

Executive Summary

This report describes the results of the third assessment conducted in Whistler as part of the Communities That Care Process. The Communities That Care system is a way for members of a community to work together to prevent youth health and behavior problems including substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, violence, depression and anxiety. This system was developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano. It is based on their research, which has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed over life.

Communities That Care was first adopted in Whistler in 2003 in response to concerns arising from risk related behaviors associated with substance use in youth. Preventing and delaying the use of substances such as alcohol is an important challenge not just in Whistler, but in Canada (Hammond, et al, 2011) and internationally (Eisenberg, Toumbourou, Catalano and Hemphill, 2014). Drawing on a strong evidence base was felt to be a helpful way to support healthy development of our local youth.

A key goal of the Communities That Care effort is to identify which risk factors, protective factors and behavioral health problems are most prevalent in our community and to implement evidence-based programs that address our community's unique profile. To that end, the Risk and Protective-Factor Assessment work group collected and analyzed data on Whistler. The Community Assessment Report reflects the input of many community members and organizations working together with care, skill and dedication to promote the healthiest possible development of children and youth in our community. The process has contributed to in depth discussions and learning about best and better practices in prevention of child and youth health and behavior issues in relation to our community's local context.

Whistler's Strengths

The data also revealed Whistler's strengths to build on. In 2006, the protective factors Family Recognition for Pro-social Involvement, Family Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement, and School Recognition for Pro-social Involvement were identified as strengths to build on. Since 2006, there has been a slight increase in the average percentage of students across all grades indicating strength on these protective factors.

Prevention Priorities

Based on the local data in 2013, of the six health and behavior concerns addressed, substance use remains a priority for the community. In addition, the following risk factors were identified as community priorities for attention:

1. **Parental Attitudes Favorable toward Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drug (ATOD) Use**, particularly for students in grades 8-12;
2. **Parental Attitudes Favorable towards Antisocial Behavior**, especially for grades 9-12;
3. **Peer Rewards for Antisocial Behavior**, particularly for grades 9-12; and
4. **Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use**

These risk factors were selected as priorities for prevention action primarily because data indicated that they are significantly elevated in Whistler.

Community Protective Factor Priorities were also identified for prevention action primarily because data indicated that they are significantly suppressed in Whistler:

1. **Community Rewards for Prosocial Involvement**
2. **Interaction with Prosocial Peers**

This report recommends that the community give particular attention to the risk factors noted above when developing the community's action plan to and promote positive youth development and prevent youth health & behavior problems. In Whistler, given the high cost of living, the community has agreed that sensitivity to economic pressures facing local families remain on the radar. This means that care be taken to ensure that prevention programs implemented as part of the Communities That Care process are offered free of charge to maximize accessibility to families.

This report will serve as a resource document for communicating the assessment results to stakeholders in our community and will guide the third wave of prevention planning and evaluation by Communities That Care Whistler.

