

HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

April 2023

DENTAL HEALTH

Teaching and Learning



Springtime smiles: April is oral health month

April is oral health month in Canada and a perfect time to help children set new goals to help their smile shine. The theme of the month this year is “Oral Health for Total Health,” which is an important reminder that taking good care of our mouth, teeth, and gums benefits our overall physical and mental well-being.

The British Columbia Dental Association, [Brush2Win](#) contest, runs **April 1-30, 2023**, and is open to all BC elementary schools with children in Kindergarten through Grade 3. Schools registering during the contest period will be entered into a draw for **one of five \$1,000 prizes!**

The month-long contest promotes good dental health habits and challenges children to brush (and floss!) twice daily for a full month. Brushing twice a day is a simple step to help keep teeth clean and healthy and avoid cavities. Download and print a Brush2Win poster (PDF) for your classroom! ([English](#), [French](#))

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association's website, [Dental Hygiene Canada](#), also has several school-aged resources to create healthy lesson plans. You can also find educational activity sheets and [feature resources](#) that focus on sugar, diabetes, vaping, tooth brushing, and more.

Make sure to check out [Interior Health's Dental Toolkit](#) for additional resources.

Happy Oral Health Month!



HARM REDUCTION

Teaching and Learning

Facts and Myths about Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a key component of a [comprehensive school approach to substance use](#). Let's explore some common myths about harm reduction.

X MYTH: Talking about the effects of various substances makes them more appealing to students.

✓ FACT: It is natural for youth to have questions about substance use. Talking honestly with youth in school about the effects of substances creates a safe place to ask questions and get accurate information. Without opportunities for open, fact-based dialogue youth will seek out other sources of information that may not be credible.

X MYTH: Talking to youth about how to reduce risk if using substances will encourage more youth to experiment with drugs and alcohol.

✓ FACT: Many studies show that harm reduction approaches do not encourage youth to experiment with substances. Instead, harm reduction approaches present the real risks of using substances while also providing information on ways to reduce those risks, including abstinence. [Research](#) shows youth often find harm reduction education to be more realistic and practical.

X MYTH: The key to preventing substance use harm is to tell youth to make "good" choices.

✓ FACT: Preventing substance use related harm is about more than just making "good or bad" choices. Substance use harms are influenced by social factors including the privileges one has and/or the constraints and barriers they face in life. Sometimes systemic factors like racism, stigma and criminalization create more harm than the drug itself. Youth who are particularly vulnerable to experiencing substance related harms are often dealing with other challenges like racism, poverty, learning disabilities, trauma and more. Harm reduction approaches encourage schools to provide supports to address the broader factors that put youth at risk rather than simply focussing on substances.

X MYTH: If a student experiences harsh consequences for using substances, they are more likely to stop using.

✓ FACT: Harsh penalties and consequences in schools can actually create unintended harm. Approaches such as zero tolerance policies, expulsion and abstinence-based education programs that refer to drugs and people who use them as "bad" or "criminal" have limited effectiveness and can perpetuate stigma, contribute to isolation, shame and reluctance to seek help.

Want to learn more about harm reduction? Check out the [Youth Harm Reduction Toolkit](#) or get in touch with your local [youth harm reduction coordinator](#).



Harm reduction is an evidence-based approach that respects and promotes human rights and is a key ingredient of effective efforts to address youth substance use.

IMMUNIZATION

Community Partnerships

Immunization Records



Have a student's record that needs updating or submitting? Updating or submitting your student's immunization records can be done online through the BC Provincial Immunization Registry at www.immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca

To view immunization records and see if they are up to date visit [Health Gateway \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://HealthGateway.gov.bc.ca)

If you have questions about immunizations or would like to book an appointment – please call your local [Public Health Unit](#)

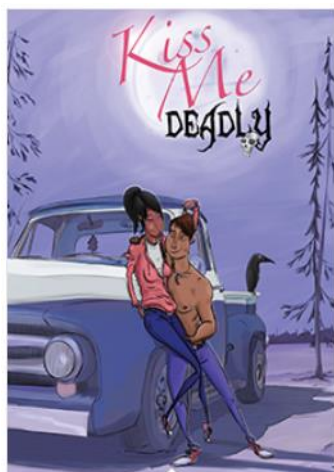
INDIGENOUS STORY STUDIO

Teaching and Learning

Graphic Novels Still Available

There are still a variety of graphic novels available from Indigenous Story Studio. These resources help to educate youth in a non-threatening and entertaining way on health and social issues.

For more information see previews and pricing at www.istorystudio.com. There is an order link on the website or send your order and billing address to sean@istorystudio.com.



Kiss Me Deadly - sexual health



River Run - smoking prevention

MENTAL HEALTH

Teaching and Learning



School Counsellors Series: Self-Injury, Depression & Suicide by BC Children's Hospital

You can access the 1 hour [Webinar recording](#) of the February 7, 2023 Child and Youth Mental Health Webinar Series for BC School Counsellors on the Compass Mental Health website under Webinar Recordings. Additional toolkits and resources are also available.

NUTRITION

Teaching and Learning

Educator Resources

[Hands on Food](#) – looking for an engaging way to teach food literacy? Where food comes from, how to grow it, different methods of preparation and more. Have a look through this new resource for teaching nutrition, food skills and food systems through experiential learning. Join the virtual [Hands on Food](#) information session on April 27th to learn more.



[Canada's Food Guide digital activity](#) – looking for ways to teach about the Canada's Food Guide? Check out this online activity to help students learn about the different types of foods in the Canada's Food Guide (grades 4-6).

[School Garden Mentorship Program](#) – Farm to School BC is offering a free mentorship program for K-12 educators interested in creating a school garden or revitalizing and existing garden. They offer monthly online workshops. Check out the next session on outdoor planting on April 4th.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/LITERACY

Teaching and Learning

School Physical Activity and Physical Literacy (PAPL) Resource

This Free Provincial Resource aligns with the BC PHE Curriculum. Access information on Pro-D opportunities, resources for the classroom, and lesson plans.

For more information and to access the resources see: [Physical Activity and Physical Literacy in BC Schools](#)



RESOURCES

Teaching and Learning

Teaching Toolkits

Interior Health has recently updated the [Teaching Toolkits](#) with resources for teachers on a variety of health related topics like COVID-19 Information, Dental and Oral Health, Hand Hygiene, Positive Mental Health, and Substance Use.

Healthy Schools BC Website

The [Healthy Schools BC Website](#) is a great resource for teachers. Look for the “Classroom and School Resources” and “Teach Food First”.



Healthy Schools Information Sharing

The following School Districts have a Healthy Schools tab on their websites. Take a look at all the great information available from: [SD 5](#), [SD 6](#), [SD 8](#), [SD 19](#), [SD 53](#), [SD 73](#), [SD 83](#)

Community Partnerships

Harm Reduction Resources

For resources visit the [Interior Health Website](#).

To connect with a Harm Reduction Coordinator email: harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca

Tobacco and Vapour Prevention and Control

For resources visit the [Interior Health Website](#).

To connect with a Tobacco Reduction Coordinator email: tobaccoandvape@interiorhealth.ca.

For previous newsletters: [Health Promoting Schools Newsletters](#)