



Healthy Living Peer Leader Project

Information Package

April 2010

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Introduction

The Healthy Living Peer Leader Project was created by Guelph CHC in partnership with the Onward Willow and Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Groups. We are committed to working with our community to provide access to health programs and services and to create opportunities for people to improve their well-being. This project is being supported through a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion.

We would like to welcome you to the Healthy Living Peer Leader Project and thank you for your participation.

When you see the title of a resource **UNDERLINED, BOLDED, IN ITALICS AND IN CAPITALS**, it means it is included with this package. Refer to it for valuable information. You may also contact Guelph CHC for information, resources or referrals on any healthy living topic.

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Healthy Living Peer Leaders

How Do I Become a Peer Leader?

Guelph CHC is offering training to people who want to volunteer as healthy living peer leaders. To get started, you will need to attend three full-day training sessions:

- physical activity training
- healthy eating and group facilitation training
- first aid & CPR

In your role as a peer leader you will be working as a volunteer for Guelph CHC. Therefore, you will also need to attend a separate two hour volunteer orientation session. At the orientation, you will fill out a volunteer agreement, sign a privacy policy, and learn about your responsibilities for reporting suspected child abuse.

What Does a Peer Leader Do?

As a peer leader, you will take what you learn about healthy living and share those messages with others in your community. After you have attended all of the training sessions, staff from Guelph CHC will help you lead and organize activities within your community.

Some examples of activities you could be doing as a peer leader include:

- leading a walking group
- running a DVD exercise class
- giving a healthy living presentation
- sharing healthy eating tips with participants, friends and family
- working with a community member for one-on-one mentoring

The following flow chart shows how the healthy living peer leader project works.



Figure 1: Healthy Living Peer Leader Project

How Much Time Will It Take?

After the initial training and volunteer orientation, your ongoing time commitment will be about one hour per week, plus a one hour monthly meeting with Guelph CHC and other peer leaders. You'll also be expected to keep written records of your activities.

Is This For Me?

Becoming a healthy living peer leader may interest you if you:

- want to live in a healthy community
- want to meet others with similar interests
- like to help others

To be a healthy living peer leader, you should:

- have a passion for healthy living
- be good at working with people
- be well organized and reliable
- be able to speak and read basic English (training will be in English)

Being a volunteer in your community is a rewarding experience. This project will give you the chance to:

- learn how to improve your health
- gain valuable skills (that look great on a resume)
- help build a healthier community to live in
- gain volunteer work experience
- build contacts and connections

How Will Guelph CHC Support Peer Leaders?

Guelph CHC will provide free training to interested volunteers. Childcare, food and resources required during the training sessions will be covered. Guelph CHC's Health Promoter will also provide ongoing support, resources and training as needed.

What are the Limits of a Peer Leader?

It is important to understand that there will be limits to your role as a peer leader. Your role will be to share the information you learn from the training sessions with others. You are not a health care professional, and your contact with community members will not take the place of visits to their family doctor, nurse practitioner or other health care professionals (such as their physiotherapist, kinesiologist or registered dietitian). It will not be your job to provide direct health care, or any advice about medications.ⁱ

If an issue ever arises that is beyond what you have learned, you will tell a Guelph CHC staff member. They will arrange additional support or referral to other services.

Training and Orientation Dates

To become a healthy living peer leader, you must attend all of these training/orientation sessions. Please contact us in advance if you plan to attend. A childcare honorarium will be provided if needed.

Thursday, May 6 Guelph CHC Volunteer Orientation for Health Living Peer Leaders
7:00 – 9:00pm, Shelldale Centre (Jassy’s Room)

Saturday, June 5 Physical Activity Training
9:30am – 4:30pm, Shelldale Centre (Jassy’s Room)

Saturday, June 12 Healthy Eating and Group Facilitation Training
9:30am – 4:30pm, Shelldale Centre (Jassy’s Room)

Saturday, June 19 First Aid and CPR
9:30am – 4:30pm, Shelldale Centre (Multi-purpose Room)

For more information and to register, contact:

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Chronic Diseases

Overview

Chronic diseases are diseases that generally last a long time and slowly get worse. Chronic diseases are the major cause of disability and death in the world. Some examples include: ⁱⁱ

- cardiovascular diseases (heart disease and stroke)
- cancer
- chronic respiratory diseases
- diabetes

The causes (also called risk factors) of many chronic diseases are well known. A small set of common risk factors are responsible for most of the main chronic diseases. They include: ⁱⁱⁱ

- unhealthy diet
- physical inactivity
- tobacco use

Substance misuse and poor mental health can also affect your ability to choose health-promoting behaviours.

The most important thing to note about the risk factors presented here is that they are all things you can **change** about your lifestyle. The following diagram shows the relationship between these risk factors and your health.

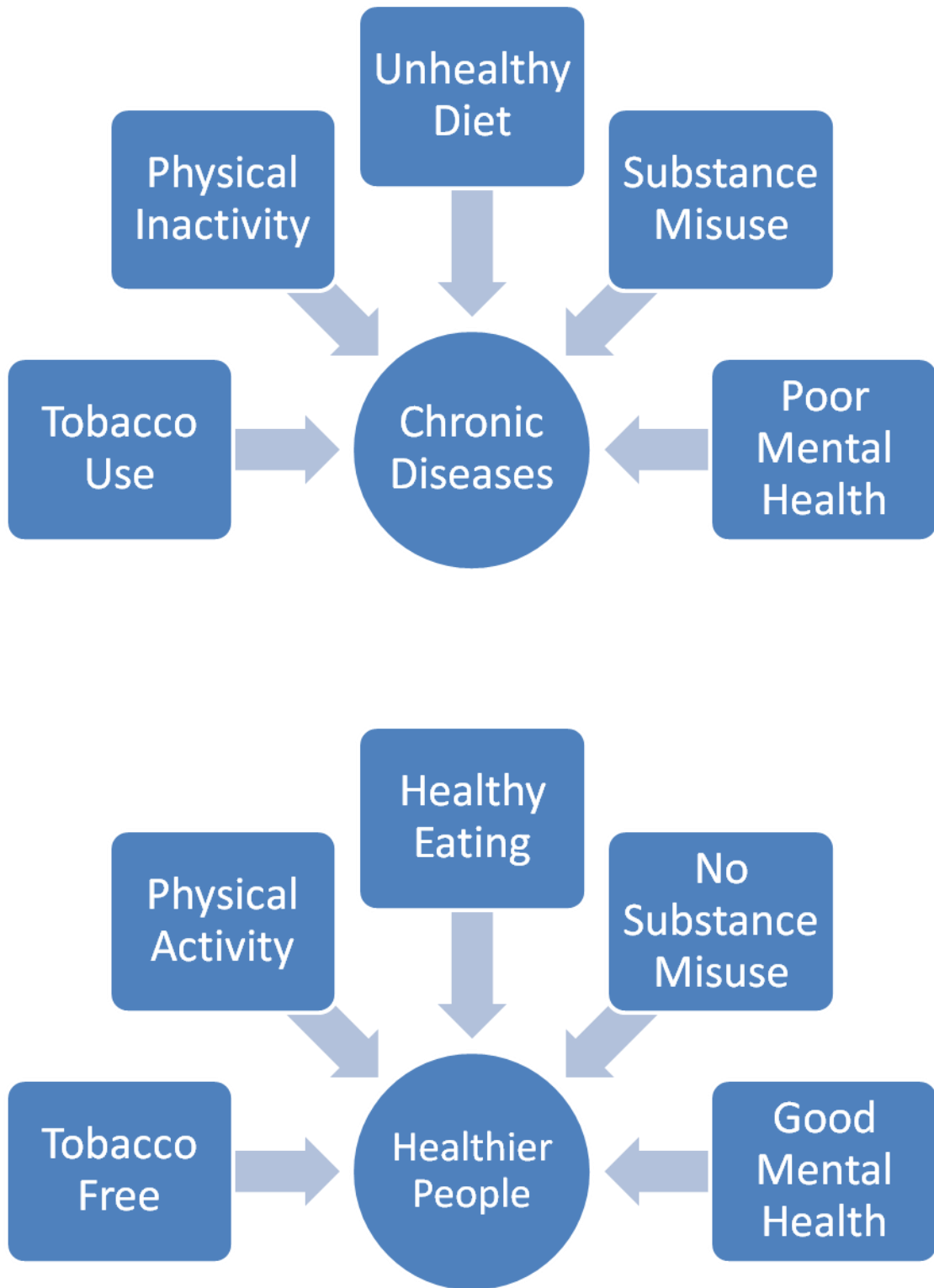


Figure 2: Chronic Disease Risk Factors

Physical Activity

Overview

Experts recommend that adults get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Children should get 90 minutes or more. This does not need to happen all at once though. Building physical activity into your daily routine can be easier if you break it down into blocks of 10 minutes or more. ^{iv}

Many Canadians are not getting enough physical activity in their lives to keep them healthy. Consider the following:

- 52% of Canadians are inactive.^v
- 60% of Guelph & Wellington County adult residents do not accumulate enough moderate to vigorous physical activity.^{vi}
- In 2008, 17% of the residents in Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph were considered obese.^{vii}
- Only 8% of WDG residents bike or walk to work^{viii}
- In Canada, our time spent playing video games is among the highest in the world.^{ix}

Your body needs three different types of activities to keep it healthy:

- endurance (walking, biking, skating, dancing)
- flexibility (yoga, stretching, gardening, T'ai Chi)
- strength (weight training, heavy yard work, climbing stairs)

Doing a variety of activities from each group will help you get the most health benefits.^x Explore **CANADA'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDE** for ideas on how to build more physical activity into your daily life.

In My Community

Check out the **GUELPH CHC'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES** brochure for a variety programs offered in your neighbourhood. You can also explore activities offered through:

- the City of Guelph's recreation centres
- your local neighbourhood group
- sports organizations
- the YMCA-YWCA of Guelph

Walking is a free activity that family and friends can enjoy together. Guelph has many trails that can be found on the city's website (www.guelph.ca). Pedometers are a fun tool that can be used to track your steps and help you reach your personal goals. They can also be used to create friendly competitions.

Resources

More information about physical activity can be found at:

- www.wdglivewell.ca
Interactive lessons on physical activity and nutrition.
- www.wdginmotion.ca
Check under the "Communities" tab for a list of activities going on in Guelph.
- www.active2010.ca
Locate physical activity opportunities in Guelph using the "Resource Locator" tool or read inspiring stories on how others became physically active. This site also contains lots of great activity tips.
- www.parc.ophea.net
Provides tools and support for physical activity promoters and key community leaders working to enhance opportunities for healthy active living. Free "Walk This Way" Kits can be ordered.
- www.canadawalks.ca
Resources to help promote walking as a means of transportation for all age groups.

Healthy Eating

Overview

Food nourishes your body and gives you energy each day. Healthy eating can help you achieve overall health and vitality. **CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE** helps you eat well by:^{xi}

- showing how much food you need to eat each day based on your age
- giving examples of portion sizes
- helping you make wise food choices
- teaching you how to read food labels
- providing tips on making healthy food choices at home, at school, at work or eating out

Healthy eating is important in reducing the risk of many chronic diseases. It can help reduce the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.^{xii}

It may interest you to know that in our community:

- The weekly cost of a food basket to feed a family of four is \$167.02.^{xiii}
- At least 50% of Guelph CHC priority populations do not eat healthy at least some of the time.^{xiv}

In My Community

The **GARDEN FRESH BOX PROGRAM** is a non-profit, fresh produce buying service created to help people access affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. It also supports local farmers. Participants go to a neighbourhood site at the beginning of the month to place their order and pay for it. The food box is delivered to their neighbourhood on the third Wednesday of the month.

Resources

More information about healthy eating can be found at:

- www.hc-sc.gc.ca
Create your own food guide with the “My Food Guide” feature.
- www.wdglivewell.ca
Interactive lessons on physical activity and nutrition.
- www.eatracker.ca
Keep track of your eating and activity choices and get personalized feedback on your total intake of energy.
- www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca
Do a virtual grocery store tour and learn how to shop for healthy food choices.
- www.dietitians.ca
Nutrition and healthy eating tips & fact sheets, recipes, virtual grocery store, recipe analyzer and more from the Dietitians of Canada
- www.eatrightontario.ca
Registered Dietitians provide EatRight Ontario visitors with feature articles on food and nutrition, meal planning advice, healthy eating tips and recipes.

Tobacco Use

Overview

Tobacco use is the biggest preventable cause of death and disease in Ontario. It kills 13,000 Ontarians each year.^{xv} It is the leading cause of cardiovascular disease, cancer, and respiratory disease. During the years 2000 to 2002 in Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph:^{xvi}

- 3,668 residents died from these three diseases - an average of over 1,200 deaths a year.
- 240 deaths were directly caused by tobacco use.

Tobacco smoke has negative effects on nearly every organ of the body and reduces overall health. Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, including at least 50 that are known or suspected to cause cancer (carcinogens). ***WHAT'S YOUR POISON*** shows a list of cigarette ingredients you may find surprising. Chew or spit tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes. Smokeless tobacco contains 28 cancer-causing agents and it increases the risk of developing cancer of the oral cavity.^{xvii}

Nearly 90% of regular smokers start before they are 19. The tobacco industry knows this and uses a variety of tactics to promote their products to children and teens. The tobacco industry also targets other special populations such as women, different cultural groups and low income people.^{xviii}

Second-Hand Smoke

There is no known safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke.^{xix} Second-hand smoke is more dangerous than directly-inhaled smoke because it is not filtered. It burns at a lower temperature and has twice as much tar and five times more carbon monoxide.^{xx} Second-hand smoke in a motor vehicle can get very concentrated, even with the windows open. It can be up to 27 times greater than in a smoker's home.^{xxi}

If you are a non-smoker, exposure to second-hand smoke will increase your risk of getting lung cancer or heart disease. Second-hand smoke can lead to blood clots that can cause heart attacks and strokes, raise your heart rate and damage your heart muscle.^{xxii} Children exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more severe asthma. Second-hand smoke can also influence a child's ability to reason and understand, and can negatively impact behaviour and attention span.^{xxiii}

Protect Yourself

You can protect yourself and your family from second-hand smoke.

- Make your home smoke-free.
- Make your car smoke-free.
- Ask smokers not to smoke around you.

The pamphlet **STEPS TO MAKE YOUR HOME SMOKE-FREE** offers advice. If you want to support someone to quit smoking, get tips and ideas from the pamphlet **IF YOU WANT TO HELP A SMOKER QUIT.**

Smoking and the Law

The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* (SFOA), protects the health of all Ontarians by: ^{xxiv}

- prohibiting smoking in enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places
- banning the public display of tobacco products prior to purchase
- prohibiting smoking in a motor vehicle with children under age 16 years present

For more details on the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*, visit www.mhp.gov.on.ca.

Quit Support

It's never too late to quit smoking. From the minute you stop, your body begins to heal. Visit your doctor for support or contact:

The Canadian Cancer Society

www.smokershelpline.ca

1-877-513-5333

Proven tools and tips to help you quit successfully. Free, personalized and non-judgemental support. Available 7 days a week by phone, text and online.

“FHT to Quit” by the Guelph Family Health Team

www.guelphfht.com

519-837-4444

Program assists clients with quitting. Options for medication and support from health care providers included.

Resources

More resources about tobacco and your health can be found at:

- www.wdghu.org
Public Health website with information on tobacco and health. Also has information on quitting, including a list of self-help resources.
- www.mhp.gov.on.ca
Information on how the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* affects you, as well as links to quitting resources.
- www.smoke-fx.com
Everything you ever wanted to know about how youth can fight tobacco and create a smoke-free world. Share it with the young people in your life.
- www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca
Tools to help parents, coaches and players create tobacco-free sports and recreation environments.
- www.smokefreehousingon.ca
A website created to help increase options for smoke-free living.
- www.cancer.ca
Information on how healthy lifestyle decisions can help prevent cancer.

Mental Health

What is Mental Health?

Mental health involves finding a balance in all aspects of life including: ^{xxv}

- physically
- mentally
- emotionally
- spiritually

Reaching a balance is a learning process and your personal balance will be unique. ^{xxvi}
Good mental health enables you to enjoy life and deal with everyday challenges. It helps you make positive choices and decisions and it helps you adapt and cope in difficult situations. ^{xxvii}

What is Mental Illness?

Just as our lives and situations continually change, so do our moods, thoughts and our sense of well-being. It is natural to feel off-balance at times, and sometimes you may feel sad, worried, scared or suspicious. But these kinds of feelings can become a problem if they get in the way of our daily lives over a long period. When there are changes in a person's thinking, mood or behaviour that cause a lot of distress and make it difficult to do daily tasks, that person may have a mental illness. ^{xxviii}

Mental illness can cause serious problems in all areas of a person's life. Physical health, relationships, school and work may suffer. Different studies have shown that mental illness can have a variety of negative effects: ^{xxix}

- 70 - 90% of people with serious mental illness are unemployed.
- Major depression can put a woman at greater risk of developing breast cancer.
- 75% of homeless women have a mental illness.
- The likelihood that a person with a mental illness will be a victim of violent crime is 2.5 times that of the general population.

How Can I Improve My Mental Health?

By learning more about mental health, you can help protect yourself and those around you from mental illness. Some actions you can take to build positive mental health include.^{xxx}

- Learn to manage stress effectively.
- Do things that boost your confidence and increase your self-esteem.
- Improve your communication skills to reduce conflict with others.
- Keep your work, family and social lives in balance.
- Take time to develop positive relationships with friends and family.
- Get involved with a group or volunteer.
- Get regular exercise, eat well and get plenty of rest.
- Limit your use of alcohol.

Where Can I Get Help?

There are many people and places that offer help. Consider turning to:

- Family Counselling and Support Services (519-824-2431)
- Community mental health agencies
 - Trellis (519-821-2060)
 - Canadian Mental Health Association (519-836-6220)
 - Homewood Health Centre (519-824-1010)
- Guelph Community Health Centre (519-821-6638)
- Phone-based counselling
 - Distress Centre (519-821-3760)
 - Crisis Line (519-821-0140)
 - Outline (LGTBQ) (519-824-5544)
- A private counsellor or therapist
- Your family doctor
- Your religious or spiritual leader
- Workplace Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- Guelph General Hospital (519-822-5350)
- Guelph and Wellington Immigrant Services (519-836-2222)

Please refer to **WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES: OPEN MIND** for a full list of mental health supports and contact information.

Resources

More information about mental health can be found at:

- www.camh.net
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is a leading addiction and mental health organization. Information about clinical care, research, education, health promotion and policy development.
- www.cmha.ca
Useful ideas for improving your mental health. Try the “Mental Health Meter”. It can be found in the section called “Your Mental Health”.
- www.trellis.on.ca
Trellis helps people with mental health and developmental challenges. Visit the website to learn about their programs and services.

Substance Misuse

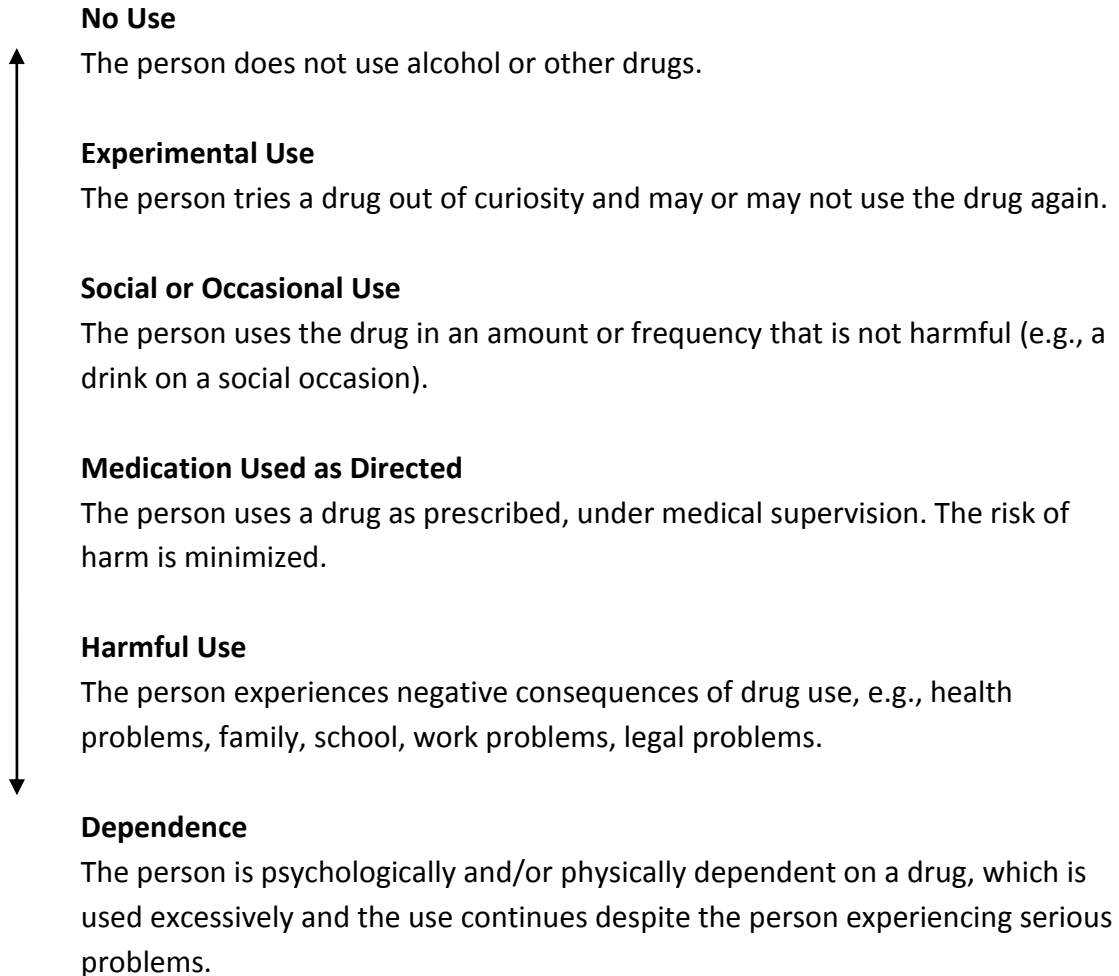
Overview

The use of alcohol or other drugs is a problem when it results in negative consequences. They may be physical, mental, social, emotional, legal, economic or environmental consequences. They may be felt by the individual, or by other people such as the person's family, friends or employer. When an individual continues to use a drug despite negative consequences, it is often referred to as substance misuse.^{xxxix}

People use different drugs for different reasons. Reasons can vary from drug to drug, and from person to person. A person may have more than one reason. People may start using a drug for one reason (curiosity, pleasure, social pressures, medical reasons) but continue using it for a different reason (such as tension relief or escape).^{xxxix}

Continuum of Risk

It is helpful to think of substance misuse on a scale, with different points on the scale representing different levels of risk. This is called a continuum of risk. The continuum of risk ranges from no use on one end of the scale, to dependence on the other end. As a person progresses along the scale, their substance use often becomes more problematic. There will be increased individual, community and social consequences and costs. The following diagram shows this continuum of risk:^{xxxix}



Alcohol

You may have heard mixed messages about whether drinking alcohol is good or bad for your health. Use the **LOW-RISK DRINKING GUIDELINES** to help you make informed choices out how much alcohol you drink.

Where to Get Help

There are many places that offer help with substance misuse. The **GUELPH WELLINGTON ADDICTION SERVICES** pocket card lists many places you can call for support with alcohol or drug issues.

Resources

You can get more information on substance misuse at:

- www.hc-sc.gc.ca
Health Canada's website with reports and publications about alcohol and substance misuse prevention.
- www.nationalantidrugstrategy.gc.ca
Learn more from the Government of Canada about prevention, treatment and enforcement.
- www.camh.net
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is a leading addiction and mental health organization. Information about clinical care, research, education, health promotion and policy development.

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