

CANADA'S CANNABIS ACT AND YOUTH:

**5 YEARS LATER AND
5 YEARS FORWARD**

By YouthREX in partnership with the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA), Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program at Strides Toronto, and YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program.

**Thu, 20 April 2023
1:00 PM – 3:30 PM EDT**





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EVENT PARTNERS



ONECA is an organization comprised of First Nation Education Counsellors incorporated in 1985. The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) is founded upon principles that recognize that, although a variety of counselling and educational tools and programs exist in Ontario, the development of Native communities requires tools and programs designed specifically to improve Native Counselling and Education Services.

ONECA: [Cannabis Resources](#)



Strides Toronto is the Lead Agency for the **Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program** — a prevention and intervention program that focuses on youth with risk factors who live in an identified priority community and/or belong to a distinct priority population (e.g. Black, Indigenous, Racialized, including Somali, Roma, 2SLGBTQIA). These youth may experience increased barriers in accessing the opportunities that can help them to develop their capacity to make healthy life choices and achieve their goals.



YMCA of Greater Toronto offers a series of **free Cannabis Awareness webinars** aimed at youth 12-24, as well as adults (parents/guardians and professionals) involved in the lives of youth. These webinars cover different topics, such as:

- Let's Talk About Cannabis
- Cannabis & The Developing Brain
- Canna-facts
- Youth & Cannabis Use: A Canadian Landscape
- Talking With Youth About Cannabis
- Cannabis in the Media and its Impact on Youth

YMCA: [Cannabis Knowledge Hub](#)



EVENT INFORMATION

The event is being hosted on Zoom. You will receive the link to join the live event by email.

Live Transcription/Closed Captions: Please note that live transcription/closed captioning will be made available for all participants, except during the Breakout Discussion Groups.

To encourage dialogue and participation, **this event will not be recorded**, but slide decks and other materials from presenters will be shared after the event (*if available*).

Attendees will be able to select during the event which Breakout Discussion Groups they want to join.

Have any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, either leading up to or during the event, you can contact us at info@youthrex.com.



AGENDA

WELCOME & LAND RECOGNITION

Kathe Rogers, Knowledge Exchange Director, and
Kamau Davis-Locke, Learning & Research Associate, YouthREX

1:05PM OPENING REMARKS

Sabrina Samsudeen, Director, Mental Health Systems, Strides Toronto

1:10PM PRESENTATIONS

1. Cannabis and Vaping: Indigenous Perspectives

Roxane Manitowabi, Executive Director, Ontario Native Education
Counselling Association

2. Youth and Cannabis Use: Landscape in Canada

Yvette Clark and **Toby Ma**, YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program

3. The Rippling Impacts of Cannabis Criminalization

Chuka Ejeckam, Political Researcher & Writer

4. Delivering Better Drugs Education for Youth Cannabis Consumers

Dr. Daniel Bear, Professor, Humber College

2:05PM Q&A

2:15PM OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL IMPACT FUNDING RFP BY THE ONTARIO CANNABIS STORE

Jenna Valleriani, Senior Manager, Social Responsibility, Ontario Cannabis Store

2:25PM Q&A

2:30PM BREAK AND TRANSITION TO BREAKOUT DISCUSSION GROUPS

2:40PM BREAKOUT DISCUSSION GROUPS

ROOM 1: SUPPORTING YOUTH WELLBEING

[Google Jamboard](#)

Co-Facilitators:

- **Antonette Phiri**, Manager, Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program
- **Charles-Antoine Rouyer**, Course Director, Multidisciplinary Studies, York University – Glendon Campus

ROOM 2: SUSTAINING THE WORK

[Google Jamboard](#)

Co-Facilitators:

- **Mina Hazar** and **Lucia Scalco**, YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program
- **Garth Edwards**, Policy Analyst, Ontario Public Service (OPS)

ROOM 3: CONSIDERING MENTAL HEALTH

[Google Jamboard](#)

Co-Facilitators:

- **Kiah Ellis-Durity**, Project Facilitator, Cannabis & Mental Health
- **Destin Bujang**, Executive Director, Black Creek Youth Initiative

ROOM 4: ECONOMIC & POLICY IMPACTS

[Google Jamboard](#)

Co-Facilitators:

- **Chuka Ejeckam**, Political Researcher & Writer
- **Dr. Daniel Bear**, Professor, Humber College

3:10PM SHARING KEY TAKEAWAYS

THANK YOU AND NEXT STEPS

Kathe Rogers, Knowledge Exchange Director



BREAKOUT GROUPS

ROOM 1: Supporting Youth Wellbeing: How have legalization and the pandemic affected youth cannabis use? What current and emerging challenges do youth face? What challenges does the youth sector face in continuing to support young people?

[Google Jamboard](#)

ROOM 2: Sustaining The Work: What happens when funding for different youth sector initiatives focused on public education, advocacy, and capacity building around cannabis and youth comes to an end? What are the resulting gaps? Does this work need to be sustained? How?

[Google Jamboard](#)

ROOM 3: Considering Mental Health: Some youth have said they self-medicate with cannabis in the absence of effective mental health support. Others find cannabis use preferable to more traditional therapeutic options. How has the pandemic exacerbated these realities? How do we now understand the connections between cannabis and mental health? How can we continue to support youth in recognizing when cannabis use becomes more harmful than helpful in their lives?

[Google Jamboard](#)

ROOM 4: Economic & Policy Impacts: Concerns have been raised that communities that experienced the legal consequences of the stigmatization and criminalization of cannabis are being left out of the economic benefits of this new industry. How can the benefits be more equally distributed?

[Google Jamboard](#)





PRESENTERS



ROXANE MANITOWABI | Executive Director, Ontario
Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA)

Presentation: Cannabis and Vaping: Indigenous Perspectives

Roxane is a member of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation and has been the Executive Director of the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association for the past 21 years. She has been involved in education for the past 35 years in

various capacities, both at the institutional level and the community level. Roxane is passionate about education and believes that every child deserves a quality education that allows them to thrive and grow. She believes that students will be successful if they are given an opportunity and the proper resources that support them in their educational journey. She is always looking for ideas and ways to advance Indigenous students so that they can flourish in their pursuit of higher learning.

Learn More:

[ONECA's Cannabis Resources](#)



YVETTE CLARK | YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program

Presentation: Youth and Cannabis Use: Landscape in Canada

Yvette is currently the Associate Manager of the Youth Gambling Awareness Program in the YMCA of Greater Toronto, having served as the Associate Manager for the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program for the last two years. Yvette is an educator and team leader who enjoys working with youth and the adults

in their lives. Yvette has a BSc in Zoology and Psychology and a postgraduate Higher Diploma in Education.

Learn More:

[YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program](#)

[YMCA Youth & Cannabis Use Self-Guided Module](#)





TOBY MA | YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program

Presentation: Youth and Cannabis Use: Landscape in Canada

Toby works for the YMCA of Greater Toronto. He started out as an Education and Awareness Coordinator for the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program in the province of Ontario and is now working in the Youth Opioids Awareness Program in a similar capacity. Toby provides awareness workshops and programs for both youth and adults involved in the lives of youth.

Learn More:

[YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program](#)

[YMCA Youth & Cannabis Use Self-Guided Module](#)



CHUKA EJECKAM | Political Researcher & Writer

Presentation: The Rippling Impacts of Cannabis Criminalization

Chuka is a writer and researcher based in Toronto. The son of Igbo immigrants to Canada, he was born and grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His academic work has focused on domestic and global inequity and inequality, reparations drug policy, structural racism, and labour. He has been published in *The Globe and Mail*, *Macleans*, rabble.ca, and *Canadian*

Diversity, and he has contributed to multiple academic articles and book chapters.

His graduate work highlights and opposes the explicitly racist foundations of drug prohibition, and the means by which drug policy enforcement and the US-led War on Drugs have advanced Western, primarily US-based, neoliberal capitalist and imperialist interests, creating incalculable harm in death, displacement, and desperation. Chuka has also written and spoken against police budgets and brutality, Canadian arms manufacturing and sales, and about the need for Western countries to pay reparations for colonization and climate change, and to resettle climate refugees. Chuka previously worked in the labour movement in British Columbia.

Learn More:

ChukaEjeckam.com

**DR. DANIEL BEAR** | Professor, Humber College**Presentation: Delivering Better Drugs Education for Youth Cannabis Consumers**

Daniel has been working in drugs policy since 2003 when he started a chapter of Students for Sensible Drug Policy, and he later went on to work with the American Civil Liberties Union's Drug Law Reform Project where he focused on public education and outreach initiatives across the United States.

Daniel's doctoral work at the London School of Economics and Political Science focused on the implementation of cannabis policy by police in the UK. Since coming to Canada in 2013 he has focused on cannabis education, harm reduction, and how young people make decisions about how and where they consume cannabis.

Daniel leads the Canadian team of the Global Cannabis Cultivation Research Consortium (GCCRC), and is PI of the Engaging and Educating Young-Adult Cannabis Consumers project. He is a Professor in the Faculty of Social and Community Services (FSCS) at Humber College in Toronto and runs Responsum Consulting, where he works with clients such as the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

Learn More:[Twitter](#)[ProfDanBear.com](#)[Weed Out Misinformation](#)



JENNA VALLERIANI | Senior Manager, Social Responsibility,
Ontario Cannabis Store

Jenna, PhD, has been involved in the cannabis industry for over 10 years in Canada. She is the Senior Manager, Social Responsibility for the Ontario Cannabis Store – the Crown corporation that manages the online retail and wholesale distribution of recreational cannabis throughout Ontario. In this role, Jenna works to put into action purpose-driven initiatives to support cannabis knowledge, responsible use, a more diverse and inclusive industry, and environmental sustainability. Jenna has also testified as an expert witness at the Senate of Canada concerning Bill C45's impact on young people and has consulted internationally on cannabis reform.

Learn More:

[Ontario Cannabis Store's Educational Platform](#)

[Social Responsibility at the Ontario Cannabis Store](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

SPECIAL GUESTS



SABRINA SAMSUDEEN | Director, Mental Health Systems, Strides Toronto

Sabrina has been a Strides Toronto employee since 2011, holding multiple positions over the years, including Individual and Family Therapist, Youth Engagement Manager, Manager of Community Outreach Services, and, most recently, Manager of System and Service Access. Previously, she was a Student Engagement Coordinator at Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Social Work, held several roles at Covenant House (Job Developer and Youth/Outreach Worker), and was a Program Supervisor in the residential program at A Circle of Support. These roles have given Sabrina a depth and breadth of experience that will serve her well in her new role.

Sabrina has had a number of notable achievements in her career. As the Manager of Community Outreach Services, Sabrina co-led a pilot aimed at strengthening clinical supports in the Youth Outreach Worker program in East Toronto. The pilot led to the adoption and funding of the Enhanced Youth Outreach Worker role by the provincial government and subsequent roll out across the province.

In all her work, Sabrina centres the best interests of clients in her thinking and decision making. She is a champion for equity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that the programs she leads are responsive to the diverse needs of the communities served. Sabrina has Master of Social Work and Bachelor of Social Work Degrees from Toronto Metropolitan University as well as a Child and Youth Work Diploma from Centennial College.

Learn More: [Strides Toronto](#)

ANTONETTE PHIRI | Manager, Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program

Antonette is the Manager of the Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program (PYOW) at Strides Toronto, which serves as the lead agency for PYOW.

Learn More:

[YouthREX Community Spotlight: Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program Strides Toronto](#)





CHARLES-ANTOINE ROUYER | Course Director,
Multidisciplinary Studies, York University – Glendon Campus

Charles-Antoine is a course director at York University, Glendon campus, and at the Université de l'Ontario français in Toronto, as well as a writer and broadcaster, specializing in Health & Environment, Urban Health, Sustainability, and Travel writing.

Charles-Antoine has also been giving workshops in schools on harm reduction of cannabis consumption and youth since 2018.

Charles-Antoine holds a Master of Environmental Studies specializing in Urban Environmental Health Journalism from York University, and an Honours BA in Economics and Psychology from York University, Glendon campus.

Charles-Antoine is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Education focusing on harm reduction and cannabis consumption with high school students.

Learn More:

[Charles-Antoine Rouyer, Course Director, York University](#)



MINA HAZAR | YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program

Mina is a public health professional and the Manager of National and Provincial Programs within the YMCA of Greater Toronto. Mina supports community capacity building and promoting healthy living via research, leadership, partnership, and innovation. She has designed and implemented evidence-based education and prevention interventions such as Youth Cannabis Awareness Program, Youth Digital Media Awareness Campaigns, and Youth Gambling Awareness Program. Mina holds a MA in Leadership Studies and a B.S in Engineering.

Learn More:

[YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program](#)
[YMCA Youth & Cannabis Use Self-Guided Module](#)





LUCIA SCALCO | YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program

Lucia has been working at the YMCA of Greater Toronto for the past five years in different roles; through her work she has been able to make a positive impact in the lives of countless people. In 2022, as an Education and Awareness Coordinator, she set up the Youth Cannabis Awareness Program in the province of New Brunswick. In her current role as a Bilingual Program Coordinator for the Youth Gambling Awareness Program, she

continues to work on educating and empowering young people, providing them with the tools needed to make informed decisions.

Learn More:

[YMCA Youth Cannabis Awareness Program](#)

[YMCA Youth & Cannabis Use Self-Guided Module](#)



GARTH EDWARDS | Policy Analyst, Ontario Public Service (OPS)

Garth (he/him) is a policy analyst with the Ontario Public Service and is completing his Masters in Public Policy, Administration & Law at York University. He has extensive experience in community engagement, strategic planning, research, and program evaluation, having worked with non-profit and charities geared towards supporting youth.

Learn More:

[YouthREX Community Spotlight: Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program](#)





KIAH ELLIS-DURITY | Project Facilitator, Cannabis & Mental Health

Kiah (she/her) is involved in several harm reduction, substance use education, and drug policy reform initiatives. She has co-developed a free online course for youth on Cannabis and Mental Health with the Schizophrenia Society of Canada, YouthREX, and the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). Kiah is also working with the Get Sensible project,

which focuses on cannabis and substance use health. In her spare time, she loves to garden, play rugby, and binge reality TV.

Learn More:

[Cannabis and Mental Health Project](#)

[Get Sensible](#)

[LinkedIn](#)



DESTIN BUJANG | Executive Director, Black Creek Youth Initiative

With political unrest in Cameroon, Destin came to Canada as a refugee in 2012 after graduating with a BSc in Journalism and Mass Communication. He recently graduated from York University with Specialized Honors, *Suma cum Laude*, majoring in Human Rights and Equity Studies.

Destin is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Black Creek Youth Initiative, located in one of Toronto's priority neighborhoods. The organization provides a safe and inclusive space for youth in the Black Creek communities in Toronto, offering programs and services aimed to address and prevent challenges faced by youth, while building interpersonal and leadership skills.

Over the past 10 years, Destin has developed and coordinated community and youth-based programs, working with various academic and community stakeholders with a focus on prioritizing the needs and experiences of young people. He is also a professor of Social Service Work/Immigrant and Refugee Studies at Seneca College.

In 2020, Destin received the CSC Certificate from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for his contribution towards improving Canadian communities.

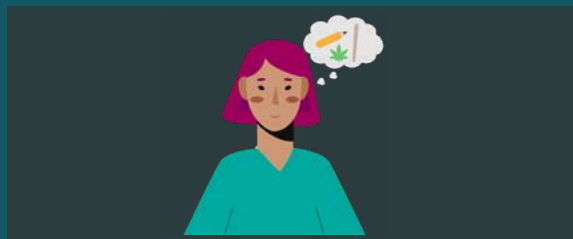
Learn More: [Black Creek Youth Initiative](#) / info@blackcreekyouthinitiative.com

YOUTHREX RESOURCES



Cannabis Use Featured Collection

Browse this collection of toolkits, factsheets, and reports that offer insight into new cannabis laws, harm reduction, and strategies to help youth and youth workers navigate conversations about cannabis use.

[BROWSE THE COLLECTION](#)


What's With Weed?

We collaborated with a variety of partners, including the Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program — and young people! — to create this youth-friendly one-stop-shop on cannabis.

[Disponible en français!](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)


Cannabis and Youth:

A Certificate for Youth Workers

This self-guided certificate, developed in collaboration with the Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program, provides youth workers with evidence-based information on the health, social, and legal risks associated with cannabis use. The best part? It's available on an ongoing basis!

[Disponible en français!](#)

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)


Cannabis and Mental Health

Cannabis and Mental Health is a comprehensive suite of online resources exploring a range of issues surrounding the mental health impacts of cannabis, at the individual, community, and societal level. Register for this free 90-minute course created by youth, for youth.

[Disponible en français!](#)

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

Thank you for joining us!

Visit our **Knowledge Hub** → for more resources connecting shared knowledge to youth work practice.

OUR VISION is an Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth!

OUR MISSION is to make research evidence and evaluation practices accessible and relevant to Ontario's grassroots youth sector through knowledge exchange, capacity building and evaluation leadership!

Follow us on social media:



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