

Healthy Living Unit #1

Substance Use, Addictions, and Related Behaviours

Lesson #1
Mental Health and its
affects on Substance
Abuse

By the end of the lesson
students will be able to:

- identify links between mental health and substance abuse
- to develop an understanding perspective of this disorders (not judgemental)

'Mental Illness' is...

- Any of various conditions characterized by impairment of an individual's normal cognitive, emotional, or behavioural functioning, and caused by social, psychological, biochemical, genetic or other factors such as head trauma

Depression

- often manifests as irritable moods, physical complaints (e.g., headaches, stomach cramps), insomnia, decreased academic functioning, decreased social activities and anti-social behaviours (e.g., lying, stealing, fighting).
- Depression often precedes substance abuse. Most substances (e.g., alcohol, marijuana) that youth use to cope with depression cause greater depression with chronic use.

Social Anxiety

- usually manifests as school avoidance behaviours, poor self-image and social isolation.
- Initially this behaviour may protect a young person from using a substance.
- However, when a young person tries alcohol or other drugs, the anxiety reducing effect of the substance can promote ongoing use.

Post-traumatic Stress

- can manifest through such symptoms as anxiety, depression, self-harming, a preoccupation with death, suicidal thoughts or gestures and flashbacks.
- The incidence of post-traumatic stress is much higher when the young person has been sexually or physically abused.
- People experiencing post-traumatic stress often use substances to help numb painful emotions and deal with anger.

Conduct Disorders

- generally manifest as anti-social behaviours, such as illegal activities and disregard for other people's rights.
- This condition is highly linked with substance abuse and usually precedes it.
- It is also commonly associated with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Youth with conduct disorders are risk-takers and often heavily use a gamut of substances to enjoy the excitement and rush.

Eating Disorders

- usually have their onset in adolescence.
- The likelihood of developing a concurrent substance use problem increases by 12 to 18 per cent among people with anorexia and by 30 to 70 per cent among people with bulimia.
- Young people with an eating disorder tend to use substances that suppress their appetite, such as nicotine, alcohol or stimulants (e.g., diet pills, caffeine pills, speed, cocaine).