

HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

February 2023

MENTAL HEALTH

Teaching and Learning

PREMIERE: Youth Inspiring Action for Mental Health Video Toolkit (February 15, 3:30 - 4:30 pm PST)

The BC Children's Health Promotion/Health Literacy Team is very happy to share their new webinar which will be premiering videos showcasing the experiences of students from across BC advocating for mental well-being in their schools and communities. Please see below for more information and how to register. Feel free to share this webinar premiere invitation with your networks and any young people you work with who may be interested!

Join us for a free virtual premiere featuring the new Balancing Our Minds Inspiring Action Toolkit Videos on February 15, 2023 from 3:30 - 4:30pm PST. The webinar will showcase the experiences of young people in BC school communities advocating for change in mental health. Check out the trailer [here](#).



The new resource - [Inspiring Action & Creating Change for Mental Health, a toolkit for youth, by youth](#) - aims to support youth wanting to make changes for improved mental health and well-being in their schools and communities. The toolkit videos feature the experiences of young people, some who are early on their advocacy journey and some who have years of experience. The toolkit was created alongside our youth advisory committee, who provided input and led action during the development process.

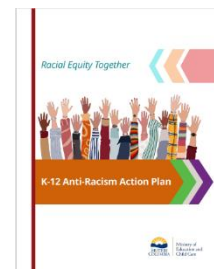
Register for the webinar premiere [here](#).

Please share this invitation with your networks and any young people you work with. We look forward to you joining us on the 15th of February!

Questions or comments? Contact Sabrina Khan at sabrina.khan@cw.bc.ca.

B.C. launches anti-racism action plan for K-12 students

Empowering students and educators to identify and take action against racism and discrimination in British Columbia schools is the aim of a new provincial K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan launched on Monday, Jan. 23, 2023. The action plan will create change in B.C. schools by raising awareness and creating resources to improve the school experience for racialized students, staff and families so that everyone feels a strong sense of belonging.



To facilitate this work, the Ministry of Education and Child Care will provide new training opportunities for all school staff to help them better understand their role in fostering anti-racist school environments. The action plan will also empower students and staff to identify biases and address acts of racism or discrimination with new incident-response guidelines. For more information see: [K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan](#).

Recording of Webinar Series for BC School Counsellors

A [Webinar](#) recording of the January 17th, 2023 Child & Youth Mental Health Webinar Series for BC School Counsellors (Session 1) on Navigating Anxiety for Children and Youth in a School Setting is now available for viewing on their website.



Challenges with School Attendance and Refusal

A series of 3 Webinars is now available for school staff and counsellors on the Compass Mental Health Website:

1. [Introduction to school avoidance](#)
2. [Managing School Avoidance in the Elementary Years](#)
3. [Building a Successful School Year](#)

For parents and caregivers, the following webinar may be helpful: [School Anxiety & Attendance Challenges for parents and Caregivers: Webinar Series](#)



Ask Auntie

Ask Auntie is an online and community-based wellness program, for Indigenous girls aged 10 -14 living in BC. Rooted in the Cuystwi program, the Ask Auntie program takes girls on a journey to learn about health and their bodies, connection and relationships, culture and the history of colonization, and what it means to be strong Indigenous girls.

For more information see: [Ask Auntie — Indigenous Youth Wellness](#)

NUTRITION

Teaching and Learning

Teacher Resources – Body Image and Weight Bias

February is Eating Disorder awareness month. Have a look at the following resources to support a weight inclusive classroom and promote positive body image.

[Weight Bias and Stigma in Schools](#) – check out Interior Health’s resource for schools to inform staff on weight bias and stigma and provide resources to create a weight-inclusive school environment. Virtual workshops are available to educators upon request.

[Promoting Positive Body Image – A Resource for Educators](#) - a resource to support school staff and others with promoting positive body image and relationships with food for children and youth. (Jesse’s Legacy and Vancouver Coastal Health)



RADON

Community Partnerships

Interior Health Pilot Project Testing for Radon in Schools

Radon is a radioactive gas that is formed naturally in the ground. It has no colour, odour, or taste and can accumulate indoors, particularly in basements and ground floors. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in Canada after smoking. Spending long periods of time in rooms where radon is present can increase the chance of developing lung cancer. The only way to know radon levels is to test for it.

Interior Health is currently collaborating with schools on a radon testing pilot project. The project includes reviewing radon results and supplementing ongoing testing efforts. Interior Health will work with school management to reduce radon levels where high levels are found.

According to the BC Centre for Disease Control, radon levels are generally higher in the Interior region than other areas of the province. While this project focuses on schools, this setting only accounts for part of the total exposure people may receive. Radon may be present in other buildings in your community, including homes. [We encourage everyone to test their home for radon.](#)

For more information and resources about radon in BC and to order a long-term test kit visit:

- [Interior Health’s Radon Information Page](#) - Radon Overview and Resources
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) - Radon Overview and BC Mapping Information
- [BC Lung Foundation](#) - Long-Term Test Kit Information and Radon Projects in BC

If you have questions, please contact the Healthy Schools team at: HealthySchools@interiorhealth.ca.



SUBSTANCE USE EDUCATION

Teaching and Learning

ABCs of Substance Use Education

When it comes to substance use education, school professionals are an important resource. Schools can provide supportive environments that promote overall well-being and equip students with the confidence, knowledge, and skills they need to make decisions about the substances they'll encounter as they grow.

Bryn and guest co-host Cindy Andrew come together with Dave Mackenzie, School Counsellor and Art Steinmann, Youth Substance Use Health Promotion Specialist to talk about the ABCs of substance use education and schools. They share evidence-based approaches that help students build protective factors including autonomy, belonging and competence and describe how this can help prevent, delay and reduce substance-related harms.

This episode is a collaboration between BC Children's Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre and [Bunyaad Public Affairs Inc.](#)

Podcast:

[Promoting Student Well-Being: The ABCs of Substance Use Education | Kelty Mental Health](#)



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](#)