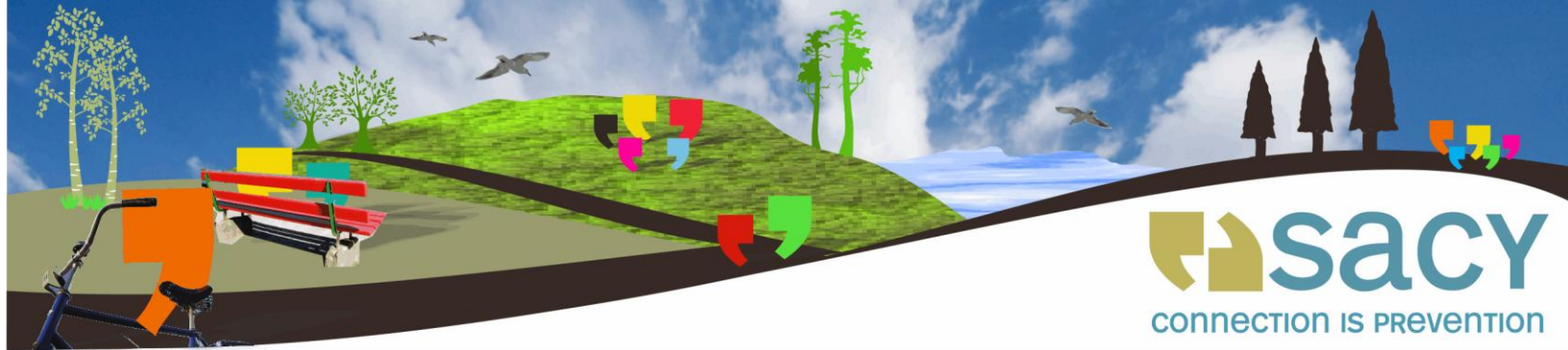


# SACY (School Aged Children and Youth Substance Use Prevention): Key Findings from the 2009-2012 External Evaluation

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**SACY** (School Aged Children and Youth Substance Use Prevention) aims to enhance the brief intervention and support infrastructure in VSB schools and surrounding communities to prevent, reduce and delay substance use\* problems as well as promote health and wellness for youth and families. Since its' beginnings in 2006, SACY has expanded at a rapid rate, reaching thousands of youth and parents in addition to working with all 18 high schools in the Vancouver School District. What follows are some of the key evaluation findings from the past three school years in three of the intersecting SACY streams – Youth, SACY TEEN ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM (S.T.E.P.) and Parent.

\*substance use includes alcohol use.

## THE YOUTH STREAM KEY ACTIVITIES

SACY Youth Prevention & Engagement Staff work in secondary schools in the area of youth health promotion, substance use prevention and positive youth engagement programming. Their work focuses on creating positive connections to help engage youth in healthy ways around their goals and passions. Where useful, staff have the expertise to engage in early intervention and support work. Their work always involves partnership with families, school and community allies and resources. During the past three years, the youth stream has facilitated numerous activities.

- ✓ 25,347 students took part in a classroom presentation on substance use prevention awareness.
- ✓ 5,314 youth attendees participated in a SACY lunch group/club.
- ✓ 3,024 youth attendees participated in a half- or full-day workshop on a topic related to substance use prevention.
- ✓ 2,849 one-on-one support/intervention sessions took place with youth from 2010-2012.
- ✓ 1,715 youth attendees participated in a community service learning activity.
- ✓ 194 youth attendees were involved in the Capacity Cafés.
- ✓ 128 youth were regularly involved in more than 10 hours of SACY activity in 2009/10.
- ✓ 156 youth were regularly involved in more than 10 hours of SACY activity in 2010/11.
- ✓ 152 youth were regularly involved in more than 10 hours of SACY in 2011/12.

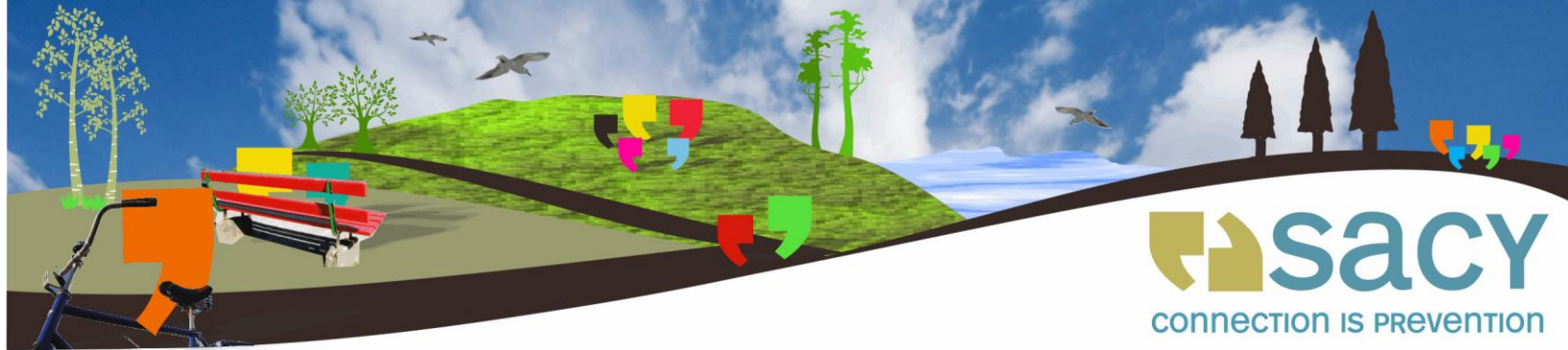
## Key Findings from the Youth Stream

### Classroom Presentation Findings

- ◆ According to youth, the top three valuable learnings derived from the classroom presentations were: specific information about substance use (25%); the impact that substance use can have on the body and behavior (23%); and the advantages of avoiding substance use (21%). (2009-2012)
- ◆ 22% of youth indicated that they intended to make changes in their life as a result of participating in a classroom presentation. The key change noted by these students was the intention to avoid substance use. (2009-2012)
- ◆ 62% of youth indicated that the information that they learned during the classroom presentation would be helpful in their lives. (2011/12)

### Community Service Learning/Multi-Session Activity Findings

- ◆ 48% of youth reported that they made changes in their life as result of their participation in community service learning or multi-session SACY activities. The top three changes were: reduction in the amount of substance use; increased respect for others; and higher levels of participation in the school and community. (2009-2012)



## Key Findings from the Youth Stream continued...

### Mainstream and Multilingual Capacity Cafés

- ◆ 90% of youth who participated in the Mainstream Capacity Cafés strongly agreed that parents really wanted to hear what they had to say about the youth experience and further to this, 94% strongly agreed that parents and youth seemed to better understand each other better by the end of the Café. (2009-2012)
- ◆ 100% of youth who participated in the Multicultural Capacity Café strongly agreed that parents really wanted to hear what they had to say about the youth experience. 100% of youth strongly agreed that parents and youth seemed to better understand each other better by the end of the Café. (2011/12)

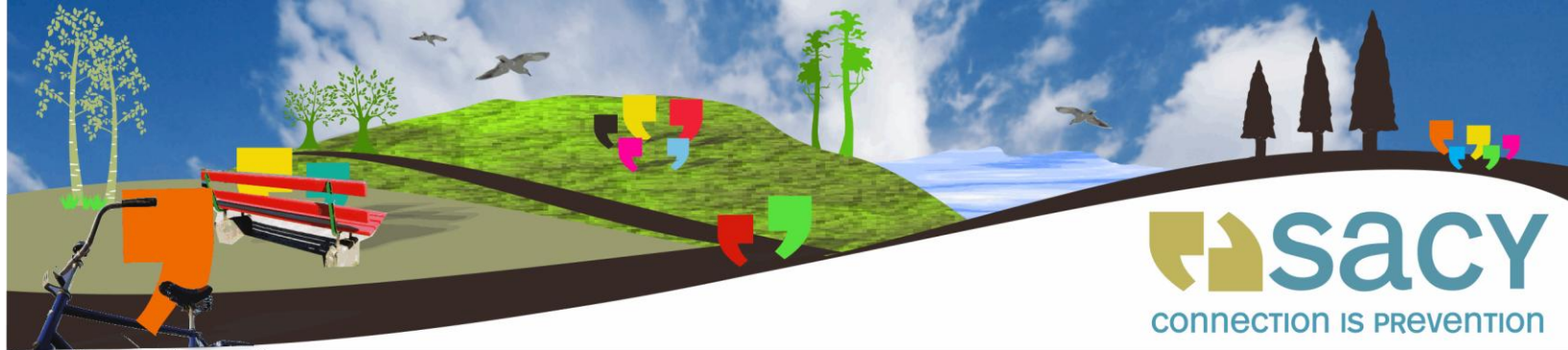
### Youth who had ten or more hours of SACY involvement in a school year

- ◆ 67% of youth reported that, as a result of their participation in SACY, they had a better understanding how substance use can impact their life. (2009-2012)
- ◆ 54% of youth reported participating in school more as a result of their involvement in SACY. (2009-2012)
- ◆ 65% of youth reported feeling more involved in their community as a result of SACY. (2009-2012)
- ◆ 71% of SACY-involved youth reported that there is an adult who really cares about them. (2009-2012)
- ◆ 57% of SACY-involved youth reported that they had set personal limits for their alcohol use since being involved in SACY. (2011/12)
- ◆ 31% of SACY-involved youth reported that they had set personal limits for marijuana use since being involved in SACY. (2011/12)
- ◆ 33% of SACY-involved youth reported that they had cut back on their other drug use since being involved in SACY. (2011/12)

### What is a Capacity Café?

A Capacity Café is a unique opportunity for community members (parents, teachers and other adults invested in youth) to engage with youth and hear about their lived experience. The overall goal is to encourage young people to feel listened to, respected, and valued in order that they view themselves as a needed resource within the community. By creating this youth-friendly environment, youth are willing to talk openly about their lives and issues they consider to be important. In turn, the community is provided with the chance to learn the realities of youth in today's society.





## Key Findings from the S.T.E.P. Stream

- ◆ 36% of S.T.E.P. youth strongly agreed that as a result of their participation in the program, they were considering the option of talking to someone about their substance use. (2009-2012)
- ◆ 34% of S.T.E.P. youth thought that they would easily be able to avoid substances if they chose to do so. (2010/11)
- ◆ 68% of S.T.E.P. youth strongly agreed that as a result of the program, they are able to make choices for their future. (2009-2012)
- ◆ The top three ways that S.T.E.P. youth identified as being an effective ways to avoid AOD use were: deciding not to buy substances (60%); telling others that you don't want to use (52%); and telling others that you have to be somewhere so you can't be drunk/high (51%). (2011/12)

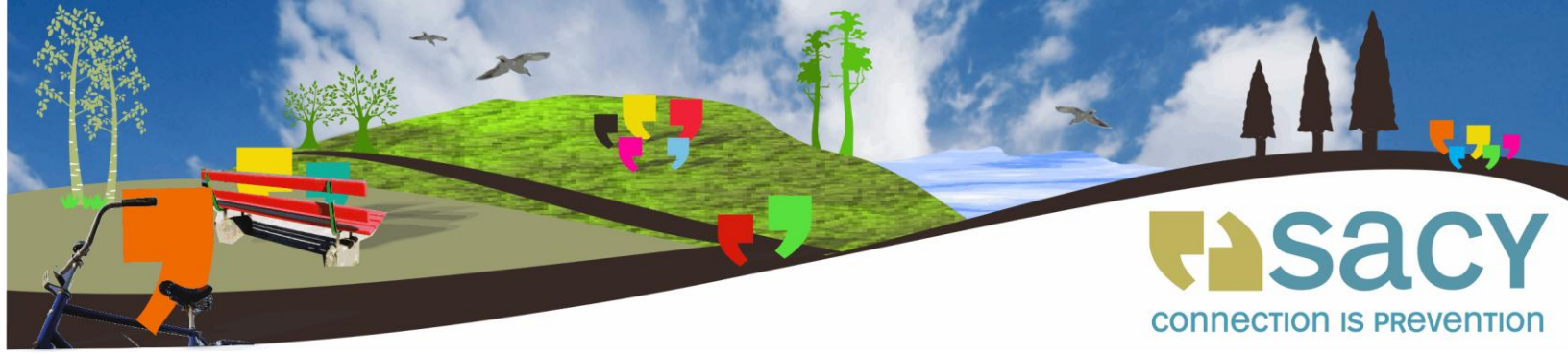
### From the S.T.E.P. Program to Ten Weeks Post-S.T.E.P.

- ◆ 51% of S.T.E.P. youth reported that they felt high levels of support from school-based adults after returning from the program. (2009-2012)
- ◆ 25% of S.T.E.P. youth became involved in SACY after their return from the program. (2009-2012)
- ◆ The top three skills learned at S.T.E.P. that youth continued to use after leaving S.T.E.P. were: following their values (46%); being aware of their roles and responsibilities toward family and friends (41%); and being aware of their emotions (40%). (2010/11)
- ◆ From the S.T.E.P. program to ten weeks post-S.T.E.P., youth reported a 12% decrease (from 63% to 51%) in weekly marijuana use. (2010/11)
- ◆ From the S.T.E.P. program to ten weeks post-S.T.E.P., youth reported a 20% decrease (from 32% to 12%) in daily marijuana use. (2010/11)
- ◆ From the S.T.E.P. program to ten weeks post-S.T.E.P., youth reported an 8% decrease (from 12% to 4%) in weekly other drug use (apart from marijuana). (2009-2011)

## THE STEP STREAM

The SACY Teen Engagement Program (S.T.E.P.) is a structured three-day, intensive program offered to secondary school-aged youth who can benefit from prevention education, personal reflection and goal setting. The program focuses on issues surrounding alcohol or other drugs, as well as risk mitigation, decision making, healthy relationships and critical thinking. Many students choose to come to S.T.E.P. to learn and to develop strategies for positive growth. The S.T.E.P. program is also an excellent resource that can serve as an alternative to suspension. S.T.E.P. focuses on youth's strengths and encourages students to re-engage with their goals and passions. S.T.E.P. seeks to draw youth closer rather than pushing them away. During the past three years:

- ✓ 511 youth participated in the three-day S.T.E.P. program
- ✓ 274 youth provided feedback at 8-10 weeks post-S.T.E.P.



## THE PARENT STREAM

In collaboration with the school community, Parent Engagement Staff utilize a strengths-based model that moves from solely focusing on problems to building assets among youth and families.

The SACY Parent & Family Engagement staff work alongside schools to connect with parents and caregivers. In turn, they also work with parents and caregivers to assist them in fostering and maintaining connections to their child's secondary school. Further to this, the stream offers education and support that focuses on ways to develop strong relationships with teens.

The main stream activities include: Building Bridges workshops, Capacity Cafés, Chinese parenting tea meetings, multilingual parenting workshops, and specialized workshops such as a communication workshop for parents of grade eight youth. In the past three years:

- ✓ Approximately 2,950 attendees received some form of education/support from the parent stream from 2010-2012
- ✓ A total of 137 parent and family stream events were held. This included 54 Building Bridges workshops; 24 Capacity Cafés; 2 Multi-lingual Capacity Cafés; and 4 Aboriginal Capacity Cafés.

## Key Findings from the PARENT Stream

### Mainstream and Multilingual Capacity Cafes

As a result of participating in the Mainstream Capacity Café (2009-2012):

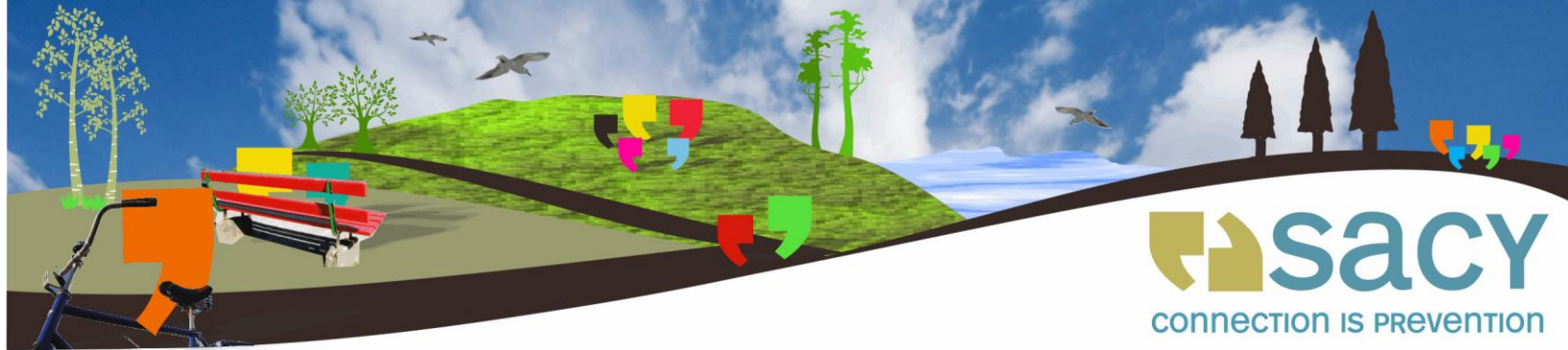
- ◆ Adults reported a 30% increase in learning with respect to understanding youth substance use issues.
- ◆ 56% of adults strongly agreed that they learned some ways that they can set boundaries with their child.
- ◆ 84% of adults strongly agreed that they felt that they had a better understanding of life from a teen's perspective.
- ◆ 70% of adults strongly agreed that they felt more confident that they could talk to their youth about difficult subjects.
- ◆ 35% of adults strongly agreed that they needed to learn more about youth substance use issues.

As a result of participating in the Multilingual Capacity Café (2011/12):

- ◆ 75% of adults strongly agreed that they felt more confident that they could talk to their youth about difficult subjects.
- ◆ 71% of adults strongly agreed that they understood more about youth stressors.

### Grade 8 Communication Workshop (2011/12)

- ◆ 94% of parents strongly agreed that learning about the importance of building strong relationships with youth was of great benefit.
- ◆ 74% of parents strongly agreed that learning how to build positive family communication was of great benefit.



### Building Bridges (2009-2012)

- ◆ 80% of parents strongly agreed that the information about adolescent development was very helpful.
- ◆ 87% of parents strongly agreed that the information about how to enhance parent-youth communication was very helpful.

### Multi-lingual Parenting Workshop (2010-12)

- ◆ 96% of parents who attended a multi-lingual parenting workshop strongly agreed that they gained valuable knowledge from the workshop.
- ◆ 90% of parents strongly agreed that they learned skills that will help them better communicate with their children.
- ◆ 96% of parents strongly agreed that the information that they learned in the workshop will help them understand their children more.
- ◆ 98% of parents strongly agreed that they would like to attend other parenting workshops.

### Chinese Parenting Tea Series (2010-2012)

- ◆ 77% of Chinese parents who attended one or more 'tea sessions', in which parenting skills were the focus, reported high benefit from the sessions.
- ◆ 53% of parents strongly agreed that it was important to have parent sessions in languages other than English.

#### What parents and other youth-oriented adults learn at the Building Bridges workshop....

- ❖ How to listen so kids will talk
- ❖ Tools to encourage positive youth development
- ❖ What's typical, what's not in adolescent development

#### The Tea Series

The goal for these meetings was to help parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds overcome their hesitation to get involved in school and in the community through increasing awareness of opportunities. The Multi-Cultural Parents' Tea Club provided a safe, open, non-judgmental and supportive environment for parents to share their parenting experiences. It also offered an opportunity for them to network with other parents and get connected with the school.

For more information about SACY, please visit the SACY website at [www.vsb.bc.ca/sacy](http://www.vsb.bc.ca/sacy). To request a copy of the full report, please contact Art Steinmann at [asteinmann@vsb.bc.ca](mailto:asteinmann@vsb.bc.ca) or Lorraine Grieves at [lorraine.grieves@vch.ca](mailto:lorraine.grieves@vch.ca)