.

- When the big test day rolls around and you feel like there's no point writing it, you decide to skip class and avoid it altogether.
- You realize you've made a huge mistake and should have sought some extra help before the test, but you write it anyway. You'll do better next time.
- You confide in your teacher and ask for an extension. They honour your honesty and agree to help you out.

You find yourself hanging out in the streets where you can smoke without your parents knowing, the cops who patrol the area are keeping an eye on you and the people you now hang out with. One of them has already gotten in trouble with the law for vandalism. You aren't very comfortable with your new lifestyle and you realize you'd rather be doing something else. Still, none of the school clubs really appeal to you so you decide to create your own!

Since you don't have any work experience, finding a job was pretty tough but you managed to land a spot as cashier at the local grocery store. You start making a fair amount of money but now you don't want to spend it! Especially after you realize how much cigarettes actually cost. Your parents help you set up a savings account, the cost was enough to deter you from continuing to smoke, and you start to save up some money for post-secondary school.

You decide to go to your teacher first and they are disappointed in you but more so, they are glad that you came to talk to them. They direct you to the school nurse who helps you quit.

You have a couple of relapses because you're still hanging out with the same friends that introduced you to tobacco.

A lot of the people at the party are questioning why you don't have a drink in your hands but when you tell them you're D.D. for the night, they understand. One of your friends from the paper who isn't as responsible as you drinks enough to be pretty intoxicated but he doesn't have a way of getting home. He's thinking about walking, but you don't think this is safe so being DD you give him a ride home safely.

You and your friend stick together at the party, grab a cup of juice and are being social without the alcohol. Nobody gives you a hard time about staying sober, in fact nobody even notices. You both have a good time and then split a cab home.

You end up having quite a few drinks at the party as you accidentally lost track of all the drinks people were giving out. When your brother arrives to pick you up, you are rambling about how great all your new friends are. Concerned, your brother asks if you've been drinking but once you had stopped talking, your nauseated face gives it away anyway. The minute you get home you run right past your parents to the bathroom... grounded for sure.

Adapted from the Drug Awareness Resource 2012.

Appendix H

MOCKTAIL RECIPES

Fruity mocktail

- Handful of green grapes
- Handful of blueberries
- 1 tbsp grenadine
- 50-100 ml orange juice
- Sparkling water, to top up
- 1 bamboo skewers

Thread the grapes and blueberries onto a skewer. Pour grenadine then pour orange juice down the inside of the glass so it sits on top of the grenadine. Top up with sparkling water, and add the stirrer.

Little engineer

- 4 oz orange juice
- 4 oz pineapple juice
- ½ oz. grenadine

Pour into glass over ice.

Texas sunrise

- 8 oz. orange juice
- ¾ oz. grenadine

Add orange juice and grenadine to the glass. Let it settle on the bottom or stir, as desired.

Lemon Mocktail

- 2 oz. orange juice
- 6 oz. lemon juice

Mix all ingredients in a shaker and pour into glass over ice.

Shirley temple

- 3 oz. lemon-lime soda
- 3 oz. ginger ale
- 1 dash grenadine

Pour sodas in glass over ice. Add grenadine and stir.

After glow

- 4 oz. orange juice
- 4 oz. pineapple juice
- 1 oz. grenadine

Mix in glass.



Pineapple milkshake

- 1 tbsp. honey
- 4 oz. milk
- 3 pineapple chunks
- 3 oz. pineapple juice

Mix all ingredients in a shaker and pour into glass over ice.

Wave bender

- 5 oz. ginger ale
- 1 tsp. grenadine
- 1 oz. orange juice
- ½ oz. lemon juice

Mix all ingredients (except ginger ale) and pour into glass over ice. Top with ginger ale and stir.

Cardinal punch

- 2 oz. cranberry juice
- 2 oz. ginger ale
- ½ oz. lemon juice
- 1 oz. orange juice
- Lemon and orange slice (garnish)

Mix all ingredients in a shaker and pour into glass over ice. Top up with ginger ale.

Berry sweetheart

- 3 oz. cranberry juice
- 3 oz. apple juice
- 1 oz. honey

Fill the glass with ice cubes. Add juice and honey and mix.

Adapted from [Western Health NL's Non-Alcoholic Drink Recipes](#) and [BBC Good Food's Kid's Mocktail Recipes](#).

Appendix I

EMPOWERED YOUTH EMPOWER CHOICES: YOUTH PROGRAMS

Did you know...?

A majority, 59.9% of students have tried alcohol in their lifetime.

There is significant increase in cannabis use from grades 9/10 is 12.2% to grades 11/12 is 33.8% (past year, 2021).

Alcohol (and other drug use) can negatively affect youth brain development and well-being. Students need to be informed of the harms related to alcohol and other drugs.

Presentations

Our program offers engaging presentations to students, school staff and parents on substance use prevention related to Alcohol, Cannabis and Opioids.

Peer-led programs, targeting students in Grades 8-12

Our peer-led programs cover topics such as strategies to deal with peer pressure, stress, harms related to using alcohol and drugs and making safer choices. These messages can be helpful to students during key transition periods: grade 8 to high school, and from high school to post-secondary education.

Life after Grade 8 - Feeder school initiative:

Public Health Nurses train Grade 11 or 12 student leaders to present to Grade 8 students.

Transition to high school–Grade 9 initiative:

Public Health Nurses train Grade 11 or 12 student leaders to present to Grade 9 students.

How will your party end? Safer partying initiative:

Public Health Nurses train Prom, ESP or OSAID student leaders to present or plan initiatives for their graduating class.

For more information, please contact your Healthy Schools Nurse or email Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Team at substance@york.ca.

Appendix J

RESOURCE LIST

For teachers and parents

CAMH (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) [Ontario Student Drug Use and Mental Health Survey \(OSDUHS\) | CAMH](#)

Keep informed about the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey and share statistics, trends and policies with student council, parents, teachers, and your community

CAMH Primary Education Resources for Teachers <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/guides-and-publications/primary-education-resources-for-teachers>

CAMH Talking About and Spotting Substance Abuse <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/guides-and-publications/talking-about-and-spotting-substance-abuse>

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction provides [additional information and resources](#) on:

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Adolescent and the developing brain
- Impaired driving
- Prescription drug

CCSA 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

Watch each module while using the [Educator's Guide](#) as a supporting resource.

Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy: Sensible Cannabis Education: A Toolkit for Educating Youth: created for educators, as well as parents, this [resource](#) aims to support adults in having informed and non-judgmental conversations with young people about cannabis.

Centre for Addictions Research of BC: Helping schools resources. iMINDS lesson plans [Drug Literacy Curriculum Big Ideas. Helping Schools](#)

OPHEA (Ontario Physical and Health Education Association) [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.

School Mental Health Ontario <https://smho-smso.ca/>

York Region Public Health:

Alcohol and Drugs: A Quick Guide: This is a one pager resource from York Region Public Health that helps teachers or parents identify signs, side effects and behaviors of various drugs.

Alcohol & Drugs. Be Informed. Peer-led Youth Programs consists of three peer-led modules, targeting students in grade 8-12. The program covers topics such as strategies to deal with peer pressure, stress (mental health), harms related to using alcohol and drugs and making safer choices. These messages can be helpful to students during their key transition periods, Grade 8 to high school and from high school to post-secondary education. **All modules are curriculum matched.**

Mini Booklets, posters and postcard resources to assist educators and parents in facilitating discussion around delaying substance use and the harms/risks associated with alcohol and drug use with youth:

- Where's the party
- Tips for safer partying
- A matter of facts
- Think about it: Youth brain development
- Weed out the myths
- Drug and alcohol continuum: Where do you see yourself?

Elementary School Packages: Curriculum-matched packages (Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6, Grades 7-8) that provide information, activities and booster sessions on various substance use topics

Secondary School Support:

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

Engage a group of students to help plan and implement substance use topics and health promotion activities in the school

Train and support students to lead displays (interactive wheel, and plinko) and prevention activities on alcohol and drugs.



For students

Cannabis and Mental Health: The Cannabis and Mental Health Course is an online course created by youth and made for youth. A free 90-minute certificate course for youth, created by youth. [Cannabis and Mental Health](#)

Jack.org: Jack Talks are mental health presentations delivered by young people to young people. [Jack.org](#)

Kids Help Phone (24 hours) www.kidshelpphone.ca

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.

YMCA Youth Programs:

- Youth Cannabis Awareness Program: YCAP is [a free cannabis education and prevention initiative](#) that takes a harm reduction approach for ages 12-24.
- Youth Opioids Awareness Program: YOAP aims to increase awareness about opioids in youth ages 15–24 via harm reduction in an enjoyable way through workshops, and activities. [The program](#) aligns with the health and physical education curriculum for grades 9 to 12 in Ontario.
- Youth Gambling Awareness Program: YGAP offering [educational prevention programs](#) to youth and adults involved in young people's lives on gambling awareness including potential risks, making informed decisions and healthy and active living.

Presentation/speakers

Accident Awareness: [Accident Awareness](#)

Addiction Services Central Ontario: [Booking a Presentation - ASCO](#)

Mixed Company: www.mixedcompanytheatre.com

Mothers Against Drunk Driving: [School Presentations – in person and online – MADD Canada](#)

P.A.R.T.Y Program Southlake Hospital: partyprogram.com/

Springboard: Weed Out the Risks: [Weed out the Risk - Springboard Services](#)

YouthSpeak: [Youth Programs: Interactive Assemblies & Workshops - YouthSpeak](#)