

# HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025

## DENTAL HEALTH

### Teaching and Learning

#### April is Oral Health Month Beautiful Smiles Blossom!



April is Oral Health Month making this a perfect time to set some goals for our teeth. The theme, “Oral Health for Total Health” is an important reminder that taking good care of our mouth, teeth, and gums benefits our overall physical and mental well-being. Below are some fun opportunities to celebrate Oral Health Month.

To promote school participation and child engagement, the British Columbia Dental Association (BCDA) is offering a [Brush2Win](#) tooth brushing contest for British Columbia’s Kindergarten to Grade 3 students. [This](#) contest runs April 1-30, 2025 and schools that register during the contest period will be entered into a draw for one of five \$1,000 prizes! This month-long contest promotes good dental health habits and challenges children to brush (and floss) twice daily.

Download your toothbrushing calendar here: [Oral Health Month - BCDA Public Site](#)

The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association is offering a [National Colouring Contest](#) promoting “Tooth Tips”

- Choose healthy snacks
- Brush 2 minutes, 2 times a day
- Clean between your teeth every day
- Use fluoride toothpaste
- Change your brush every 3 months



Colouring contest submissions are due by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 with opportunities to win prizes!

For additional fun ideas on how to incorporate oral health into your curriculum, check out the Interior Health Healthy School Toolkit Series: [Dental and Oral Health](#).

## FOOD LITERACY

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### Webinars & Workshops

- *Thurs, Apr 3rd* - Join Farm to School BC and Matthew Kemshaw for an inspiring afterschool webinar on [Flourish! A Community Rooted Approach to School Food](#). This is part of a growing series of food literacy focused webinars we've planned for the year. [Learn more and register.](#)
- Virtual nutrition education workshops for BC K-12 teachers are also offered by [Registered Dietitians at BC Dairy Association](#) (BCDA). Educators who have completed a workshop can apply for a [mini food grant](#) to purchase food for their classroom.

### Teaching Resource

Explore BC Agriculture in the Classroom's [In the Kitchen – Soup Basics](#), a hands-on food literacy resource for Grades 9-12. It features a 20-minute video with Chef Randle, a lesson plan, and BC-grown recipes.

### Grant Opportunity

The United Way BC supports school food programs by funding upgrades to food infrastructure. Open to non-profits across BC, the grant helps organizations purchase or improve equipment for preparing, storing, and transporting food. For more information see: [United Way British Columbia Grants & Funding](#). Applications close on **April 8, 2025**.



## LEGAL SUBSTANCES AND YOUTH HARM REDUCTION

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### Teaching and Learning

#### Empowered Parenting: A New Way to Support Families

Talking to kids about substance use can feel challenging, and we know parents want guidance—but finding time can be tough. That's why the Legal Substance Team in partnership with the Youth Harm Reduction Team launched a new pilot program alongside School District 20 called **Empowered Parenting**, a project designed to provide practical tips around youth substance use in small, easy-to-digest pieces.

Each week, we share quick, helpful insights through the school newsletter to support meaningful conversations at home. To complement this, we host **two virtual sessions** where parents can connect, share experiences, and discuss what's working (or not!). These sessions also help us refine the approach so it can be adapted for other schools.

We'll also be covering the latest trends in nicotine and vaping products—because with so many new products that always seem to be appearing, it can be hard to keep up. Our goal is to provide clear, balanced information so parents feel confident having these conversations with their kids.

We're excited to see how this project grows—because informed, confident parents make a big difference! If your school and/or district is interested in becoming involved in this project as it expands in the future, please email [LegalSubstances@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:LegalSubstances@interiorhealth.ca). Stay tuned for more updates!

### Professional Development for Educators

The Interior Health Youth Harm Reduction Team offers education and training for middle and secondary school administration, counsellors and teachers, educators, as well as school trustees on a number of topics. They are able to combine and customize sessions based on the need. Sessions can be delivered virtually and in-person.

The following may be topics of interest.

- Facts and Myths about Harm Reduction and Youth
- Substance Use Education in the Classroom
- Safety First Deep-Dive
- Exploring School Policies and Practices
- Harm Reduction Services
- Harm Reduction Tools for Counsellors

For more details about opportunities for professional development contact the Youth Harm Reduction Team at [yhrc@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:yhrc@interiorhealth.ca)



**Interior Health**

**Professional Development for Educators**

*The Interior Health Youth Harm Reduction Team offers education and training for middle and secondary school administration, counsellors and teachers, educators as well as school trustees on a number of topics. We can combine and customize sessions based on your needs. Sessions can be delivered virtually and in-person.*

**Facts and Myths about Harm Reduction and Youth**  
Explore what a harm reduction approach is and what it can look like for youth in the school setting. We will unpack some common myths and misunderstandings together and discuss opportunities and challenges for schools.

**Substance Use Education in the Classroom**  
Let's discuss what the research says about the effectiveness of various approaches to substance use education. We will take a look at two secondary school education programs that Interior Health has adapted for use in B.C. Finally, we will engage you in identifying opportunities and overcoming challenges in bringing this approach into the classroom.

**Safety First Deep-Dive**  
Building off the previous session, this is a more in-depth look at *Safety First* (an evidence based-harm reduction curricular aligned resource for secondary schools). Participants will understand key components of effective facilitator delivery styles, receive an overview of the lessons and participate in program activities.

**Exploring School Policies and Practices**  
Tools and questions will be provided to assist schools in evaluating policies and practices with a harm reduction lens. We will discuss the value of having a separate substance use policy and alternatives to zero-tolerance approaches that still allow for boundary setting while also keeping students connected.

**Harm Reduction Services**  
Participants will be given an overview of harm reduction programs and services available for youth including naloxone programs, supply distribution programs, drug checking and overdose prevention services. We will discuss how to locate harm reduction services, create awareness among students and explore offering harm reduction services in schools.

**Harm Reduction Tools for Counsellors**  
Practical tools and approaches will be provided to support counsellors to incorporate harm reduction principles into their practice. Tips to help youth who use substances reduce their risk will be discussed as well as how key legislation like the duty to report and mature minor consent apply to youth substance use and harm reduction service access.

**CONTACT US** Let's discuss your needs! [yhrc@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:yhrc@interiorhealth.ca)



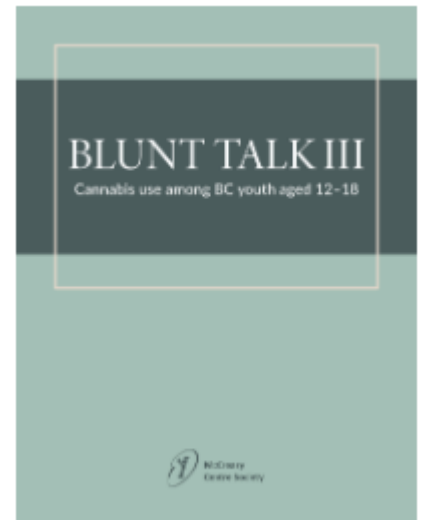
### Just released: Blunt Talk III: Cannabis use among BC youth aged 12-18

The report is the first to look at cannabis using BC AHS data since cannabis was legalized for adults.

To view the report, please [click here](#).

[To hear about the results, join one of these webinar presentations](#) on:

- March 28th | 12pm-1pm PT: [Webinar link](#)
- April 10th | 1pm-2pm PT: [Webinar link](#)
- April 15th | 10am-11am PT: [Webinar link](#)
- April 17th | 10am-11am PT: [Webinar link](#)
- April 17th | 2pm-3pm PT: [Webinar link](#)



## MENTAL HEALTH

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### Teaching and Learning Upcoming Education Opportunities

#### For Professionals from the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors

[Transforming Problematic Caregiver Patterns: a workshop to support clinician's effectiveness when working with tricky parents and caregivers](#)

Thursday, April 17th | 9am - 12pm online via Zoom  
Presenter: Natasha Files MSW, RSW

#### For Caregivers/Parents from the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors

[Caregivers and the Teen Years: How to Navigate Your Relationship, Healthy Boundaries, and Conflict](#)

Tuesday, April 29th | 6 - 7pm, free virtual public event

## RESOURCES

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### Teaching and Learning

#### Interior Health Website

The [School Health](#) section of the Interior Health Public Website will take you to the following sections where you can find more information: [Information for School Staff](#), [Promoting Health of Children & Youth in School](#), and [Medical Conditions at School](#).

#### 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 23](#), [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: [YHRC@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:YHRC@interiorhealth.ca)

#### Legal Substances Program

For resources on tobacco, vaping or cannabis use, visit the Interior Health [Tobacco & Vaping Information for Schools webpage](#) or the [Cannabis Information for Youth webpage](#).

To connect with a Legal Substances Reduction Coordinator, email: [LegalSubstances@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:LegalSubstances@interiorhealth.ca)

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