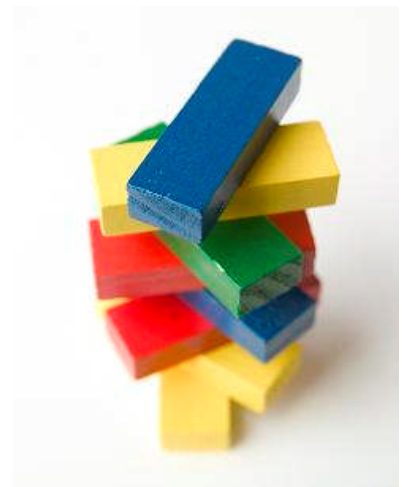




## **Building Blocks for Change: Putting the Pieces Together**

FOCUS/ODAP Symposium  
February 7-8, 2006  
Report

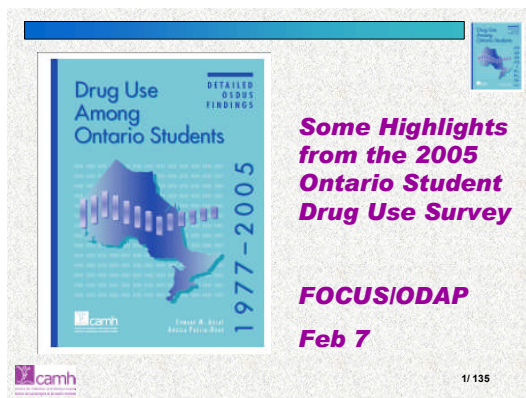
A health promotion symposium  
on alcohol and other drugs



The FOCUS/ODAP symposium 2005/06 was held at the Institute for Learning of the Bank of Montreal, in Scarborough Ontario from February 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> 2006. The theme for the event was **“Building Blocks for Change: Putting the Pieces Together”**.

The FOCUS Business Day opened the symposium on February 6. The Ministry of Health Promotion provided an update outlining priorities of the Ministry and the role of the FOCUS program. FOCUS Resource Centre also provided an update with particular reference to the FOCUS Media Campaign Project and a training session was held on the Program Record Form to be used for the campaign. The FOCUS Provincial Working Group did a branding exercise with the FOCUS coalitions with the aim of developing a FOCUS program tag line that could be used by all FOCUS programs to identify them as part of a provincial FOCUS network. This would not be used in addition to individual logos to capture both the unique qualities of the individual FOCUS communities as well as their broader affiliation to a provincial program.

A meeting of Drug Awareness Committee (DAC) members was also held on February 6, 2006. This forum provided an opportunity for networking, update of ODAP operations activities, reports of the 2005 Drug Awareness Week community activities and the evaluation/feedback of the week. It was determined that the TALK campaign for 2006/07 would highlight the letters A & L and that consultations would be undertaken to create materials for the annual Drug Awareness Week campaign November 20-26, 2006.



The formal symposium began on February 7<sup>th</sup> with Professor Edward Adlaf, CAMH as the keynote speaker on the topic of “The Ontario Student Drug Use Survey, 2005”. Dr. Adlaf reviewed the highlights of the most recent OSDUS survey and commented on things we need to watch, to do and to remember. He also focused on the things we have learned and what we have yet to learn about student drug use. The keynote was followed by an enthusiastic discussion with conference participants. The keynote

and a number of workshops and presentations are posted on the FOCUS website at [http://www.frcentre.net/resources/conferences/dsp\\_2006conference.cfm](http://www.frcentre.net/resources/conferences/dsp_2006conference.cfm)

Following the keynote address, ODAP provided an overview and update of the Talk Campaign, a Marketing/Communications Campaign, created by the Ontario Drug Awareness Partnership, for Drug Awareness in Ontario. The program is a multi year initiative:

- ✚ To increase the awareness, understanding and positive community action for a range of issues from learning how to talk to each other and more effectively to being able to talk about drug and alcohol issues.
- ✚ To develop a recognized strategy that can be used simply and effectively with little or no cost to Drug Awareness Committee
- ✚ To generate discussion, interest and media coverage of “TALK” initiatives.



A number of fifteen minute presentations were made throughout the symposium by members of FOCUS coalitions and DACs. These were well received with a comment that *"it is through those presentations that we obtain new and innovative project ideas"*. The conference planners received more presentation requests than we were able to accommodate in this year and for future planning could consider running a parallel stream of short presentations during workshop hours.

This year, the first annual ARAPO award was presented to the recipients Sarah Sales and Manny Pavia in recognition for their efforts to protect the health and safety of area youth.

An update of the YAMM project was given by APN including a video of the successful youth conference held in 2004/05. PAD also spoke to the audience about the current Breast Cancer project underway in that organization.



Norman Rowan of Pathways to Education provided a stimulating overview of the pathways initiative and the ways in which it works with disadvantaged youth to help them achieve in life through education.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the symposium overall and the workshops individually. The overall quality of the symposium was rated as good to excellent by all the respondents. They were particularly appreciative of the facilities and theatre event. The food, the organization of the event, and the keynote were rated highly as well. There was a somewhat broader spread from good to excellent (3-5 on a five point scale) for the choice of presentations and workshops.

In response to how well the symposium collaboration met the expectations and needs of FOCUS communities and DACs the following are a representation of comments.

*"Excellent FOCUS business section", "great opportunity to network", "excellent topics related to mandate", met the needs of both groups extremely well" "helps us to feel like we are a significant part of a much larger movement and reinforces the value of our contribution to address substance abuse prevention" and a comment that "more attention is needed to high risk youth, alcohol, drugs and gangs"*

In regard to expectations for DACs the following comments were received.

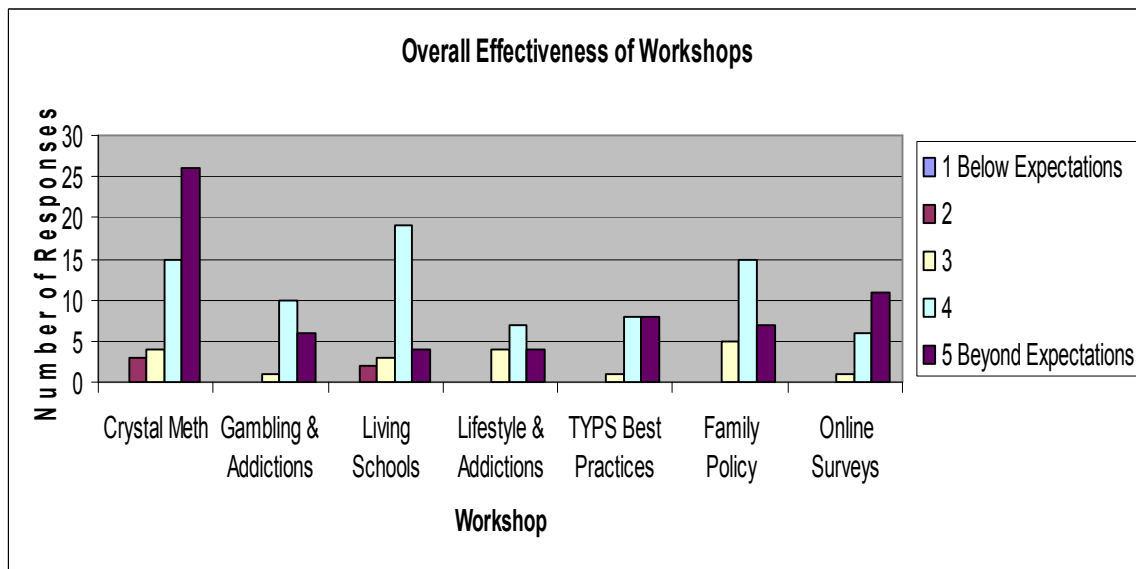
*"Great, new opportunities to collaborate, " a necessary event for ODAP", " a chance to share ideas and get to meet face to face on Tuesday which was productive", "excellent", "did a good job-showed different approaches". In addition the following more critical comments were received: " group activity was confusing- not sure what we were trying to accomplish", fairly well," wish there had been more community projects highlighted", "ODAP" not given the time it deserved", "I need the chance to talk formally with other DACs".*

In “other comments”, there were a number of positive observations and suggestions that can be used by the planners to develop the subsequent annual event. These included sending out more detailed information in advance, packing less into the event, having more short presentations and changing the time of year. Subsequent to the symposium, a survey was sent out to participants soliciting information on the most desirable time of the year for the symposium and venue preferences.

There were 8 workshops for this event elaborating on the theme of **Building Blocks for Change: Putting the Pieces Together**. The goal was to provide information to participants that indicated the various areas of health promotion that work in concert with alcohol and other drug programs to bring about change. These included not only specific drug issues such as Crystal Meth in the Community but related issues like Problem Gambling and Addiction, Lifestyle and Addiction, and Family Substance Use Policy. In addition there were workshops on Living Schools, TYPS Best Practices and Building On-Line Surveys. We were able to draw on the expertise of our colleagues in CAMH, TYPS, OPHEA, RCMP, and NGOs for these educational workshops and each was individually evaluated.

The following graphic indicates the overall effectiveness of the Workshops.

Diagram 1.



### Crystal Meth in the Community, Brent Hill RCMP & Dr. Heather Keiser

This workshop was a popular choice with 48 participants providing feedback. The brief histories of Drug Laboratories were seen as useful by all. With the exception of one person, knowledge and understanding of Drug Labs had increased significantly as had knowledge and



understanding of Methamphetamine and confidence in ability to recognize a Meth lab. As noted in Graph 1 the majority of respondents found the workshop very effective, however a small minority did not agree.

Comments on the workshop included: “*excellent*”, “*well qualified presenters, impressive amount of info*” and “*very informative*”. Some people felt that it was too clinical and not easily transferable to prevention/health promotion specifically. In addition one comment indicated “*some of the info doesn’t mesh with data from OSDUS*” possibly explained by the fact that OSDUS is based on students attending school while the information for this presentation may have a broader population cull and is more specific to the Niagara region in particular.

### **Problem Gambling and Addiction, Steve Meredith and Peter Chen, CAMH**

Seventeen respondents provided feedback on this workshop; 6 rated the overall effectiveness as excellent and an additional 10 as very good. All agreed that after participating in the workshop they could distinguish between gambling and problem gambling, that knowledge about types of gambling in Ontario had increased significantly and that their ability to describe similarities and differences between gambling and other addictions had increased. Most people had an improved or very improved ability to identify a person with a gambling problem and could refer them for counseling. As noted in Graph 1 most people rated the workshop overall as very good or beyond expectations.

Comments included the following: “*excellent presentation, very informative, useful info-wish we had more time*”. A couple of people indicated that they would have liked more time focused on “*program development*” as well.



### **Family Substance Use Policy, Larry Grand, CAMH**

Twenty nine respondents provided feedback on this workshop. All agreed that they would be able to identify established and accepted best practice concepts related to family substance use policies and that they would be able to develop a family substance use policy sample and guidelines for families engaging in this work. With the exception of one person, all agreed or strongly agreed that their knowledge had increased in the area of implementing and disseminating a family substance use policy project in the community. Twenty eight people found the information useful and relevant with one dissenter. As noted in Graph 1, the majority of people rated the effectiveness of the workshop as very good to beyond expectations.

Comments included the following: “*great job, hands on with potential for immediate application*”, “*excellent*”, “*clear, structured – could allow for some creative, different approaches in the process*”, “*know where to start on how to guide families*”. Additional comments included “*needed more time on last exercise- couldn’t get to consequences and tips for families*” and “*should address issues for minorities or different structured families and challenges they face with societal rules/laws*”.

### **Lifestyle and Addictions, George Goldie**

Sixteen respondents provided evaluations for this workshop. Fourteen agreed to strongly agreed that their knowledge of the relationship between lifestyle and addictions had increased. Similarly 14 of 16 agreed to strongly agreed that their knowledge of the impact of excessive information and stimulation had increased after attending the workshop and that their knowledge increased in the area of understanding the need for a

set of core values as a base for dealing with addictive behaviour. One person indicated that the effectiveness of the workshop was below expectations; however the other 15 rated it as good to beyond expectations.

Comments included: *“excellent trainer, great flow, excellent info, perfect”, “good discussions, nice to get away from .ppt”,* One person commented *“I do not understand the thesis of this presentation and how it relates to the FOCUS mandate”*.

### **Living Schools, Rachel Deane and Katie Glover, OPHEA**

This workshop was repeated on two days with a total evaluation response of twenty-eight. All respondents indicated they had a good or better understanding of what a Living School was following the workshop.

With the exception of two people, the rest agreed to strongly agreed that following the presentation they would be prepared to take the principles of Living School and apply them to school communities specifically at the secondary level. Most respondents (with the exception of 3) also agree to strongly agreed that they would feel confident in identifying the needs of the secondary school community in relation to substance use and abuse. All participants indicated that the information gained in the workshop was useful to very useful. As indicated in Graph 1, most people rated the effectiveness of the workshop as good to beyond expectations with the majority in the very good range.

Comments included: *“ excellent info and program, CODA would love to be involved somehow”, “would need more support and resources to take to the schools”, “hard in rural communities, teachers are almost sick of hearing from us”*. Another commented that *“I strongly recommend integrating francophone communities in the program”*. One person’s comments were quite negative and included *“Presenters had many unknowns, and were not sure about the issues”*.



### **TYPS Best Practices Project, Les Voakes**

This workshop had 17 respondents who completed the evaluation. The majority strongly agreed that following the workshop they understood the participatory research approach to developing best practices. All agree they knew where to access and update materials about best practice development for youth centres. Six indicated they were very confident to format a step by step implementation plan with grassroots groups. The overall effectiveness of the workshop, illustrated in Graph I, was rated as very good to beyond expectations by all but one respondent.

Comments on the workshop included *“excellent presentation”* and *“engaging presenter”*



### **Building On Line Surveys on a Shoestring, Mary Graham**

This workshop was a hands-on workshop in a computer lab and eighteen participants responded to the evaluation. Sixteen stated they had a high to very high confidence in their ability to devise an on-line survey after participating in the workshop. Knowledge of data collection and analysis had increased significantly for the respondents with the exception of 1 person. All indicated a good to very high confidence level to download the results from online surveys and to use them in documents. As indicated in Graph 1, the majority of participants also rated the workshop as very good to beyond expectations, while 1 person rated it as good.

Comments included: "great intro using the tool", "excellent, more please", "good tool for evaluation components" and "awesome, I'm going to use this right away".

Roseneath Theatre Company closed the symposium with a reading of the play **WRECKED**, a piece about alcohol and substance abuse, and its impact on a teenager, his family and his peers. A very powerful drama, it was rated excellent by the majority of respondents many of whom were interested in bringing the play back to their own communities.



Roseneath  
Theatre Company

The symposium for 2005/06 experienced some unexpected challenges. A break-out of illness amongst participants related to food required some additional support for participants. In the absence of a formal policy on how to deal with this situation, conference organizers decided to take this on as a project prior to the next symposium. Due to a recent structural reorganization at CAMH just prior to the symposium, organizers went out of their way to provide facilities and networking opportunities for participants who might need them to help with the recent news.

FOCUS and ODAP introduced some new resources on conference etiquette which were included in participants' folders and placed on the tables. It was hoped that these resources would help to increase the professionalism of the conference and there was a notable decrease in distracting behaviour. Following the conference, a number of people asked to use these resources for their own programs.

Despite the challenges experienced this year the conference was a success due not only to the programming but also the nature of the conference centre and the ability of the FOCUS coalitions and DACs to meet and network both formally and informally. The FOCUS/ODAP collaboration on a joint venture works well for both. Based on the feedback from the preference survey, the conference planners will consider both the time of the year and the venue for future symposiums.