

Best Practices Guide for Promotion and Prevention Activities in a School Context

For organisations
interacting in the school
environment

”

You will find simple and practical advice to help prepare to interact with youth in the context of an activity or when leading a health, well-being, promotion, prevention or educational workshop.

September 2025



Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
de la Gaspésie

Québec

Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
des Îles

Québec

Direction de santé publique

Thank you

Healthy School agents

Planning and Research Programming Officers (APPR) of the GIM Public Health Department:

Sophie Arseneault, Prevention of psychoactive substances, overdoes and the fight against smoking and vaping

Jessica Boudreau, Youth Mental Health

Eloïse Bourdon, Promotion of healthy eating

Jocelyne Côté, Healthy School

Ingrid Fleurant, Healthy School

Nancy Gédéon, Promotion of mental health and suicide prevention

Kim Lavoie-Pelletier, Physically active lifestyle and unintentional trauma

Marie-Claude Tremblay, Healthy and responsible sexuality

Centre de services scolaire des Chic-Chocs:

Geneviève Gagné, Educational Advisor

Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel(CALACS)

La Bôme Gaspésie

Graphic design: Ghislaine Roy

Free translation: Melody Ann Fournier, administrative agent Child Psychiatry Service

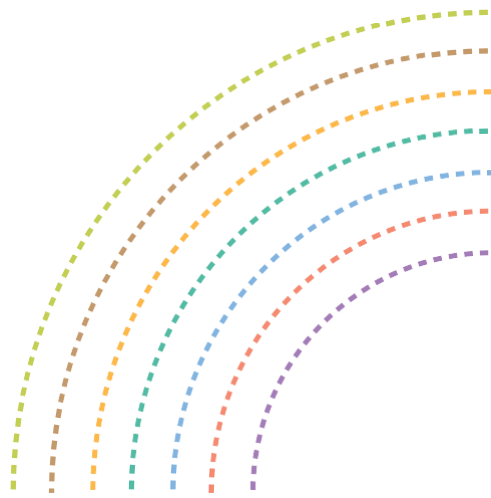


Table of contents

4	You are a role model for young people
5	Opt for a positive attitude during an animation
6	To prepare before your activity
7	To remember during your animation
7	To do after your event
8	To keep in mind
9	Health and well-being themes
10	Physical activity and sedentary behaviours,
13	Alcohol, drugs and gambling prevention
16	Healthy eating
18	Positive mental health
21	Healthy and responsible sexuality
25	Tobacco use prevention (smoking and vaping)
27	Prevention of violence
30	In conclusion
31	References



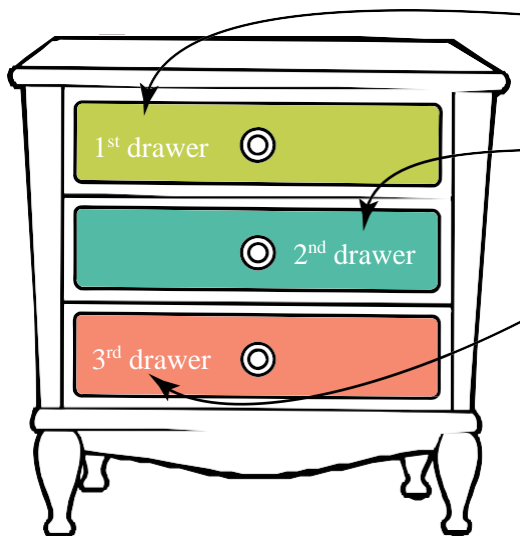
You are a **role model** For young people

School is both a place of learning and a living environment where young people are called upon to develop their potential and acquire skills in different areas in order to provide tools needed to face life and its challenges once they reach adulthood.

Adults who interact with youth at school are **role models** in terms of personal and social skills.

Therefore, it is important to be aware of our values, beliefs and stigmas that can influence the way we interact with students and their families.

The three drawers



My private life (AVOID)

- I make the choices that suit me, that make sense to me, on a personal, cultural and family context;
- I respect my strengths and my limits;
- I pay attention to how I feel.

My professional life as a part of a team

- Within my organization, I comply with the orientations, directives and its knowledge;
- I respect the code of ethics and exercise it in coherence with the values of my organization.

My professional life with youth

- I am at the service of the people I meet;
- I listen and respect what they feel;
- I provide them with comprehensive and up-to-date information based on evidence;
- I do not judge their personal choice;
- I respect decisions that make sense for them, in their personal, cultural and family context.

When giving a presentation in a school setting, we must adopt the position of the **third drawer**, meaning provide the most accurate information possible without exposing our experiences and our personal choices¹.

¹ The three drawers, taken from the Basic Breastfeeding Training document.



Adopt a **positive attitude** During an activity

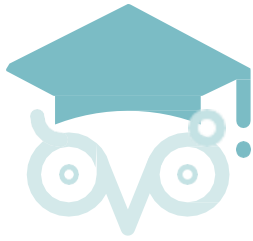
Adopt an attitude of openness, respect for differences and inclusion towards young people and their families. A positive vision includes, among other things, gender equality, respect for sexual and gender diversity, the promotion of bodily diversity, the fight against sexual stereotypes and any discrimination based on sex, economic or cultural realities.

Be careful with the documents you present

- Avoid presenting sexist, heteronormative images or those that present an unrealistic vision of the body by conveying a single model of beauty. Aim to represent a diversity of people: ethnic origin, disability, age, gender, etc.;
- Use material that contain objective, inclusive facts and not personal opinions.

To do this:

- Promote inclusive messages;
- Deliver clear, non-sensational messages while taking into account the context, developmental stage and age of the students;
- Provide simple accurate information that is based on facts before addressing the issue of emotions felt in relation to the given subject;
- Consider the diversity of perceptions as an enrichment to discussions, provided that it does not fuel stigmas;
- Focus on the young person's sense of emotional feeling of personal enrichment rather than on performance, competition and comparison with others;
- Tackle myths and barriers by providing accurate and realistic information;
- Avoid messages that are moralizing, guilt inducing, or that generate fear or anxiety.



To prepare **before** Your activity

-
- Prepare your content and be careful to create a favorable environment for your activity, for example: be ready to answer questions, know who to refer the young person to if necessary, present strategies for solving problems or difficulties, etc.;
 - Find out what has already been done on the subject with teachers, daycare services, personal development and community engagement facilitators, in order to reinvest in their competencies;
 - Consult the school's code of conduct regarding expected behaviour;
 - You must know the stage of development of the young people with whom you will interact in order to adapt your communication accordingly. To do this, we suggest you refer to the **Profile of young people by school cycle** of the reference framework ÉKIP.
 - During activities, take into account the socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and religious realities of the students;
 - **Provide a safety net** if you are addressing sensitive topics, such as sexual abuse, bullying and violence, mental health, etc. Be sure to be accompanied by a counselor or a teacher who can take care of a student who feels uncomfortable during your presentation, who wishes to reveal/unveil or any other reaction that requires quick individual intervention;
 - Validate the content, if necessary, by a qualified professional from the public health department or other, depending on the context.



To remember **during** Your animation

-
- Accept youth as they are, without judgment;
 - Listen to different points of view;
 - Highlight the strengths and skills of each individual;
 - Avoid comparing young people with each other and bad-mouthing them individually or in front of others;
 - Avoid highlighting negative leaders, either positively or negatively;
 - Support **competencies** to be developed in young people;
 - Intervene in any situation of mockery (make fun of, laugh at, etc.) about :
 - Weight;
 - Appearance;
 - Physical abilities;
 - Mental health, whether it be a diagnosis or difficulties;
 - Sex and gender expression;
 - Sexual orientation;
 - Any other form of discrimination;
 - Tackle myths and barriers by providing accurate and realistic information;
 - Recognize and accept that we cannot answer all of the young people's questions on all subjects;
 - Summarize what you need to remember from your presentation. Return to key messages, validate needs and focus on solutions;
 - Provide references, information sheets, pamphlets, guidelines, etc. for students who want to know more.



To do **after** Your activity

-
- Schedule enough time at the end of your activity to collect individual feedback;
 - Provide individual follow-ups to students who show a need, or refer them to the school counselor;
 - Check in with the school staff or the person responsible for establishing a safety net if additional help needs to be provided or a follow-up is necessary.

To keep in mind

During a prevention activity aimed at the well-being of young people at school, here are the recognized effective practices:

During the animation, focus on protective factors, on students' ability to take charge of their well-being and on the development of skills (competencies) such as:

- Manage emotions and stress;
- Conflict management;
- Self-affirmation and resistance to peer pressure;
- The ability to make informed lifestyle choices;
- Participation in activities and hobbies.



Focus on

- Develop an open and **favorable climate** while being sensitive to tackle myths and barriers or false beliefs;
- Ensure you are **prepared** to respond to questions, disclosures or reactions;
- Use **objective**, appropriate, precise and inclusive **language**;
- Know who to **refer or direct** the student to quickly if needed;
- Present strategies for resolving problem situations or existing **support resources**.



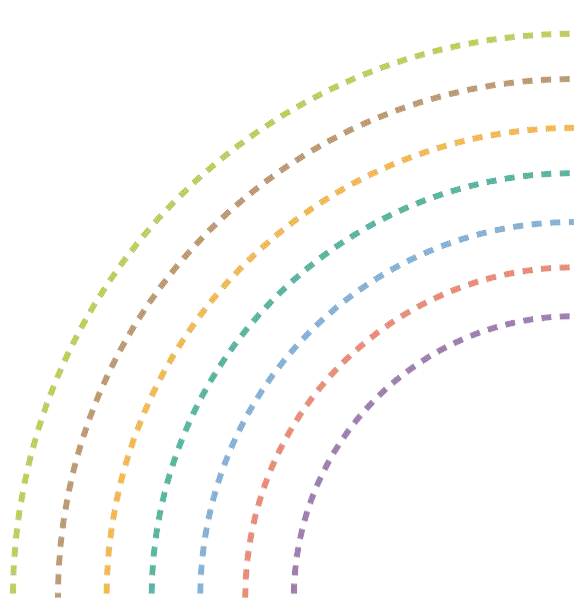
Avoid

- Convey prejudices, stigmatize;
- Use sensationalism, education through fear or dramatization;
- Trivialize;
- Taking certain elements for granted, underestimating or overestimating students' knowledge or experience;
- Talk about personal experiences or anecdotes;
- Using testimonials.

Thematic Files

Non-exhaustive themes of the reference framework ÉKIP.

Health and well-being themes

- 
- Physical activity and sedentary behaviours
 - Alcohol, drugs, and gambling prevention
 - Healthy eating
 - Positive mental health
 - Healthy and responsible sexuality
 - Tobacco use prevention (smoking and vaping)
 - Violence prevention

Physical activity and Sedentary behaviours

What you need to know

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines physical activity as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical activity is an activity that sets the body in motion and results in energy expenditure—for example, recreational, sports, functional or travel activities. Physical activity is a lifestyle habit: movement, in various forms, is part of daily life.

Physical inactivity, on the other hand, is defined by the duration, frequency and level of physical activity below the recommended threshold. **For those under 18 years old**, this threshold is 60 minutes per day of moderate to high intensity physical activity.

Sedentary behaviours are characterized by low energy expenditure while sitting or lying down (excluding sleep). Examples of sedentary activities:

- Watching television;
- Sitting in a car;
- Sitting in your office;
- Reading or drawing;
- Using a computer or tablet.

Although sedentary activities are not necessarily negative in themselves, the fact remains that youth spend a lot of time sitting during the school day. **It is recommended to have less than 8 hours of sedentary activity per day.**

It is possible to be both physically active and sedentary. However, being active is not a protective factor against a sedentary lifestyle. Just like physical inactivity, a sedentary lifestyle has a significant impact on the health of young people, which is why it is important to address both aspects and be able to distinguish between them.



It is therefore important to encourage young people to increase their daily physical activities and reduce their sedentary activities.

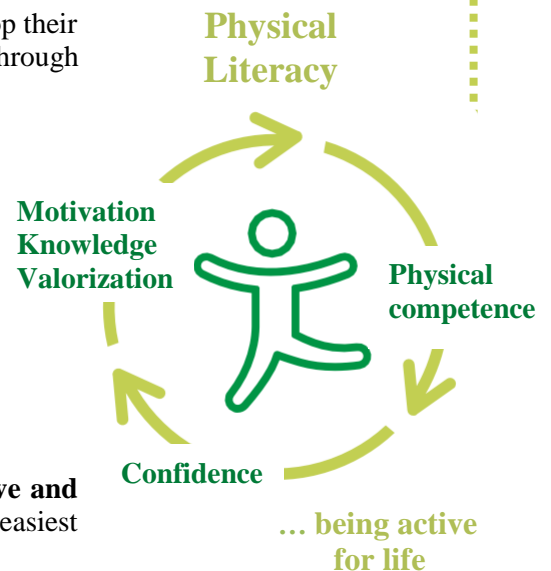
In a school context focus on



- **Respect the stage of development** of children in the proposals for physical activities and respect the recommendations of **Guide to Long-Term development through sport and physical activity**.
- Offer varied opportunities to move that meet everyone's interests, in various contexts: **class period, daycare and extracurricular activities**;
- Ensure that different ways of being physically active are valued and integrated **daily**;
- Offer young people a variety of opportunities to develop their motor skills while gaining motivation and confidence through positive experiences that allow them to feel valued and commit to a life-long physically active lifestyle.
- Diversify the range of physical activities : walking, outdoor activities, gardening, dancing, yoga, martial arts, etc.;
- Go beyond competitive sports and further explore **recreational opportunities related to youth's interests**. For example: you notice that some young people like wildlife, why not develop a birdwatching outing with a walk in the forest.

Create supportive environments that encourage a love and enjoyment of movement and make being active the easiest choice for young people:

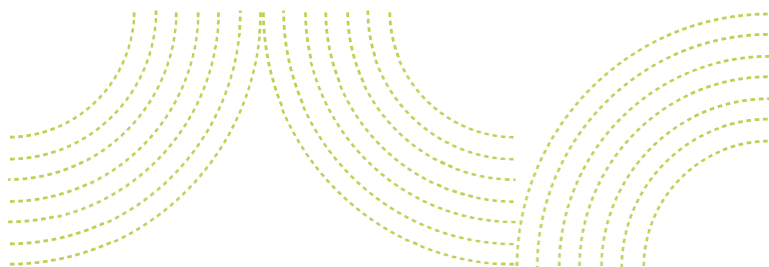
- Integrate active breaks into your activity planning;
- Promote motor action and dynamic workshops;
- Promote outdoor learning;
- Promote active and safe movements;
- Plan with the school the clothing needed for the activity to encourage everyone to participate;
- Find activities suitable for students with an injury or limitation, rather than canceling their participation.



Avoid



- The use of **screens**, (television, computer, audiovisual equipment) other than for educational purposes;
- The integration of **competition**, ranking and positioning aspects, before the age of 11. Focus more on participation and the fun of the event as well as on personal achievement;
- **Specialization in sports** before the age of 14, it is preferable for youth to do multisport to develop a variety of motor skills;
- Do not leverage physical activity as a means of punishment;
- Do not weigh students, calculate their body mass index (BMI) or take anthropometric measurements (skin folds, waist circumference, etc.);
- **Fitness assessment** activities as a means of evaluation for workshops. Where appropriate, focus on personal comparison and growth rather than on the student's performance in relation to national standards;
- Talking about **obesity prevention** as an objective of the as a workshop objective. Such an approach may stigmatize young people who are overweight and encourage the adoption of risky behaviours such as dieting and excessive physical activity.



Alcohol, drugs and gambling Prevention

What you need to know

The subject "Alcohol, drugs and gambling" concerns the use of psychoactive substances (alcohol and other drugs) and the practice of gambling and games of chance (GGC)

A **psychoactive substance** (PAS) is a natural or synthetic substance that acts on the central nervous system by modifying its function, causing various psychological and physical effects. Its use exposes people to health risks and dangers, it also lead to negative social consequences and addiction.

Gambling involves an irreversible wagering of a sum of money or an object of value by the player. The outcome is unpredictable. The consumption of alcohol and other drugs, as well as the practice of gambling, present risks and can have negative consequences on health and quality of life.

In **schools**, preventive actions should enable young people to develop protective factors, such as involvement in an activity or recreational pursuits, as well as the ability to assert themselves, refuse and manage social influences.

Actions should also aim to delay the age of initiation to substance use and gambling and empower young people to make informed choices by ensuring they know the effects, risks and consequences associated with these practices.



In a school context focus on



In Elementary school, educational interventions should be limited to the development of personal and social skills based on topics other than alcohol, drugs and gambling.

In High School, effective structured educational interventions should combine the development of personal and social skills with theme-specific elements.

For more information (in French): <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2018/18-236-10F.pdf>

For **grade 6 students** from environments where alcohol and drug use or gambling is present:

- Attempt to prevent or delay the initial use of alcohol and cannabis (the age of first use is generally between 12 and 15) through the promotion of individual **protective factors** (e.g., high self-esteem, healthy lifestyle habits, academic success, ability to make friends, etc.):
 - **Family protective factors** (e.g., strong attachment, support between family members, good communication and discussion-based discipline, support from extended family, family rituals, etc.)
 - **Environment factors** (e.g., belonging and commitment to the school environment, positive peer group, student commitment to school, presence of a significant adult, availability of resources, etc.);
- For young people who have already used alcohol or drugs or who have already gambled (including games of chance), Provide young people who have already used alcohol or drugs or gambled with consistent and credible information on the effects and risks of these behaviours. Address ways to avoid or reduce risks (harm reduction);
- Focus on short- and medium-term risks so that they seem more tangible to young people;
- Communicate messages that promote critical thinking and provide objective information so that young people can make informed choices regarding alcohol and drug use and gambling;
- Address the advantages that youth put forward regarding the use of alcohol or gambling and encourage them to find alternative strategies, focusing on positive alternatives;
- Explain that the use of any type of drug, whether legal or not, accessible or not, has effects as well as risks and can lead to negative consequences. The use of certain drugs should not be trivialized;
- Discuss different drugs separately to avoid making some substances seem less harmful than others to youth (e.g., alcohol and cannabis versus heroin);
- Use interventions to promote young people's ability to refuse offers of alcohol or drugs, appropriately manage stress and emotions and become involved in their community;
- Manage the composition of groups during educational activities to avoid undesirable effects, such as encouraging alcohol and drug use:
 - Favor small groups;
 - Form groups of young people who are the same age or who have had similar experiences;
 - Avoid groups composed only of students with deviant behaviour.

Avoid



- In **elementary school**, refrain from speaking directly about alcohol and drug use or gambling. Limit interventions to questions asked by students; answer them directly, succinctly and simply. Exception: call on preventive counselling services in communities where inhalants are used;
- Do not trivialize the use of certain drugs;
- Avoid stigmatizing language when talking about people who use drugs or alcohol. For example: avoid saying drug addicts, alcoholics, drug addicts, junkies, etc., instead say: people who use drugs, people who use drugs occasionally, people who have a substance use disorder, people who have used drugs;
- Avoid focusing interventions or activities on fear or sensationalism. These approaches do not have the desired effects on youth attitudes and behaviours in the longer term;
- Avoid addressing only the risks associated with PAS use. This can lead to a closed-minded attitude among youth, in addition to undermining the credibility of the message.



Healthy eating

What you need to know

Eating habits refer to the food and drink consumed by an individual or population group. Depending on their nutritional value, foods and beverages can make up one's eating habits on a daily, occasional or exceptional basis.

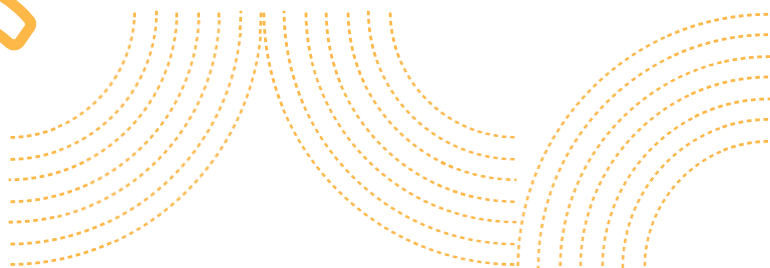
A Healthy eating habit includes:

- Daily consumption of a variety of highly nutritious foods, beverages and water;
- Occasional or exceptional consumption of foods or beverages of low nutritional value.

There are other dimensions of eating habits that go beyond the nutritional value of food. Indeed, food conveys gastronomic, cultural, or emotional value.

Interventions in schools should empower young people to make healthy eating choices and to develop a healthy relationship with food. Nutrient-dense foods and beverages should be offered in sufficient quantity and variety and be economically accessible. Water should be easily accessible at all times.

Therefore, whether your activity is about healthy eating or not, it is advisable to follow the recommendations on page 17 whenever food is offered.



In a school context focus on



- Encourage pleasure, experimentation and discovery: handling, smelling, preparing and tasting different foods;
- Encourage listening to and respecting hunger and satiety signals;
- Emphasize that a healthy eating consists of a variety of foods and prioritizes water consumption. Foods with high nutritional value should occupy an important place in both frequency and quantity;
- Qualify foods in a positive way;
- Ensure that food concepts are fact-based rather than derived from personal experiences or popular myths (e.g. sugar makes children hyperactive);
- Focus interventions on adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits, not on weight;
- Encourage students to develop critical judgment regarding food marketing, for example the consumption of sugary drinks or sports supplements by questioning the motivations of the industry;
- Act in accordance with school policies and this guide.

Avoid



- Avoid using food to Reward or reprimand young people (e.g. special activities). Food should not be used as negotiating tool;
- Avoid dichotomizing foods, using terms like “good,” “bad,” “allowed,” or “forbidden.”;
- Do not make positive or negative comments about weight, height and physical appearance, whether these comments concern yourself or others;
- Do not promote diets, unhealthy eating behaviours or any other unhealthy weight-loss methods;
- Avoid the use of personal stories from individual or public figures who have suffered from eating disorders because of the risk of negative effects, such as trivializing weight loss diets and harmful eating behaviours.

For more information, see the guide on the website of the Montreal Regional Public Health Department (in French): [AcompanyingGuide_FV](#)



Positive mental health

What you need to know

Mental health is a state of well-being in which a person can achieve self-fulfillment. Mental health refers to the ability to think and act in such a way as to enjoy life, meet various challenges, be productive and contribute to the community. Mental health is related to the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, behaviours and relationships with others. (**Mental health: Strengthening our actions**. World Health Organization 2022).

Several factors (individual, social, environmental) influence a person's mental health.

In the school context, the actions to be prioritized should aim at developing personal and social skills, engaging youth and creating healthy and inclusive living environments. The goal is for young people to feel good, safe, valued, supported and able to adapt to various situations.



In a school context focus on



- Promote the development of personal and social skills:
 - Expressing and managing emotions and stress;
 - Asking for help;
 - Managing conflict and solving problems;
 - Management of social influences;
 - The ability to make informed choices.
- Promote positive mental health (remember that everyone has mental health and that good mental health is not just the absence of mental disorders).
- Promote interventions that aim to strengthen protective factors (personal and social skills, youth engagement, family and social support, etc.) and reduce risk factors (stigmas linked to mental disorders, homophobia, violence in romantic relationships, etc.).
- Encourage participation in activities and hobbies (protective factor).
- Become aware of your own values and prejudices in relation to mental health.
- Check that the information provided is relevant and appropriate for the age of the students.
- Be prepared to answer questions if students ask about suicide or death by suicide, in order to do so safely. For proper preparation, refer to the document **Preventing suicide among young people**
- Check with those who want to talk about suicide to see if this interest is in fact a request for help.

BE VIGILANT



It is important to remain sensitive to signs of distress and mental health issues (even if not addressing these issues directly with youth) when interacting with young people. For example:

- Repeated academic failure
- Isolation
- Truancy/Absenteeism
- Attention problems
- Frequent crying
- Tantrums
- Loss of interest
- Anxiety
- Self-mutilation or other inadequate coping strategies
- Violence
- Suicidal thoughts

Refer young people in need to the appropriate services quickly and appropriately.

Avoid



- Stigmatization regarding mental problems or disorders. Pay attention to your actions, attitudes and words;
- Providing information about the consequences of mental disorders or inadequate coping strategies. Even if the message is intended to be positive, it can be distorted and interpreted differently by a person in distress, because their perception and judgment are altered;
- Sharing opinions and personal experiences concerning mental health issues and suicide;
- Interventions specifically addressing the topic of suicide with groups of students. As mentioned previously, limit yourself to answering questions and confirming whether or not it is a request for help;
- Avoid to expand their knowledge of ways to die by suicide and their degrees of fatality;
- Avoid seeing suicide as a romantic, heroic, or inevitable way to end one's suffering. Make it clear that suicide is not an option and that the causes are multifactorial. Remind people of support resources.

Free Online Training (in French)



- Training « Santé mentale positive : agir concrètement pour le bien-être des élèves » on the [ENA plateforme](#) .

To go further



- [Rain or Shine](#)
- [Frame of reference ÉPANOUIR MSSS](#) (in French)



Healthy and Responsible Sexuality

What you need to know

Sexuality is a fundamental dimension of human beings that goes beyond genitalia and reproduction. It includes biological, psycho-affective, relational, sociocultural, and moral aspects. (ÉKIP).

- Adapt your content according to the student's stages of psychosexual development. Therefore, do not overestimate young people's knowledge about sexuality, but also do not underestimate their ability to understand and deal with certain realities of life. Check the prior knowledge that students must have acquired to assimilate your content. To do this, consult:

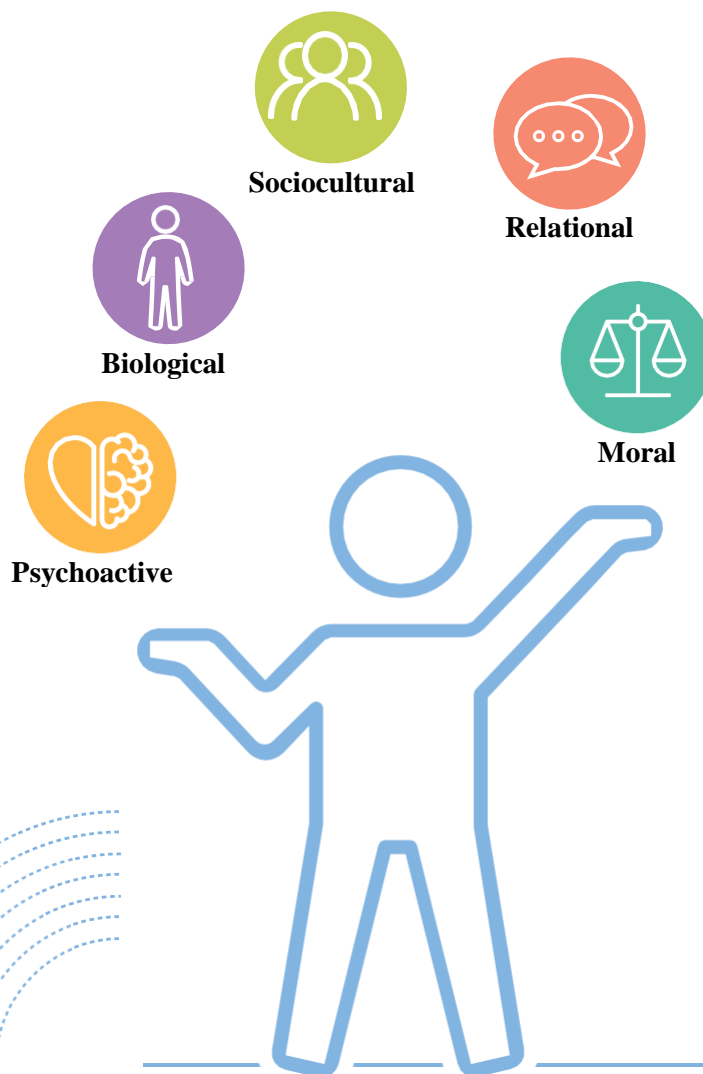
In kindergarten and elementary school:

[Detailed content on sex education from the Ministère de l'Éducation](#)

In highschool:

[Detailed content on sex education from the Ministère de l'éducation](#)

- Be consistent with the compulsory Sexuality Education of the Ministère de l'Éducation for certain themes. Follow guidelines of Culture and Citizenship in Québec program (CCQ). See [Elementary CCQ program](#)



In a school context focus on



- Present a comprehensive and **positive** approach to sexuality, which includes gender equality, the fight against sexual stereotypes, respect for diversity, which promotes fulfilling romantic relationships as well as values such as authenticity, communication, the notion of pleasure, respect for consent, etc.;
- Get students to use the right terms (precise, respectful and non-vulgar);
- Help prevent sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs) and unplanned pregnancies, which includes providing young people with services tailored to their needs, such as access to contraception and condoms;
- Talk about sexuality in general and emphasize the importance of respecting people's privacy. **No one should talk about their own sexuality**; neither the speaker nor the student;
- Respect your limits, meaning you have the right not to know everything about the subject. You can answer that you don't know, or delay your answer to allow yourself time to do your research;
- Watch this summary capsule (in French) [C'est quoi « faire de l'éducation à la sexualité »](#) before your activity.

Specifically when leading an activity addressing sexuality, care must be taken to foster a climate of trust within the group by establishing functioning rules that aim to:

- Reassure all the young people that the activity must be carried out with respect and discretion in the face of questions, comments, opinions, reactions and feelings expressed by other people in the group;
- Reassure a student who sometimes wrongly believes that they are the only one concerned about an aspect of sexuality, when in reality, there are often several of them asking the same questions;
- Frame the discussion in such a way as to protect the integrity and privacy of youth or those around them, if personal information, vulgar or disrespectful comments arise during the discussion. (SEXOclie).

In a school context focus on



Developing an environment conducive to exchanges and discussions on sexuality. **Establish ground rules** with students when sexuality is discussed and encourage their participation. Here are some suggestions of ground rules:

1. I raise my hand to ask to speak.
2. I always express myself respectfully and use accurate and appropriate vocabulary when talking about sexuality.
3. I listen to what others have to say with respect, being sensitive to the fact that everyone may have a point of view or opinion different from mine.
4. I can ask any questions that concern me without fear of judgment from others. All questions are welcome and valid.
5. I use the pronoun “I” to talk about myself, express my opinions and my emotions, avoiding disclosing too much personal information.
6. I avoid naming names or personalizing situations to protect the privacy of others at all times.

Instead of saying:

“If Mathieu walks hand in hand with his friend Leo in the schoolyard, does that mean he is gay?”

Say:

”When two boys hold hands, does it mean they are gay?”

Instead of saying:

”My best friend told me she didn't use protection during sex, does that mean she could get pregnant?”

Say:

”I've heard that if you don't use protection during sex, you could get pregnant. Is that true?”

7. I do not circulate in any way (disclose, record, film) information or comments that were mentioned during the discussions out of respect for the group participants.
8. I do not make negative comments, insult or ridicule anyone under any circumstances.
9. I have the right not to participate in discussions if I do not feel comfortable speaking in front of the group.
10. I speak privately to an adult I trust if I am not comfortable with certain topics that are discussed, if I have concerns or if I have questions about sexuality that have remained unanswered. (SEXOclie)

Avoid



- Stigmatization about sexual diversity, whether through actions, attitudes or words;
- Taking for granted: students' gender identity and sexual orientation, romantic or sexual experiences;
- Images of STDs that show genitals with lesions and infections;
- Sensationalism;
- Show pornography;
- Use the word *normal* to describe a person, a behaviour, a concern, etc. Replace this term with natural. Ex.: it is natural to be concerned about...



See as needed:

To increase your comfort answering student questions [Teachers | Teaching Sexual Health](#)

See also as needed (French only):

Key messages to convey to [high school students](#).

Sex education in a [multicultural](#) context.

To answer difficult questions, you can watch [Capsule 9 – answering questions from SE students](#) on YouTube.



Tobacco use prevention (smoking and vaping)

What you need to know

Tobacco use refers to the consumption of tobacco products in various forms: cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, electronic cigarettes, snuff, shisha, etc. Tobacco products are the only legal products that kill when consumed as intended by the manufacturer. There is no safe threshold using these products because nicotine is highly addictive.

Interventions in schools should aim to **prevent the use of tobacco** by:

- Providing young people with tools to remain non-smokers and non-vapers;
- Facilitating the engagement of youth in actions to build a smoke-free society;
- Promoting smoke-free and vapor-free environments;
- Focusing on promoting **protective factors** (e.g., high self-esteem, good problem-solving habits, healthy lifestyle habits, positive peers, etc.).



In a school context focus on



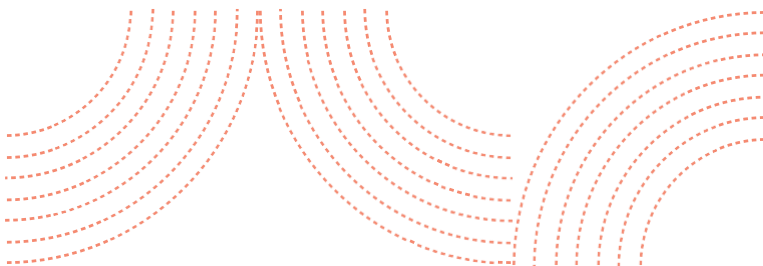
For grade 6 elementary students in environments where tobacco use is common, as well as among secondary school students:

- Use interventions to promote young people’s ability to refuse offers to consume tobacco, manage emotions and stress adequately, and encourage young people to become involved in their communities;
- Provide age-appropriate information to youth directly and objectively, do not focus only on the risks associated with tobacco use;
- Aim the key initiation period to carry out prevention activities. (At the secondary level, this advice applies to students in secondary 1 and 2);
- Inform young people about the following elements:
 - Initiation to smoking and vaping starts gradually, it is sneaky: you take a first drag, you inhale, you smoke a whole cigarette, you smoke frequently;
 - There is no safe threshold for tobacco use;
 - There is no typical initiation pathway. Research shows that addiction can occur very early, well before weekly or daily use;
 - The earlier a person starts using tobacco products, the more likely they are to become addicted to nicotine.

Avoid



- In **elementary school**, refrain from talking directly about tobacco use and vaping. Limit interventions to questions asked by students; answer them directly, succinctly and simply;
- Avoid advertisements or films that show people using tobacco (smoking and vaping);
- Refrain from smoking and vaping in the presence of students, and on all school grounds. Remember, you are a role model for young people.



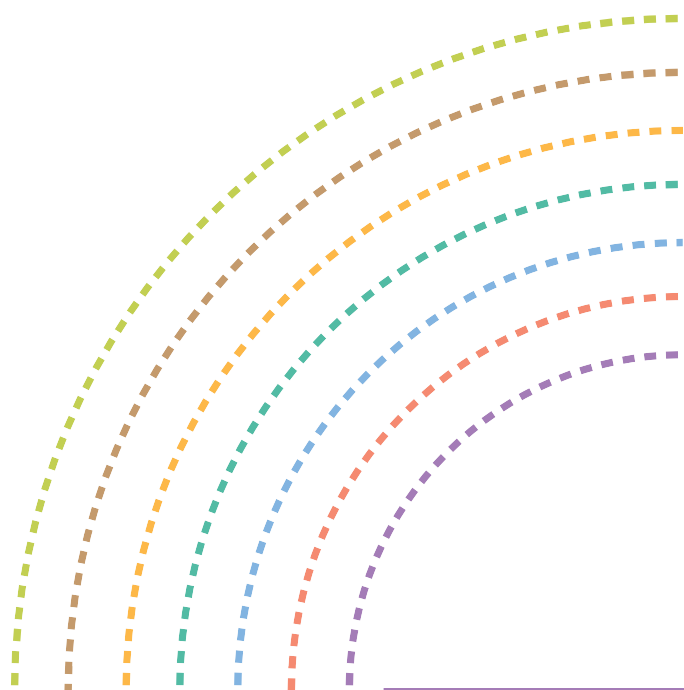
Violence prevention

What you need to know

Violence refers to any use of force, whether verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual; which is intentionally used against a person; and resulting in: feelings of distress, harm, injury, oppression from an attack on a person's psychological or physical integrity or well-being, rights or property.

Before an activity dealing with sensitive topics such as bullying, dating violence, sexual assault, etc., inform the administration of the planned time for the activity to ensure the presence of a school counselor who will act as a **safety net**. Schools have key bullying counselors who could play this safety net role and take charge of the student who discloses an assault or of the group according to the needs.

In the event of disclosure of **sexual assault** of a young person, any professional working with youth must report all situations covered by the YPA (art. 39, YPA).



In a school context focus on



- Provide a caring, civic-minded environment for young people that fosters positive relationships and openness to diversity;
- contribute to young people's sense of security, and reduce or prevent problems related to aggressive behaviour in victims, perpetrators or witnesses of violence;
- Promote harmonious relationships and prosocial behaviours between students, between adults and students, and between adults;
- Consider situations of violence and bullying as a sign of relationship difficulties. These situations require educational support and guidance aimed at strengthening the personal and social skills of the students involved, such as:
 - Increased support for anger or conflict management;
 - Positive self-assertion;
 - Responsible decision-making;
 - Exploring strategies for dealing with bullying, violence, and teasing.
- Actively intervene in group dynamics to protect at-risk students and prevent negative interactions;
- Intervene in any situation of mockery about weight, appearance, physical and intellectual abilities, sex and gender expression, sexual orientation or any form of discrimination;
- Ensure **early** intervention in cases of violence or bullying expressed directly (e.g., beatings, insults, fights) or indirectly (e.g., rumors, exclusion), including on line (cyberspace). Immediate intervention is necessary, as well as supervision aimed at stopping the behaviour.

Avoid



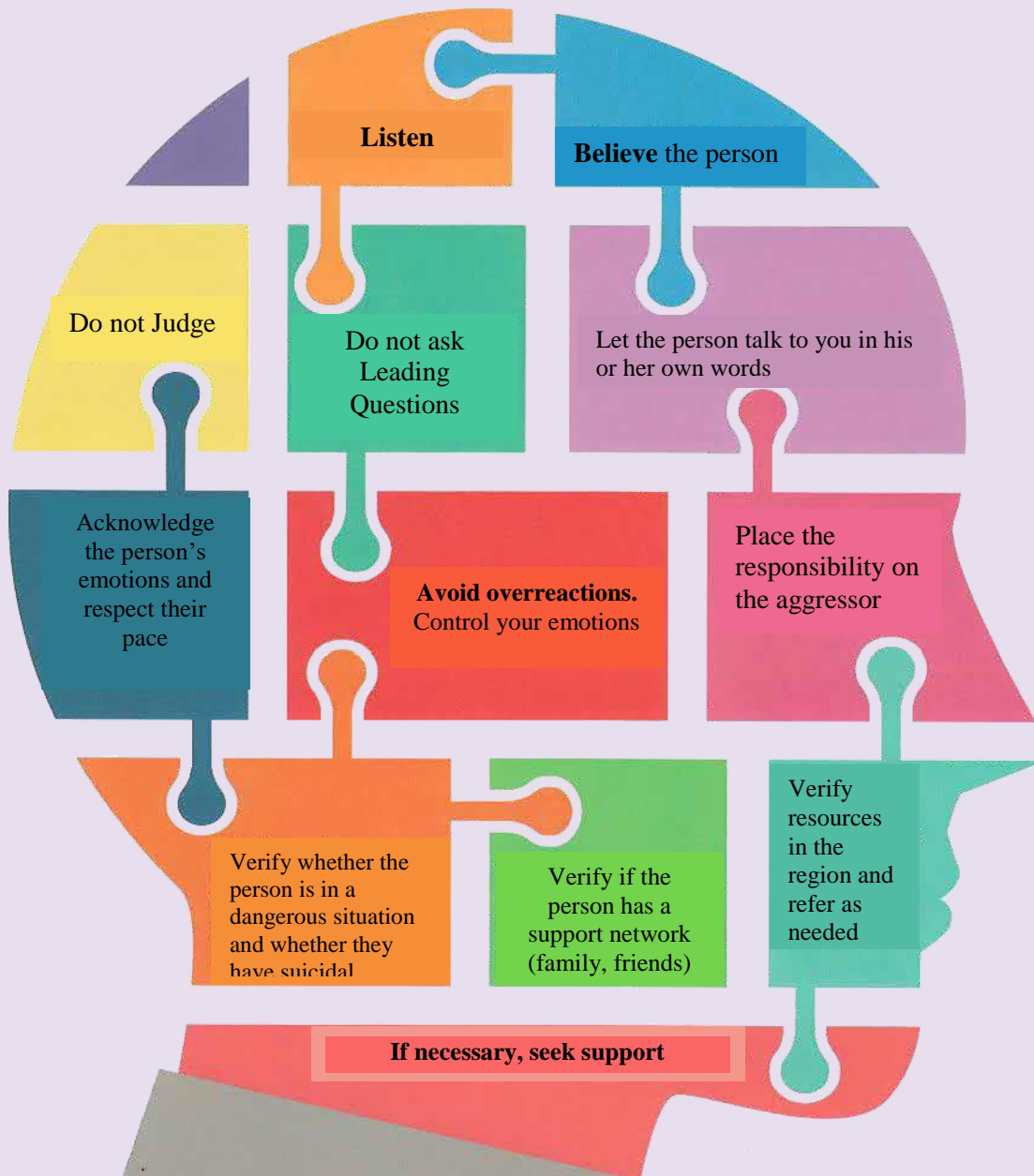
- Trivializing violence;
- Questioning the statements of a student who claims to be a victim of bullying or violence;
- Making young people who are victims or witnesses of violence feel guilty.

See also as needed:



The **SPARX** program aims to promote positive intimate and romantic relationships and prevent dating violence among high school youth.

SUPPORTIVE ATTITUDES DURING A DISCLOSURE OF SEXUAL ABUSE



Source :

Regroupement Québécois des Centres d'Aide et de Lutte Contre les Agressions à Caractère Sexuel
www.rqcalacs.qc.ca/attitudes-aidantes.php

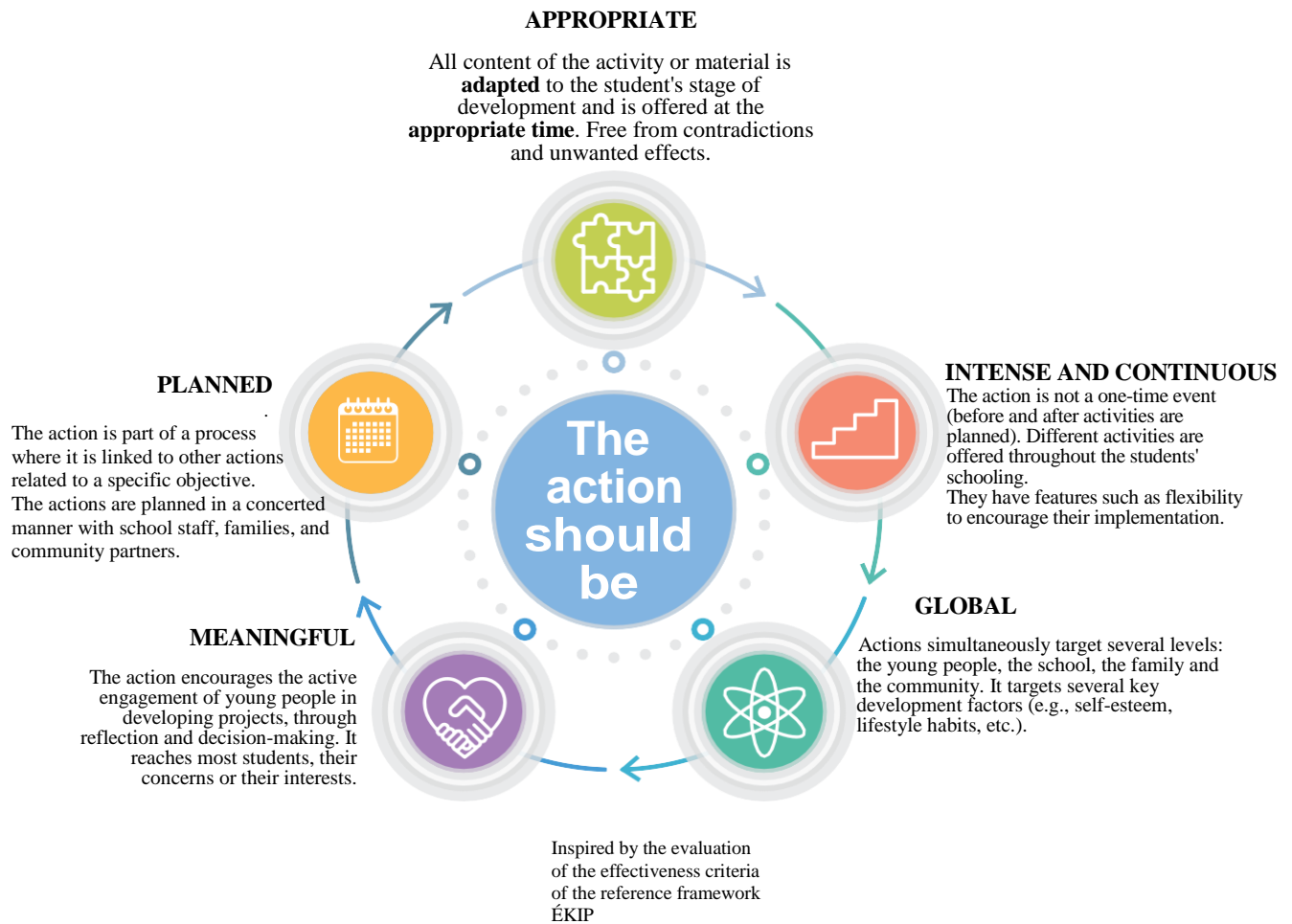
OUTIL PRÉPARÉ PAR





IN CONCLUSION

No matter what the educational intention (informing, raising awareness, helping to understand, teaching or developing new skills), when carrying out **preventive actions** aimed at youth well-being, they should meet these **effectiveness criteria** which are recognized as being **optimal**.



ÉKIP is a reference framework for actions to promote health and well-being as well as the prevention of problems among school-aged children in order to contribute to their academic perseverance and educational success.

It is designed for professionals working in the education, health, social and community services. It invites these networks to work together to maximize the impact of their actions and to equip youth to cope with life situations they encounter.

The ÉKIP framework presents effective and recognized means of working with preschool children, primary and secondary school students attending public and private schools in Québec.

Consult **ÉKIP**.

To support you in preparing your event, you could call on the Healthy School agent in your area or the professionals from your School board service center.

References

- ALCOOL, CANNABIS ET AUTRES DROGUES, Planification des actions préventives en milieu scolaire au secondaire basée sur les meilleures pratiques, [En ligne], 2018. [<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2018/18-236-10F.pdf>].
- CIVA, Sexualité et handicap. Un guide pour les personnes aidantes, [En ligne]. [<https://indd.adobe.com/view/6099da9a-71c2-459c-868d-44351c31c78e>].
- Compétences à développer chez les jeunes du préscolaire à la 5^e secondaire, [En ligne], mis à jour le 20 mars 2024. [<https://www.quebec.ca/education/prescolaire-primaire-et-secondaire/ressources-outils-reseau-scolaire/sante-bien-etre-jeunes/ekip/competences-a-developper-chez-les-jeunes-du-prescolaire-a-la-5e-secondaire>].
- Contenus détaillés en éducation à la sexualité préscolaire et primaire, [En ligne], 2018. [https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/education/education-sexualite/education-sexualite-contenus-detailles-prescolaire-primaire_FR.pdf].
- Contenus détaillés en éducation à la sexualité secondaire, [En ligne], 2018. [https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/education/education-sexualite/education-sexualite-contenus-detailles-secondaire_FR.pdf].
- CULTURE ET CITOYENNETÉ QUÉBÉCOISE, Répondre aux question des élèves sur la sexualité, [En ligne], 2024. [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiVb6H20zg>].
- ÉTINCELLES, pour des parcours amoureux et intimes positifs, [En ligne]. [<https://etincelles.uqam.ca/>].
- Formation « Santé mentale positive : agir concrètement pour le bien-être des élèves » sur la plate-forme ENA, [En ligne], mis à jour le 16 décembre 2024. [<https://fcp-partenaires.ca/login/index.php>].
- Guide d'accompagnement en saine alimentation pour les intervenants en milieu scolaire, [En ligne], 2024. [https://ccsmtlpro.ca/sites/mtlpro/files/media/document/DRSP_Pub_2024_11_19_GuideAccompagnementSaineAlimentationMilieuScolaire.pdf].
- Interventions pour promouvoir la santé mentale de la population, INSPQ, [En ligne] mis à jour le 26 juin 2024. [<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sante-mentale/interventions>].
- Le Plan d'action interministériel en santé mentale 2022-2026 – S'unir pour un mieux-être collectif, [En ligne], 2022, mis à jour le 6 mai 2022. [<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-003301/>].
- LE SPORT C'EST POUR LA VIE, Développement à long terme par le sport et l'activité physique, Édition 3.0, [En ligne], 2019. [<https://sportpourelavie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/DLT-3-0-March-2021.pdf>].
- Les trois tiroirs, tiré du document de Formation de base en allaitement maternel, p. 24, [En ligne], 2008. [https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2008/formation_allaitement.pdf].
- Organisation mondiale de la Santé (OMS) Santé mentale : renforcer notre action, [En ligne], 17 juin 2022. [<https://www.who.int/fr/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>].
- Plateforme Ça se cultive, [En ligne], 2025. [<https://casecultiive.ca/>].
- Portrait du jeune en fonction de son cycle scolaire, [En ligne], mis à jour le 20 mars 2024. [<https://www.quebec.ca/education/prescolaire-primaire-et-secondaire/ressources-outils-reseau-scolaire/sante-bien-etre-jeunes/ekip/portrait-du-jeune-en-fonction-de-son-cycle-scolaire>].

- Prévenir le suicide chez les jeunes, inspiré de L'aide-mémoire pour le personnel scolaire et les partenaires: document réalisé dans le cadre des travaux du Groupe-relais régional BSLGÎM en janvier 2022, [En ligne], 2024. [\[https://www.cisss-gaspesie.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Prevenir-le-suicide-chez-les-jeunes-Lignes-directrices-Avril-2024-VF.pdf\]](https://www.cisss-gaspesie.gouv.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Prevenir-le-suicide-chez-les-jeunes-Lignes-directrices-Avril-2024-VF.pdf).
- Programme d'études Culture et citoyenneté québécoise, [En ligne]. [\[https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/education/pfeq/primaire/programmes/PFEQ-culture-citoyennete-quebecoise-feuillet.pdf\]](https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/education/pfeq/primaire/programmes/PFEQ-culture-citoyennete-quebecoise-feuillet.pdf).
- Projet Épanouir – Promotion de la santé mentale positive en contexte scolaire – Cadre de référence – MSSS [En ligne], 21 novembre 2022. [\[https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-003495/\]](https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/document-003495/).
- RÉFÉRENT ÉKIP, Sécurité, santé et bien-être des jeunes en milieu scolaire, [En ligne], mis à jour le 10 avril 2025. [\[https://www.quebec.ca/education/prescolaire-primaire-et-secondaire/ressources-outils-reseau-scolaire/sante-bien-etre-jeunes\]](https://www.quebec.ca/education/prescolaire-primaire-et-secondaire/ressources-outils-reseau-scolaire/sante-bien-etre-jeunes).
- SEXOCLIC, Développement psychosexuel des jeunes de 12 à 17 ans, [En ligne], mis à jour le 9 mai 2024. [\[https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/jeunesse/sexoclic/developpement-psychosexuel-jeunes-12-17-ans/\]](https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/jeunesse/sexoclic/developpement-psychosexuel-jeunes-12-17-ans/).
- SEXOCLIC, Éducation à la sexualité en contexte multiculturel, [En ligne], mis à jour le 9 mai 2024. [\[https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/jeunesse/sexoclic/education-sexualite-en-contexte-multiculturel/\]](https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/jeunesse/sexoclic/education-sexualite-en-contexte-multiculturel/).
- SEXOCLIC, Dix règles de fonctionnement pour une intervention de groupe, [En ligne], mis à jour le 9 mai 2024. [\[https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/jeunesse/sexoclic/dix-regles-fonctionnement-pour-intervention-de-groupe/\]](https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/jeunesse/sexoclic/dix-regles-fonctionnement-pour-intervention-de-groupe/).
- TEACHING SEXUAL HEALTH, resources and lesson plans for delivering sexual health education, [On line], updated September 9, 2025. [\[https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/\]](https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/).

*Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
de la Gaspésie*

Québec  

*Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
des îles*

Québec  

Direction de santé publique

