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Toronto Public Health

SAFER PARTYING TOOLKIT

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ABOUT THE SAFER PARTYING TOOLKIT

We know that many traditional approaches to addressing youth substance use (e.g., zero-tolerance policies, abstinence-only education, etc.) have limited effectiveness and can produce unintended negative consequences. As a result, this toolkit uses a harm reduction approach and aims to reduce the negative social and health outcomes related to alcohol and other drugs. The goal is to support and encourage healthy behaviours and good decision-making. This resource includes information on the risks of using alcohol and other drugs and encourages youth to celebrate in a safer, less harmful way on their prom/grad night or any events/parties celebrating the end of the school year.

Many of the resources and lessons in this toolkit can be used at any time to increase teens' awareness of the importance of safer partying.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide school administrators, teachers, students, and parents/caregivers with resources and messaging that encourages students to have fun on their prom night while making decisions to celebrate in safer ways.



STUDENT PARTY PROMISE PLEDGE

Alcohol and other drugs affects decision-making abilities and can contribute to unintended consequences. A “promise,” which is sometimes referred to as a “pledge,” is an easy way to encourage ownership of an individual’s intention to behave or act in a certain way. Students need to value themselves and their friends and classmates. The goal of the PROMise Pledge is for students to take responsibility for their behaviour to reduce the risk of harm to themselves and others. The PROMise Pledge can be found in [Appendix A](#) of the toolkit. Your school or prom committee can create your own PROMise Pledge using this as a template.

How to use this resource:

Before Prom:

- Share it using various communication platforms with students attending prom (e.g., send to each student to read in grade 12 homeroom after reviewing the [Safe Partying and Protecting Yourself from Sexual Violence](#) tip sheets.
- Share in conjunction with the daily morning announcements.
- Share with parents/caregivers to review with their teens before prom.
- Print out the PROMise Pledge (see [Appendix A](#)) and place these in common areas of the school to be signed by the students who are attending prom.

On Prom Night:

- On the day of prom, post these at the entrance of the venue and/or print out the PROMise Pledge to be signed by students as they arrive.
- Read out during the welcoming speech at the celebration.

SAFER PARTYING: TIP SHEET

It is common for schools to have a zero-tolerance approach to alcohol and other drugs for students attending prom. However, it becomes more difficult to supervise what takes place once students leave the facility and continue celebrating on their prom night. This resource encourages students to party in safer, less harmful ways while highlighting information on the risks of using alcohol and other drugs (see [Appendix B](#)).

How to use this resource:

- Give to students who are attending the prom, and promote it using various communication platforms.
- Use it to facilitate discussion in class or at assemblies.
- Share the resource with parents of students attending prom.
- Turn the tips in the resource into content that can be used during announcements, or communications going out to the school community about prom (see [Announcement Section](#) of the toolkit).
- Use adapted materials for social media posts and display monitors at school (see [Social Media Section](#) of the toolkit).

A LESSON ON CONSENT

The [Supreme Court of Canada](#) (Section 273.1(1) of the Criminal Code) defines consent as a person's voluntary agreement to "engage in the sexual activity in question." Understanding what consent is can create healthy boundaries in intimate relationships. Talking with teens about

consent, sexuality and relationships can help them make more informed, mature decisions in the future. It is not easy to talk with your teen about consent; however it is very important to do so.

How to use this resource:

- Use the “[Introduction to Consent](#)” video developed by Ontario Physical & Health Education Association (OPHEA) during an assembly or for class discussion (5:55 minutes in length).
- Educators can review the [Sexual Violence Prevention Education Resources](#) developed by OPHEA and incorporate information into lessons.
- Other resources that can be shared with students and families include [Teen Talk-Consent and Sexual Assault](#) and [Teaching Sexual Health: Consent](#).

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE: TIP SHEET

Sexual violence includes unwanted touching up to and including rape. Sexual violence is a serious problem that can have lasting, harmful physical and mental health effects on victims, their families, friends, and communities. This resource highlights tips on how to prevent sexual violence (see [Appendix C](#)).

How to use this resource:

- Review it with students who are attending prom and promote it using various communication platforms using a trauma-informed approach. Do not assume that students have not already experienced sexual violence.
- Use it to facilitate discussion in class or at assemblies.
- Turn the tips in the resource into content that can be used during announcements, or communications going out to the school community about prom (see [Announcement Section](#) of the toolkit).
- Use adapted materials for social media posts and display monitors at school (see [Social Media Section](#) of the toolkit).
- Refer to it while discussing the White Ribbon & Draw the Line Campaigns

WHITE RIBBON & DRAW THE LINE

The white ribbon is a symbol used by the White Ribbon Campaign to symbolize a commitment to ending gender-based violence. [White Ribbon & Draw the Line](#) provide resources for students, parents, and school staff around gender-based violence and tools, including lesson plans and promotional materials to end gender-based violence.

How to use this resource:

- [The White Ribbon & Draw the Line website](#) contains lesson plans & promotional materials that can be used with students at school.
- [Share the parent portal](#) of the White Ribbon & Draw the Line website with parents through your school's communication portal.
- Share White Ribbon resources with the prom committee and allow them to incorporate messaging as they see fit:
 - » For example: purchase pins and a white ribbon to pin on the prom attendee's coat/shirt/dress.
- Send to students ahead of time and encourage them to save resources to their phones so they can access them on the night of the prom if they need a safe ride home.



THE POWER OF THE BYSTANDER

Individuals have the power to protect others who may be in a difficult situation. The Sexual Assault Crisis Centre has developed information about how to “[Use Your Power as a Bystander](#)” to learn more.

How to use this resource:

- Share the “Power of the Bystander” resources on the school and school council’s social media platforms.
- Use the “Power of the Bystander” resources for the morning announcement.
- Use the “[GAME ON: Because Stepping in Should be Everyone’s Game](#)” video (8:14 mins in length) during an assembly or for class discussion.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TEEN ABOUT PROM: PARENT/CAREGIVER TIP SHEET

Parents/caregivers talking to their teens about their party plans can be tough, but those conversations have been shown to have an important influence when it comes to teens’ use of alcohol and other drugs. Supporting them with information can help them to make safer and

responsible decisions. This resource provides some starting points for parents/caregivers to have a conversation with their teen (see [Appendix D](#)). Many teenagers are attending parties, so it is important for them to feel confident in making safe and responsible decisions. Alcohol and other drug

use affects decision-making abilities and can contribute to many preventable outcomes. A parent party pledge is included with this resource. This promise provides parents with a method to improve communication and trust with their teenagers by promising their teens that they will be there to ask questions or help them when they get in difficult situations.

How to use this resource:

- Share with parents/caregivers of your school communities before prom using your communication platforms and social media.
- Use sections of this resource to share as social media messages.
- The [links in the Resource section](#) can be shared with parents to support conversations with their teens.

COMMUNICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND PROM COMMITTEES

Messages have been developed for social media and school wide announcements to reinforce the harm reduction strategies provided in this toolkit and encourage students to celebrate safer on their prom night.

How to use this resource:

- Post on social media accounts managed by your school and school committees (the target audience for these accounts can be both students and parents).
- Display on school monitors.
- Read during morning announcements.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- It's almost prom! Let's watch out for each other. Come up with a code word you or your friends can say or text to let each other know when needed. Uncomfortable situations can happen. Let's have each other's back.
- Sadly, impaired driving is real! Alcohol is involved in almost 1/3 of teenage car accident fatalities. Don't crash your memories on prom night. Make a plan to get home safely!
- Prom is coming up! Never feel obligated to do more with someone if you don't feel right or comfortable. Set your boundaries and respect others boundaries.
- Know your limit and draw your line. Know that when alcohol/drugs are consumed, it makes it more difficult to:
 - » Think clearly
 - » Set limits and make good choices
 - » Think about long-term consequences and control impulses
 - » Determine when a situation is dangerous
 - » Say "no"
- Using the True & False Questions from the Sexual Violence Tip Sheet (see [Appendix C](#)) to create announcements.

LINKS TO RESOURCES

For students/youth

- Canadian Association for Mental Health (CAMH), [Partying and Getting Drunk](#)
- CAMH, [Lower-Risk Cannabis Guidelines for Youth](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#)
- [Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Care Centre \(SA/DVCC\)](#)
- [White Ribbon](#)

For parents/caregivers

- Canadian Centre on Substance Use & Addiction (CCSA), [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol & Health](#)
- Drug Free Kids Canada, [Cannabis Talk Kit](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), [Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use](#)
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), [Information for Parents](#)
- Ontario Ministry of Health (MOH), [Talking with Your Teen About Sexuality](#)
- Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), [Parents Matter: Strategies for Parents to Prevent or Delay Alcohol and Other Drug Use](#)
- [White Ribbon](#)

For teachers/staff

- Canadian Centre on Substance Use & Addiction (CCSA), [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol & Health](#)
- Ontario Physical & Health Education Association (OPHEA), [Sexual Violence Prevention Resources](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), [Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use](#)
- [White Ribbon](#)

APPENDIX A:

PROMise Pledge

PROM PLEDGE

I PROMISE TO...



- 01 find a party partner to help keep me safe.
- 02 stay with a group so we can take care of each other.
- 03 have a plan in place to get home safely.
- 04 keep my parents/caregivers informed of my whereabouts.
- 05 make sure my phone is fully charged and with me in case of an emergency.
- 06 set limits if consuming any alcohol or drugs.
- 07 not accept any drinks from someone I don't know, and to never leave my drink unattended.
- 08 not allow someone who is under the influence of drugs/alcohol to get behind the wheel.
- 09 step in if someone's safety is at risk.
- 10 call my parents/caregivers if I need a safe ride home.

APPENDIX B:

Safer Partying Tip Sheet

PARTY SAFER TIPS

Follow the Party Safer tips below to reduce your alcohol and drug-related risks. Share these tips with your friends!

You don't need to drink alcohol or use drugs to enjoy yourself at a party or an event! If you choose to consume, follow the #PartySafer tips to reduce your risks:

PLAN A SAFE RIDE OR WALK HOME

Substances impair coordination, attention, judgement, and reaction time. All of these factors are important for lessening your chances for accidents and injuries. Before using alcohol or drugs have a plan to get home safely. This can be with a trusted friend or family member, using the TTC, or a rideshare service.

ONLY YOU CAN GIVE CONSENT FOR YOURSELF

People who are under the influence of substances like alcohol, asleep, unable to understand what they are saying yes to, or under severe pressure are not able to consent freely and willingly to participate in a sexual activity.

PACE YOURSELF AND DRINK WATER

Eat before consuming substances and have a drink of water for every alcoholic drink. It can take up to two hours to feel the effects of alcohol, so pacing yourself is important! Follow [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health](#).

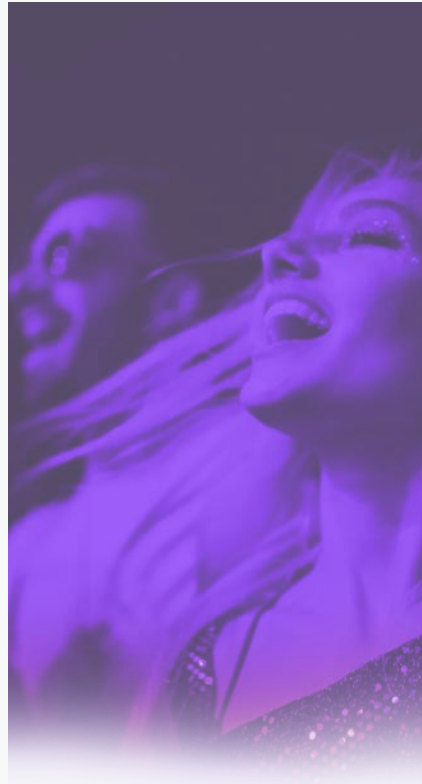
STICK TO ONE SUBSTANCE AT A TIME

Using different substances together, including mixing alcohol and drugs, can increase impairment and risk of harms, such as overdoses, accidents, and injuries.

STAY WITH FRIENDS YOU TRUST AND LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER

You can play an active role in keeping each other safe and preventing violence by choosing to respond safely to a potentially harmful situation.

If you have a bad feeling, get help.



NEED INFORMATION?

Kids Help Phone
kidshelpphone.ca
Call: 1-800-668-6868 | Text: 686868

Sexual Health Information Line
Sexual Health Infoline Ontario (SHILO) –
City of Toronto
1-800-668-2437

City of Toronto Safer Partying
toronto.ca/SaferPartying



APPENDIX C:

Protect Yourself from Sexual Violence Tip Sheet

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

TRUE OR FALSE?

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|----------|----------|
| 01 | Sexual violence means that someone forces or manipulates someone else into unwanted sexual activity without consent. | T | F |
| 02 | One in four girls and one in eight boys have been sexually abused by the time they are eighteen. | T | F |
| 03 | Male students have higher rates of physical and sexual violence than female students. | T | F |
| 04 | You can ALWAYS say no to a kiss, a touch, or whatever, even if you said yes before. | T | F |
| 05 | Lack of consent turns sexual contact into an act of sexual violence. | T | F |
| 06 | Once a consent is given it cannot be withdrawn. | T | F |



TIPS ON HOW TO AVOID SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- 01** Be respectful towards each other.
- 02** **Draw the Line.** Set your boundaries and respect others boundaries.
- 03** **NEVER** feel obligated to do more with someone if you don't feel right or comfortable.
- 04** Don't use force, threats or violence in your relationships.
- 05** **Get consent.** Only a sober 'yes' means yes.
- 06** If you feel uncomfortable exit the scene as quickly as possible.
- 07** Stand up for yourself, trust your instinct and get help when things don't feel right.
- 08** If you see someone that may be at risk for sexual assault: intervene, if you can do so safely, or get help.
- 09** Let's work together and **STOP** sexual violence.

Every choice we make and every action we take has the power to make a difference!

Answers to True and False questions: 1. True 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. True 6. False

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APPENDIX D:

How to Talk to Your Teen About Prom: Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

PARENTS & CAREGIVERS OF TEENS

Your teen may be going to many parties, from house parties to prom. Before your teen and their friends head out, talk with them about making safe and responsible decisions.

DISCUSS YOUR TEEN'S PLANS WITH THEM; IT MAY BE UNCOMFORTABLE BUT IT HAS TO BE DONE.

Where will you be?

Who are you going with?

Will there be alcohol or drugs?

How are you getting there and back home?

CONSIDER THESE POINTS TO HELP GUIDE YOUR TALK

- Setting a curfew.
- No after-parties in rented hotel rooms/homes.
- Discuss the importance of being reachable, that is keeping a cell phone turned on and charged.
- Discuss having a Party Partner. A friend that will: be around for the whole night, be mutually responsible for each other, step in if something is happening that does not seem right, and make sure that the other gets home safely.
- Plan transportation options and offer non-judgemental support to get home safely. Stress to your teens to never get into a car with a driver who has been using substances.
- Remind your teen to always keep an eye on their drink to make sure nothing is slipped into it.
- Discuss consent including knowing and respecting their own boundaries as well as the boundaries of others.

ARE YOU AN ADULT HOSTING THE PARTY? HERE ARE SOME FACTS FOR YOU.

- It's not the role of the police to monitor parties on behalf of parents.
- If an adult/parent provides alcohol/drugs to those who are underage, they can be charged.

COMMIT; TAKE THE PARENTS' PARTY PLEDGE...

I promise you the unconditional option of calling me at any time for help or advice. That includes picking you up at any time of the day or night, with a promise not to shame or embarrass you in front of others. I always welcome the chance of being part of your smart and safe decisions.

You may feel like your teen is tuning you out but, the truth is, they are listening more than you think. In fact, parents have been shown to have an important influence when it comes to teens' use of alcohol and other drugs. Visit MADD's [Parent Action Pack](http://madd.ca/media/docs/parent-action-pack.pdf) (<http://madd.ca/media/docs/parent-action-pack.pdf>) for stats and info for your talk.

For more information visit the following websites:

[Sexual Assault Crisis Centre-Party Safe Tips](https://saccwindsor.net/party-safe/safe-partying-tips-1/)
<https://saccwindsor.net/party-safe/safe-partying-tips-1/>
[Prevnet.ca- Addressing Youth Dating Violence](https://youthdatingviolence.prevnet.ca/#:~:text=As%20Canada's%20Healthy%20Relationships%20Hub,and%20reduce%20youth%20dating%20violence.)
<https://youthdatingviolence.prevnet.ca/#:~:text=As%20Canada's%20Healthy%20Relationships%20Hub,and%20reduce%20youth%20dating%20violence.>

APPENDIX E:

Social Media Images



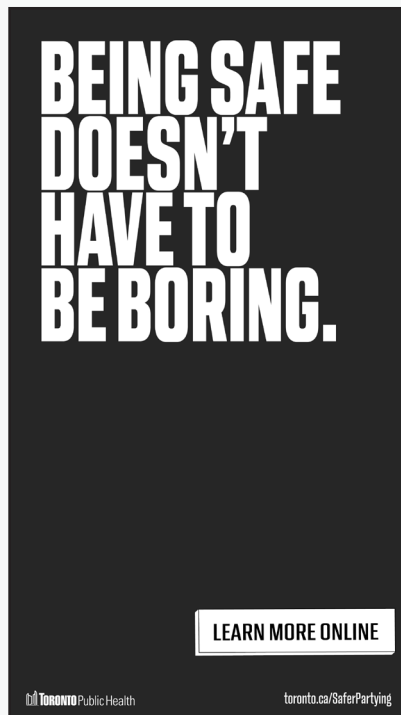
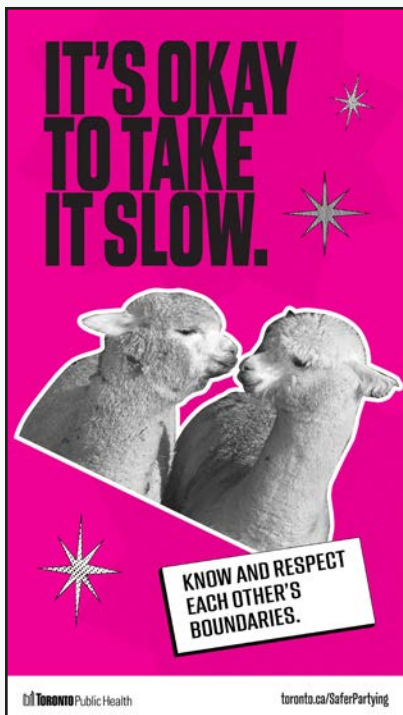
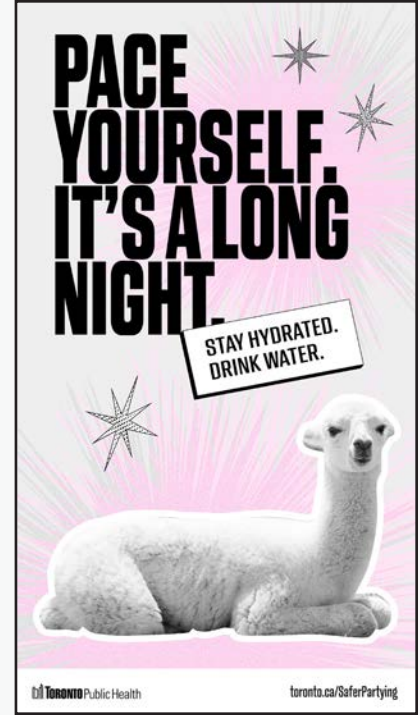
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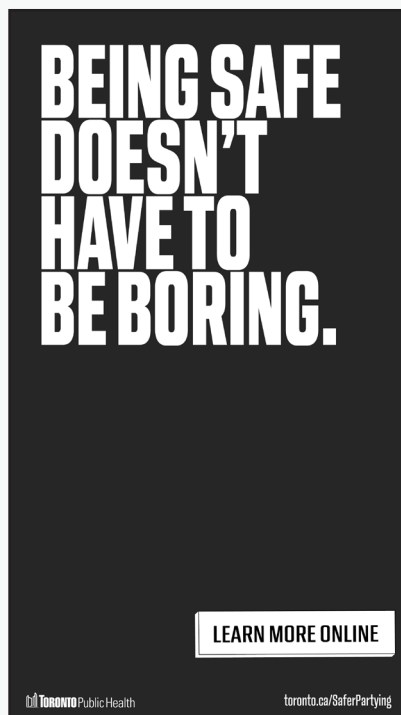
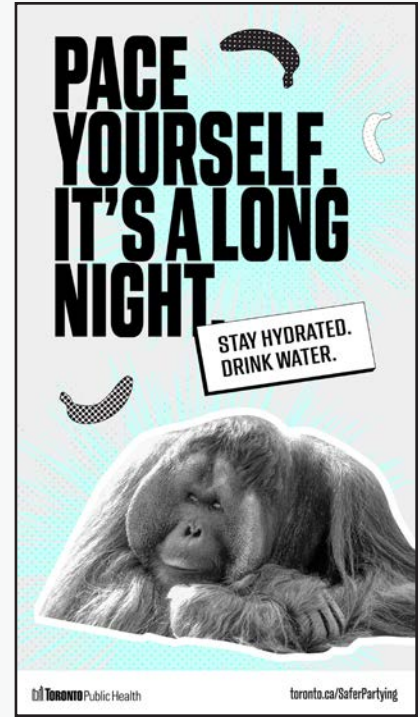
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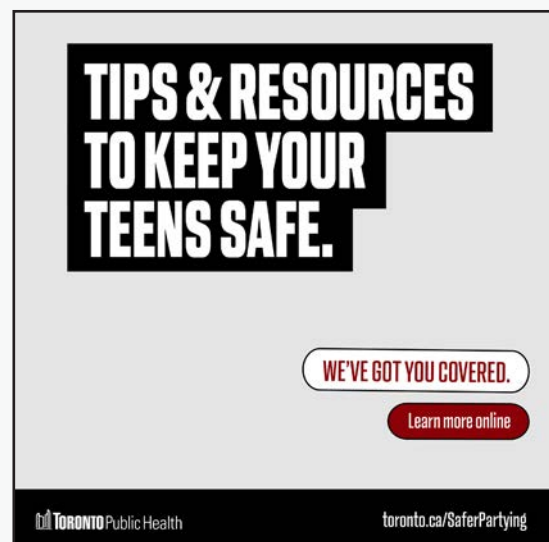
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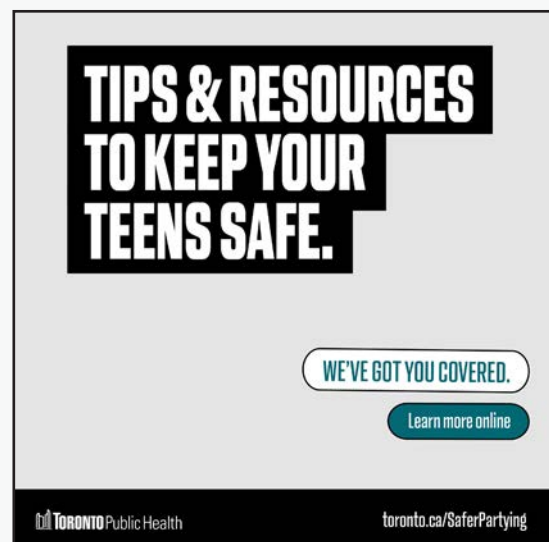
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