



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 April 18

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## LAUNCHING THE PARENTING OF TEEN VIDEOS

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that Report No. 047-13 re “Launching the Parenting of Teen Videos” be received for information.*

### **Key Points**

- Parents of teens are most likely to get their information from the internet and their peers.
- The Young Adult Team partnered with other community agencies to develop a library of 25 videos regarding parenting of teens, six of which are related to resiliency and mental wellness.
- A Parent Symposium in November 2012 organized by Young Adult Team staff members and community partners was the official launch for the video series.
- The video series has had over 12,000 viewings.

### **Background**

The 2008 Ontario Public Health Standards require health units to promote positive parenting through a comprehensive, health promotion approach. In 2009, a Health Unit report entitled, ‘Great Parents are Made, Not Born’, identified that initiatives regarding parenting of teens were missing in the community.

Parenting a teenager is often met with challenges as there are many external influences that impact both parents and teens. These include peer pressure, social media, drugs, rapid paced technology, the economy and physiological changes with the teen. Parents of teens often find it challenging to balance promoting their teen’s independence and monitoring and disciplining him/her. Teenagers are very involved with their peers at this developmental stage of life. Despite this, parents of teens need to know that their teens do listen to them and consider them to be big influencers in their lives. Parents have the power to create positive home environments where their children are comfortable disclosing information about the risky decisions they are facing in their daily lives.

Parents of teens are often hesitant to ask for help, and evidence shows that parents of teens are most likely to get their information from the internet and their peers. It has also been identified that social media techniques should be utilized within future programming efforts to expand to the target groups, who are increasingly moving away from traditional communication methodologies like television and print media.

### **Rationale**

A 2011 survey administered by the Health Unit’s Young Adult Team to parents of teens identified ways parents would like to receive information. Parents identified the internet, their friends, community professionals and school events and newsletters as the key methods for learning. This survey also identified the topics that parents were most interested in learning which included the teen brain, drugs and

alcohol, positive discipline, sexuality and mental health issues. Considering the information obtained from the parents, the Young Adult Team (YAT) decided to create some evidence-based YouTube videos for parents of teenagers that could be easily accessed through the internet and would provide credible information to this population.

### **Production and Launching the Video Series**

In late fall 2010, members of the YAT began to work on an initial series of videos which focused on the developmental challenges that teens face and ways parents can help teens through this stage of their life. Over the past two years, members of the YAT have worked collaboratively with community partners and other Health Unit staff to develop 25 subject-specific videos, each of two to three minutes in duration. The videos focus on teen brain, drugs and alcohol, mental wellness, healthy sexuality, positive discipline and communication with teens.

On November 15, 2012, the Health Unit officially launched the series of 25 videos. The YAT hosted a community Parenting Symposium with guest speaker Mr. Michael Reist, who is an author, educator and parenting consultant. Along with acknowledging the content of the video library and topics, Mr. Reist provided an hour presentation on "Building Resiliency in Our Children". Prior to presentations, parents visited displays and had opportunities to speak with representatives from 10 community agencies that support parents. The formal presentation was opened with dignitaries representing the Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee, the Thames Valley District School Board and a Thames Valley School Board Trustee. Mr. Graham Smith, Public Health Nurse, showed the attendees a sample of a mental wellness video focused on resiliency and outlined where one could access the other video series on the Internet. The following day, a formal media launch was held at the Health Unit which involved Mr. Reist's endorsement of the video series.

### **Community Response**

Many community partners worked together to make the community launch a success. Over 400 people attended the November 15<sup>th</sup> Parenting Symposium. This event helped to raise awareness about the video library and the significant role the Health Unit plays in supporting families with teenagers. Over 12,000 viewings of the videos have occurred to date.

### **Next Steps**

Parents need and want information so they can raise caring, responsible and independent adults. Allowing parents to participate in community events and view the video library from their home are important activities that provide valuable service to our community. It is the intent of the Health Unit's Young Adult Team to develop more videos for parents of teens which will focus on addressing teen's use of technology, cyber bullying and healthy relationships.

This report was prepared by Mr. Graham Smith, Public Health Nurse and Ms. Christine Preece, Manager, Young Adult Team.



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<p><b>This report addresses</b> the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Chronic Disease and Injuries Program Standard, 3, 4, 11, 12 and Child Health, 5, 6, 7, 8.</p>
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