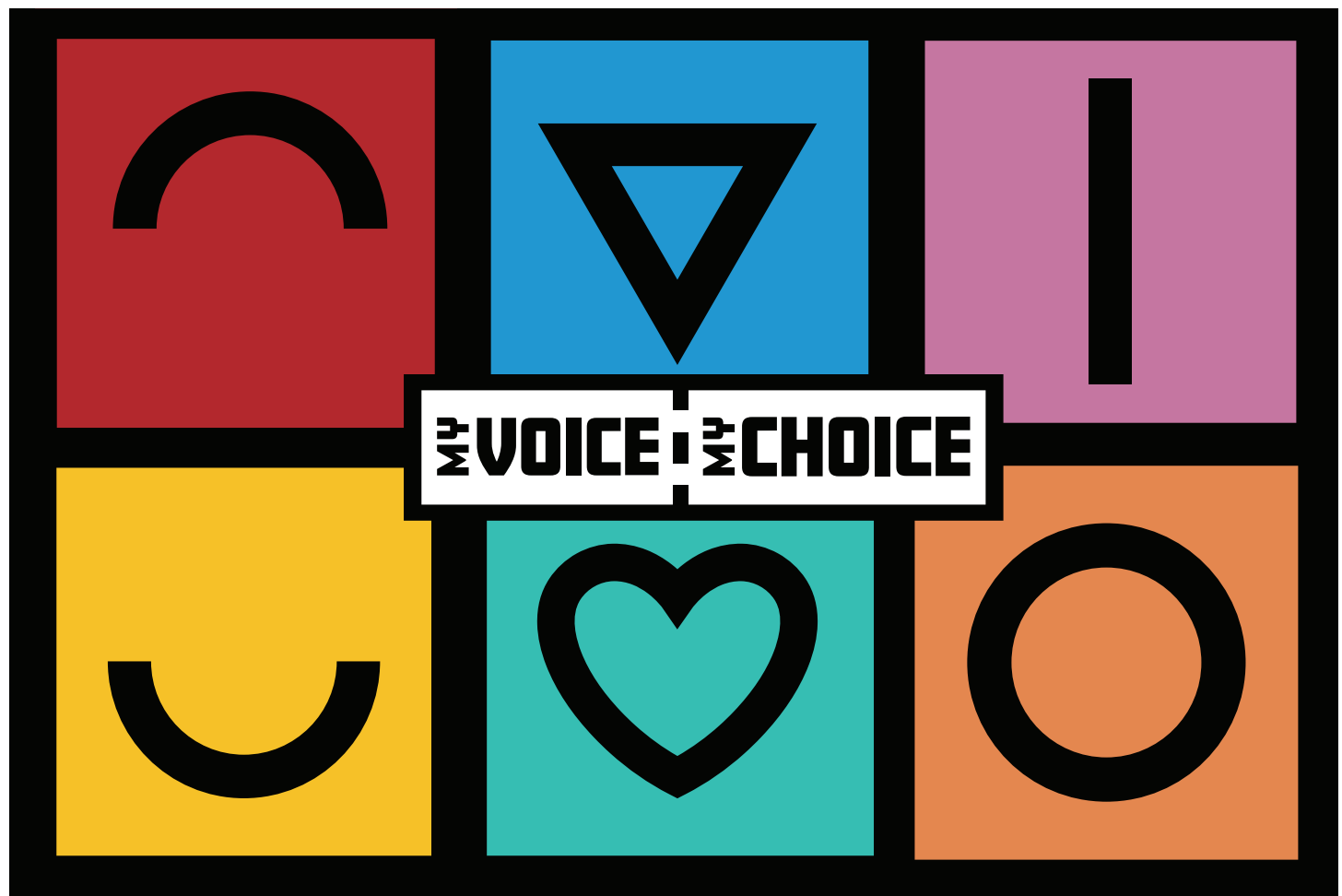


FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH





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BACKGROUND FOR FACILITATORS

My Voice My Choice (MVMC) was first created in 2011 as a program to empower youth to resist alcohol and drugs. The program has since evolved to focus more broadly on supporting youth in the Northwest Territories to facilitate overall positive mental wellness. Over the last ten years, the mission of MVMC has changed to focus more broadly on youth mental wellness throughout the Northwest Territories. The purpose for MVMC is to give youth the information they need to make positive personal choices and behaviours related to their mental wellness.

This guide was written with the following facts about substance use and mental health education in mind:

- It's important to not just focus on substances and their effects;
- Using scare tactics and focusing on risks doesn't usually work in the long term;
- Moralizing substance use is not helpful;
- There should be recognition of risk and protective factors for those who may experience mental health issues, mental illness, or use substances;
- Skill building, empowerment, self-efficacy and resilience are important;
- There are multiple ways to intervene and support young people.

(Public Safety Canada, 2018; Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2014)

KEEPING IT IN CHECK

Before the session begins, all facilitators are encouraged to self-reflect and assess their level of comfortability when it comes to leading discussions and activities on the topic of mental health, mental illness, and substance use.

It is recommended that the facilitator engages in self-reflection beforehand. Questions a facilitator may ask themselves include:

- What values, beliefs or narratives were shared with me in relation to mental health, mental illness and substance use?
- Are there any personal experiences, including my own lived experience with substance use or living with mental health issues/ mental illness that shape my own attitudes, values, and beliefs?
- Do I know what I need to do to support myself to facilitate something that may be triggering or might not align with my own values and beliefs?

Remember that even those who consider themselves to be content experts and experienced facilitators have moments of unease!

If the facilitator decides they are not comfortable leading the session with the activities and discussion points provided, they should speak with the organization sponsoring the session for ways to adapt or adjust the content in a way that works for them.



ACTIVITY OPTIONS

This facilitator's guide contains several options for group activities. Facilitators should use their judgement to decide what activities are best suited to the participants based on factors such as age and group dynamics. The colouring sheets in the appendices can be made available at the beginning of the session as an option for the youth to stay focused and calm.



PREPARING TO ADDRESS SESSION CONTENT

Discuss group guidelines in advance

The facilitator will ask the group to establish a set of guidelines for a safe learning environment. Suggestions from the group should be written on paper and kept in the space as a visual reminder of the expectations. If the following “rules” are not suggested by the group, the facilitator should consider adding them to the list:

- Confidentiality (also discuss what it means as well as limits of confidentiality).
- Discuss what may be considered “oversharing” or “TMI”. It is important to establish a balance with youth feeling safe to share their experiences and ask questions.
- Avoid glorifying substance use; this can include bragging about or sharing personal stories about substance use in a comical way.
- Suggest participants “challenge ideas, but not each other”; it’s okay to disagree on things, but it should be done respectfully.
- No put downs or rude/mean language.

Youth in your session need to know what the term “confidentiality” means. You can explain to them that it means you can’t tell anyone what is spoken about in your sessions. However, they also need to realize that sometimes you need to tell someone about what is shared because it’s about safety. “Limits to confidentiality” include any safety concerns such as abuse, neglect, self-harm, or threats to harm themselves or others. If you have questions about your role in protecting the safety of children and youth, speak to your organization’s leaders about learning more.

Note: Facilitators should make sure they offer participants a way to ask questions or share experiences they may not feel comfortable asking in front of others. For example, the facilitator can begin the discussion by giving out post-it notes and a pen/pencil to participants. Participants can write down any questions they do not want to ask in front of the group and the facilitator would collect the notes at the end of the module to address the questions.



FACILITATORS AND MANAGEMENT OF PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

“Have you ever used drugs?”

“Do you drink?”

“Have you ever talked to a counsellor?”

It is common for youth to ask personal questions to a facilitator. At the start of the session, the facilitator should set clear boundaries. Remember that your personal life is your own and you are not obligated to share anything you are not comfortable with sharing. Even if you are open to making personal disclosures, it may not always be appropriate.

Consider the following:

- What is the context in which the young person is asking these questions? They may assume you are open to these conversations, they may be trying to make you uncomfortable, or they may be genuinely curious to gain information about something they are not familiar with. If you disclose personal information, consider asking yourself: what is the motivation? Will this disclosure be helpful to the youth that I am supporting? Will this disclosure build relationship with this youth? Am I making this disclosure to serve my own needs, rather than the needs of the youth? Always ask yourself why you think it would be necessary for the young person to know this information about you.

- Will there be unintended consequences to your co-workers or other youth participants if you make personal disclosures? (e.g., a co-facilitator of a group participant may feel pressured to self-disclose or a young person may think it is okay to ask similar questions that others may find invasive.)
- Young people need to understand that people have reasons for not wanting to share personal stories. For example, someone who is grieving a loss may prefer to do it privately instead of in a group setting.

Here are some examples of how a facilitator may respond to personal questions:

"I actually don't discuss my personal life, but since you brought up _____, let's discuss that."

“How would this be helpful for you to know?”

“If you have questions about this, how about you see me after the session is done and we can talk about it more.”



Disclosures of past or current substance use can be tricky and it can be used against the facilitator regardless of how the question is answered.

Never used before? Then you don't know what you're talking about.

Currently using? Well, you're a hypocrite.

Used to use substances but no longer do? Well, you turned out just fine, so there must be no risk.

Not going to answer? You're obviously hiding something.

These questions can be a no-win situation. It is important for the facilitator to remember that no matter what their experience is with substances, whether they have used them or not, the information being provided in these sessions is credible.

Remember, these sessions are about the youth participants, not the facilitator.



IMPORTANCE OF TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE (TIP) IN EDUCATION ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

Trauma is an experience which can overwhelm a person and make them feel helpless, unsafe, and harm their emotional and/or physical wellbeing. Being “trauma-informed” means the facilitators need to deliver content in a way that assumes program participants have experienced trauma. In these sessions, youth who have experienced trauma may present in the following ways:

- Irritability
- Difficulties engaging in sessions (not participating, being argumentative or generally disruptive)
- Dissociation or being “spaced out”
- Sadness or anger
- Anxiety

Reactions to things that seem minor

Sometimes this is just “typical” adolescent behaviour and not always related to trauma. Being trauma-informed means the facilitator is aware that certain behaviours may be connected to trauma and can try and make sure everyone feels as safe as possible.

Here are some practical ways facilitators can be trauma-informed throughout this session:

- Having a welcoming and non-judgemental space to learn
- Making sure the participants know what to expect in sessions including group “rules”
- Building positive relationships
- Believing in the strengths and resilience of the participants

For more information on providing trauma informed spaces to learn, please refer to Klinik’s Trauma-informed: A resource for service organizations and providers to deliver services that are trauma-informed (http://trauma-informed.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Trauma-informed_Toolkit.pdf)

What’s in the box?

- Pencil crayons or markers
- Plain paper
- Colouring pages
- Activity sheets
- Matching game cards
- Ball of yarn
- Pencil sharpeners
- Participant guides

Note: There are activities in some of the modules which can be done with the support of technology if it is available.

This topic can be complex and facilitators are not expected to be experts. It’s okay to say “I don’t know” or offer to look up information with the youth to get answers. There is value with continuous learning in our lives and learning alongside the participants.



MODULE 1

Language and Stigma

OBJECTIVES

- Learn about the most appropriate language to use when speaking about substance use, mental health, and overall mental wellness
- Understand what stigma is and recognize harms with it.

LESSON STYLE: Group Discussion and Interactive activity

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Stigma Self-Awareness Activity (Appendix 2)
- Screen, projector, internet connection (Optional)



Hand out the Stigma Self-Awareness Activity (adapted from the National Alliance on Mental Health's "Stigma Free Quiz") for youth to complete on their own, or simply read out the questions and ask the group to think about their answers.

Tell the group: "This exercise is not supposed to make you feel badly about anything. It's just a good way to be more aware of your thoughts and feelings."

1. I think people living with substance use or mental health challenges....
 - a) need to just stop.
 - b) did something wrong to cause it.
 - c) need support.
 - d) should not be taken as seriously as someone with a physical health problem.

The best answer is "C" and this is why:

- People living with mental health or substance use challenges need support.
- These issues don't exist because they are bad people or can't just "get over it".
- Mental health and substance use disorders are health conditions and should be treated that way.

2. Stigma can....

- a) make people feel badly about themselves.
- b) stop people from getting help.
- c) worsen a mental health condition.
- d) All of the above

The best answer is "D" and this is why:

Stigma makes people feel ashamed and scared to talk about what's going on. If people can't talk about what's going on, it's really hard to get help. Without help and hope, things can get worse. For people experiencing mental health and substance use issues, this is a big problem.

3. If someone you care about is experiencing mental health or substance use challenges, you should...
 - a) treat them differently than you used to.
 - b) keep your distance.
 - c) feel sorry for them.
 - d) support them.

The correct answer is "D". It is important to support others by providing them with support. Here are some practical ways to do that:

- Don't judge them
- Listen to them
- Educate yourself about what they are going through
- Let them know you care

Take good care of yourself too because it can be hard to support someone who is struggling!

ASK: What are some songs, tv series, or movies about people who live with mental health or substance use challenges?

- Possible answers can be anything the group is familiar with.

ASK: How are people portrayed in the media who are living with or experiencing mental health and substance use challenges?

Possible answers:

- Bad
- Immoral
- Criminal
- Like they're having fun (e.g. if they are drinking, using drugs, and partying)
- Selfish



ASK: Do you know what the word “stigma” means?

Note that if the group has gone through the learning exercises from other subscription boxes, they may be familiar with the topic already.

Possible answers:

- Judging someone
- Talking badly about people

Tell/remind the group: Stigma is an unfair way someone can be treated when someone else cannot understand something about them, like mental illness or challenges with substance use.

ASK: What are some ways mental health and substance use are stigmatized?

Possible answers:

- Words like “crazy”, “psycho”, “druggie” to describe people who may or may not have a mental health or substance use issue.
- The media can make people living with mental health or substance use concerns look a certain way.
- People can feel embarrassed talking about it.

Tell/Remind the group: Stigma can stop people from getting the help they need.

ASK: What are some ways we can help to end stigma?

Possible answers:

- Avoid using stigmatizing language

- Speak out if you hear stigma
- Try to be understanding and supportive

Tell the group: “Remember that people are more than a diagnosis. People who live with mental health or substance use issues are also brothers, sisters, friends, athletes, parents, children, artists, and so much more. This is why using ‘person first language’ is always the safest way to talk. For example, say ‘a person with a diagnosis of depression’ or a ‘a person with a substance use disorder’ instead of just calling them ‘depressed’ or ‘addicted’.”

Optional Videos on Stigma (if able to use technology in sessions):

“Reducing Stigma” from Have That Talk:
<https://youtu.be/eio-l8PbdDk>

“5 Ways To Reduce Mental Health Stigma!” from Greg and Mitch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MG_HDNqZA0

Take away messages:

- People are not their diagnosis
- Avoid labels, derogatory or other insensitive language:
 - Junkie, addict, alcoholic, crazy, psycho, or saying things like “I’m so OCD” when you just like things clean and in the proper place.

Even the term “overdose” can contribute to stigma which is why some health care professionals want people to stop saying it and use the term “poisoning” instead. Why? Well, because “poisoning” is actually what is happening inside the body when too much of a substance is taken. When people use substances, they don’t always know what dosage they are taking and the “overdose,” makes it sound like the dose was known and the person chose to take too much. The word “poisoning” just makes more sense.



MODULE 2

Substance Use

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Learn more about substances and their effects
- Recognize risk and protective factors
- Learn about harm reduction and safer partying

LESSON STYLE: Group discussion and Interactive Activities

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Drug Classifications poster



Reasons to Use/Reasons not to Use Substances (group discussion)

- The goal is to be balanced here. Address the positive benefits or “needs” getting met by substance use (socialization, coping, etc.) as well as short and long-term negative consequences.

ASK: Why do some young people choose to use substances?

Possible answers:

- For fun
- Curiosity
- To fit in
- Act grown up

ASK: Why do some young people choose to not use substances?

Possible answers:

- Worried about health
- It can be illegal
- Can get into trouble
- Can interfere with school, activities, jobs, etc.

Next, the facilitator can bring out the “Drug Facts: Necessary Information without Unnecessary Judgement” poster. Go through each area of the poster by reading the information or youth in session can take turns reading it. Remember, facilitators are not expected to be drug experts. If possible, look up information on certain substances as questions come up. It is recommended to look up drug information on reliable websites such as <https://www.drugs.com/> which has a search engine to find current information on legal and illegal substances, side effects, interactions, etc. The University of Utah also has a website with written information and good videos on different substances: <https://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/addiction/abuse/>



Category	Stimulants	Depressants	Hallucinogens	Cannabinoids
Examples	caffeine, nicotine, cocaine, amphetamines	alcohol, opioids (codeine, fentanyl, oxycontin, heroin), sleeping pills	magic mushrooms, LSD, PCP	substances containing THC and CBD (Note that CBD does not make you high.)
Why people like it	Good feelings Lowers appetite Keeps you awake Can be helpful for some conditions when taken under the direction of a doctor (e.g. medications for ADHD)	Relaxation Feeling braver Socializing Pain management	Can be fun Spiritual experiences Interesting	Relaxation Pain management Socializing
Some not-so-great things	Faster heartbeat Anxiety Paranoia Mood swings Dehydration Addiction Large amounts can cause seizures or death	Making choices you would not make while sober Being clumsy Accidentally getting hurt Puking Losing memory Addiction Coma Death	“Bad trips” Panic Paranoia Scary hallucinations Heart problems	Increased heart rate Red eyes Anxiety Dry mouth Addiction

Other Facts:

- Everyone is Different

- Any of the following factors can determine how drunk or high someone can get:
 - Body weight and health
 - Other substance use (including medication)
 - Strength of substance
 - Amount taken
 - Whether the person is used to the substance (tolerance)

- Legal and Illegal

- Some substances are legal and some are not.
- Legal does not mean safer.
- All substances have the potential to be harmful

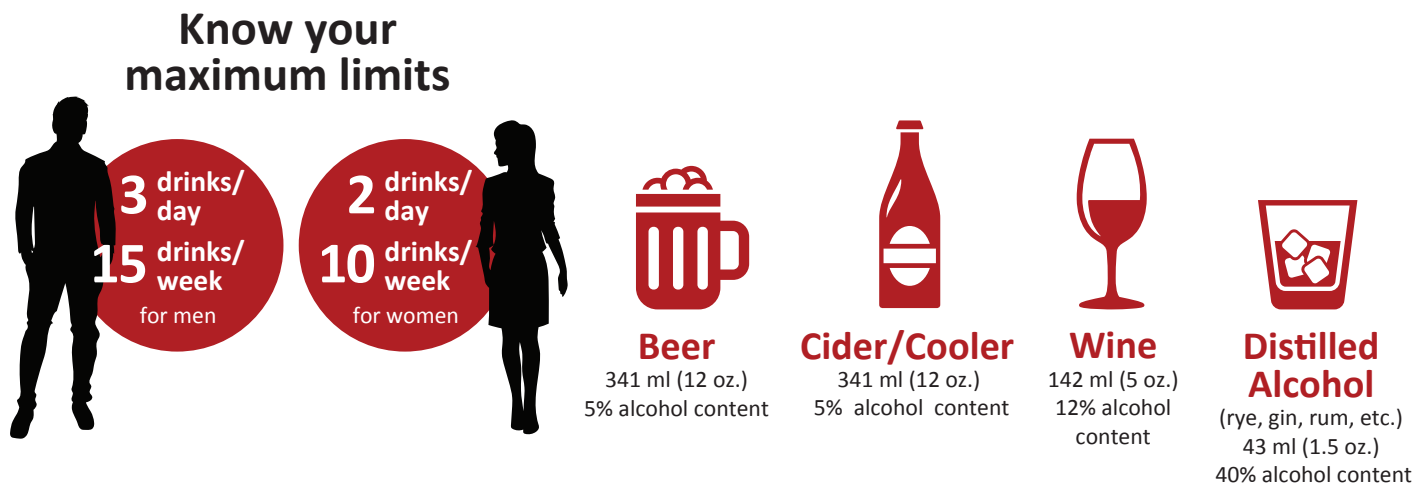
- Mixing Drugs

- Taking more than one substance at a time can cause unpredictable and unwanted effects.
 - Mixing the same type of drug (like a stimulant and a stimulant) can increase effects and cause extra harm to your body.
 - Mixing different types of drugs (like a stimulant with a depressant) can increase different risks depending on the combination
- If you are on medication and have questions about how it mixes with other medications or substances, talk to a health care professional like a pharmacist who knows how it works in the body!

After a discussion on drug classifications and reasons people use, the facilitator will now lead a discussion on reducing harms.



Low Risk Drinking Guidelines and Sex Specific Impacts for Females



Tell the group: Drinking is a choice everyone makes. The more someone drinks, the more risks there are. Canada has guidelines to help people understand the risks.

Refer youth to the low risk drinking guidelines in their participant manual or find it online at <https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-04/2012-Canada-Low-Risk-Alcohol-Drinking-Guidelines-Poster-en.pdf>

Tell the group the following facts:

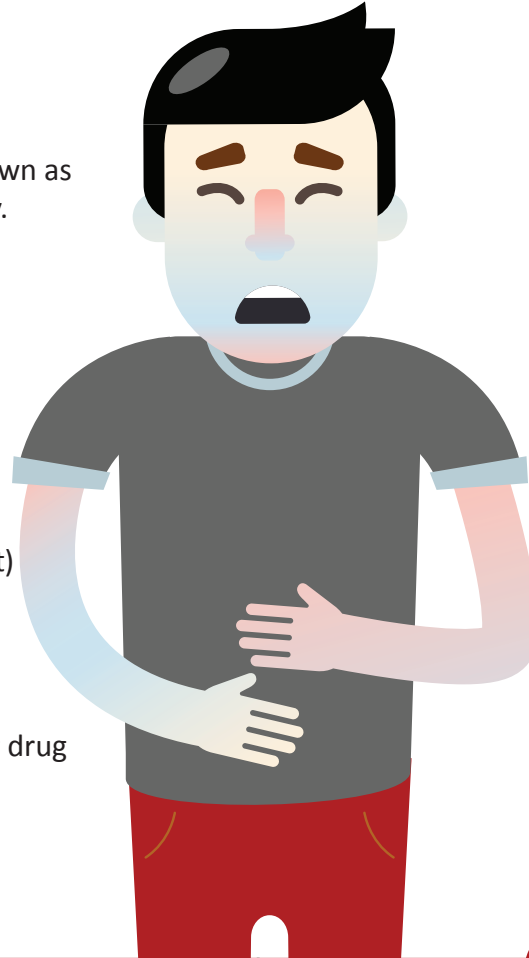
- There are differences between male and female bodies in how alcohol and other drugs are processed. People who are born biologically female have bodies and brains that don't handle substances as well. It's not fair, but it's true; and it's not sexist, it's science!
- Females tend to experience more negative alcohol related consequences:
 - o Females get drunker faster than males
 - o Females get addicted faster than males (this is called "telescoping")

- o Females tend to experience more mental health issues because of substance use
- o Problems with menstrual cycles like pain, heavy or irregular flow, and missed periods
- o Increased chances of serious health issues such as liver damage and breast cancer

ASK: What surprised you about these facts?

Note to facilitator: Some youth may not understand the differences between sex and gender. This specific lesson is about what makes people biologically male or female, not how society decides how this is expressed. We are also not referring to sexual attraction. The facilitator should also note that young people who are LGBTQ2S may experience additional challenges because of the way they can be treated.

If you think someone has alcohol or drug poisoning...

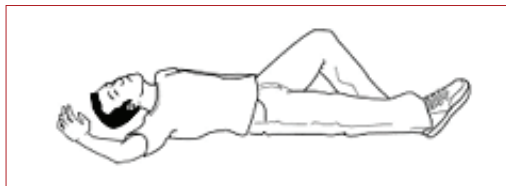


✓	✗
Keep track of them to make sure they haven't gone somewhere unsafe.	Try and humiliate them by drawing on them, taking embarrassing photos. This is not the time.
Check if they are breathing and their mouth is empty.	Ignore them.
Put them in the "recovery position" (see illustration on the next page).	Put them in a cold shower.
Stay with them even if they are awake—they may eventually pass out.	Try and give them food or fluid if they aren't totally awake because they could puke and choke.
Call for emergency help if they stop breathing or can't stop puking.	Leave them alone.
Try and stay calm.	Panic.

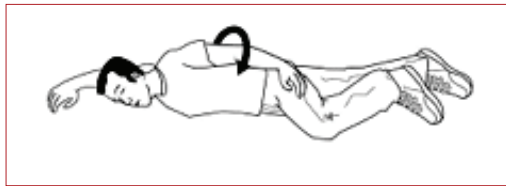


The Bacchus Maneuver or “Recovery Position”

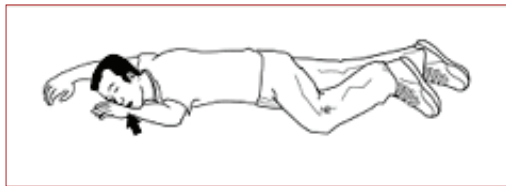
1. Raise the arm that is closest to you above their head. Prepare to roll them toward you.



2. Gently roll them toward you, guarding their head from hitting the floor. The head should rest in front of the arm, not on it.



3. Tilt the head up to maintain airway. Tuck their nearest hand under the cheek to help maintain head tilt and raise the face off the floor.



4. Check on them often.

Learning how to put someone in the recovery position can also be a demonstration with a volunteer from the group or the group can practice with each other. Please use caution in suggesting any activity where group members physically touch each other.



Tell the group: The best way to avoid harm with using substances, is to not use them. However, if you do decide to use them, there are some ways to be safer.

ASK: What are some ways to be safer if you choose to use substances?

Possible answers:

- Stay with friends
- Don't use alone
- Pace yourself
- Drink water
- Eat before drinking
- Plan a safe ride home
- Stick with one substance
- If you don't know what it is, don't put it in your body
- Avoid smoking or injecting substances to reduce risk of getting sick

Recognize signs of alcohol or drug poisoning (also called overdose).

Signs of a Problem:

Tell the group: Not everyone who uses substances has a problem. Some people never use, some people use once in a while and some people organize their whole lives around substance use.

ASK: How do you know that substance use might be a problem for someone?

Possible answers:

- Getting into trouble with the law
- Fights with family
- Not doing well in school
- Losing friends or hanging out with people only because they use
- Getting into trouble at work
- Choosing to use over doing other things they used to enjoy
- Physical issues: hangovers, weight gain, weight loss, etc.
- Mental health: increased anxiety, feeling down, etc.
- Getting into unsafe situations when under the influence

Facilitator's Note: Remind the group that sometimes people will experience consequences as a result of their substance use, but that doesn't mean they are "addicted". For example, taking someone else's prescription medication to get high or deciding to drive after drinking are both unsafe, but not necessarily the sign of addiction.



Refer the group to the chart in their participant manual called “Substance Use and Life Areas: When is it a Problem?”

Family	Physical Health	Mental Health	Social
Getting into fights about use Lack of trust	Hangovers Changes in weight Sleep problems Head and body aches Getting injured while using	Anxiety Depression Hopelessness Self harm Suicidal thoughts	Losing friends Only hanging out with people who use No longer interested in social activities that were once enjoyable
School	Job		Legal
Missing class Grades dropping Arguments with school staff Going to school while drunk or high Disciplinary action	Showing up drunk or high to work Being late or not showing up because of using Getting into trouble with the boss or other co-workers		Getting charged with something to do with using Doing something illegal related to using Being with others who do illegal things related to using



The facilitator should remind the group of this important message:

Optional Videos: If technology is available, these videos from the Government of Northwest Territories “We Need to Talk about this Stuff” features local people sharing their experiences and advice on being safer with substances and choosing sobriety:

Safe Substance Use through Moderation:

<https://youtu.be/tZQuBnbn7yo>

Choosing a Sober Lifestyle:

<https://youtu.be/v1vx52DYzJs>

Drugs, Drinking and Sex = Risky Business

Alcohol, drugs, and sex can be risky. People may not be as careful with protecting themselves and this can result in getting a sexually transmitted blood borne infection (STBBI) or an unplanned pregnancy. Remember that people cannot consent to any sexual contact when they are drunk, high, passed out, or sleeping. It is never okay to try and make advances on intoxicated people who can’t consent, so don’t do it. Speak out if you see this happening to someone else.



MODULE 3

Mental Health and Mental Illness

OBJECTIVES

- Increase understanding of mental wellness
- Learn more about mental health challenges and mental illnesses
- Explore differences between mental health and mental illness
- Grow skills and ability to self-regulate and provide support to others.

LESSON STYLE: Group Discussion

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Screen, projector, internet connection (Optional)

Note to Facilitator: There is overlap between content in this module and the information discussed in subscription boxes on Self-Harm and Suicide as well as Healthy Coping.



ASK: What is mental health?

Possible answers:

- Feeling good
- Not being mentally ill
- Being able to get through the day feeling okay
- Happiness
- Mental wellness

Tell the group: Mental health isn't just "being happy" and it's not just when people aren't mentally ill. Mental health is also called "mental wellness". Being mentally well is part of overall health. Mental health comes from:

- feeling balanced
- being connected to supportive people
- being able to take on challenging situations in life

People who are mentally well still experience difficult feelings like sadness, stress, and anger, because that's just part of life!

Having your mental health challenged is completely normal. For example, it's normal to feel anxious before a big sports game or an exam. However, it's a problem when the body is consistently reacting as though it is in danger when it is not.

Difference between mental health and mental illness

Tell the group: Some people say "mental health" or "mental illness" as the same thing, but they are not.

Mental health refers to mental wellness and it's about emotions, thoughts, feelings, and being able to deal with tough stuff in life. Mental illness is something that affects the way someone thinks, feels, and acts.

ASK: What are some examples of mental illness?

Possible answers:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia

Tell the group: There are lots of different kinds of mental illnesses. Here are a few of them:

Mood disorders which affect how someone's mood and emotions work. Depression and bipolar disorder are examples of mood disorders.

Anxiety disorders make people feel scared unexpectedly or feel fearful of things other people think are normal. Panic disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are examples of anxiety disorders.

Psychotic disorders affect how someone understands what is real and what isn't. Schizophrenia is an example of a psychotic disorder.

Facilitator's Note: This subject is complex and you are not expected to know all there is to know about mental illnesses. If youth have specific questions, refer them to some of the youth websites recommended to get good information, or offer to look it up with them during the session.



Eating disorders include harmful behaviours to manage food and weight. Examples of eating disorders include anorexia and bulimia.

Personality disorders affect the way someone feels, acts, and has relationships. An example is borderline personality disorder (BPD).

Substance use disorders (also called addictions) are when someone uses alcohol or other drugs and can't seem to stop.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can be diagnosed in adults but is usually found in children and youth. It affects your ability to focus your attention. It may also include hyperactivity, which is when you become easily over-excited.

Tell the group: Symptoms of mental illness can be mild or severe and some are judged more than others.

ASK: Which mental illnesses do you think are judged more than others? Why?

Possible answers:

- Anything based on the personal opinions and experiences of the group.

Take away message: Mental health is health and when someone is mentally ill, they need treatment, compassion, and other supports.

Optional video to consider:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvrNI85dNdI>

Mental illness is not caused by...

- another person
- personal failures or weakness
- punishment
- spirits or demons
- "catching" it



MODULE 4

Connection with Mental Health and Substance Use

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand how mental health and substance use are connected.

LESSON STYLE: Interactive activity

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Card for matching activity
- Internet connect and device for searching information (optional)



Start by getting the “Match Game” cards ready. There will be three signs with the following: Symptom of Substance Use?; Symptom of Mental Illness?; Symptom of Both? The signs can be placed on a wall or on the floor depending on the set up of the room. There will also be a pile of cards with a list of symptoms on it.

Explain to the group:

- Each person will take turns as a group drawing a card from the symptom pile.
- As a group discuss if the symptom can go under “Symptom of Substance Use”, “Symptom of Mental Illness” or “Symptom of Both”

Allow for unstructured discussion and questions to occur as the activity progresses.

Facilitator notes to guide discussion:

All the symptoms fit under the category of BOTH. If a participant puts one in either category, just have a conversation about why they put it there. If there is any uncertainty, look up the information (if possible), or youth can be encouraged to look it up later.

List of symptoms on cards:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hallucinating (seeing, hearing, feeling things that are not there)
- Restlessness
- Aggression
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Always Tired
- Hopelessness
- Appetite changes
- Impulsive (doing things without thinking them through)
- Sleep issues (difficulty falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much)
- Paranoia

Tell the group: All of these symptoms can happen with BOTH depending on the substance and the mental illness. The point is that mental health and substance use share a lot of things in common and both need to be treated as health issues.

Take away message: Mental health and substance use are often interconnected. Some people use substances to deal with mental health issues, and some people develop mental health issues because of substance use. Some symptoms of mental health look like a substance use issue, and some symptoms of substance use look like a mental health issue. We can’t talk about one without talking about the other.



MODULE 5

Supporting Yourself or Someone Else

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Help youth recognize it's okay to get support
- Discuss options for help
- Explore resources for getting help
- Discuss being impacted by someone else's mental health and/or substance use issues

LESSON STYLE: Group Discussion

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Spool of yarn or string

Note to Facilitator: Similar information can be found in the Subscription Box on Healthy Coping. Refer back to the lessons and activities from this box if youth are not familiar with it.



ASK: If you have concerns about your own mental health or substance use, who can you talk to?

Possible answers:

- Family
- Friends
- Counsellor
- Coach
- Elder
- Doctor
- Online support groups

Tell the group: Depending on how serious the issue is, there are a few things you can do to help yourself. What are some ideas for someone who may be living with a mental health or substance use issue?

ASK: What are some options to help with mental health and substance use issues:

- Connecting with healthy activities (e.g. exercise, time in nature, reading, spending time with others, art, music, taking care of animals, etc.)
- Being with supportive people
- Traditional activities
- Taking medication under the care of a doctor
- Talking to a counsellor/Treatment centres for experiences which may require additional supports

Mini Lesson: Being impacted by someone else's mental health and/or substance use issues:

1. Take a ball of yarn or string and invite the group to sit or stand in a circle.

2. Take an end of the yarn and throw it to a member of the group. When they catch it, ask them to share one feeling a person might have if someone in their life is living with mental health or substance use challenge. After they share, they can throw it to someone else.
3. After each person has had a turn, ask them to tug a little at the strings they are holding
4. **Ask the group:** "Can you feel all of the connections?"
5. **Tell the group:** "When one person is struggling, it doesn't just affect them, it can affect lots of people. It's okay to have lots of different feelings about it too."
6. **Tell the group:** "The 'web' you just created also shows us how many connections we have for support as well."
7. Wrap up the activity and move on to the next discussion.

ASK: What are some ways you can cope if you are worried about someone else?

Possible answers:

- Talk to someone you trust
- Don't blame yourself
- Set boundaries
- Take good care of yourself, but supporting others can be really hard
- Remember, we can't control others; we can only control ourselves

Facilitator Note: The subscription box on Suicide and Self Harm also has good suggestions on how to support others. Refer to information from there as well.

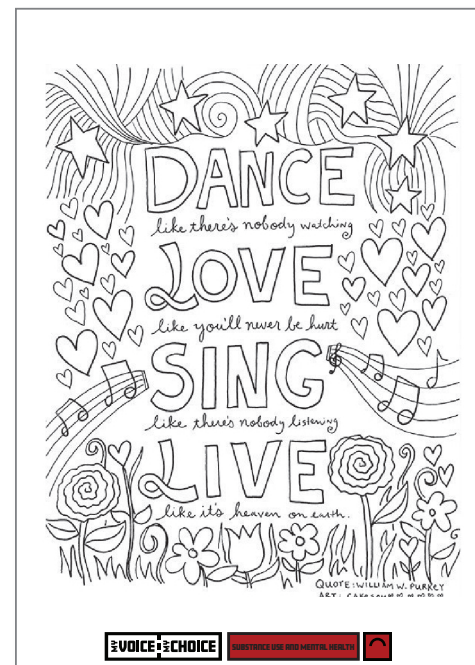
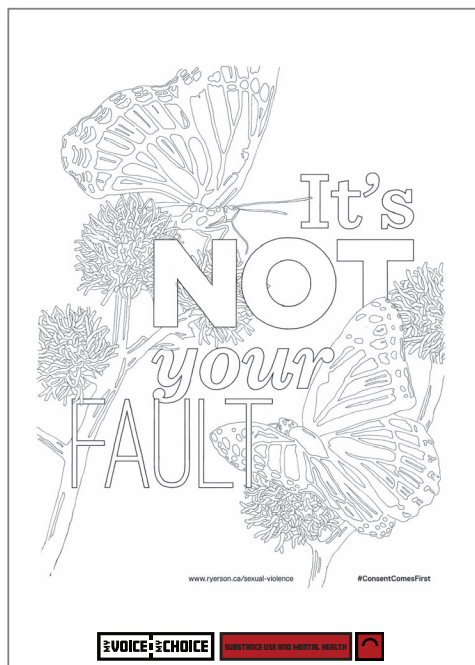
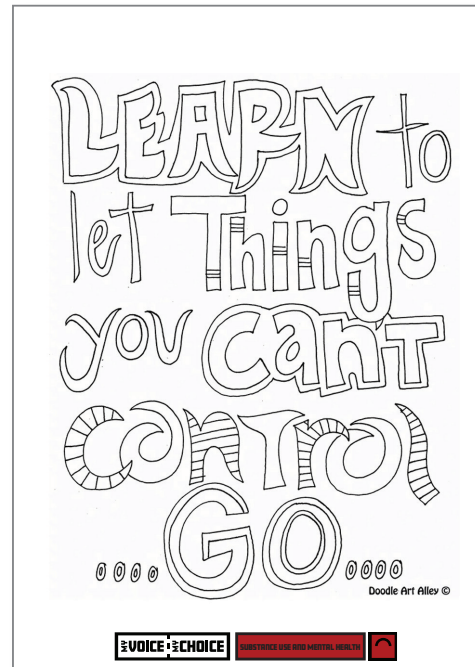
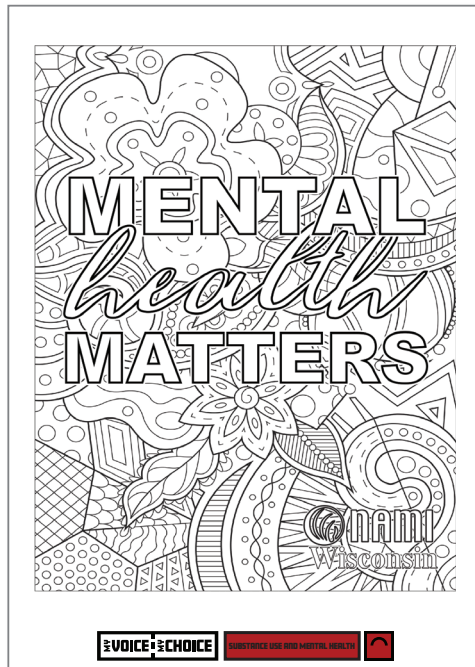


Wrapping it Up

Congratulations on making it through the activities that were a good fit for your group! At this point, facilitators can also congratulate the youth for making their way through the lessons and activities, and express thanks for their attention, honesty, and bravery in discussing these important topics. If facilitators or youth require additional support after these discussions, a list of resources can be found in the appendices. Youth may want to speak more about the lesson topics privately or later.



APPENDIX 1: COLOURING SHEETS





APPENDIX 2: STIGMA SELF-AWARENESS QUIZ

1. I think people living with substance use or mental health challenges....
 - a) need to just stop.
 - b) did something wrong to cause it.
 - c) need support.
 - d) should not be taken as seriously as someone with a physical health problem.
2. Stigma can....
 - a) make people feel badly about themselves.
 - b) stop people from getting help.
 - c) worsen a mental health condition.
 - d) All of the above
3. If someone you care about is experiencing mental health or substance use challenges, you should:
 - a) Treat them differently than you used to.
 - b) Keep your distance.
 - c) Feel sorry for them.
 - d) Support them.



APPENDIX 3: MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE MATCHING GAME

<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>ANXIETY</div></div>	<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>DEPRESSION</div></div>	<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>HALLUCINATING (seeing, hearing, feeling things that are not there)</div></div>
<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>RESTLESSNESS</div></div>	<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>AGGRESSION</div></div>	<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING</div></div>
<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>ALWAYS TIRED</div></div>	<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>HOPELESSNESS</div></div>	<div><div><div>VOICE CHOICE</div><div>SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH</div><div></div></div><div>CONFIDENCE</div></div>



VOICE CHOICE

SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

APPETITE CHANGES

VOICE CHOICE

SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

IMPULSIVE
(doing things without thinking them through)

VOICE CHOICE

SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

SLEEP ISSUES
(difficulty falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much)

VOICE CHOICE

SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

PARANOIA





APPENDIX 4: COMMUNITY SUPPORT RESOURCES

Kids Help Phone

- Web: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
- Call: 1-800-668-6868
- Text: 686868
- Live chat counselling: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/live-chat-counselling>

Northern Options for Women (NOW)

- Web: <https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/northern-options-women-now>
- Call: 1-888-873-5710

NWT Community Counselling Program (CCP)

- Web: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/nwt-community-counselling-program-ccp>
- Call: 867-767-9061
- Email: mha@gov.nt.ca

NWT HelpLine

- Web: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/nwt-help-line>
- Call: 1-800-661-0844.

Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife

- Web: <http://www.rainbowcoalitionyk.org/>
- Call: 867-444-7295
- Email: info@rainbowcoalitionyk.org



APPENDIX 5: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FACILITATORS AND PARTICIPANTS

7 CUPS

7 Cups provides on demand emotional health support and online therapy services. People accessing this site can have 1-on-1 conversations, group chats, participate in forums, and read up on advice from experts.

<https://www.7cups.com/>

ANXIETY CANADA

This site is all about anxiety and has information just for youth on how to identify and manage symptoms.

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/>

BREATHINGROOM™

This is a multimedia experience designed for youth to help improve mental health. The app can be downloaded from Google Play or the App Store. Enter the code XXQTGPUE for full access.

<https://app.breathingroom.me/register?code=XXQTGPUE>

HAVE THAT TALK

Have THAT Talk is an educational series from Ottawa Public Health about awareness about mental health and taking action to increase support and reduce stigma. There is a section just for youth on this site.

<https://haveTHATtalk.ca>

JACK.ORG

Jack.org is a youth-led organization with chapters all over Canada. Their website has links to resources, information with personal stories about mental health and how to get help for yourself and support others.

jack.org

THE LINK

This site has information about several topics including mental health, substances, safer partying, and getting support.

<https://www.thelinkottawa.ca/>

MIND YOUR MIND

This site contains information co-created by youth for youth on mental health topics. Youth accessing this website can learn about difference kinds of mental illnesses, supporting their own mental wellness, and getting help for themselves and others. There is also a space for youth to submit personal expressions such as stories, art, photography, etc.

<https://mindyourmind.ca>



NIDA FOR TEENS

This site from the National Institute on Drug Abuse has a variety of science-based information on substances. There are also videos and interactive games to help learn more about substances.

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/>

WELLNESS TOGETHER CANADA (GOVERNMENT OF CANADA)

This website connects users of all ages and backgrounds to a variety of free resources to support mental wellness. Users can get personal recommendations based on their needs and track their progress.

<https://wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA>

WHAT'S WITH WEED?

This site contains extensive information on cannabis. Youth can learn everything from effects, legal information, harm reduction strategies, and more.

<https://whatswithweed.ca/>

YOUTHSMART

YouthSMART stands for Youth Supporting Mental Health and Resiliency Together and is connected to the Canadian Mental Health Association. Their site contains information on topics related to mental health and mental illness.

<https://youthsmart.ca>



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