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Redesigned mindcheck.ca Website now a Provincial Resource

A redesigned, enhanced and now provincial resource focused on early intervention and prevention of potential mental health and substance use issues for youth and young adults – mindcheck.ca, has just gone live.

Initially launched in spring 2010 as part of **Fraser Health's Youth and Young Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Early Intervention Pilot Project** for the communities of Surrey, White Rock, Delta and Langley, mindcheck.ca has recently undergone a redesign to improve its visual appeal and functionality and to broaden its reach to support not only all communities in Fraser Health but across the province. The expansion to a provincial resource comes thanks to a recent partnership with the Provincial Health Services Authority's BC Mental Health and Addictions Services (BCMHA).

mindcheck.ca targets **young people ages 13-25 years old** and is designed to be youth and user friendly. It's a website where young people can check out how they're feeling and get connected to support early and quickly. It offers education materials, confidential screening tools (quizzes) for five conditions - depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol and drug use, and psychosis. The website provides links to self-help websites and information on how to access community services.

It also includes sections for families and friends, and professionals who work with teens and young adults.

Mental health and substance use disorders are the primary health issues experienced by young people in their teen years and early 20s. In fact, one in five youth in B.C. will experience a mental health or substance use disorder serious enough to cause significant distress and impair their ability to function at home, at school or work and with their peers.

While half of all lifetime cases of mental health and substance use disorders begin by age 14, and 75 percent by age 24, it's currently estimated that over 60 per cent of young people impacted, don't seek professional help.

Knowing the web is a preferred resource for youth and young adults searching for information, we developed the website with a goal of increasing the chances of young people gaining access to the resources they need to get help.

Identifying an issue early and intervening early helps young people get better in less time and can prevent things from becoming worse, while significantly reducing related negative impacts on their self-image, self-esteem and social development.

The website is the primary resource of mind check, a B.C. based youth and young adult health literacy program that seeks to encourage the early detection, intervention and prevention of mental health and substance issues while increasing public awareness and reducing stigma. Initiated by Fraser Health's Youth and Young Adult Early Intervention Project Team in Fall 2009, it is now a partnership between Fraser Health and BCMHA's Health Literacy Team. This health literacy project involves a multi-media approach which includes the website, print media, presentations, etc.

What's new about mindcheck.ca?

- a more interactive and engaging home page
- language changes that reflect a more youthful tone
- improved functionality so the website can be viewed regardless of what internet browser is used
- revision of a psychosis screening tool and a newly designed learn more section
- an improved results and feedback page
- expansion to serve as a provincial resource

Valuable feedback from young people engaged in the evaluation process informed many of the changes.

What's next?

We will continue developing the website to enhance quality and appeal for young people. Among the changes to come:

- the health literacy program/website will be expanded to include social anxiety and disordered eating
- the website will be enhanced for mobile technology
- social media – facebook, twitter, youtube will be used for website and health literacy promotion
- video and info-graphics will be added

This fall, the Vancouver Canucks, through their Canucks for Kids Fund and in memory of long-time Canucks forward Rick Rypien, pledged \$50,000 and promotional support to the BC Children's Foundation to support the BC Mental Health and Addiction Services' Health Literacy Strategy. As **mindcheck.ca** is a key component of that strategy, our website will benefit from this generous donation.

Our ask

Please go to www.mindcheck.ca and check out the website; share information about **mind check** with family, friends and colleagues.

Downloadable fact sheets on depression, anxiety, stress, substance use and psychosis are available on the website. Posters and postcards promoting the website are available. If you are interested in seeing the electronic catalogue for these materials, please let us know.

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