

# Young Adult Substance Use Program

**The Young Adult Substance Use Program (YA-SUP) is designed to meet the unique needs of young adults (17-25 years of age).**

Young adulthood is an "in-between" period of transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. That is why other names for people in this age group include Transition Aged Youth or Emerging Adults. It is a unique time for self-discovery, building relationships, and becoming independent. Many young adults also experience lots of uncertainty and change. This can make the transition challenging to navigate. The Young Adult Substance Use Program (YA-SUP) aims to meet these unique needs. We offer 2 separate streams. There is a Young Adult Stream for young adults (17-25) looking to make changes to their substance use. We also offer a Loved Ones stream, for loved ones of young adults with substance use problems.

**Our mission** is to provide young adults with the support and skills to:

1. **Reduce the negative impacts of substance use** on young adults' lives. This can be abstinence, reduced use, or using harm reduction strategies.
2. **Improve mental health and wellbeing** by considering the whole-person.
3. **Increase substance-free activities** to create a pleasurable life that aligns with their goals.

**We value:**

- Providing **young adult centered** care
- Creating a **safe(r) space**
- Considering the **whole person**
- **Collaboration** with young adults and community partners
- Using **evidence-based** practices and contributing to evidence

We have a **collaborative team** made up of:

Mental Health Worker (Marina)  
Community Support Counsellor (Kyla)  
Nurse Practitioners (Mareena and Shahnawaz)  
Addiction Psychiatrist (Michelle)  
Clinical Psychologists  
Substance Use and Mental Health researchers

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St. Joseph's  
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# Young Adult Program Ingredients

Revolves around a 12 week structure

## Intake Appointments

To start in the program, we provide 2 one-on-one intake appointments. You will meet with Marina (Mental Health Worker) or Kyla (Community Support Worker). The first appointment is 2 hours. About a week later, the second appointment is 1 hour. The purpose of the intake is to identify what your goals are and how we can best support you.

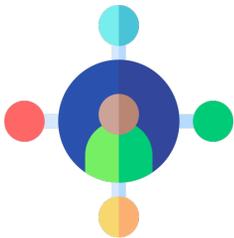


## Check-In Sessions

We offer one-on-one monthly check-ins for 3 months. You will meet with the same provider you met during your intake. The purpose of these sessions are to touch base on how things are going, support you to continue to work on your goals, and help you get connected to other services within and outside of YA-SUP.

## Measurement Based Care

At the start of your first intake, we ask all young adults to complete a survey. This survey asks questions about your quality of life, mental health, and substance use. We go over your results with you during your one-on-one sessions. This survey is used to develop a care plan that fits your needs. We repeat these surveys a few times over 6 months to be able to track your progress. This lets us know what is working, or what is not working, to optimize your care. You can choose to contribute your survey data to our research studies.



## Consults

If needed and interested, we offer consultations. You may meet with a Nurse Practitioner or Addiction Psychiatrist. Consults can be used to clarify diagnoses and/or explore or start medication options for both mental health and substance use.

## Groups

We offer groups on various topics that support self-discovery and self-management of young adults. Much of our program is delivered through groups. **The intensity of your care depends on if and how you engage with the groups.** Your main provider will often be a co-leader for the groups. Most groups are drop-in. Right now, our groups are offered virtually.



# Young Adult Groups

Revolves around a 12 week structure

## Mind-Drug Connection

We explore how thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, environment, and behaviours (like substance use) are connected. The goal is to give you the tools to take control of your mind and environment. This group uses **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)** approaches.

## Navigating the Week

This group aims to support you to:

1. Predict and plan for high-risk situations (using **Relapse Prevention** techniques)
2. Plan substance-free pleasurable activities
3. Prioritize your physical health

## Levelling up Your Health

These sessions focus on aspects of your **physical health** that influence your substance use and emotional wellbeing. We discuss exercise, sleep, and nutrition.

## Balancing Emotion and Mind

These groups discuss skills to regulate emotions and to tolerate distress. These groups use **Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT)**.

## Mindfulness

These sessions are focused on grounding yourself to the present moment. They are based on **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction** techniques. Each session includes brief mindfulness practices.

## Peer Space

There is evidence that mutual support groups (also called self-help groups) can help people with substance use concerns. Examples of mutual support groups include Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART Recovery).

1. We provide an **intro to mutual support** session. This session defines what mutual support is and what you can expect if you decide to attend a group.
2. We also offer weekly **SMART Recovery groups**. You can attend the SMART Recovery group through Concurrent Disorders even if you are not yet part of the YA-SUP. Find the link here: <https://www.cdcapacitybuilding.com/online-group-link>

# Young Adult Groups

## Specific Sessions

### Mind-Drug Connection

#### Sign-up Sequence (4 sessions)

- Understanding your substance use
- Identifying and dealing with challenging thoughts
- Coping with urges and learning refusal skills
- Planning for difficult situations

#### Drop-ins (7 sessions)

- Taking control of your anger
- Living your values
- Problem solving
- Being assertive
- Exploring & creating your social support network
- Communication skills
- Identifying & scheduling pleasant activities

### Levelling up Your Health

- Moving your body: Exercise
- Nourishing your body: Nutrition
- Resting your body: Sleep

### Navigating the Week

Drop-in group every Thursday afternoon. This session follows the same structure every week

### Mindfulness

#### Drop-ins (6 sessions)

- B**ody
- R**eflections
- E**motions
- A**ttention
- T**enderness
- H**abits

### Peer Space

#### Drop-ins

- Intro to mutual support**
- Weekly SMART Recovery groups**

**General structure:** Most groups involve check-ins, learning a skill or doing a guided personal reflection, and planning or practicing what was discussed.

### Balancing Emotion and Mind

#### Drop-ins (7 sessions)

- Why and how to do the opposite of how you feel (Opposite Action)
- Maintaining emotional control (PLEASE skill)
- Stopping an impulsive behaviour in its tracks (STOP skill)
- Thinking your way out of an impulsive behaviour (Pros and Cons Skill)
- Turning your attention away from a negative emotion until you can resolve it (ACCEPTS skill)
- Reducing the intensity of negative emotions by using your senses (Self Soothe skill)
- Quickly reducing the intensity of negative emotions by changing your body physiology (TIPP skill)

**We recognize groups can sometimes feel intimidating. It may also be challenging to participate in virtual settings. If you are feeling hesitant, please connect with your provider to talk more about how we can make groups a safer and more supportive space for you and your recovery.**

# Loved Ones Stream

**YA-SUP Loved Ones Education Group is a group for the parents and other supporters of young adults (17-25 years of age) with substance use problems.** This may include immediate, extended, or chosen parents and family members or close friends and partners. You can attend the Loved Ones Education Group even if your loved one is not involved in the Young Adult Stream. If your loved one is involved in the Young Adult Stream, no information is shared between the streams.

These group sessions are based on **Community Reinforcement Approach to Family Training – Support and Prevention (CRAFT)**. CRAFT is an evidence-based approach to change the way you interact with your child or loved one to promote positive relationships and recovery. Substance use can be difficult to understand and challenging to cope with. CRAFT talks about how **behaviour makes sense** and how the environment, community, and social support can play a powerful role in recovery.



**The Loved Ones Education Group includes 7 sessions:**

1. Group Overview, Safety, and Self Care
2. Understanding Substance Use
3. Positive Communication
4. Past Patterns & New Strategies
5. Rewards & Coping with Intoxication
6. Allowing Negative Consequences
7. Special Cases, Recap, & Next Steps

If you are interested, please register on the webpage:  
<https://www.cdcapacitybuilding.com/youth-program>

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# Describing Our Values

## *Providing young adult centered care*

We aim to create and deliver services that are young adult centered and tailored to this life stage. We promote **self-directed care, consent, privacy, and confidentiality** for all care and program components. Young adults are in control of their treatment and their personal health information.

## *Creating a safe(r) space*

We offer a safe(r) space that aims to be trauma-informed, culturally responsive, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, respectful of marginalized young adults, respectful of diverse populations such as BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ young adults. We are open to all feedback for how to make our space safer and strive to provide **non-judgmental care**. For example, we work with young adults on abstinence and/or harm reduction goals. We work with young adults **where they are at**, or want to be at, with their values and goals. In our groups, we set group norms and expectations to facilitate positive interactions between group members. Our team is also committed to ongoing learning through diversity training.

## *Considering the whole person*

We seek to understand and consider young adults **holistically**. This includes biology, psychology, social life and identity, and spirituality. We want young adults to feel empowered to **create their own unique path to recovery**. We also recognize that substance use and mental health concerns commonly co-occur, especially among young adults. Therefore, our program provides care relevant to both substance use and mental health concerns.

## *Collaborating with young adults and community providers*

We collaborate with young adults and community partners to co-create care plans. We want to optimize the skills and resources young adults already have and fill in gaps where needed. We also continuously collaborate with young adults and community partners to improve the program.

## *Using evidence-based practices and contributing to evidence*

We use the best available research evidence to create and inform the program. We also collect data through the program to contribute to advances in young adult substance use research and care. We are both an **evidence-based and evidence-generating** program.

**YA-SUP**

# Who & How to Refer

## **Who this program is for:**

- *Young adults age 17-25*
- *Young adults who are looking to make changes to their substance use*
- *Young adults with a concurrent disorder*
- *Young adults committed to attending group-based treatment*

The YA-SUP is **not** a crisis resource. If you are in an immediate crisis, please call the Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST) at 905-972-8338 or go to your local Emergency Department.

## **How to refer?**

- *CONNECT Mental Health and Addiction Services (self or professional) (905) 522-1155, Ext.36499 more information: <https://www.stjoes.ca/hospital-services/mental-health-addiction-services/connect-mental-health-and-addiction-outpatient-programs>*
- *Clinicians within the St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton system can make internal referrals via Dovetale*

## **Other programs to consider that might be a better fit:**

- *Alternatives for Youth ages 12-25 <https://ay.on.ca/>*
- *Alcohol Drug and Gambling Services (ADGS) ages 23 & up <https://www.hamilton.ca/public-health/clinics-services/alcohol-drug-gambling-services>*
- *Youth Wellness Centre (for early intervention) <https://www.stjoes.ca/hospital-services/mental-health-addiction-services/mental-health-services/youth-wellness-centre>*
- *Cleghorn (for first episode psychosis) <https://www.stjoes.ca/hospital-services/mental-health-addiction-services/mental-health-services/cleghorn-early-intervention-clinic>*
- *Good Shepherd Youth Community Mental Health (ages 12-21) <https://www.goodshepherdcentres.ca/services/youth-community-mental-health-program/>*