

1



CANNABIS & MENTAL HEALTH

Summary

Cannabis and Mental Health is a project by the Schizophrenia Society of Canada (SSC). Centering lived experience and empowering marginalized youth voices is essential in our work at the SSC. We engage and support harder-to-reach youth, especially those who feel their realities aren't reflected in mainstream public health approaches to cannabis and mental health education.

Created for youth by youth, and supported by our scientific and strategic advisors, the Cannabis and Mental Health Project includes a free [online course](#) and a [mentor guide](#) with activities for educators, peer support and youth workers, guardians and youth allies.

The resources are evidence-based and are designed to promote engagement and develop essential skills in health literacy. For more about our evidence base, [please see our website](#).

Project Goals

Our resources are designed to support informed decision-making, and encourage teens and young adults to:

- increase their sense of agency over their own health and well-being,
- help themselves and others reduce the risk of harm from cannabis and other substances by focusing on building relationships and life skills, and
- think critically about their ideas and assumptions, recognize the wide range of wellness options available, and use harm reduction strategies if/when needed.



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What's in it for schools?

The course and/or mentor guide can be used in many ways in the school setting.

In the classroom:

- Invite students to take the course and then debrief with them afterward about what they learned, what they liked, and what they think could be changed or added
- Walk through each of the four course modules with the students over a four week period, taking time to explore the activities as a class or in small groups
- Use the mentor guide activities as ice-breakers, conversation starters or assignments

In the school:

- Invite students to start an after-school group based on discussing and creating additional content for the course and/or mentor guide
- Use the course as a substitute for detention or expulsion for substance use at school
- Use a few mentor guide activities to prompt staff discussions about substance use and mental health during Professional Development Day
- Host a mental wellness fair featuring parts of the course and/or mentor guide, such as Yoga, Meditation, Mindful Walking, and Understanding the Endocannabinoid System

In the school community:

- Encourage parents and caregivers to use the mentor guide activities at home to build bonds and increase their understanding of how their child thinks and feels
- Host an event that brings together members of the school community to discuss mental health and substance use, using mentor guide activities as ice-breakers or conversation starters



Visit our website and book a workshop with our team to learn more about using our resources in your community!



cannabisandmentalhealth.ca