

McCreary News: Fall 2006

QUESTION:

What percentage of BC students said that they have an adult in their family who they would feel okay talking to if they had a serious problem? (Answer at bottom)

This newsletter gives an update on new reports available from the McCreary Centre Society, current projects underway at McCreary, and new readings in the field of youth health. It is sent to individuals who have asked to be included on McCreary's mailing list.

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1. McCreary Has A New Managing Director

Annie Smith has replaced long time Managing Director Aileen Murphy who has moved on to become the City of Surrey's first ever Senior Social Planning Officer. Aileen has been highly respected in her 15 years at McCreary and is wished well in her new career.

Annie comes to McCreary with a variety of nursing, youth participation, and community development experience. She trained as a psychiatric nurse in England before becoming involved in youth health and homelessness where she headed up a number of front line services. After completing a Master's degree at Harvard, Annie had the opportunity to really put "research into action" doing community development work in the South Yorkshire coalfield region in the North of England. Here she was able to increase youth participation and the youth agenda at both the grassroots and the policy-making level.

Annie can be contacted at annie@mcs.bc.ca.

2. Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges (B4), youth for youth health conference

10th Annual B4 Conference is October 13-15, 2006 at Camp Howdy. This year's theme is "Becoming Leaders: Having a Positive Impact on Others." The B4 will explore social and health issues that affect youth. It is a weekend full of opportunities for new leaders to develop skills, gain knowledge, and get ideas. The weekend will also enable experienced youth and adult support persons to network with other leaders, see what's happening throughout the province, and support each other. And of course: have FUN!!!

Youth aged 13 and up are invited to register on a first-come, first-serve basis (limit three youth per organization). We encourage adults who work with youth groups to attend along with their youth. For more information or a registration package, please contact David at david@mcs.bc.ca, visit www.mcs.bc.ca/ya_b4.htm or call at 604-291-1996.

3. New Reports

Building Resilience in Vulnerable Youth (2006)

This report explores the experiences, risks and health challenges facing vulnerable youth in BC, and describes protective factors that offer hope for helping them build resilience, connections and a positive future.

For more information or to download a report, visit www.mcs.bc.ca/r_ahs.htm

Promoting Healthy Bodies: Physical activity, weight, and tobacco use among BC youth (2006)

Research tells us that physical inactivity, tobacco use, obesity and poor nutrition are risk factors that can cause serious and preventable chronic diseases. This report examines the health of BC youth in respect to activity levels, eating habits, and tobacco use.

For more information or to download a report, visit www.mcs.bc.ca/r_ahs.htm

The Next Steps: BC Youths' Response to the AHS III and Ideas for Action (2006)

The Next Steps is a workshop series that provides youth, along with supportive adults, an opportunity to: discuss the results of the 2003 BC Adolescent Health Survey; identify priority issues; and plan projects for improving the health of youth in their communities. Between April and October 2005, McCreary conducted 13 Next Steps Workshops in communities all over BC. This report is a summary from conversations with youth during these workshops and is available in a provincial summary report as well as individual community reports. You can also hold your own Next Steps Workshop with help from our Toolkit – it contains everything needed to put on a successful and fun Next Steps workshop.

For more information or to download a report, visit www.mcs.bc.ca/ya_next-steps.htm

Raven's Children II: Aboriginal Youth Health in BC (2005)

Raven's Children II shows that most Aboriginal students in BC are healthy, feel connected to their families and school, volunteer in the community, and are similar in many ways to non-Aboriginal youth. This report is based on the largest youth health survey ever conducted in the province, and compares findings with two previous provincial surveys conducted by McCreary in 1992 and 1998. An Aboriginal research team analyzed the results for Aboriginal youth participants, with guidance and advice from an Aboriginal advisory committee.

For more information or to download the report, visit www.mcs.bc.ca/r_ahs.htm

4. AHS IV planned for 2008-09 School year

McCreary is planning a 4th province-wide, Adolescent Health Survey to take place over the 2008-09 school year. Building on AHS I, II, and III, AHS IV will continue to reveal emerging health issues and to track trends showing how BC students have changed over the past 16 years. Survey topics include questions about factors that promote healthy development such as connections with family and school, performance at school, and involvement in extracurricular activities. The AHS also includes questions on behaviours that may compromise youth's health such as substance use, tobacco use and other risky behaviours.

For more information about the AHS, how the information has been used, and to see a variety of reports using AHS data, visit McCreary's website at [/www.mcs.bc.ca/rs_ahs.htm](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/rs_ahs.htm)

5. New street youth survey

McCreary is partnering with nine communities in BC to undertake a study of street involved youth in the province. Surveying between 900 and 1,000 young people, this survey aims to identify and respond to the unique needs of street youth and provide evidence to support policy

and programs to meet the needs of street-involved youth. Including communities like, Kelowna, Kamloops, Victoria, Nanaimo, Abbotsford/Mission, Surrey, Vancouver, Prince Rupert, and Prince George will give a comprehensive profile of street-involved youth from across BC. This survey takes a unique approach to research by pairing street involved youth with an experienced researcher to go out and survey youth. This will enable the project to offer genuine opportunities for paid work and skill building opportunities for individuals, organizations and communities involved. The survey data will be collected in the Fall and the results fed back to the young people and agencies involved prior to publication in the Spring.

6. New Survey of Alternate Schools in British Columbia

The same nine communities taking part in the street youth survey will also be involved in a review of educational programs and services available for at-risk and high-risk youth in BC. Young people in the Alternate School system will be surveyed and a series of interviews with stakeholders (such as school administrators, pupils, parents, and teachers) will be conducted. As with the street youth survey, the results will be available in the Spring 2007.

7. Hearing the voice of youth in custody – workshops to engage youth

Commissioned by: Youth Justice Programs in MCFD

Over the summer of 2006 McCreary (with the assistance of the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks) is conducting 13 workshops in all three custody centres in the province (Prince George, Burnaby and Victoria). The aim of these workshops is to:

- Disseminate, in a ‘youth friendly’ interactive way, some of the results of Time Out II -: a profile of BC Youth in Custody to youth who are currently in custody.
 - Consult with youth about what the priority issues are for them IN custody and what would keep them OUT of custody
 - Discuss what their recommendations are for addressing these issues
 - Recommendations are reported to Justice Services both by the youth themselves at the time of the workshops and through a McCreary report available in Dec 2006/Jan 2007.
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8. Other Readings in Youth Health

- “Being There, Being Real: A Guide To Building Peer Based Support And Training For Experiential Youth And Those Who Would Work With Them” (PDF file)
Author: Communities Against the Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CASEY) Prince George
The manual intends to capture the profound learning that took place as CASEY (Prince

George) developed relationships and completed projects with sexually exploited youth. It is not offered as a book of solutions or as a wholly transferable resource; what it offers are the experiences of CASEY members in the hope that they may hold some useful information for others working to address sexual exploitation of youth. (Available on McCreary Youth Foundation website)

- Ungar, M. (2004). Nurturing hidden resilience in troubled youth. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Michael Ungar's Nurturing Hidden Resilience in Troubled Youth is the first text in its field to examine resilience as a social construct; it offers a comprehensive theory of resilience and a model for the application of this theory to direct practice with high-risk youth in clinical, residential, and community settings.

- “Dealing with Issues of Sexual Exploitation: A Guide for Parents” (2005)

Author: McCreary Youth Foundation

The sexual exploitation of young girls and boys for profit is a complex social issue and is particularly distressing for the parents of these youth. This guidebook is intended to provide support, hope and helpful advice for parents who are trying to cope with this crisis in their families, as well as caregivers, such as guardians and foster parents.

Translations are available. (Available on McCreary Youth Foundation website)

ANSWER: 78% of BC youth in school report they have an adult in their family they would feel okay talking to if they had a serious problem.