

CALLING ALL HEALTH PROMOTERS! The Council on Drug Abuse is looking to expand its Educator pool

Qualified educators are the arm by which CODA reaches out to its target communities. An instrumental part of successful preventive drug abuse education is having a team of trained health promotion specialists to deliver the programs. Since its inception in 1969, the Council on Drug Abuse has hosted professional development training sessions (TTT=Train-the-Trainers) where various dedicated health promoters receive an extensive full day training course on drug abuse, communicating to youth and education on the various CODA programs.

What is a CODA Educator? CODA Educators are health promoters with various academic backgrounds who share a passion and dedication to prevent drug abuse through education.

Serving as a refresher course for current CODA educators, and a recruitment and training opportunity for new potential Educators, CODA looks forward to expanding its pool of Educators across Ontario and beyond. With the creation of new programs like the Youth Advisory Council and the Prescription/Over the Counter drug abuse program, CODA is developing a new and up-to-date curriculum, providing training on CODA's new programs and current offerings.

In support of the development of a national Youth Advisory Council and new programs, CODA's long term goal is to provide adequate TTT sessions to allow for the recruitment of new CODA educators nationwide. Our total educator pool would expand to 104 covering all administrative regions across Canada.

What Does a CODA Educator Do? Each CODA Educator is assigned an administrative region, their region of residence, to deliver CODA programs. As a best practice for program delivery and effective messaging to youth, and since drug abuse is a regional phenomenon, CODA Educators deliver programs in their respective regions of residence since they are most familiar with the face of drug abuse in their areas, issues and concerns of the communities and how to address them. This is truly a grassroots solution to a grassroots problem.

As schools or community groups request CODA assistance in preventing drug abuse in their schools, or communities, CODA coordinates a program schedule with its area designated Educator and facilitates the delivery of the required programs. CODA Educators then work in the schools on the pre-determined schedule and deliver the program sessions in-class, working directly and interactively with the students. In addition, and as is often requested, CODA Educators also conduct sessions for parents and teachers.

As our frontline experts, CODA Educators also act as advisors to the CODA management and staff team, ensuring that CODA stays at the forefront of preventive drug abuse education.

Why become a CODA Educator? As a non-profit charity organization, CODA strives hard to secure the funds necessary to recruit and train its educators. In addition to the rewards of making a valuable contribution to their communities and helping prevent drug abuse in their schools, homes and regions, building safe communities and healthy life for Ontarians, CODA remunerates its educators with a small honorarium for their program delivery, and covers all related out-of-pocket expenses.

With a national mandate to provide preventive drug abuse education to youth in grades 7, 8 & 9, along with those affecting youth (teachers, parents, other adults and health professionals), CODA is expanding its program delivery beyond Ontario. Educators not only have the opportunity to be an active force in the fight against drug abuse, but also to engage in professional forums and workshops and develop themselves and their knowledge of the field of drug abuse as they represent CODA.

What's in it for CODA? As a leader in providing preventive drug abuse education programs, CODA relies on its professionally trained Educators to reach out to their target audience.

How can I become a CODA Educator? This year, CODA will be holding TTT sessions in Toronto, Calgary, Montreal and Halifax. Once the dates and location for each of those cities are confirmed, CODA will announce a call for applicants. To attend the TTT session in your area, you will be asked to submit a completed application form along with your C.V. and letter of interest. Successful applicants will be invited to attend a full day of professional training sessions and workshops. Selected potential CODA educators will then be shortlisted for a hiring interview process. For more information about becoming a CODA Educator and the Train the Trainer sessions, please contact the CODA offices.

Interested in joining the CODA Educator team? Watch for updates on sessions in your area in upcoming CODA Reports.