DRUG AWARENESS WEEK



2011 ACTIVITIES GUIDE

For groups of young people age 17–24

Québec

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For this year's Drug Awareness Week (**November 20–26, 2011**) we suggest the following original activities for young people age 17–24
(Secondary V, adult education, vocational and technical education, and CEGEP students).

IMPORTANT:
More activities available at **dependances.gouv.qc.ca**
(Drugs and Alcohol section: 2011 Drug Awareness Week)

Note:
The following activities are not recommended for groups of young people age 10–16. Activity guides for young people age 10–12 and 13–16 are available for download at dependances.gouv.qc.ca. (Drug and Alcohol section: Drug Awareness Week)

DRUG AWARENESS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A social information and awareness campaign like Drug Awareness Week differs from standard prevention programs in terms of its form and intensity. Nevertheless, we did take into account certain factors found effective in the literature when developing tools for 2011 Drug Awareness Week, including the activities presented here.

A number of factors predict the effectiveness of an addiction prevention program for young people. Activities should be aimed at small groups with the same drug and alcohol consumption habits and that include prosocial peers (good communicators who are active in their community); be jointly led by a psychosocial professional and a prosocial peer; be adapted to the age and specific community of the young people targeted; and include followup sessions.

To find out more about predictors of effectiveness in preventing addiction, see the following documents:

Myriam Laventure, Krystel Boisvert, and Thérèse Besnard. "Programmes de prévention universelle et ciblée de la toxicomanie à l'adolescence : recension des facteurs prédictifs de l'efficacité", *Drogues, santé et société*, Vol. 9, No. 1, June 2010, pp. 121–164.

Institut national de santé publique du Québec. *Réussite éducative, santé, bien-être : agir efficacement en contexte scolaire – Synthèse des recommandations*, Eds. Jézabelle Palluy et al., [Québec], Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2010. [Available online] http://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/1065_ReussiteEducativeSanteBienEtre.pdf.

Gaëtane Dubé et al. *Enquête québécoise sur le tabac, l'alcool, la drogue et le jeu chez les élèves du secondaire,* 2008, Québec, Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2009, 222 p.

A list of additional documents is available at www.dependances.gouv.qc.ca (Drugs and Alcohol section: Publications about drugs and alcohol):

Young people and alcohol
Teens & Cannabis
Young people and designer drugs
Taking amphetamines to lose weight… Not such a great idea!
The dangers of chugging alcohol
Drugs… Let's talk about it
Chart: The law of effect
Chart: More about drugs

ACTIVITY 01

MYTH OR *REALITY?*

OBJECTIVE:

Provide young people with accurate information so they can make informed decisions about alcohol and drug use and gambling, and to prevent at-risk behaviors associated with drugs, alcohol, and gambling.

MATERIALS:

- *Myth* or *reality?* PowerPoint presentation (available for download at **dependances.gouv.qc.ca**)
- A computer and a multimedia projector
- The informational document (Appendix 2) may be used as an additional resource

TIME: 30 to 45 minutes

HOW THE ACTIVITY WORKS:

- Present the *Myth* or *reality?* PowerPoint presentation to the group. Ask the members of the group to determine whether the statements are facts or myths.
- Present the slides one at a time, taking the time to discuss each statement with the group. For example, ask those who think a given statement is a myth to raise their hand, or ask those who think it is a reality to raise theirs. Then move on to the next slide, which gives the correct answer.
- At the end of the presentation, lead a discussion on the perceptions the young people had at the beginning of the exercise and ask if the presentation raised any other questions.

ACTIVITY 02

MY CHOICE!

OBJECTIVE:

Encourage young people to discover an interest, pastime, or life goal that will act as a protective factor to help them steer clear of problems, including those related to alcohol and drug use or gambling.

MATERIALS: The My choice! questionnaire (Appendix 1)

TIME: About 30 minutes in class and 30 minutes or more for group discussion

HOW THE ACTIVITY WORKS:

- Ask each student to answer the questionnaire and write a letter to themselves based on their answers. Once they finish writing their letter, have the students seal the envelope and keep it in a safe place so they can open and read it a year later.

  Option: The moderator can also offer to return the letters to the students in one year, either by mail or email.

- Next, lead the young people in a discussion about the importance of having passions and dreams that help protect them from the inappropriate behaviors associated with alcohol and drug use and gambling, among other things. (See Appendix 2 for information on protective factors)

WHY NOT GET EVERYONE INVOLVED?

Try to give each young person the chance to take a turn, either at the front of the class or in their seat, to tell everyone about their passions and pastimes (their choices) so everyone can learn a little bit more about one another. Who knows, maybe some students will become interested in a new activity!

ACTIVITY 03

DEBATE

OBJECTIVE:

Provide young people with accurate information so they can make informed decisions about alcohol and drug use and gambling, and to prevent at-risk behaviors associated with drugs, alcohol, and gambling.

MATERIALS:

- The list of subjects (Appendix 3)

The informational document (Appendix 2) may be used as an additional resource

FORMAT:

- Two teams face off to debate a specific subject, with each taking turns to convince the jury that their arguments are the best.
- The jury will decide the outcome of the debate. The judge will end each debate by providing the answer indicated after each statement in this guide.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

- One moderator, who will also act as judge
- A jury composed of four to ten young people, one of whom will be appointed to be the foreperson
- The YES team (three to five people)
- The NO team (three to five people)
- The other people present will serve as the audience.

ACTIVITY 03

DEBATE (CONT'D)

TIME: Approximately 18 minutes for each statement being debated

HOW THE ACTIVITY WORKS:

- The moderator (judge) selects three statements from those proposed in this guide, explains the rules of the activity, and makes sure the teams comply with the time limits for each phase of the debate.
- For each of the selected statements, the YES team and the NO team are given eight minutes to prepare their arguments. It is not necessary for all of the team members to agree with the position they have to take (YES or NO). The goal is to find arguments that support the team's position. The moderator may encourage the members of the team to use examples (real situations) to back up their arguments.
- Each team is given five minutes to present their arguments to the jury. Flip a coin to determine which team begins the debate.
- The jury deliberates for three to five minutes, and then the foreperson announces the verdict.
- The judge comments on the jury's verdict and provides the answer indicated after each statement in this guide. If need be, the judge can lead a discussion about the subject with all participants.

APPENDIX 1 MY CHOICE!

Right now, my main interest is:

This is how I first found out about it:

This is what drew me to it:

Whenever I do something related to this interest, this is how I feel:

This is how I would describe myself today:

This is how I picture myself in one year:

APPENDIX 1 MY CHOICE! (CONT'D)

Message to myself!
Based on the answers you just gave, write yourself a letter that you will read one year from now.

Here is an example of how you can start your letter:
Dear Me, I want you to remember that one year ago…

APPENDIX 2 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

Protective factors are things which, by their very presence in people's lives, can reduce the likelihood of problems with alcohol, drugs, or gambling. A protective factor can be acquired or reinforced.

INVOLVEMENT = A PROTECTIVE FACTOR

INVOLVEMENT:

Regular participation in an activity (or activities) for an extended period, and in a variety of settings (e.g., home, school, or school or community youth organizations)

Getting young people involved in their communities is one of the biggest factors in preventing problems related to alcohol and drugs.

What you gain from getting involved:

Getting involved in an activity you enjoy can help you in many ways. For instance it can help you boost your self-awareness and self-confidence, find friends who share similar interests, interact with helpful and supportive adults, be more assertive, learn how to manage your emotions, and develop a sense of belonging to your community—all of which makes you feel better about yourself.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES:

- Community service and volunteering
- Social action
- Individual or team sports
- Music and the arts
- Involvement in student life (being part of a committee, student radio, improv league, etc.)

EXAMPLES OF INVOLVEMENT:

- Participating in campus activities (cultural or sporting events)
- Sitting on committees
- Getting involved in your workplace (organizing an event, sitting on a committee, or attending social events)
- Participating in recreational activities and organized sports in your neighborhood or town/city
- Volunteering with a neighborhood group
- Doing things with your family (hiking, biking, etc.)
- Joining a sports team
- Taking lessons (dance, painting, piano, etc.)
- Helping friends or coworkers with their projects

OTHER PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

- Self-esteem
- Knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses
- Specific goals and confidence in your future
- A circle of friends you can trust
- Strong family ties
- Strong social skills (assertiveness, respect for others, etc.)
- Healthy lifestyle (daily physical activity, healthy diet, good sleep habits, etc.)

APPENDIX 3 DEBATE—LIST OF SUBJECTS

SUBJECT 1

You can be sure of what's in designer drugs since they are chemical products.

NO

Designer drugs are produced illegally by "cooks" or underground chemists. While concocting these drugs, these cooks face huge risks such as causing a fire or an explosion. Producing these drugs also pollutes the environment considerably.

No matter the shape, color, or origin of designer drugs, it's impossible to know exactly what is in them.

One dose may contain
- The desired substance in its pure state
- The substance mixed with other products
- A completely different substance from the one you wanted

Which means the effect on you may be
- None at all
- Totally or partially what you expected
- Too strong
- Dangerous or even toxic

SUBJECT 2

Only people who have a serious alcohol or drug addiction problem experience negative consequences associated with their consumption.

NO

Some young people experience negative consequences from using alcohol or other drugs without necessarily developing an abuse or addiction problem.

Here are some examples:
- A sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy following an unprotected sexual encounter—and the emotional toll and relationship problems they can cause
- Injuries from a fight or accident
- Health problems such as digestive problems, nasal irritation, or overdose
- Psychological problems such as distress, anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, etc.
- Problems at school such as absenteeism, low motivation, suspension, and poor grades
- Relationship problems with friends and family, including big arguments after drinking or taking drugs or disagreements about the use of these products

APPENDIX 3 DEBATE—LIST OF SUBJECTS (CONT'D)

SUBJECT 3

Since the early 2000s, the number of young people age 15 to 24 who use alcohol or take drugs has increased significantly.

NO

Overall, drinking among young people age 15 to 24 has actually decreased since 2000.

According to the Canadian Drug and Alcohol Use Monitoring Survey (January 2009):

- Three-quarters (75.5%) of young Canadians age 15 to 24 reported having consumed alcohol in the twelve months preceding the survey. This is down from 82.9% in 2004.
- Cannabis use among young people age 15 to 24 in the twelve months preceding the survey was down from 37.0% in 2004 to 26.3% in 2009.
- Use of drugs other than alcohol and cannabis in young people age 15 to 24 in the twelve months preceding the survey fell from 11.3% in 2004 to 5.5% in 2009.

SUBJECT 4

There are surefire tricks to win at games of chance like poker (with friends or online) or video lottery.

NO

There is no surefire way of winning at gambling. Luck—good and bad—is the name of the game!
And it is generally recognized that the odds of winning online games are higher on practice sites where people can play without betting money than on sites where people have to bet money.

APPENDIX 3 DEBATE—LIST OF SUBJECTS (CONT'D)

SUBJECT 5

At parties, chugging is a fun, harmless challenge!

NO

Chugging alcohol (drinking a large quantity of alcohol in a very short time) can cause acute alcohol poisoning, coma, and even death!

Here are the signs:

- Significant reduction in or total loss of response
- Loss of consciousness or deep sleep
- Difficulty breathing
- Weak pulse
- Repeated vomiting
- Excessive perspiration
- Damp or cold skin

WARNING: A person who is exhibiting these signs should never be left alone. Call 9-1-1.



La Direction des communications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec

This document is only available online at **dependances.gouv.qc.ca**
(**Drugs and Alcohol** section: **Drug Awareness Week**).

Masculine pronouns are used generically in this document.

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