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Association of Ontario

L'Association des
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June 4th, 2019
12 – 1:30 p.m. (EDT)

Supporting Youth in Making Informed Decisions About Cannabis

Kiran Somjee, Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

Kira London-Nadeau, Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Jennifer Burgess, Toronto Public Health

Welcome! The webinar will begin shortly! To hear audio for this event, please turn up your computer speakers. Please note this event will be recorded.

Your hosts



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*Support for this event is funded by Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.

Presenters

Kiran Somjee

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and
Addiction

Kira London-Nadeau

Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Jennifer Burgess

Toronto Public Health



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Talking Pot with Youth in Ontario

Registered Nurses of Ontario

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Supporting Youth in Making Informed Decisions about Cannabis – Webinar

June 4, 2019
#TalkingPot



Cannabis: Setting the Context

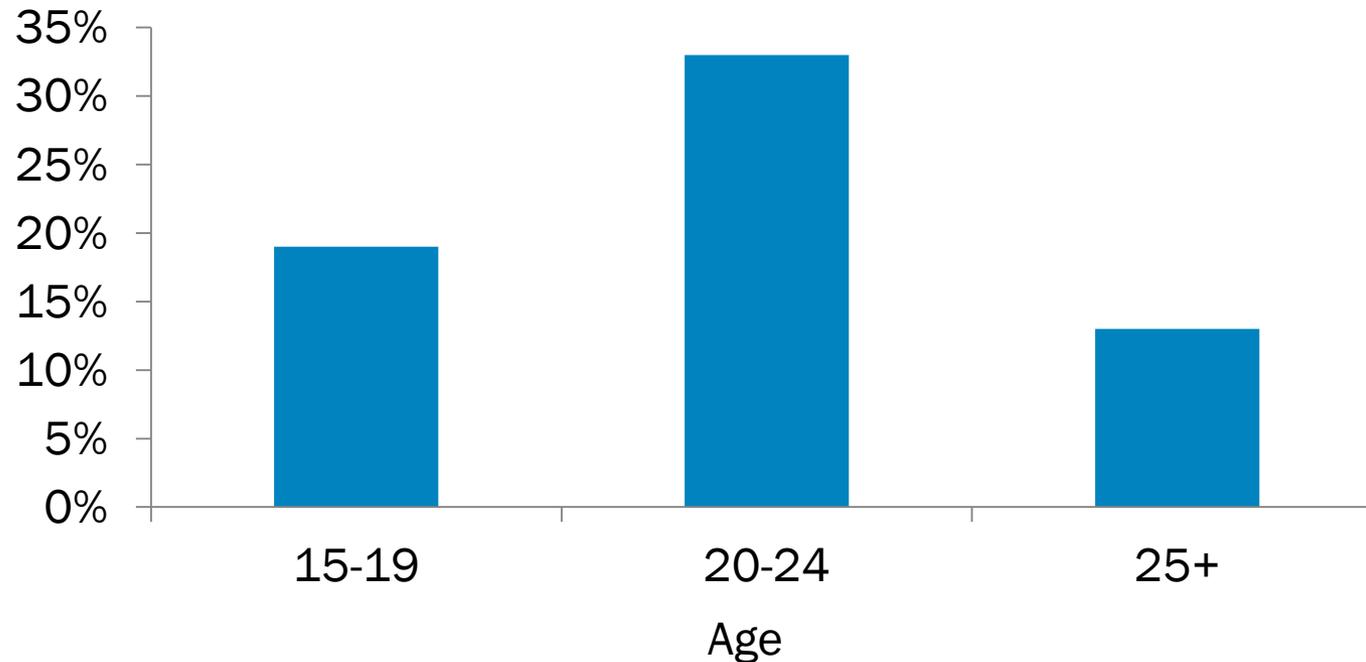
Cannabis Overview

- Legalized in October 2018, recreational cannabis is now legal and regulated
- Misinformation about cannabis continues to exist
- Need for increased public education and awareness of the effects of cannabis (both risks and benefits)



Who Uses Cannabis in Canada?

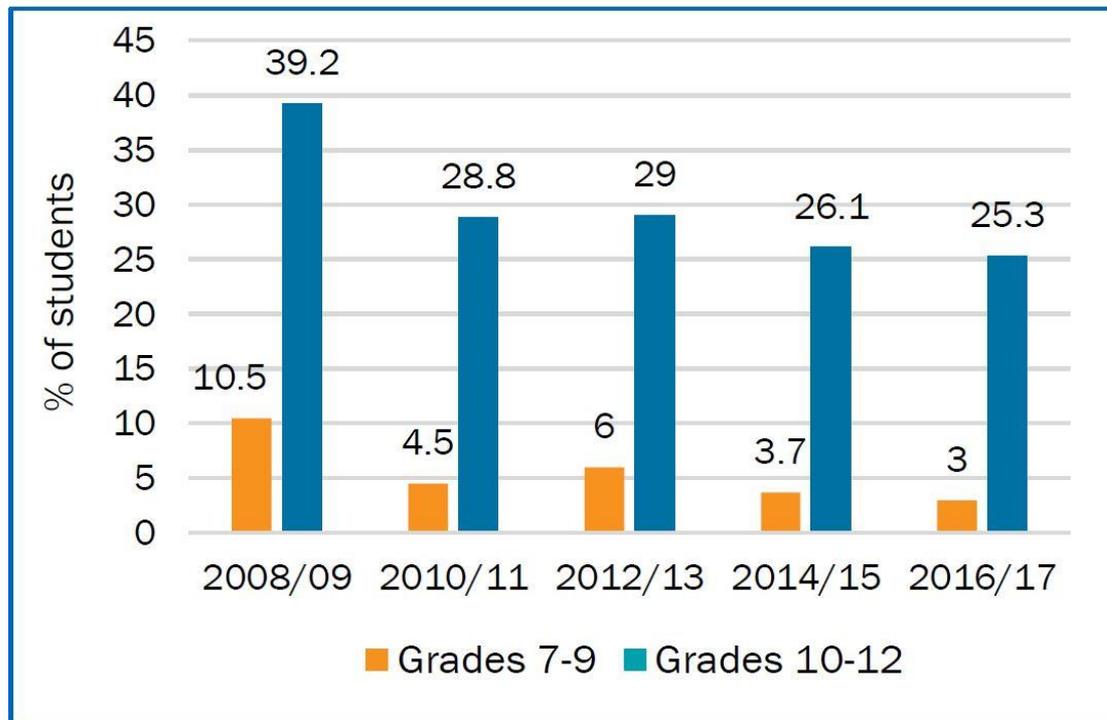
Past-Year Cannabis Use in Canada



Source: Statistics Canada. (2018). *Canadian Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey: Summary of Results from 2017*.

Youth Cannabis Use – Ontario

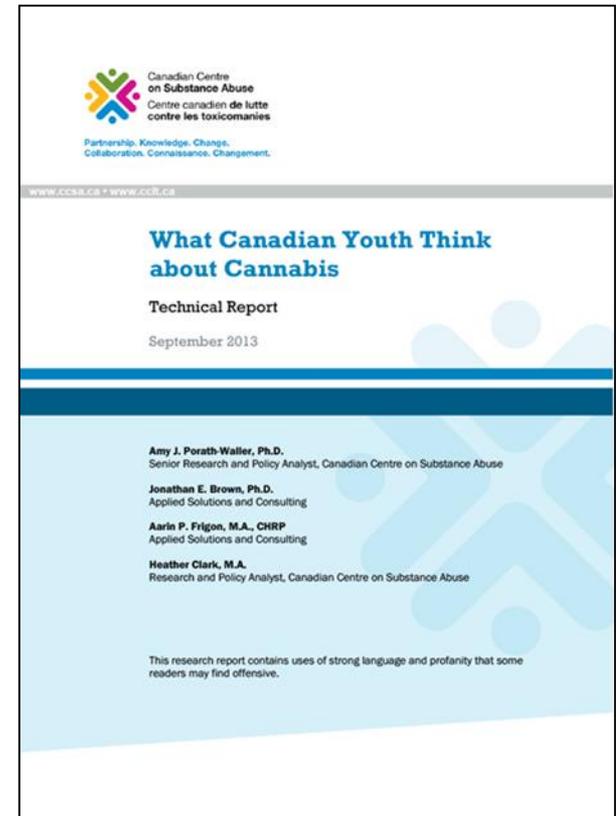
Past-12-month cannabis use by grade
(2008–2009 to 2016–2017)



Source: Statistics Canada. (2018). *Summary of Results for the Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2016-17*.

Why Youth Use Cannabis

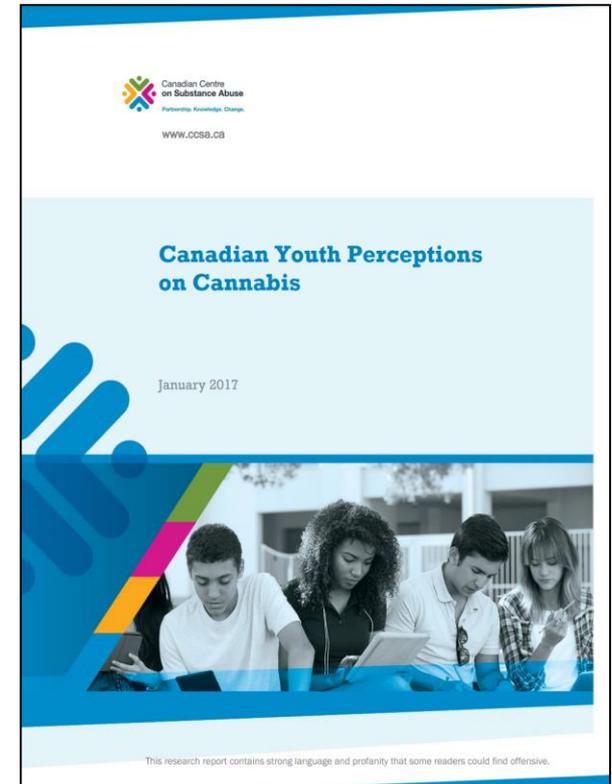
- To connect with peers and family
- Boredom
- Availability and acceptability
- “Healthier than other substances”
- Self-medication
 - Youth research and self-diagnose
 - Increase appetite, help sleep, reduce stress and worry



Source: Porath-Waller, A., Brown, J.K., Frigon, A.P., & Clark, H. (2013). *What Canadian Youth Think about Cannabis*. Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

Youth Perceptions

- Youth lack clarity about the effects of cannabis on the body and brain
 - Cannabis and driving
 - Cannabis and brain development
 - Cannabis and addiction
 - Cannabis and legal status
- Youth are confused about the effects of cannabis, especially given all the information available to them
- Youth want to be involved in prevention efforts



Source: McKiernan, A., & Fleming, K. (2017). *Canadian Youth Perceptions on Cannabis*. Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. (Cited as *Canadian Youth Perceptions on Cannabis*.)



Identifying a Need

Historical Approaches



Source: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library [Public domain], Commons Wikimedia, [Mrs. Reagan speaking at a "Just Say No" Rally in Los Angeles - NARA - 198584](#)

What We Heard

- Scare tactic approaches that only focus on harms and risks are not effective
- Include harm-reduction as opposed to “just say no” messaging
- Start prevention efforts earlier with consistent follow up
- Have a discussion with young people asking about what they think and how they feel



Canadian Youth Perceptions on Cannabis.

Identifying a Need

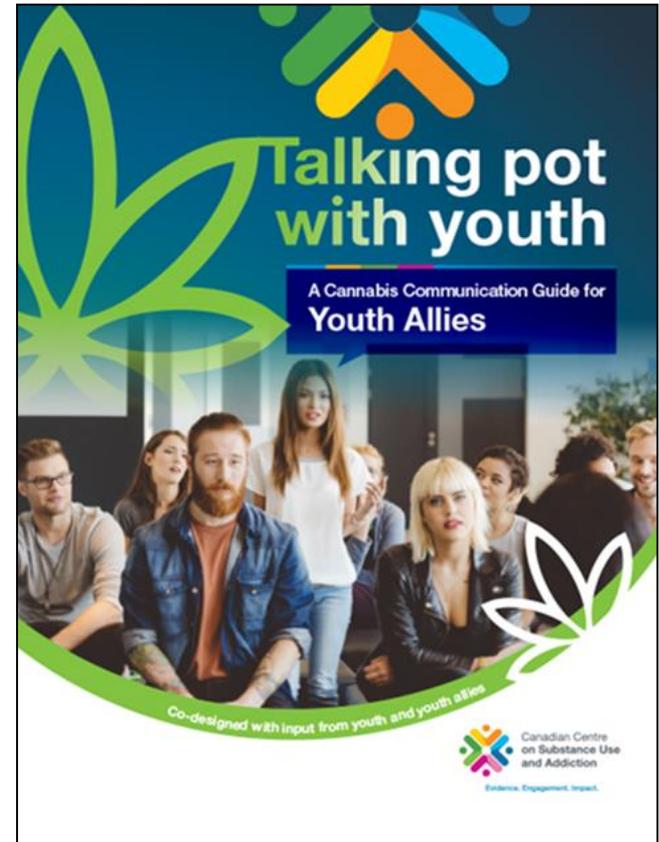


- Youth misperceptions continue to exist
- Youth are doing their own research about cannabis
- Conflicting research about the harms and benefits are leaving youth confused
- Youth did not report having open and honest conversations with family and youth allies
- Youth want to hear both sides of the story
- Youth reported that they want to be involved in prevention efforts
- Youth allies reported effective tools are available, but they lack messages tailored for youth
- Resources do not provide allies with guidance or skills necessary to have these conversations

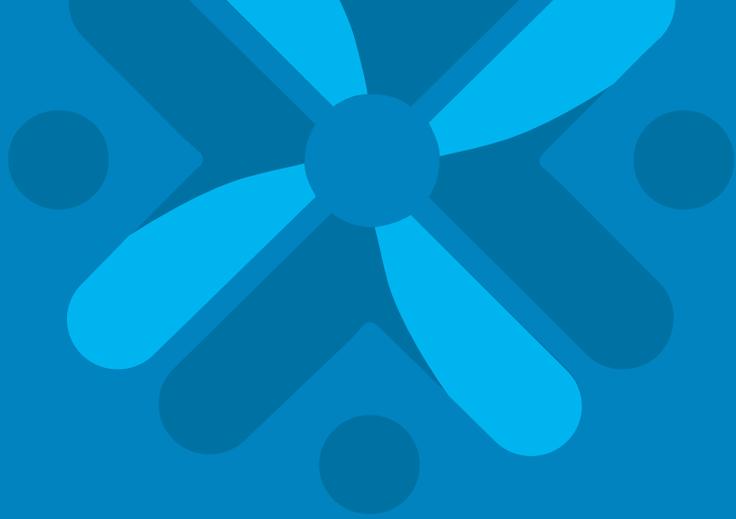
Canadian Youth Perceptions on Cannabis.

Addressing a Need

- Supports those interacting with youth to have successful conversations
- Supports young people's informed decision making
- Guides meaningful discussion around cannabis
- Provides support for non-biased, non-judgmental and open conversations
- Is a **process-based harm reduction tool**



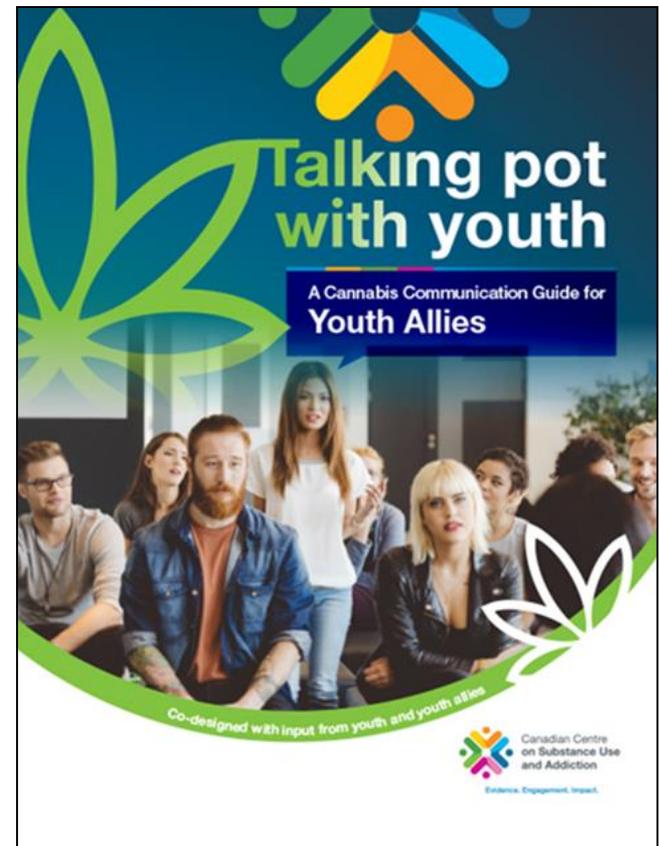
Source: Fleming, K., & McKiernan, A. (2018). *Talking Pot with Youth: A Cannabis Communication Guide for Youth Allies*. Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. (Cited as *Talking Pot*.)



Development of the Guide

Development

- Used co-design principles
- Piloted through tiered workshops with youth, youth allies and practitioners
- Peer reviewed
- Benefited from the advice of Health Canada



Talking Pot.



Application

Overview



What this guide will do for you:

- Help you understand the youth perspective
- Help you identify what makes an effective youth ally
- Provide guidelines for self-assessment
- Provide values and principles for supportive communication, including how to create safe spaces
- Lead you through the spectrum of use
- Support you in having judgment free conversations with young people about cannabis

What this guide will not do:

- Replace professional screening or treatment of cannabis use disorder

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Who Should Use the Guide?

- Are you a youth ally?
- Skills and attributes of a youth ally
 - Approachable
 - Trustworthy
 - Non-judgmental
 - Empathetic
 - Understanding
 - Experienced
 - Good listener
 - Respectful
 - Authentic
 - Accepting
 - Patient
- Know your role



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Application Exercises Overview



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Exercise 1: Self-Assessment

- Reflection
- Bringing reflections into application
- Insights into how reflections may influence discussions with youth
- Being mindful



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Exercise 2: Prepare for the Conversation

- Getting in the right frame of mind
 - Releasing judgment
 - Identifying your purpose
- Establishing values for effective communication
- Creating a safe space
 - Language, tone, approach
 - Being present and mindful
 - Listening
 - Honesty
 - Providing supportive responses
 - Non-verbal communication



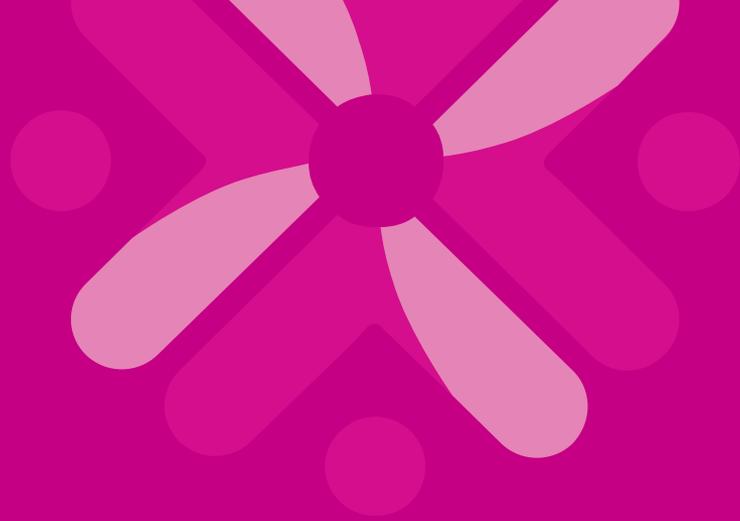
Talking Pot.

Exercise 3: Understand the Spectrum

- When the conversation gets tough
- Understanding the spectrum of use
- Key messages



Talking Pot.



Dissemination

Impact – Reach



35,354

Downloads and copies printed of
guide and promotional products

5,446,614

People reached

Impact – Engagement / Application

20,775

People engaged on social
media

107

media pick-ups and
organization copyright
requests

- The guide is being distributed to clients in 8 different provinces and territories
- Organizations include:
 - National/provincial nursing associations
 - Regional health services
 - Regional public health departments
 - Regional correctional services & justice departments
 - Regional non-profit organizations
 - Hospitals and local medical centres
 - Schools and educational centres
 - Local libraries
 - Indigenous organizations
 - Industry

Acknowledgements



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Katie Fleming, MA and Anna McKiernan, MA
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- Knowledge Broker: Chealsea De Moor, MA
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 - Production Editor: John Thurston, PhD
 - Graphic Designer: Chris Groult
 - Performance Measurement Analyst: Karolina Kaminska
- Stronger because of the expertise and input of youth and youth allies
- Benefited from the advice and input of Health Canada and peer reviewers
- Strengthened reach and impact through partnerships and collaborations

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Fleming, K., & McKiernan, A. (2018) [Talking Pot with Youth: A Cannabis Communication Guide for Youth Allies](#). Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

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Statistics Canada. (2018). [Summary of Results for the Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2016-17](#).

CCSA's Issues of Substance 2019



Evidence and Perspectives, Compassion and Action.

- CCSA's Issues of Substance is Canada's premier conference for the substance use and addiction field
- The call for abstracts closes January 28, 2019
- Registration opens March 2019
- #CCSAConference

Contact Information



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Canada

Supporting Youth in Making Informed Decisions About Cannabis

Canadian Students for
Sensible Drug Policy



June 4th 2019

<https://cssdp.org/>

Presenter: Kira
London-Nadeau,
Chair

Organizational Name: Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Presenter: Kira London-Nadeau

Relationships with commercial interests:

- Grants/Research Support: Financial Support (an **unrestricted, arms-length** grant) received from Canopy Growth Corporation for the creation and dissemination of the Cannabis Education Toolkit
- Speakers Bureau/Honoraria: None
- Consulting Fees: None
- Other: None

Mitigating Factors: Canopy had no say in the creation, review process, and dissemination of the Cannabis Education Toolkit. The Toolkit was written by members of CSSDP who specialize in drug education for youth, and was submitted to a thorough and extensive review process, with 9 external reviewers in addition to a youth content review team.

Who we are



Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy is a grassroots network comprised of youth and students who are concerned about the negative impact our drug policies have on individuals and communities.



Heather Heather poses for a photo in Ottawa Wednesday April 18, 2018. Heather is on the board of Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy.

Universities wrestle with pot rules

Surrey officials urged to build nest before eagles return

BY JACOB GIP

STUDENT LEADERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (UBC) AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN (USask) ARE FIGHTING TO GET POT INTO CLASSROOMS AND ON CAMPUS. THE STUDENTS SAY THAT POT IS A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO TREAT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND THAT IT SHOULD BE LEGALIZED. THE STUDENTS ARE ALSO FIGHTING TO GET POT INTO CLASSROOMS AND ON CAMPUS. THE STUDENTS SAY THAT POT IS A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO TREAT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND THAT IT SHOULD BE LEGALIZED.



Despite the reservations from their administration, the UBCO chapter has successfully advocated for making naloxone more accessible to the university population through peer-to-peer workshops, and has organized drug-testing seminars, where attendees are taught how to test small samples of a given drug for impurities using a chemical reagent.



Michelle Thiesen. Photo courtesy of UBC.

What we do

Active chapters:

- UBC Vancouver
- UBC Okanagan
- UofT
- SFU
- Humber
- Algonquin
- Concordia
- McGill
- Durham
- Queens
- Ryerson
- U of Alberta
- Durham
- McMaster
- Dalhousie

Increased Risk of Accidents

Cannabis	+22-36%
Prescription Sedatives	+86%
Alcohol	+169%
Texting/ Distracted Driving	+2200%

0:07 | 711 views | **not endorse**

WEAR YOUR HELMET.
Psychedelic Harm Reduction for a Safe Bicycle day!

CANADIAN STUDENTS FOR SENSIBLE DRUG POLICY

KNOW YOUR SOURCE. TEST YOUR SUPPLY.
Test your supply with reagent kits. If it's bitter, quit her.

MINDSET, AND SETTING.
Headspace dictates trip quality. Be mentally prepared to trip. Choose a safe space to trip.

HAVE A HAPPINESS STRATEGY.
Stay hydrated. Have a playlist ready. Have a trip sitter for support.

HAVE A PLAN TO GET HOME.
Sometime a change of scenery can be refreshing, just make sure you have a plan to get there!

CSSDP CANADIAN STUDENTS FOR SENSIBLE DRUG POLICY

CANNABIS HARM REDUCTION

- START LOW, GO SLOW**
Begin with a low dose and wait for the full effects before consuming more. Keep in mind that edibles can take up to 90 minutes for effects to be felt.
- CONSIDER APPROPRIATE TIME AND PLACE**
The effects of cannabis (e.g. anxiety, paranoia) can vary according to your environment.
- CHOOSE LESS RISKY CANNABIS PRODUCTS**
Choosing a lower potency THC or high CBD strain instead of THC concentrates (e.g. shatters) can help reduce harm.
- REDUCE THE AMOUNT AND FREQUENCY**
Keep frequency down to the occasional session, evening or weekend to reduce risk of unhealthy usage patterns and prevent a lower tolerance.
- CHOOSE SAFER METHODS OF CONSUMPTION**
Safer methods include vaporizers or food products which mitigate some of the risks of smoking.
- AVOID HARMFUL SMOKING PRACTICES**
If you choose to smoke, avoid deep inhalation or holding in the smoke for as long as possible. Dry brushing (away) out of aluminum pans and other materials can be harmful.
- AVOID SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS (K2, SPICE)**
Synthetic products are not regulated and can cause severe side effects. Using a regulated store product is safer and creates a more predictable high.
- AVOID MIXING WITH ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO**
Coming out to the work. Cannabis smoking can affect judgement instead of alcohol when using cannabis to prevent accidents and smoking.
- CONSIDER YOUR RISK PROFILE AND FAMILY HISTORY**
Risk factors to consider before using cannabis include family history of mental illness or substance use disorder. Avoid using cannabis if you're pregnant.
- ARRANGE ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION**
Plan ahead to have a designated driver, take a bus, or grab a cab.



Harm Reduction Guidelines



1. Start low and go slow
 - Start with 1 or 2 puffs of a joint or a vape, or 2.5 mg of an edible
2. Consider appropriate time and place
 - Try not to let your use interfere with other goals like school, work, and extracurriculars
3. Choose less risky cannabis products
 - Try to avoid high THC/low CBD products (especially extracts)
4. Choose safer methods of cannabis consumption
 - Vaping, water bongs, and edibles pose fewer health risks (but remember that edibles take longer to kick in)
5. Utilize safer smoking practices
 - Avoid deep inhalation or holding the smoke in

Harm Reduction Guidelines



6. Reduce the amount of cannabis used, and how frequently it is used
 - Consider harm reduction for both frequency and quantity
7. Avoid synthetic cannabis altogether
 - Synthetic cannabinoids (spice, K2) have a more pronounced risk profile than natural cannabis
8. Avoid mixing cannabis with tobacco and alcohol
 - Interactions and mutual enhancement can lead to uncomfortable experiences
9. Don't drive high - have a plan for transportation before using cannabis
10. Consider your risk profile and avoid using cannabis if pregnant
 - Other factors to consider include other medication use, age, mental health history, mood, setting, etc.

What we're hearing on the ground



Thoughts

- *It's nice to finally hear about harm reduction – abstinence messaging never spoke to me*
 - Recurring, heard with VoxCann round table, community workshops, informal discussions with youth
- *I don't trust the government or my school to teach me about drugs*
 - Recurring, seen in social media comments, workshops and informal discussions
- *It's weird that it's so much harder to find information about weed than alcohol*
 - Discussed at a CSSDP Concordia event

What we're hearing on the ground



Questions

- *What are the effects of mixing cannabis and other drugs, especially alcohol?*
 - CSSDP Concordia event, community workshops
- *What am I allowed and not allowed to do with weed?*
 - VoxCann round table
- *Why is the government legalizing weed just to tell us how many risks we're taking by using?*
 - Community workshops, social media comments

What we're hearing on the ground



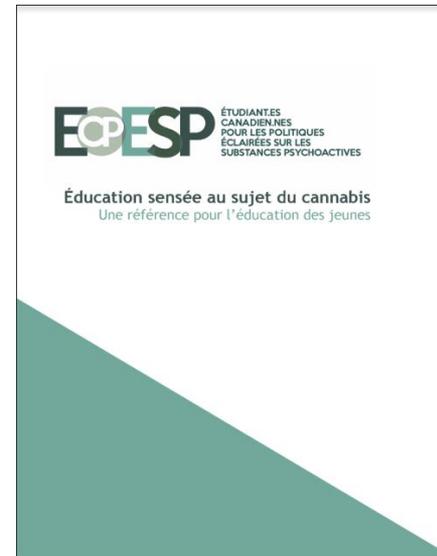
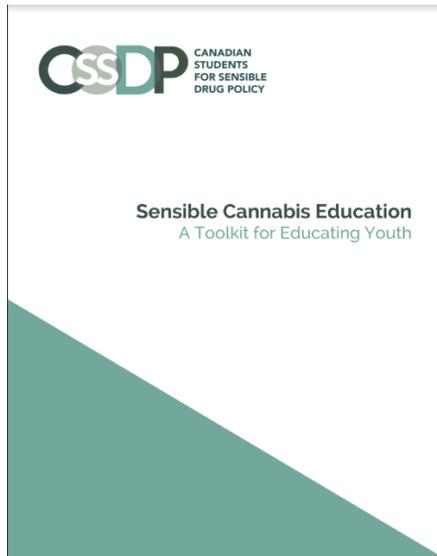
Concerns

- *My school nurse has been judgmental of my substance use – I'm not going back there for sure*
 - Heard at Concordia and McGill
- *I'd like to go to therapy, but it's too expensive and the waitlists are too long. Weed is there right away, and it's cheap.*
 - CSSDP Concordia, informal conversations
- *I don't know if I can still be successful at school if I smoke weed.*
 - VoxCann workshop

What can we do moving forward?

- **Learn more about cannabis and other drugs to be able to have honest, non-judgmental conversations**
 - The Cannabis Education Toolkit is a great place to start
- **Learn the culture, the lingo and the different motives for consumption**
 - Follow us on social media, listen to first-person accounts and experiences, ask youth how they see cannabis
- **Note the limitations of education campaigns**
 - Education campaigns tend to target improving knowledge, not behavior
 - Youth will come to trusted sources for information, not people with a certain title – recognize the importance of building these relationships before counseling
- **Note the diversity of evidence, and that support can be found for opposing positions on the effects of cannabis**

The Cannabis Education Toolkit



Even though our site broke down, we've made sure the Toolkit stays available, so you can still consult the English and French versions on our temporary landing page: <https://cssdp.org/>



Thank you and don't hesitate to get in touch:

Kira London-Nadeau

Kira@cssdp.org // contact@cssdp.org

Website: <https://cssdp.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CSSDP/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CSSDP>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cssdp/?hl=en>



Helping Youth Make Informed Decisions About Cannabis:

Promoting School Staff Cannabis Literacy

Jennifer Burgess

Health Promotion Specialist

Toronto Public Health

“To promote the public adoption of behaviours that prevent substance misuse & increase public awareness of the prevention of substance misuse through health promotion & education initiatives”

(MOHLTC, 2018)

Objectives

- *Outline a strategy targeting school staff to promote open and non-judgemental conversations with youth regarding cannabis*
- *Explore examples of school board initiatives to promote cannabis literacy amongst school staff*



Healthy Schools &
Substance Misuse
Prevention Program

Healthy Schools Approach

**Youth Engagement
&
Healthy
Schools**

**Increasing Protective
Factors
&
Reducing
Risk
Factors**

**Increased
Resilience**

**Substance Use
Prevention
&
Delayed Early Initiation**



Concerned about:

- Increased access/use
- Problematic use
- Use on school property
- Potential for negative consequences for youth who consume
- Normalizing use

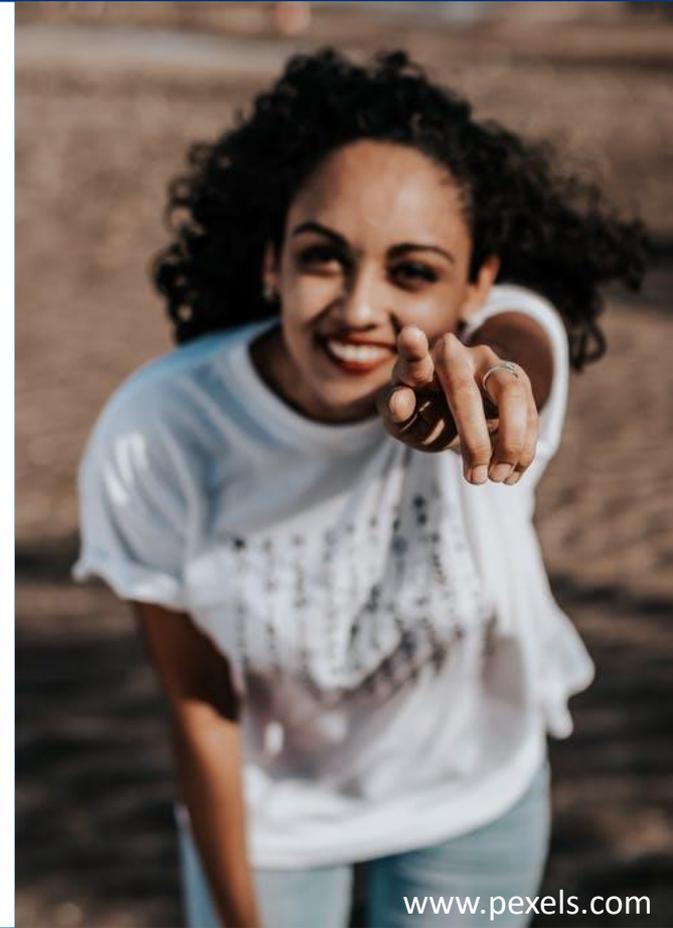
Wanted more:

- Information for staff
- Support & information from their PHN
- Clear direction from school boards in the Fall



“When young people have at least one caring adult in their lives, they demonstrate fewer risk associated behaviours ”

(Pan Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2018)



School Boards

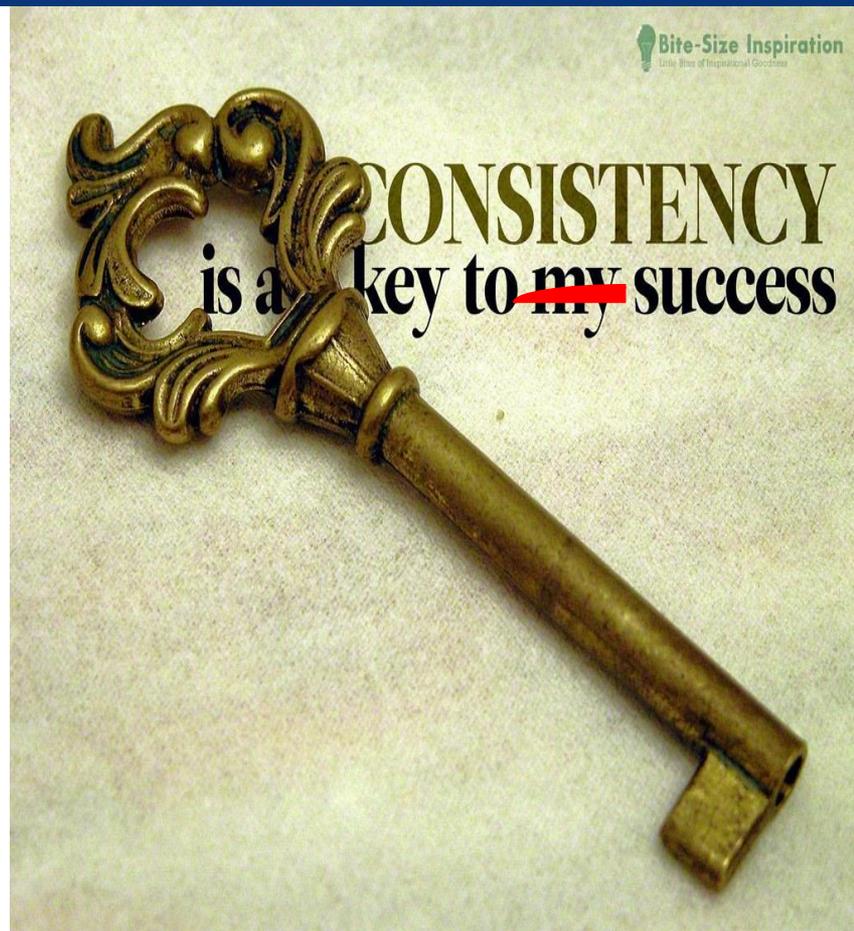
- School staff professional development workshops
- Support lesson plan development
- Secondary school Mental Health champions

Schools

- Cannabis Literacy workshops for school staff
- Look for ways to reach other school staff - not just the Health & Phys Ed teachers

Consistent Messages

- Changes in legislation
- Health impacts/youth brain development
- Patterns & frequency of use
- Beliefs and misperceptions
- Harm reduction messages
- Substance misuse prevention strategies by grades

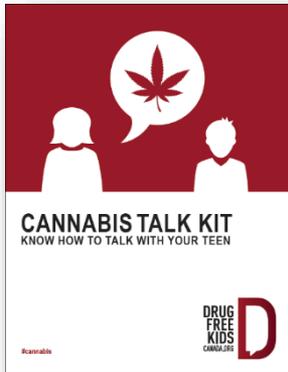


**Creates and continues
conversations
based on facts**

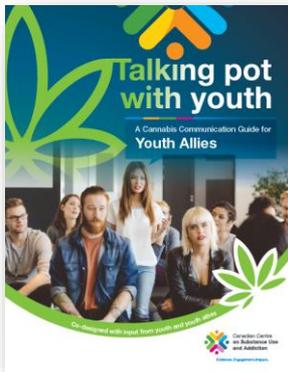


**Open and non-
judgemental
discussions**

Key Messages: What can we do?



www.drugfreekidscanada.org



www.ccsa.ca

- Meaningful dialogue
- Start early and engage all youth
- Provide accurate non-judgemental information
- Reflect on assumptions
- Incorporate links to mental health and well-being and supports for students
- Increase cannabis literacy

TDSB Cannabis Misuse Prevention

Overview

With the legalization of non-medical cannabis, it is imperative that we provide accurate, non-judgemental information to youth, parents/caregivers, and other adult allies. Research suggests that youth who have supportive parents, teachers and other adults in their lives are less likely to misuse cannabis.

The lessons on this page have been created by TDSB teachers to align with the Health and Physical Education curriculum. In addition to providing information about cannabis, these lessons are designed to promote wellness and mental health, build resiliency, and develop 21st century learning and coping skills.

While there is a lot of new information surfacing about cannabis, there are also a lot of unknowns. It is important to work together with experts to provide the most accurate information as the cannabis landscape continues to change over the next few years. A list of resources has been provided and can be found [here](#).

<https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/tdsb-cannabis-misuse-preventio/home>

Goals:

- Promote substance misuse prevention and coping strategies among youth
- Provide accurate information to school staff promoting cannabis literacy
- Share relevant resources, tools, and curriculum supports
- Build capacity and increase comfort for school staff to create and continue open and non-judgmental conversations with youth
- Clarify new policies and laws in Ontario and Canada

TDSB Cannabis Lesson Plans Gr. 6-12

The focus of the grade 9 lessons is decision making and harm reduction. The overall goal is to encourage students to delay use until their brain is fully developed (25 years) and to avoid using if they have been diagnosed with or have a family history of mental illness. As this is the only course that is mandatory in high school, the important link between cannabis and psychosis is discussed in detail. Also included are safe cannabis practices, case studies with refusal techniques, and information on how to recognize warning signs of a problem and where to go for help. Finally, the lessons include wellness practices and coping strategies that encourage students to find safe alternatives to substance use when dealing with the stress and anxiety of high school life. Teachers are encouraged to use all three lessons concurrently, however each lesson can be taught independently as well.

Lesson 1 - Cannabis 101 - What is it and how is it used?

Lesson 2 - Safer Practices and Decision Making

Lesson 3 - Fitting In and Summative Evaluation



Discussion Questions

Are the potential harms of a substance increased when it is obtained illegally?

Why do you think the controls around cannabis were previously so strict?

How does this compare to the prohibition of alcohol in the 1920's?

Why are there differences between the Federal and Provincial Bills?



Continued support

Contact Info

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Email: PublicHealth@toronto.ca

Visit: www.toronto.ca/health

Boak, A., Hamilton, H. A., Adalf, E.M., & Mann, R. E. (2017) Drug use among Ontario students, 1977-2017: Detailed findings from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS (CAMH Research Document Series No.46). Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

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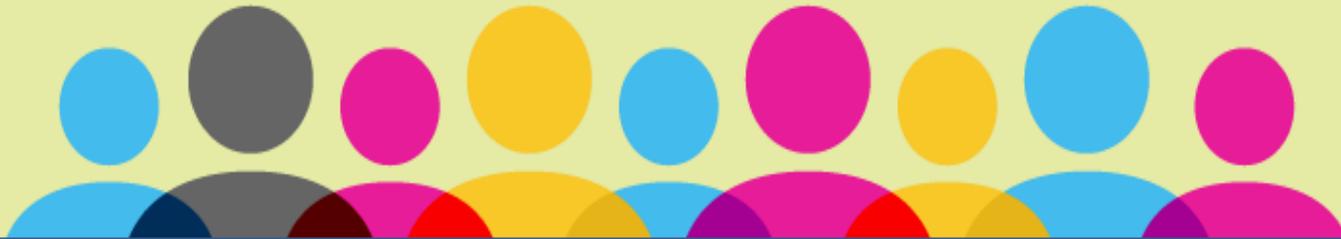
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L'Association des
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To learn about upcoming events visit:

- **EENet**
<http://eenet.ca/>
- **RNAO Mental Health & Addiction Initiative**
<http://rnao.ca/bpg/initiatives/mhai>



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L'Association des
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autorisés de l'Ontario



The logo for CAMH (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health), consisting of the lowercase letters "camh" in a bold, purple, sans-serif font.