

Young Adult Substance Use Program

The Young Adult Substance Use Program (YA-SUP) is designed to meet the unique needs of young adults (17-25 years of age).

Young adults of this age are sometimes referred to as *Transition Aged Youth* or *Emerging Adults* given it is often a time of transitioning from adolescence to adulthood, which is characterized by instability and uncertainty, self-exploration, relationship building, increasing independence, and movement from youth to adult healthcare. The program was created to meet these unique needs using the best available research evidence and in consultation with local, national, and international researchers, clinicians, and youth. We offer 2 separate streams: (1) a **young adult stream**, and (2) a **loved ones stream** (biological, extended or chosen family).

Our mission is to provide young adults with the support and skills to:

1. **Reduce the impact of substance use** on young adults' lives, whether that be through abstinence, reductions in use, or other harm reduction approaches.
2. **Improve mental health and wellbeing** by focusing on the whole-person.
3. **Increase engagement in substance-free activities** and create a life that is in alignment with their values and goals.

We value:

- Providing **young adult centered** care
- Creating a **safe(r) space**
- Caring for the **whole person**
- **Collaborating** with stakeholders and community providers
- Using **evidence-based** practices and contributing to evidence

We have a **multi-disciplinary and collaborative team** made up of:

Mental Health Worker

Community Support Counsellor

Nurse Practitioners

Clinical Psychologist

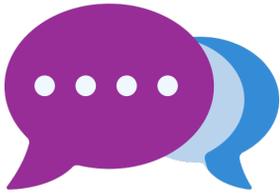
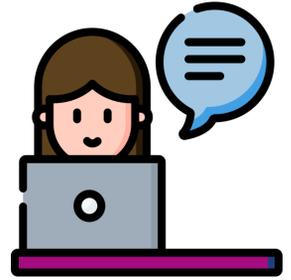
Addiction Psychiatrist

Substance use and mental health researchers

Young Adult Program Ingredients

Intake Appointment

To start in the program, we provide a one-on-one intake appointment with a Mental Health Worker, Community Support Worker, or Psychologist. These can be done in person or through telemedicine and are booked for 3 hours. The purpose of this appointment is to identify what your goals are and how we can best help you in the YA-SUP.

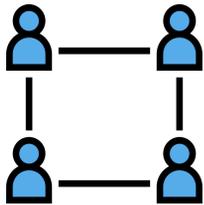
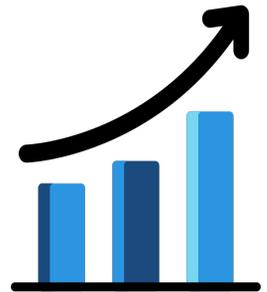


Check-In Sessions

We offer one-on-one monthly check ins with the same provider you talked to during your intake. The purpose of these sessions are to check-in on how things are going, help you continue to work on your goals, and help you get connected to other services within and outside of YA-SUP.

Measurement Based Care

At the start of your intake appointment, we ask all young adults to complete an electronic survey. This survey asks questions about your quality of life, mental health, and substance use. This survey will be used by the program to develop a care plan that fits your needs, and we will go over your results during the one-on-one session. We repeat these surveys at 1 month, 2 months, 3 months, and 6 months to be able to track your progress over time. This lets us know what is working, or what is not working, to optimize your care. You can also choose to contribute your survey data to our research studies.



Consults

If needed and interested, we offer consultations to help clarify symptoms and diagnoses and to explore and try medication options for both mental health and substance use. These are with an Addiction Psychiatrist, Nurse Practitioner, or Psychologist.

Groups

We offer evidence-based group programming on various topics. You can work with your main provider to personalize the groups you attend to meet your needs. Most groups are drop-in – so you do not need to come every week or sign up beforehand. There is one group that requires a sign-up and commitment to 4 weeks, as these sessions are offered in a sequence that builds upon each other. Right now, our groups are offered via telemedicine.

Loved Ones Stream

Loved Ones Support Group

The YA-SUP **Loved Ones Support Group** is a group for loved ones of those with substance use. This may include biological, extended, or chosen family members or close friends and partners.

Substance use can be difficult to understand and challenging to cope with. It is the belief that the environment, community, and social support system can play a powerful role in deterring one's substance use by reinforcing alternate positive behaviour.

These group sessions are based on **Community Reinforcement Approach to Family Training – Support and Prevention (CRAFT-SP)**. This approach helps family/friends/spouses change the way they interact with their loved one in a way that promotes help-seeking, recovery, and personal self-care. This content will be explored in group sessions including information about addiction/substance use, exploring past patterns of communication, developing and improving communication skills, identifying loved one's triggers for and results of their use, positive reinforcement, and taking care of yourself.

The Loves Ones Stream is **distinct and operates separately from the Young Adult Stream**. You can attend the Loved One's Support group even if your loved one is not involved in the program. If your loved one is involved in the Young Adult Stream, no information is shared between the streams.



***Disclaimer:** This group will be launching in the Spring. Until then, loved ones can access the existing Family Night through the Concurrent Disorders program on the last Wednesday of every month found here:

<https://www.cdcapacitybuilding.com/online-group-link>.

Young Adult Groups

Mind-Drug Connection: Taking Control of Your Mind & Environment

This group uses **cognitive behavioral therapy** (CBT) approaches to help you understand how your thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, environment, and behaviours (like substance use) are connected. There are 4-sessions that we ask you to sign up for and commit to for 4-weeks because they build upon one another. There are also 7 drop-in sessions that use CBT approaches but do not require any prep work or previous knowledge.

Sign-up Sequence (4 sessions)

- Understanding your substance use
- Identifying and dealing with challenging thoughts
- Coping with urges and learning refusal skills
- Planning for difficult situations

Drop-ins (7 sessions)

- Taking control of your anger
- Problem solving
- Being assertive
- Communication skills
- Exploring & creating your social support network
- Identifying & scheduling pleasant activities
- Living your values

Mind-Drug Connection: Planning for Difficult Situations

This group uses **Relapse Prevention** techniques to discuss and plan for difficult situations that may arise during your week. We put this group closer to the weekend (**weekly drop-ins** on Thursday afternoons) so it can serve as a weekend planning group – however, we acknowledge relapses and difficult situations can arise at any point during the week.

Mind-Body Connection

These are **Healthy Living** sessions are focused on components of your physical health that directly influences your emotional health and wellbeing including 3 drop-in sessions:

- Moving your body: Exercise
- Nourishing your body: Nutrition
- Resting your body: Sleep

Minding the Gap Together (MINT)

There is evidence that mutual support groups (also called self-help groups) can help people with substance use concerns. Examples of mutual support groups include Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and SMART Recovery. We provide an **intro to mutual support session** that describes what mutual support is, how it might help, and what you can expect if you decide to attend a group. We also offer weekly **SMART Recovery** groups. You are welcome to attend the SMART Recovery group through Concurrent Disorders (Every Tuesday 1:30-2:30) even if you are not yet part of the YA-SUP. Find the link here:

<https://www.cdcapacitybuilding.com/online-group-link>

Young Adult Groups

Mind over Emotion

This is an emotion skills group that teaches **Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT)** skills, specifically related to learning skills to regulate your emotions and tolerate distress.

Drop-ins (7 sessions)

- Why and how to do the opposite of how you feel (Opposite Action)
- Maintaining emotional control (PLEASE skill)
- Stopping an impulsive behaviour in its tracks (STOP skill)
- Thinking your way out of an impulsive behaviour (Pros and Cons Skill)
- Turning your attention away from a negative emotion until you can resolve it (ACCEPTS skill)
- Reducing the intensity of negative emotions by using your senses (Self Soothe skill)
- Quickly reducing the intensity of negative emotions by changing your body physiology (TIPP skill)

Mindfulness Groups

These sessions are focused on grounding yourself to the present moment and based on **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction** techniques.

Drop-ins (6 sessions)

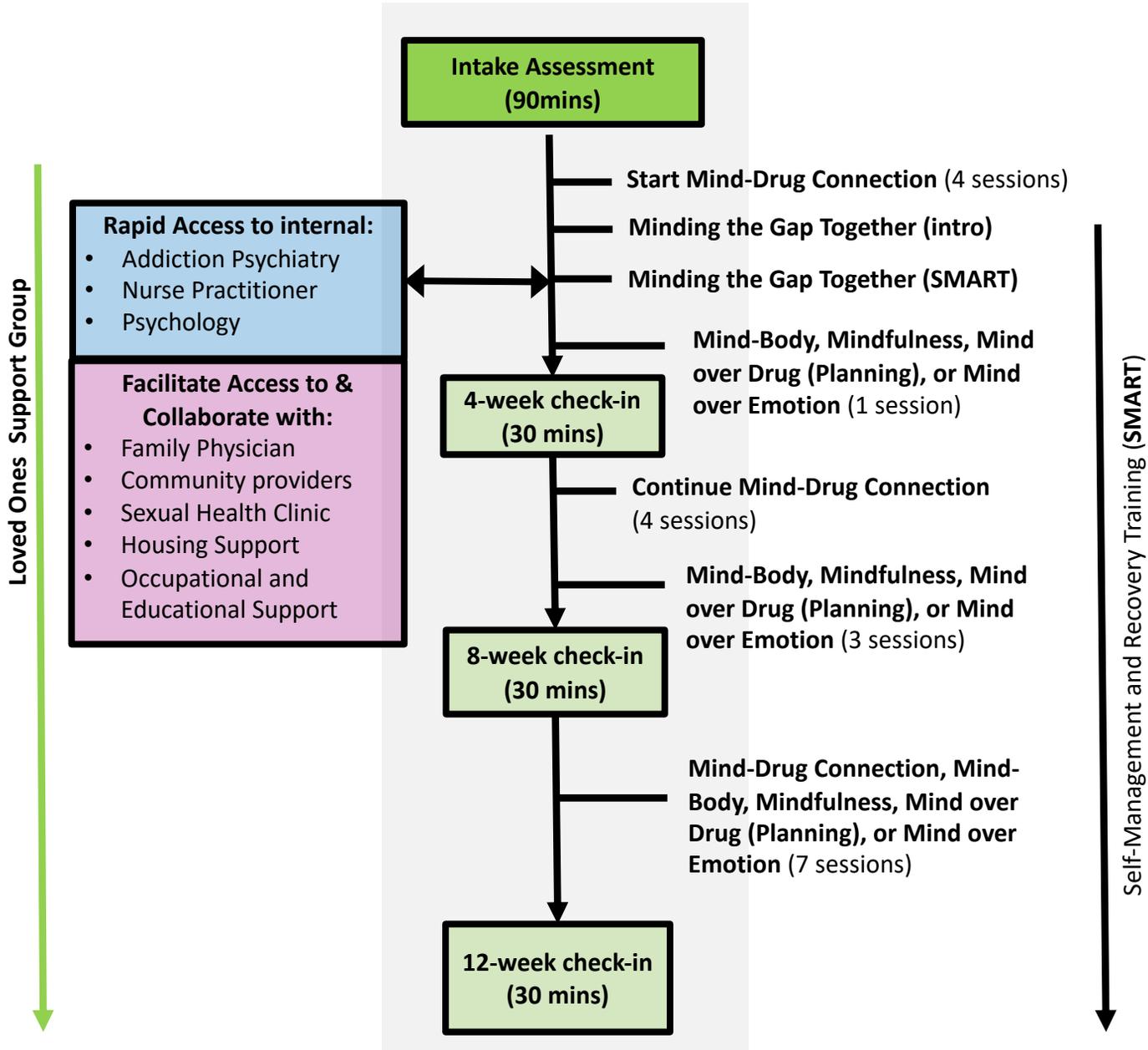
- Body
- Reflections
- Emotions
- Attention
- Tenderness
- Habits

**Disclaimer: Not all groups will be available on February 22nd, as we want to dedicate the first several weeks of the program launch to doing intakes and initial assessments. Groups will increasingly be made available over the first couple weeks of the program launching, beginning the first week of March. Once fully launched, a longer-term schedule will be made available.*

12 week structure

Our programming revolves around a 12-week structure to groups, check-ins, and surveys. We hope young adults entering the program will try to attend 2 groups or sessions a week for the 12-week period. However, young adults in the program can still access care after the 12-week period.

Here is our recommended 12-week structure as a flow chart:



YA-SUP Core Check-list

Individual Check-ins & Surveys!

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intake Session | <input type="checkbox"/> Intake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-month check-in | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-month check-in | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-month check-in | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-month |

Mind-Drug Connection (core group)

Sign-up sequence **try to do all 4* core sessions)

- Understanding your substance use
- Identifying and dealing with challenging thoughts
- Coping with urges and learning refusal skills
- Planning for difficult situations

CBT drop-ins **try for at least 4* of these drop-ins

- Taking control of your anger
- Problem solving
- Being assertive
- Communication skills
- Exploring & creating your social support network
- Identifying & scheduling pleasant activities
- Living your values

Planning Drop-in Group (try at least one)

- Planning for difficult situations weekly group

Mind-Body Connection

try at least 1

- Exercise**
- Nutrition**
- Sleep**

Mindfulness

try at least 1

- Body
- Reflections
- Emotions
- Attention
- Tenderness
- Habits

Mind over Emotion

try at least 1

- Opposite Action
- PLEASE
- STOP
- Pros and Cons
- ACCEPTS
- Self Soothe
- TIPP

Minding the Gap Together (MINT)

- Intro to Mutual Support
- SMART group **try at least 1**

***Try 24 sessions over 12 weeks
(2 sessions a week)***

Describing Our Values

Providing young adult centered care

Create and deliver services that are young adult centered and tailored to this life stage and to promote **autonomy, consent, privacy, and confidentiality** for all care and program components. Young adults are in control of their treatment and their personal health information.

Creating a safe(r) space

Offer a safe(r) space that aims to be trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and ultimately respectful of diverse and marginalized young adults (BIPOC, LGBTQ+). We are open to all feedback for how to make our space safer and strive to provide **non-judgmental care**. For example, we work with young adults on abstinence and/or harm reduction goals. We work with young adults where they are at, or want to be at, with their values and goals. We are also committed to ongoing learning through diversity training and community of practice discussions.

Caring for the whole person

Consider all-encompassing care to treat the whole person – biologically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually.

Collaborating with stakeholders and community providers

Continuously **collaborate with stakeholders** (including young adults, clinicians, and researchers) in program development and improvement. We also support **collaborative care** with other service providers to encompass all aspects of young adult-driven care.

Using evidence-based practices and contributing to evidence

Use the best available research evidence to create and inform the program, while collecting data to contribute to advances in young adult substance use research and care.

Who & How to Refer

Who this program is for:

- *Young adults age 17-25*
- *People who are looking to make changes to their substance use*
- *People with a concurrent disorder*
- *People committed to attending group-based treatment*
- *Those not in immediate crisis*

How to refer?

- *CONNECT MHAP (self or professional) (905) 522-1155, Ext.36499 more information: <https://www.stjoes.ca/hospital-services/mental-health-addiction-services/connect-mental-health-and-addiction-outpatient-programs>*
- *Internal referrals can be made via Dovetale*

Other programs to consider that might be a better fit:

- *Alternatives for Youth ages 12-25 <https://ay.on.ca/>*
- *Alcohol Drug and Gambling Services (ADGS) ages 23 & up <https://www.hamilton.ca/public-health/clinics-services/alcohol-drug-gambling-services>*
- *Youth Wellness Centre (for early intervention) <https://www.stjoes.ca/hospital-services/mental-health-addiction-services/mental-health-services/youth-wellness-centre>*
- *Cleghorn (for first episode psychosis) <https://www.stjoes.ca/hospital-services/mental-health-addiction-services/mental-health-services/cleghorn-early-intervention-clinic>*
- *Good Shepherd Youth Community Mental Health (ages 12-21) <https://www.goodshepherdcentres.ca/services/youth-community-mental-health-program/>*