

## **Program Description**

### **Addiction Prevention Tools Program (APT)**

#### **Introduction:**

The Addictions Prevention Tool (APT) Program is an evidence-based addiction prevention program for youth age 12-18. It consists of two streams: (1) non-users or users who have only experimented and (2) occasional, regular, or abusive substance users. The program raises awareness of risk and reduces risk based on informed, responsible use of substances. It is intended for facilitators working with youth in various settings such as schools, youth centers, or community or sport settings.

APT is highly structured and supported by comprehensive training. The program is based on scientific evidence and developed using best practice in addiction prevention. APT has also been found to be a program appreciated by young people.

#### **Background:**

Developed with financial support received from Health Canada as part of its Drug Strategy Community Initiatives Fund, the APT program is the result of a major study conducted over a three-year period (2005-2008) in Quebec and the Maritimes.

The APT program was developed based on the following key observations:

- Young people are consuming psychoactive substances (alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs) at increasingly younger ages and they tend to trivialize consumption.
- Young people today are exposed to contradictory messages about substance use and the risks associated with it (e.g., television commercials tell them that it is fun to drink beer, while public-service campaigns warn of the potentially fatal consequences of impaired driving).

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the program is to develop young people's ability to correct risky beliefs and reinforce protective beliefs that they may have about substance use.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To delay the average age of initial substance use; in the case of youth who are not using
2. To reduce the risk related to substance use for youth that are using
3. To develop a personal opinion on issues related to drug and alcohol use

#### **Target Audience:**

The program is aimed at young people aged 12 to 18. There are two profiles of young people that this program targets. Profile A includes young people who do not use

substances or use occasionally, typically 12-15 year olds. Profile B includes regular or abusive substance users, typically 15-18 year olds.

**Description of Activities:**

Each activity has two main parts, including a description of the activity and the steps to be followed, as well as the teaching materials required to complete the activity (scenario cards, posters, charts, and fact sheets; harmonized messages; set of arguments; and control sheet).

A major aspect of preparing for the activities is the choice of the participants’ substance use profile. In order to meet the specific needs and characteristics of different groups of participants, the APT provides for two different substance use profiles; A & B. Profile A is for young people who do not use or occasionally use and Profile B is for regular or abusive users.

The APT program is made up of five interactive activities, each of which lasts about an hour and deals with one of the following five spheres of influence on young people: friends, family, life setting, community, and media. The activities all have a common structure that includes a group discussion and debate.

The following is an example of how the scenarios are presented depending on whether the group is in profile A or B.

“A” Scenario	“B” Scenario
Situations involve non-consumption or experimentation	Situations involve occasional, regular or abusive consumption
Aim at risk elimination by non-consumption	Aim at risk elimination by informed, responsible consumption
Often depicts situations of substance use involving a friend (rather than the participants him or herself). The participants assess the situation as an observer.	Often depicts situations of substance use by participant him or herself.
Situations are aimed mainly at younger participants	Situations are aimed mainly at older participants (driving while intoxicated, initiation parties, polysubstance use)
Represent low-risk consumption behaviors (tasting alcohol)	Represent riskier consumption behavior (drinking contests, mixing substances)

**Budget:**

The cost to purchase this program, consisting of a Facilitator’s Guide, access to e-learning on the website and the book Drugs: Know the Facts, is \$480.00 (not including

shipping and handling fees). However, copies of this program are available at no cost by contacting the Mental Health Promotion Consultant or Regional Addiction Prevention Consultant.

### **Evaluation:**

This program was developed using best practice in addiction prevention and is based on scientific evidence. It is one of the few addiction prevention programs for youth that has been scientifically validated in Canada. The program was implemented concurrently with each of the four age group categories (236 subjects in total) so as to evaluate the quality of implementation and its outcomes with young participants in school and sports settings. Based on the outcomes of this testing phase, modifications to the tools and how they were used were changed to be more effective.

More information about research can be found by obtaining the scientific research paper on their website ([www.cldq](http://www.cldq)).

### **Indicators:**

- Pre and post questionnaire for participants
- Activity evaluation questionnaire for participants
- Real-time observation

### **Requirements to Support Staff:**

The training for this program is provided with the use of three training tools as well as telephone and on-line support. The three tools are the Addiction Prevention website ([www.cqld.ca](http://www.cqld.ca)) and e-learning, the Facilitator's Guide, and the book *Drugs: Know the Facts*. This program has been purchased by Western Health and can be requested from the Regional Mental Health Promotion Consultant or Regional Addiction Prevention Consultant. Time for staff to complete this on-line training would need to be supported. However, the e-learning is conducted on an individual basis, so staff can study at their own pace and according to availability.

### **Timeline/Action Plan:**

1. Request program tools (user name and password, Facilitators Guide and *Drugs: Know the Facts*) from Mental Health Promotion or Addiction Prevention Consultant
2. Use training guide and e-learning to prepare to deliver this program
3. Coordinate time and venue to deliver program
4. Advertise program, if needed
5. Prep teaching materials for each session (scenario cards, posters, chart and fact sheets, harmonized messages, set of arguments, control sheet) and ensure you are proficient with set of arguments
6. Deliver program in 60-75 minute sessions using program resources and website

**Program Structure:**

Each activity includes presentation of the activity, team discussion based on scenario card, group debate, conveying the harmonized message and wrap-up. Each session runs for approximately 60-75 minutes.

Activity 1	More or Less Risky? Friends
Activity 2	Let's Talk About it! Family
Activity 3	Decisions? Life Setting
Activity 4	You're the Expert! Community
Activity 5	Media Influences? The Media