



Substance Use Awareness

In-Service Training

Course Description

This 3-hour facilitated module will educate caregivers on how to recognize, prevent or reduce substance use, and support children and youth who use substances. This course will equip the caregiver to discuss substance use with children and youth and give them tools to prevent harm if someone in their care is using substances. If caregivers know why young people may try or use substances, this may help them have conversations about substance use, the risks and, if the youth choose to use, to reduce the possibility of harm

Learning Objectives

At the end of this three-hour workshop you will be able to:

- Recognize why young people may try or use substances.
- Use effective conversation techniques to talk about substance use.
- Manage substance use risks by applying practices and strategies to reduce harm.
- Support children/youth who may be at risk of overusing or developing an addiction.
- Connect with and explore resources to support children/youth safety

Key Messages

- Children and youth use substances for a variety and combination of reasons but an important reason is to cope with trauma and grief.
- Brain growth and development continues into the mid-twenties but alcohol and other substance use can negatively affect this development.
- Caregivers can create a safe, judgment-free space where the child/youth feel valued and respected. It is important to listen without interrupting, acknowledge their emotions, thoughts, feelings and pressures and develop strategies to support their safety.
- The earlier we have age-appropriate conversations about substance use, even when there is no use, the easier it is to address experimentation.
- Reducing harm- The goal of reducing harm is about educating the person to become more conscious of the risks of their behaviour and provide them with the tools and resources with which they can reduce their risk.
- Caregivers are expected to work closely with the case team, other professionals, friends, family or community members who are important to the child/youth to ensure they are safe.

Guided Discussion Questions

1. What conversations are you having with children/youth about substances?
2. How could you seek to reduce harm if a child/youth in your home was using substances?

Resources

AFKA – Caregiver Support Team: <https://afkaonline.ca/programs/caregiver-support-program/>

Alberta Health Services – Mental Health Services: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/amh.aspx#services>

AHS & RCMP Joint Project – Kids and drugs: A parent’s guide to prevention:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/amh/if-amh-kids-and-drugs-parents-booklet.pdf>

CAMH – Addiction: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/addiction>

Dr. Maté’s website: <https://drqabormate.com/>

Drug Free Kids Canada – Drug Guide for Parents: https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DFK_DrugGuide_Final_rev.pdf

National Institute on Drug Abuse – Words Matter: Preferred Language for Talking About Addiction:

<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/addiction-science/words-matter-preferred-language-talking-about-addiction>

YMCA - Youth Opioid Awareness Program (YOAP): <https://employmentcollaboration.ca/programs/ymca-youth-opioid-awareness-program-yoap/#:~:text=The%20YMCA%20Youth%20Opioid%20Awareness,Toxic%20Drugs>