

## McCreary News: Winter 2007

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### QUESTION:

What did youth in custody identify as the number one support that would help to prevent them from re-offending? (Answer at bottom)

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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. Youth Action: Next Steps workshops

Through workshop activities, the Next Steps makes health research relevant to young people and uses it as a springboard for creating ideas for action. The Next Steps brings research back to youth in an empowering way—by facilitating a dialogue to explore the research results and assisting youth in generating ideas for action on issues that are important to them.

The three key components to the Next Steps are:

1. Bridging Research & Action – Research results are brought back to youth for them to discuss and critique.

2. Positive Youth Development – The workshop process focuses on positive action and encourages ideas that build the resiliency and strengths of young people.
3. Building Partnerships & Capacity – Workshops build on existing relationships and community strengths to promote the healthy development of youth and to build capacity in communities to be inclusive of all youth.

A complete toolkit is available for download from McCreary's website for anyone interested in conducting their own Next Steps. Or, for those that are curious about what youth said on health issues (or issues in general) that are important to them, McCreary has produced the Next Steps Report: BC Youths' Response to the AHS III and ideas for action. Teachers, Public Health Nurses, Recreation Program Coordinators and anyone who works with youth, will find useful and innovative ideas to engage youth in their community.

For more information or to download the Next Steps, visit [www.mcs.bc.ca/ya\\_next-steps.htm](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/ya_next-steps.htm)

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## 2. New Reports

### Voices from Inside: Next Steps with Youth in Custody (2007)

In the summer of 2006, the Ministry of Children and Family Development commissioned McCreary to conduct workshops in the three youth custody centres in the province. The Next Steps was adapted to give youth in custody the opportunity to respond to the results of McCreary's 2004 survey of BC youth in custody; to share their experiences both inside and outside of custody; explore what supports would help them stay out of custody; and to make recommendations for change in the custody system.

Overall, 126 youth in Prince George Youth Custody Services, Victoria Youth Custody Services, and Burnaby Youth Custody Services took part in 13 workshops during the summer of 2006. This report summarizes the 100+ sheets of colourful (and often illustrated) flip chart notes from the workshops; the feedback from the centre representatives who listened to the youths' suggestions; and responses of the three custody centres. It is an opportunity to hear what youth felt was good about the facilities they live in; their ideas to improve them; and their ideas about what would help them transition successfully out of custody and into the community.

Report will be available for download in March. Check McCreary's website for report availability.

### Factsheets on youth and experiences of Stigma (2007)

The AHS III has been included in an international study exploring enacted stigma and its link to drug abuse and risky sexual behaviours. The purpose of the study is to explore the behaviors and environments in schools that target teens and tell them they are stigmatized. This study is taking place in 3 different countries (Canada, New Zealand, and the US) and looks at three separate

ethnic groups: indigenous youth, Asian-heritage youth, and European-heritage youth in each of the countries. Results for BC are now available in 6 factsheets.

### Youth Job Opportunity

As part of ensuring the findings of the stigma project are disseminated to youth, McCreary is currently looking to recruit youth facilitators of Aboriginal or Asian heritage, with a strong interest in LGBTQ issues, to help develop and facilitate a series of workshops. These highly interactive workshops will engage youth in discussing what schools, communities and other youth can do to increase safety and decrease health issues for stigmatized youth. If you would like more information please contact David at [david@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:david@mcs.bc.ca).

For more information or to download Factsheets, visit [www.mcs.bc.ca/rs\\_facts.htm](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/rs_facts.htm)

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### 3. Provincial Pilot of an Alcohol and Drug Monitoring and Surveillance Plan

McCreary is part of a collaboration of organizations on a pilot project coordinated by the Centre for Addictions Research BC, to develop a national alcohol and other drug monitoring system. Participating organizations include the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, the BC Centre for Disease Control, the Centre for Social Responsibility, the East Kootenay Addiction Services Society, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse in Ottawa, and the Centre on Addictions and Mental Health in Toronto. McCreary is assisting in developing national guidelines on standard questions for school surveys, and will also be piloting new questions this spring to be included in the 2008 Adolescent Health Survey (AHS).

The overall objective of this initiative is to create a monitoring system, inclusive of the whole country, for all populations (including adults and youth) on alcohol and drug use. The aim is to provide data for the implementation of Canada's drug strategy by identifying emerging trends in substance use.

Funding partners include the BC Ministry of Health, PHSA, Health Canada, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, and the BC Mental Health and Addiction Research Network.

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)

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### 4. MYF Conference: Re-Thinking Risk in Adolescence, April 27-28, 2007

McCreary Youth Foundation's annual conference will explore the theme of "Rethinking Risk" and will challenge conference participants on concepts of risk and to consider both the positive and negative aspects of the risky and risk-taking behaviours of adolescents.

A growing body of research and academic work argues in favour of rethinking our ideas about the importance of measuring at-risk, risky, and risk-taking behaviours of adolescents. It is becoming apparent that documenting risk behaviours does not necessarily change it and that resilience and capacity building in young people; enhancement of protective factors within individuals; and the introduction and evaluation of harm reduction models might be more beneficial.

The goal of this year's conference is to focus our attention on the nature of risk and to understand risk from a young person's perspective. We can then start to address some of the challenges and ways in which we can work to minimize some of the negative impacts of risk and to ensure that the required supports and protective factors are there for young people.

The program is intended for a multidisciplinary audience of academics, youth serving professionals and young people.

Confirmed speakers include:

Opening remarks by Bob Lenarduzzi

Keynote address by David A. Wolfe, Ph.D., RBC Chair in Children's Mental Health, Director, CAMH Centre for Prevention Science, Professor of Psychology & Psychiatry, University of Toronto

Closing remarks by Ian Manion , Ph.D., C.Psych., Executive Director, Operations

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO

Registration

Registration is limited to 174 persons. Fees are: \$175 by March 15 and \$200 after March 15.

For a full conference description, visit: [www.myfoundation.ca/conference-description.html](http://www.myfoundation.ca/conference-description.html) or contact Sarah Day or Kathy Powelson at 604-299-1609 or email: [info@myfoundation.ca](mailto:info@myfoundation.ca)

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## 5. YACLink: Making Youth Advisory Councils Stronger

YAC Link is a great resource for anyone who is interested in organizing a Youth Advisory Council (YAC). It was developed by three YACs: McCreary's Youth Advisory Council; Powell River YAC; and Tla'Amin YAC. The project produced a written guide to go along with a peer led workshop. The information and ideas in the YAC Link resource and workshop came from

interviews and workshops with current and past YAC members. They include useful history and information as well as best practices gathered from all three YACs –stuff that we hope will be useful to youth who are just starting out or are new to YACs.

McCreary's YAC is currently developing a partnership with Getting Busy, an Aboriginal youth hep C awareness project which will take YA CLink to three new communities across BC.

The YAC Link resource guide is available for download from McCreary's website. Or, hard copies are also available for order from McCreary.

To download the resource, visit: [www.mcs.bc.ca/ya\\_yaclink.htm](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/ya_yaclink.htm)

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## 6. Other Readings in Youth Health

(all resources are in the McCreary Youth Foundation Library, visit <http://www.myfoundation.ca/library.html>)

- Tonkin R, Foster L, co-editors, "The Youth of British Columbia: their past and their future," Western Geographical Series Vol. 39, Western Geographical Press, University of Victoria, 2005.  
Book Review by Judith Hall:  
For anybody interested in or working with youth, this book is a must. It is chock-full of data and information about the approaches that have been shown to work in BC. It emphasizes that youth are relatively underserved in BC and have unique needs. For those with a young person in their family, it is a particularly good read in order to understand what that young person is exposed to and the positive approaches that seem to work at this time in life and history. (Full review in BC Medical Journal, Vol. 48 No. 9, November 2006.)
  - "Adolescent Risk Behaviors: Why Teens Experiment and Strategies to Keep Them Safe". David A. Wolfe, Peter G. Jaffe, and Claire V. Crooks. (2006) New Haven: Yale University Press  
This book focuses on the crucial role that relationships play in the lives of teenagers. The authors particularly examine the ways that healthy relationships can help teens avoid such common risk behaviors as substance abuse, dating violence, sexual assault and unsafe sexual practices.
  - Breinbauer C, Maddeleno M. "Youth: choices and change, promoting healthy behaviors in adolescents" Pan American Health Organization, Washington, DC, 2005  
This book outlines developing effective health promotion and prevention programs for adolescents; theories and models for health promotion and behavior change and their application to adolescents; and the importance of early intervention in adolescent developmental changes and goals:
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ANSWER: Job training or job opportunities was identified by 63% of youth in custody as the number one support that would help prevent them from re-offending. Workshop discussions with youth in custody during the Custody Next Steps also identified job training as a major support youth wanted in making a successful transition back into the community. (See: Time Out II: A Profile of BC Youth in Custody, 2006 and Voices from Inside: next steps with youth in custody reports available from McCreary's website).