

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS!

Each year, CODA touches the lives of thousands of Canadian students, teachers and parents through our programs. The following summarizes which programs we are currently offering and which ones we have under development. If you have questions, or are interested in bringing a CODA program to your school or community group, call the Programs Manager at 416-763-1491 x 223.

Drugs and the Brain (DB): This multi-modular program, which focuses on the biological and physio-social consequences of drug abuse, is targeted to students in grades 7 through 12, their parents and teachers. In student sessions, many topics are covered and include up-to-date scientific information on all drugs; social issues like peer pressure and new responsibilities, how they relate to people and how all of these are affected by drug use. Presentations designed for parents and teachers also include information about human psychological development and dysfunction insofar as they affect and are affected by drugs. This is so they can understand their child/student better and be able to engage them and/or intervene when necessary. Using this insightful, direct and non-judgmental approach, students are made aware of the emotional impact drug abuse can have on them, their families, their friends and to their future. They also learn the devastating effects these drugs can have on their brains and bodies. Armed with this knowledge, they will be able to make informed decisions. The drug information provided in the presentation can be customized to meet the needs of the specific school. For example, a school faced with crystal meth abuse challenges, may request the Between Life and Death: The Crystal Meth Explosion module, as opposed to the general module.

What If? The What If? Drug Awareness Program has been in operation through CODA since 1997. More than 25,000 children have heard the story telling approach in their classrooms across Ontario, in North West Territories and in South Carolina. The original stories are narrated using stuffed animal characters to enhance the stories. Stories vary with age groups, touching on more and more involved issues related to substance abuse. Children in junior and senior kindergarten really enjoy the street proofing and poison proofing aspects of the story. As with their older siblings and friends, they repeat the rhymes and songs with enthusiasm. The Drug discussions can sometimes be surprising. For example, children in grade 2 have had in-depth knowledge of drugs such as ecstasy, cocaine, marijuana and speed. Their approach to the discussions detailed the descriptions of the drugs, street names and, in some cases, unsolicited demonstrations of how the drugs are used. One child explained that the flower of the marijuana plant was the best part because it had more of the drug in it.

As the recipients' grade level progresses, more time is allowed for the program so more discussion can be accomplished. Disclosures have ranged from one child in grade two turning to her friend (after asking about marijuana) and exclaiming "Uh oh, mom isn't gonna like it when she hears this!"; to one child plaintively asking what would happen to her when her mother died from using 'really bad drugs'. Schools ensure that staff is present during the sessions to allow for follow up and to ensure that disclosures are dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Daycares, cub and beaver groups and brownies and sparks groups have also enjoyed the program and, judging by the feedback from leaders, gained a great deal of knowledge. Summer camps indicated that children repeated the rhyme in the story and prevented others from picking up needles and other discarded drug paraphernalia.

Youth Advisory Council (YAC): CODA's newest initiative is the Youth Advisory Council (YAC). Composed of regional youth representatives, the YAC will act as an advisory body to CODA staff, and as CODA youth representatives in their respective administrative regions. As Ontario is composed of 16 administrative regions, the Youth Advisory Council will be composed of 16 youth advisors, one per administrative region. The YAC will serve as an advisory body that will assess and evaluate the relevance of CODA programming to Canadian youth, improving CODA's strategies and methodology.

The YAC will increase CODA's visibility and outreach to Ontario's diverse youth population. Since CODA programs are geared towards youth, the YAC will be composed of youth representatives from all over Ontario. As drug abuse is a regionally variant social phenomenon, a YAC reflecting that diversity in its composition will be able to provide CODA with further insight into youth needs and concerns as is specific to their respective regions. By developing the YAC, youth involvement in CODA programs is expected to increase. Creating a YAC will stimulate a sense of youth ownership of CODA programs, increasing CODA's outreach.

Prescription / Over the Counter (Rx/OTC) Drug Abuse: Rx/OTC drug abuse program targets youth, parents, other adults and health professionals (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, paramedics) in addressing the issues surrounding prescription and over the counter drug abuse and misuse. The purpose of this program is to highlight the eminent dangers of misused and abused Rx/OTC drugs. Recipients will be educated on the biological and psychosocial effects of Rx/OTC abuse on both short and long term consequences and implications. This is a comprehensive educational and awareness raising program aiming to prevent the abuse and misuse of Rx/OTC drugs. The Rx/OTC program incorporates various learning tools and educational resources as educational videos, pamphlets and interactive activities.

The professionals module of this program is delivered through a dynamic and engaging session where CODA's team of drug abuse experts work towards increasing the capacity of health professionals to prevent Rx/OTC drug abuse within their own working environment and community at large. After establishing the working definitions and latest available statistics on the extent of Rx/OTC drug abuse in Canada, participants will explore the most commonly abused Rx/OTC drugs as well as the various populations that are known abusers. At-risk populations and communities, along with how to work with them, will also be discussed. Having identified which popular Rx/OTC drugs are subject to abuse and by whom, the workshop curriculum will move on to shed some light on the most popular methods of drug diversion and the reasons behind Rx/OTC drug trafficking.

Building on this comprehensive look into Rx/OTC drug abuse in Canada, participants will explore current Canadian efforts to monitor, minimize and prevent such abuse, highlighting CODA's role and introducing ways to contribute to preventing Rx/OTC drug abuse.

PROGRAMS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Parenting Program (PP): targeting parents and legal guardians, this program uses different parenting models in addressing substance abuse with youth. In addition to providing parents with the knowledge and education surrounding substances of abuse, this program heightens parents' awareness of the modeling effects of their own substance abuse or misuse on their children. Another purpose of this program is to help parents identify early signs of substance abuse and equip them with the necessary parenting tools to prevent substance abuse in their families.

Front Line Health Professionals (FLHP) (physicians, nurses, pharmacists, paramedics): Designed to raise awareness amongst health professionals most directly working / or interacting with substance abuse in their varied capacities. The FLHP educates health professionals as to the position and extent of substance abuse amongst youth and provides them with essential preventive education skills that will facilitate their work with their respective patients. In addition, the FLHP bridges the gap between health professionals and youth in terms of knowledge of substance abuse, prevention programs and the latest trends or fads amongst youth.

Teachers Program (TPP): targets teachers and school administrators in addressing the issues surrounding substance abuse in the classroom and what role teachers can play in preventing their youth from abusing drugs. The purpose of this program is educate teachers and school administrators on substance abuse providing them with the necessary teaching and modeling skills to help prevent students from abusing drugs. The program also addresses methods of building and strengthening resiliency in students and approaches to dealing with substance abuse in the classroom.