

Moving Forward: Youth, Peer Mentoring and Harm Reduction - Halifax 2009



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

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The YMCA of Greater Toronto's

Youth Substance Abuse Program (YSAP)

TODAYS AGENDA

- The YMCA of Greater Toronto and the Youth Substance Abuse Program (YSAP)
- Harm Reduction
- The YSAP Peer Mentoring Program
- School & Community based Peer Mentoring
- Practical Tools
- Benefits & Limitations
- Scenarios



OUTCOMES OF THIS PRESENTATION

To provide practical information and tools for individuals/organizations interested in integrating a similar Peer Mentoring model in their own program

To provide an overview of specifics on how the program is tailored to meet needs of various youth populations its benefit and limitations and practical tools and uses



YMCA APPROACH TO WORKING WITH YOUTH

Asset Building	Harm Reduction	Transtheoretical model of change
Developmental appropriateness	YMCA Values	Determinates of Health



ASSET BUILDING

Valuing youth voices, choices and contributions



HARM REDUCTION

Respecting every individuals right to choice

Helping to ensure that the choice is an informed one



TRANS-THEORETICAL MODEL OF CHANGE

Work with youth, not for youth, understanding that development and change are processes not 'events'



DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS

Creating meaningful opportunities for youth to serve others and to participate in community building

Creating programs and services that are responsive to youths developmental needs



YMCA VALUES

Placing, Caring, Honesty, Health Inclusiveness, Respect and Responsibility as the cornerstones of all interactions



DETERMINATES OF HEALTH

Minimizing barriers and supporting youth, from all walks of life, to achieve their goals



The YMCA of Greater Toronto's Youth Substance Abuse Program (YSAP)

The YMCA's Youth Substance Abuse Program was developed over 16 years ago to meet the needs of Toronto youth; fully supported by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care through sustained ongoing annual funding.

YSAP works with youth between the ages of 14 through 24 who have questions or concerns related to substance use in a free and confidential non-judgmental environment



YSAP COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Individual and group counselling

Assessments and Referrals

Education and training for youth, parents and professionals



HARM REDUCTION

The YMCA of Greater Toronto defines Harm Reduction as “a philosophy and a set of strategies that seek to reduce the harm associated with some types of substance use. It prioritizes giving accurate information and unbiased support so people can make and carry out informed decisions for themselves”



YSAP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM-1

Brings youth, adults and the community together to learn and talk about substance use

Embraces new and creative ways to communicate drug and alcohol harm reduction based information to youth

4 to 10 week commitment



YSAP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM-2

Youth have an opportunity to learn:

- substances and the body
- effects on individuals and society
- informed choices
- presentation and facilitation skills
- non- judgmental information delivery



YSAP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM-3

Youth may benefit by:

- new knowledge
- leadership and accountability skills
- presentation and facilitation speaking skills
- positive relationships with their peers, school staff, other professionals and the community
- opportunity for self reflection



YSAP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM-4

Environment

School Based

- Toronto District School Board
- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Section 19

Community Based

- Alternative school
- Drop-in centers
- Youth shelters
- Supportive housing
- Community services



YSAP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM-5

Participants

School Based

- Students
- Teachers and administrators
- Students parents

Community Based

- Service users
- Agency staff
- Volunteers
- Community

YSAP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM-6

Schedule

School based

- 6-8 weeks peer training
- 1-2 large assembly presentations
- Multiple breakout groups

Community Based

- 4-6 week peer training
- Small group presentation
- Question and answer
- Further community facilitation



YSAP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM-7

Additional Benefits

School based

- Community hours
- School involvement
- Student engagement

Community based

- Other volunteer hours
- Peer training
- Community engagement



YSAP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM-8

Possible unique challenges in a community based Peer Mentoring Program's could be;

- higher levels of drug involvement
- mental health, addictions, social class
- consistent attendance



PRACTICAL TOOLS-1

Partnership:

Existing community relationships

Outreach agreement

- Roles and responsibility
- Liability and confidentiality
- Timeline
- Limitations and/or restrictions



PRACTICAL TOOLS-2

Recruitment:

Knowledge/experiences with substance use and public speaking not a pre-requisite

Commitment to the program supporting youth and respecting our harm reduction message

Support through space, staffing, food, time, resources and supplies



PRACTICAL TOOLS-3

Delivery:

Harm reduction, values and drug information

Varied experience, skill and comfort level's

Confidentiality agreement, guidelines/questions and activities for breakout sessions, YSAP presentation, peer manuals



FOLLOW-UP

Pre and Post evaluations

Support to the school/community agency with supplementary YSAP services

Support for peers and students who may wish to further connect to or access YSAP services



BENEFITS

Education

Opportunity

Involvement

Accountability/Responsibility

Partnership

Service entry point



LIMITATIONS

Time

Resources

Understanding of Harm Reduction

Engagement level

Balanced message



SCENARIO 1

The school you are working with decides after 3 sessions that they don't like the harm reduction message and want you to tell youth solely that drugs are bad and they shouldn't use them...

What do you do?



SCENARIO 2

The group of youth you are working with are developing their assembly presentation well; however the message seems to be glorifying substance use and is not providing abstinence as an option at all...

What do you do?



CONTACT INFORMATION

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