

Drug education in the classroom

There are many parents who feel they don't know enough about alcohol and drug abuse to talk about it with their kids. They rely on the school system to teach their kids about drug and alcohol issues. The problem is that some teachers feel ill-equipped to teach young people about substance abuse. Now there's help for all of them.

TVOntario (TVO) and the Addiction Research Foundation (ARF) have joined forces with the Provincial Anti-Drug Secretariat to bring drug education programs to the classroom. The Substance Abuse Prevention Projects gives teachers the tools to provide drug education.



"We hope teachers will use the videos as a starting point for discussions about alcohol and other drugs," said Lynne Hyne, manager of TVO's Educational Services. "These videos are as educational for parents and teachers as they are for the students."

Of the four distinct programs which make up the Substance Abuse Prevention Project, the Quality Education Project is the most comprehensive. It will provide up to ten days of training to help teachers address the issues around substance abuse. TVO and ARF will train a small group of teachers from selected school boards across the province, who will in turn train other teachers. This "Trainer of Trainers" approach will have a ripple effect throughout the province, according to Gloria Silverman, Manager of the ARF's Schools Program.

"TVOntario has a reputation for excellence in educational television and the ARF is Ontario's primary resource in the addictions field. It seemed logical that together they could bring a wealth of expertise to Ontario schools," said Silverman.

Resource materials from the ARF will also be used for other teacher training programs. Multi-phase workshops will look at how television technology can help teachers, with three half-day sessions given by TVOntario. Another program involves two- to three-hour workshops given by TVOntario workshop specialists, designed to provide information and teaching strategies. TVO Daytime, the noon-hour broadcast for educators, will provide current information on substance abuse and drug education.

"We want to provide teachers with effective teaching strategies, including the creative use of video," said Hyne. "We've found that kids respond better if they feel teachers and parents understand the problems they face."

TVOntario will also broadcast three video series. "Your Choice, Our Chance" focuses on issues appropriate to students in grade 5 and 6. "Dealing with Drugs" is a series of six open-ended dramas aimed at highschool students. A teacher's guide accompanies each series.

The Addiction Research Foundation is collaborating with La Chaine Francaise on "Projet Toxicomanie," their French-language equivalent of the Substance Abuse Prevention Project, which also received full funding from the Provincial Anti-Drug Secretariat.

The Addiction Research Foundation and TVOntario are agencies of the province of Ontario.

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