

# **Youth Voices, Healthy Choices** **Engage Youth, Change Lives**



Health Promotion & Primary Health Care  
Mental Health & Addiction Services  
Western Health

## **FINAL REPORT**

Submitted By:  
Sexual Health Working Group

May 2013



**Youth Voices, Healthy Choices Project**  
Sexual Health Working Group, Western Health

## **Project Description and Activities**

The Sexual Health Working Group, Western Health, was awarded funding from the Health Promotion and Primary Health Care Program area to implement a Project entitled **Youth Voices, Healthy Choices**. The Project was developed to get youth involved as leaders in the promotion of healthy decision making. This project aims to support youth, parents and communities in working together to take action to address local sexual and emotional health priorities including: relationships, self-esteem/body image, sexual identity, decision making, risky behaviours (ex: unprotected sexual activity, alcohol/drug use) and harm reduction. The project focused on skill development, opportunities related to coping, assertiveness, communication and decision making for youth and promoted parent participation in teams.

Project Activities Include:

- Recruitment of Youth Leaders (4 areas)
- Development of Youth Voices Teams
- Development of a Social Marketing Campaign
- Participation in a Leadership Rally (1 day workshop)
- Development of Youth-led and community-driven plans with maximum \$1000 budget per plan
- Participation in a Celebration of Success Gala (showcase of community projects)

## **Youth Leaders**

Port aux Basques, Stephenville, Corner Brook and the Bonne Bay areas were selected for the project as the Youth Early Intervention and Outreach Workers were identified to support the youth and teams. A Youth Outreach Worker was paired with the Youth leaders to provide ongoing mentorship, support and to liaise with the Sexual Health Working Group as needed. The recruitment of Youth Leaders began in June 2012 with support from the Youth Early Intervention and Outreach Workers (YOW) and schools

The project was promoted to schools with a letter identifying project information, application form and a poster targeting youth. The goal was to recruit one youth leader in each of the four Youth Outreach Workers areas. An honorarium of \$500 for each youth leader would be awarded following completion of the project. The recruitment of 2 youth leaders was also permitted with each leader receiving a \$250 honorarium.

The role of the youth leader was to increase awareness among peers, parents, & community partners regarding sexual & emotional health priorities, the benefits of health promotion & prevention work, & their role in promoting health.

Each *Youth Leader* worked with the Youth Outreach Worker and the Sexual Health Working Group. Youth leaders participated in orientation and training and were responsible for establishing Teams comprised of peers, parents, and community members. Youth leaders were also responsible for fully participating in all project activities including leading the development of local action plans to address sexual and emotional health and get peers, parents, and communities involved in activities to address sexual and emotional health priorities.

A clearly defined role and expectations of the Youth Leader was provided in the project information sheet/application and reviewed during orientation that was held via videoconferencing. The role was defined as follows:

- Be a voice for healthy choices in your school & community
- To promote sexual & emotional health in his/her school & community.
- To increase awareness among peers, parents, & community partners regarding sexual & emotional health priorities, the benefits of health promotion & prevention work, & their role in promoting health.
- To involve peers, parents, & community partners in health promotion & prevention work.
- Youth Leaders will promote healthy decision making & be a voice for youth on issues such as:
  - Healthy relationships
  - Self-esteem/body image
  - Sexual identity
  - Decision making
  - Risky behaviours & Harm Reduction (ex: unprotected sexual activity, alcohol/drug use)
- Participate in skill development activities related to: coping, assertiveness, communication & decision making.
- Participate in orientation & training.
- Work to increase awareness about sexual & emotional health among peers, parents, & community.
  - Work with the other *Youth leaders* to develop a social marketing campaign (media, posters, promotional materials, events, & advertisements).
- Encourage peers, parents, & communities to get involved in activities to address priorities:
  - Develop Teams of peers, parents, & community members.
  - Plan & participate in a 1-day Leadership Rally (Oct 2012).
  - Lead the development & local action plans to address wellness.
  - Plan & participate in a Celebration of Success Gala – a showcase of community wellness projects (April/May 2013).

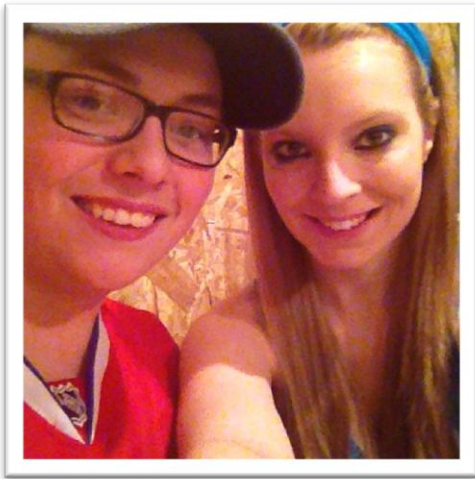
**Meet the Youth Leaders**



**Dylon Tucker**, Bonne Bay Area  
Rocky Harbour/Norris Point



**Rae-Ann Bennett**, Stephenville Area  
St. George's



**Michael King & Chelsea Bryan**, Port Aux Basques Area  
Burnt Islands



**Jessica Gillingham**, Corner Brook Area



## Youth-led Teams

Four Teams were established to increase awareness of local sexual & emotional health priorities and the benefits of living a safe and healthy lifestyle.



**Bonne Bay Area**



**Corner Brook Area**



**Port aux Basques Area**



**Stephenville Area**

## **Youth Engagement Tool Kits**

A Tool Kit was developed as a collection of resources intended to support the *Youth Voices, Healthy Choices Project*. One binder per team area was distributed to the Youth Outreach Worker at the Leadership Rally in October.

### ***The Resource Binder was organized into the following topic areas:***

#### Section 1- Introduction to Youth Voices, Healthy Choices Project

This section provides an overview of the youth engagement project including an introduction to the youth leaders.

#### Section 2 - What is Health Promotion?

This section provides information and tools to support the promotion of health and prevention of illness or harm.

#### Section 3 - Social Marketing

This section includes information and resources to support a successful social marketing campaign.

#### Section 4 - Taking Action

This section provides information and practical tools to get you started in Taking Action to address your local sexual and emotional health priorities.

#### Section 5 - Sexual & Emotional Health Priorities

This section includes facts, project and activity ideas, as well as resources for the following sexual and emotional health priorities:

- Body Image/Self-Esteem
- Relationships
- Sexual Identity
- Decision Making
- Risky Behaviours & Harm Reduction (e.g., unprotected sexual activity, alcohol/drug use)

## **Social Marketing**

It was anticipated that the four teams would participate in a Social Marketing Campaign to create awareness and interest in local sexual & emotional health priorities, to motivate people to make healthy choices and want to change their lifestyle, and to empower people to make lifestyle changes, and/or get involved in prevention & promotion activities. However, challenges in team composition in 2 of the 4 areas limited the time for teams to work together. There was some social marketing of team activities at the local level (e.g., team t-shirts, posters). However, the majority of activities took place within the school and there were limited marketing efforts outside of the schools. Future projects should

incorporate more opportunities for social marketing and engage the media for public awareness of key messages and activities.

## Leadership Rally



Four Youth Teams including peers, parents, and community members were invited to participate as members of the Youth Voices, Healthy Choices Team. A one-day

Leadership Rally for Youth Leaders and their Teams was held on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The purpose of the leadership rally was to increase the skills, confidence, & knowledge of youth, parents, & community leaders about health promotion and prevention. It was also an opportunity to distribute Toolkits & resources to support the youth-led & community-driven activities. The Tool Kits provided significant information on the sexual & emotional health priorities of the project and helped teams identify priorities to address in their communities. The leadership rally provided an opportunity for youth and their teams to start action planning. Surveys were completed at the beginning of the day to be used as a baseline for comparison at the end of the project.

Leadership Rally – October 13, 2012 (Supported by the Youth Leaders):

- Master of Ceremonies – Youth Leader, Port aux Basques
- Icebreaker Activity - Youth Leader, Stephenville
- Baseline Survey was completed by all participants
- Project presentation and introduction of the 5 Youth Leaders.
- Build a Perfect Team Member Activity - Youth Leader, Corner Brook
- Determinants of Health Activity - Youth Leader, Corner Brook
- Upstream/Downstream Activity - Youth Leader, Bonne Bay
- Guess What? Health Promotion Strategies Activity - Youth Leader, Port aux Basques
- Passport to Healthy Choices Activity - Youth Leader, Corner Brook



- Marshmallow World and Planning to Take Action Activities - Youth Leader, Bonne Bay
- Whole Body Experience Activity - Youth Leader, Bonne Bay
- Wrap Up – Youth Leader, Port aux Basques

## Youth-Led and Community-Driven Action Plans

Each Youth Leader and their teams developed an action plan to address local priorities. The action plans aimed at promoting health, preventing illness and injury related to sexual & emotional health priorities within their local area. The development of the action plan started during the leadership rally. Action planning worksheets, work plan and budget template were provided to guide the team discussion and help with the development of the plan.

Team areas were given 3 weeks from the date of the leadership rally to complete and submit a proposed action plan and budget up to \$1000. The action plans were then submitted to the Sexual Health Working Group for review, recommendations and approval. Action plans for the Stephenville and Bonne Bay areas were submitted by this deadline. However, changes in youth leaders and team membership in the Corner Brook and Port aux Basques areas meant delays in this process. For Stephenville and Bonne Bay areas, project implementation began in November 2012. With a change in youth leaders, Corner Brook was ready to begin as of December 2012/January 2013. Despite many efforts to recruit a youth leader or youth leaders in the Port aux Basques area, the project was moved to Burnt Islands. Two youth leaders were recruited and a new team was created in January/February 2013.

Team	Topics Covered	Key Activities
<p><b>Dylen Tucker</b> Bonne Bay Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Decision Making</li> <li>• Sexual Health</li> <li>• Healthy Relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movie Nights</li> <li>• Booths at Formal Dance (mocktails, holiday stress-less tips, healthy choices)</li> <li>• Free Skate (passport activity using sexual &amp; emotional health displays)</li> <li>• Sexual &amp; Reproductive Awareness Week Campaign (spin quest &amp; jeopardy games, free condoms &amp; snacks – peer pressure, healthy relationships, etc)</li> </ul>



<p><b>Jessica Gillingham</b> Corner Brook Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy decision making</li> <li>• Healthy relationships</li> <li>• Body image and Self-esteem</li> <li>• Sexual diversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Decision Making – Exam Time Stress Less Tips Booth with Spin Quest Activity and Smoothies (60+ participants)</li> <li>• Pink Shirt Day - The Bully Project Movie Night with guest speaker and Subway subs and Mocktails (80-100 participants).</li> <li>• Healthy Relationships bracelets campaign (distributed 900 bracelets). Free compliments/positive thoughts tear-off posters throughout the school.</li> <li>• Sexual Diversity “It’s OK to be Gay” Creative Art Contest</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rae-Ann Bennett</b> Stephenville/St. George’s Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Decision Making</li> <li>• Body Image</li> <li>• Healthy Relationships</li> <li>• Sexuality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body Image Lunch and Learn (5 students).</li> <li>• Video Café and Passport Activity in Level 1 Career Development Class (texting &amp; driving, kids help phone, healthy relationships, equality, teen dating violence and sexuality) 36 students.</li> <li>• Self-esteem Lunch and Learn (2 students).</li> <li>• Smoothie Breakfast Stand (40 students)</li> <li>• Smoothie &amp; Healthy Trail Mix Lunch Demo (72 students).</li> <li>• Video Café with Level 2 and 3 Healthy Living Classes (23 students).</li> </ul>

<p><b>Michael King &amp; Chelsea Bryan</b> Port aux Basques/Burnt Islands Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bullying</li><li>• STI's</li><li>• Sexual Orientation</li><li>• Self-esteem</li><li>• Body Image</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Body Image/Self-Esteem Coloring Contest &amp; Presentation (k-6 all students).</li><li>• Movie and Pizza Night - The Bully Project (gr 7-12 all students).</li><li>• Smoothie Bar (k-12 all students).</li><li>• STI/Sexual Orientation Jeopardy with Mocktails (gr 7-12 all students).</li></ul>
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## Celebration Gala

A Celebration of Success Gala was held on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 for Youth Leaders and their Teams. The event took place in Corner Brook from 1:00 to 5:00 PM. Members of the Sexual Health Working Group were also invited to support the event. The Gala showcased the experiences, success stories, and activities completed in each of the team areas during the Project. Youth Leaders were awarded for their efforts through the presentation of honoraria. Team members were also given a small gift as a token of appreciation for their efforts. Post evaluation surveys were completed by all in attendance.

### Highlights of the Celebration Gala

- One Youth Leader was the Master of Ceremonies for the event.
- Post surveys were completed by all participants.
- Project presentations for each of the 4 areas.
- Youth Leaders were awarded honoraria.
- Team members were presented with gifts of appreciation.
- Whole Body Experience Activity.
- Enjoyed a healthy, celebratory dinner to wrap up the event.



## Results

### Outcome Evaluation

- 32 participants completed the baseline survey
- 20 participants completed the post-survey
- 12 pre and post surveys were able to be used to make comparisons

Unfortunately due to team composition and recruitment challenges, the comparison results of the survey data were not used. We were unable to make pre and post survey comparisons for the majority of participants as there were different participants in attendance at the leadership rally and celebration gala. Therefore, only 12 participants were in attendance at both events and completed the pre and post surveys. Due to the low numbers of comparable surveys completed, we were unable to tabulate the data to determine statistical significance.

However, a snapshot of the post survey data suggests that the project was successful. Findings indicate that the majority of participants felt that the youth

engagement project helped them think about their current lifestyle choices and felt it would motivate them to make healthier lifestyle choices in the future. Since participating in the project, more than half of the participants indicated that they have already made lifestyle changes to improve their health.

When asked what they learned from the project, participants indicated the following:

- How to deal with youth issues
- Peer education is important; importance of youth involvement
- Planning and teamwork are essential for a successful event
- How to organize an event and be a leader in the community
- To be more confident when speaking in public
- Partnerships are key when promoting events in the community
- Acceptance of all sexual orientations
- A healthy lifestyle makes you feel good about yourself
- Love yourself, enjoy life
- Listen more to youth and provide guidance

When asked what skills they developed from the project, participants indicated the following:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- How to provide guidance
- Leadership
- Organization
- To remain patient
- Action planning
- Budgeting
- Healthy decision making

Overall participant feedback indicates positive results for the project. See summary of participant feedback below from the leadership rally and celebration gala. Many participants indicated an interest in supporting the project in the following year.

### Participant Feedback (The Whole Body Experience Activity)

	What are your <b>thoughts</b> about the session?	What are your <b>feelings</b> about the session?	What will you <b>take away</b> from the session?
<b>Leadership Rally</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was fun</li> <li>• Good experience</li> <li>• Should be done again</li> <li>• Informative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I hope I do good with this program</li> <li>• Positive</li> <li>• Optimistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great discussion on how to proceed</li> <li>• Momentum</li> <li>• Confidence,</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuable</li> <li>• Empowers leadership and individuality</li> <li>• Good job by youth and staff</li> <li>• Great tool to introduce teens to project</li> <li>• Great way to get information to youth</li> <li>• It was great</li> <li>• Team us motivated to get started</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported by the team</li> <li>• Energized</li> <li>• Uplifted</li> <li>• Confident</li> <li>• Encouraged</li> <li>• Enlightened and very happy about what I have learned today</li> </ul>	<p>inspiration and education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More ideas</li> <li>• All the tools and resources</li> <li>• Youth led initiatives are important.</li> <li>• Peer led works</li> <li>• Knowledge of some of the issues facing kids</li> </ul>
<b>Celebration Gala</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great success – youth were amazing!</li> <li>• Very informative</li> <li>• Fun and interesting to hear successes</li> <li>• Great overall experience</li> <li>• Great ideas</li> <li>• Wonderful presentations</li> <li>• Youth teams did great work</li> <li>• Great for us as youth leaders to meet and discuss accomplishments</li> <li>• Positive group for the school and this should continue.</li> <li>• The project is much needed and I hope it continues</li> <li>• Invaluable resource to help youth become engaged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy that all groups were successful</li> <li>• Honored to work with such promising youth</li> <li>• Loved the project more of our team should have come to this event because it's a good experience.</li> <li>• Sad to see it end.</li> <li>• Proud of accomplishments</li> <li>• Heart-warming presentations</li> <li>• It's a great program</li> <li>• Hopeful, excited and pleased</li> <li>• Very inspired</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New ideas for projects</li> <li>• New ways to deal with issues</li> <li>• How to speak in front of other better</li> <li>• How willing youth are to change</li> <li>• It's important to create good relationships with people</li> <li>• As youth, we are capable of becoming leaders and we can make a difference</li> <li>• Knowledge</li> <li>• The accomplishments and success of the project.</li> <li>• Confidence to speak in front of a crowd</li> <li>• New ideas for next year.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would love the opportunity to continue this project next year.</li> <li>• A great way to see what other groups accomplished and get new ideas.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sense of accomplishment</li> <li>• How to make myself feel confident in public and around my peers</li> <li>• The importance of having youth led discussions</li> <li>• Ways to get students more involved</li> <li>• Communication and meeting regularly as a group is key</li> <li>• All the lessons learned</li> <li>• Meeting some of the greatest youth</li> </ul>
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### Successes

The major success of the Youth Voices, Healthy Choices project is the awareness that it created in schools and communities of issues relevant to youth. This project encouraged youth to think about their lifestyle choices, learn new things and develop new skills. In addition, the development of the resource tool kit and the support of the YOW's contributed to the success of the project.

### Challenges

- Timelines needed to be adjusted based on project funding. This resulted in limited opportunities to promote the project and recruit youth leaders in June and youth leaders were not identified until after the start of the new school year (September 2012).
- Issues with retention of youth leaders in two team areas. In Corner Brook, one youth leader relocated to another school. In Port aux Basques, the youth leader was unable to continue due to other time commitments.
- Recruitment of team participants was a challenge in the Stephenville Area.
- The support of the Youth Outreach Worker in Bonne Bay was not consistent throughout the course of the project as there was turnover in staff with 3 different individuals supporting the project at various times. Additional support was required for this youth leader/team area and better orientation for new support staff in the interim.

- Difficulty accessing project funding was a challenge for the organizing committee. Constraints related to year end spending, March 31, 2013 as the project end date was May 2013.
- The action planning and action plan review process posed challenges for the teams. This was difficult for youth that were not familiar with the work plan process. It was also a difficult process for the review committee, which often needed to adjust their expectations and recognize that action planning is tough, especially for youth.
- Some teams had difficulty with scheduling meetings and meeting participation.
- Participation in events. Some activities had low participation,
- There were logistical and technical problems with the implementation of some activities but overall those issues were resolved and served as learning experiences for the youth.
- Participation was low at Leadership Rally and Celebration Gala.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Scheduled opportunities to connect with YOW's for project updates on a monthly basis.
- Partner with a youth community organization with similar interest to promote and support the youth initiatives. Funding could be awarded to the community partner to simplify the budget spending limitations within the fiscal year.
- Recruitment of youth leaders and team members should take place in May prior to the start of a fall school year.
- Youth leader applications need to be submitted to the Youth Outreach Worker in the area and not to the school as this presented a challenge in one team area.
- Action planning/action plan review committee to review action plan, make recommendations and approve initiatives. The Sexual Health Working Group will be informed of work plan activities.

### **Sustainability**

To support ongoing sexual and emotional health activities in team areas, a number of gift card incentives were purchased. YOW's can request incentives to support future activities through the Sexual and Reproductive Health Consultant. Three important aspects of how this project was structured will help ensure that it continues in some capacity:

1. Resource Tool Kit Developed – The tool kit is available through the Sexual and Reproductive Health Consultant and the Regional Mental Health Promotion Consultant. Copies are also kept with the 4 Youth Outreach Workers.
2. Teams Established – It is anticipated that the already established Youth Voices, Healthy Choices Teams may continue to meet and plan activities in the next school year.

3. Link to Youth Outreach Workers – These positions played a significant supportive role to the youth and teams participating in the project. It is anticipated that their continued connect with youth and teams will encourage continuation of this work.

*Stephenville/St. George's Area* – They hope that youth will continue this work and create another Youth Voices Team next year. Two members will still be at Appalachia High and hope to keep doing this in 2013-2014. The Smoothie Lunch and Learn was so liked that they are going to do another Healthy Smoothies and Trail Mix Demo after the project has ended. The Video Café materials are available to the school or other schools (if needed) for future use.

*Bonne Bay Area* – They would like to see these activities continue because they think it was a great idea. They paired with other groups in the school in order to be successful and think it is very possible for these opportunities to continue.

*Port aux Basques/Burnt Islands Area* – The current Youth Leaders are graduating this year. However, two other youth participants on the team would like to continue next year and become the youth leaders if future funding was approved. There are resources left for future activities.

*Corner Brook Area* - This team had a late start but would like the opportunity to continue spreading awareness in a fun way in the new-year.

## Final Budget

Youth Voices, Health Choices was a project of the Sexual Health Working Group. Sponsored by: Health Promotion and Primary Health Care and supported by Mental Health & Addiction Services, Western Health. The Celebration Gala was made possible through the financial support of Merck Canada Inc..

Budget Item	Estimated Cost	Actual Expense
<b>Leadership Rally</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$718.30</b>
Venue		\$0
Food (Subway, Walmart, Colemans)		\$241.72
Materials & Supplies		\$13.56
Travel		\$463.02
<b>Action Plans</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>	<b>\$3,116.33</b>
Port aux Basques Area	\$1,000	\$672.83
Stephenville Area	\$1,000	\$1,000.00
Corner Brook Area	\$1,000	\$843.50
Bonne Bay Area	\$1,000	\$600.00
<b>Celebration Gala</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$1,741.86</b>
Venue		\$100.00
Food (Aroma's, Colemans, Shoppers)		\$780.96

Materials & Supplies		\$59.04
Team Gifts		\$276.29
Travel		\$525.57
<b>Youth Honoraria</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$1,900.00</b>
Port aux Basques Area (2)	\$500	\$400
Stephenville Area (1)	\$500	\$500
Corner Brook Area (1)	\$500	\$500
Bonne Bay Area (1)	\$500	\$500
<b>Project Incentives</b>		<b>\$200</b>
Subway Gift Cards		\$200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$7,676.49</b>