“Meet Them Where They’re At”

Effective peer programming on substance use for the transition years

Peer Education on Substance Use and Choice
From Parent Action on Drugs
Meet Them Where They’re At: Effective Peer Programming on Substance Use for the Transition Years

March 7, 2016 • 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

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**Parent Action on Drugs (PAD)** is a provincial organization that addresses issues related to youth substance use, and has programs for parents, youth, educators, and communities. More information at [www.parentactionondrugs.org](http://www.parentactionondrugs.org).

PAD is a member of **HC Link**. HC Link provides consulting services, learning and networking events, and resources for health promotion in English and French. More information at [www.hclinkontario.ca](http://www.hclinkontario.ca).
Objectives

• Provide information on an effective school-based program that provides realistic, relevant and reliable information to students by students.  
  – See “Web Links & Resources” box for backgrounder

• Hear from educational instructors, a guidance teacher, public health nurse, mental health counselor and student peer educators on their involvement in this program.
Youth Engagement Is a Continuum

- Leadership positions
- Voting Members on Boards Committees (Hiring, Program, Development)
- Youth Forum
- Advocacy
- Youth Advisory Group
- Focus Groups/Surveys
- Evaluation
- Consultants
- Youth in Media
- Peer Education
- Mentoring
- Youth as trainers/facilitators
- Youth theatre
- Fundraiser
- Community Service

More opportunities; more young people can get involved

Model based off of ACT for Youth Center of Excellence (2012)
“Peer education is based on the reality that many people make changes not only based on what they know, but on the opinions and actions of their close, trusted peers.

Peer educators can communicate and understand in a way that the best-intentioned adults can’t, and can serve as role models for change.”

- UNICEF Life Skills
Why Peer Education?

Peer Education Builds Skills, Assets and Connectedness

“A peer education program is a way of improving services by spreading needed information throughout a community. Through such programs, people can gain the knowledge and skills to strengthen their communities, advocate for themselves and their needs, and assert more control over their lives.”

- The Community Tool Box
Can incorporate a curriculum that is evidence-based

- Developmentally appropriate
- Selected information that is current and relevant
- Accurate information provided; misconceptions addressed
- Information is balanced
- Useful skills built
- Self identification of assets and protective factors
- Student-to-student interactivity emphasized
- Transitions experience of older students (peer leaders) incorporated
- Students are engaged
PAD Peer Education Programs

• PAD has developed and delivered peer-led substance misuse prevention programs for almost three decades
• The programs are developed in partnership with key stakeholders, particularly public health, education and the youth themselves
• Supported continuously by the Masonic Foundation of Ontario
• The programs have shown to have a significant impact on both the peer leaders and the younger students
By the numbers…

Implemented in over 30 school boards across Ontario in 30 years

Each year:

- 300 peer educators trained
- 125 classes reached
- 3250 students involved in peer education programs

Overall:

- 10,000 peer educators trained
- 3,000 classes reached
- 90,000 students involved in peer education programs
• Empower students to make their own decisions by gaining **Knowledge**, exploring their **Attitudes** and learning **Skills** to manage their interactions with others.

• It is important to provide younger students with these learning experiences before they are confronted with actual decision-making situations.

• If we meet students where they are at, rather than where we want them to be, we are more likely to engage them in a discussion about options.
Three PAD Education Programs

Challenges, Beliefs and Changes (CBC)
What’s With Weed (WWW)
Get Ready

• Based on the premise that younger youth will related to and benefit from the diverse experiences of slightly older youth

• Younger youth are more likely to be engaged and receptive to information and learning opportunities
Challenges, Beliefs and Changes (CBC)

A peer education program to assist the transition to high school and address decisions about alcohol and other drugs.
Challenges, Beliefs and Changes

• Longest running peer-led drug prevention program in Ontario - 30 years
• Focus is on drug prevention and transition to grade 9
• Peer leaders participate in the two day training to explore the knowledge, attitudes and skills required to make decisions about substance use
• Newly training senior students customize programs for younger students that reflects the unique culture and substance use in the community
• CBC activities are reviewed regularly and updated every two years
What’s With Weed

A secondary school peer education program to address issues with marijuana use.
A developmentally appropriate program which aims to increase readiness skills of 11-12 year olds to make decisions about the substance that they are likely to encounter as they prepare to transition to their teens.
PAD peer education programs provide:

- Peer education training workshops: 1-2 day training programs on facilitation, drug literacy and curriculum activities delivered by professional trainer
- Varied curriculum of activities, discussion and practice
- Manuals for the peer educators providing complete program information
- Menu options to gear the programming to the unique community
- Free of charge
Panel Presentation:
Experiences in working with the CBC Peer Education Program

“Meet them where they’re at”
Panel Presentation

Jacky Allan  
Public Health Nurse (Substance Misuse Prevention), Elgin-St. Thomas Public Health Department

Allison Haldenby  
Guidance Counsellor, Elgin East Secondary School
Panel Presentation

Youth Addiction Counsellor
Canadian Mental Health Association, Muskoka Parry Sound
Panel Presentation

Jack Gaudette and Kennedie Close
Students at Elgin East Secondary School
Questions?
Available for consultation and peer education training...

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Contact Us – We do Consultations and workshops

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