

understanding substance use and abuse



WHAT IS IT?

Youth may use alcohol and other drugs for a variety of reasons: to help them relax, to cope with problems, for social or religious reasons, or simply out of curiosity. Since this is relatively common, it is important to know how to recognize when a person is at risk of becoming dependant on the substance.

There are 2 kinds of substance dependence:

- Psychological: when a person feels they need the drug to function or feel comfortable in certain situations.
- Physical: when a person's body has adapted to the presence of alcohol or drugs and tolerance has developed which leads them to be using more drugs in order to get the same effect. When alcohol/drug use stops, withdrawal symptoms typically occur.

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

There are 2 important signs that a person's substance use is at risk of becoming or already is a problem:

- Presence of harmful consequences: these can range from mild (e.g. feeling hung over, being late for school/work) to severe (e.g. homelessness, disease). Although it may seem that there is little impact initially, the consequences can build up over time. An individual may have a substance abuse problem if they continue to use despite these harmful consequences. Harms of substance use can also be extended to family members, friends, co-workers or even strangers (e.g. when someone drives while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs).
- Loss of control: some individuals may be aware that their substance use is a problem but continue to use even when they want to stop. Others may not be aware that their substance use is out of control and causing problems in their lives (being "in denial").

SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONTINUUM OF RISK



WHAT NOW?

There are different resources available in the community to support youth with addictions/substance abuse issues:

Addictions and Mental Health Services – Sandy Hill Community Health Centre:

supportive counseling services for youth seeking help with addictions (including problem gambling), mental health issues or concurrent disorders,

613.789.8941 | www.sandyhillchc.on.ca

Al-Anon and Alateen:

12-step weekly support group for adults & teens learning to cope with the effects of a loved one's drinking, 613.860.3431 | www.al-anon-ottawa.ca

Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre:

helps youth 13-18 overcome substance abuse issues and other related problems,

613.594.8333 | www.davesmithcentre.org

Maison fraternité:

services for francophone youth struggling with alcohol or drug use,

613.562.1415 | www.maisonfraternite.ca

Nar-Anon:

weekly support group for friends and relatives of individuals struggling with drug problems,

613.860.0902 | www.naranonontario.com

Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services:

individual, family and school-based support for youth experiencing problems with alcohol, drugs & gambling, 613.724.4881 | www.rideauwood.org

**If you are concerned about a youth's immediate safety call 9-1-1 or, if you can safely do so, take them to the closest hospital's emergency department*

For further information please visit:

www.camh.net | www.hc-sc.gc.ca | www.ementalhealth.ca



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