

Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

October 2023

National Teen Driver Safety Week



As Canada's national injury prevention organization, Parachute is proud to present the eleventh annual National Teen Driver Safety Week (NTDSW) from October 15 to 21, 2023, an awareness week designed to build public awareness of teen driver safety issues and encourage communities to be part of the solution. Road crashes are the third-leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24 in Canada. Young people are killed in crashes at a higher rate than any other age group under 75.

Information to share with your Teen Drivers:

1. **Put down the phone:** Don't drive distracted - Drivers who text while driving are up to six times more likely to be involved in a crash.
2. **Higher speeds = higher risks** - Speeding is a factor in one-third of teen driver deaths in Canada. Don't risk your life just for the thrill of driving faster than the limit.
3. **Don't Drive High** - Cannabis impairs your ability to drive by affecting your balance and coordination, motor skills, attention, judgment, reaction time and decision-making skills.
4. **If you drink, don't drive!** - Motor vehicle crashes are the third-leading cause of death among 16 to 25-year-olds, and alcohol is a factor in almost half of those crashes.

To learn more, visit [National Teen Driver Safety Week's](https://parachute.ca/NTDSW) webpage.

Don't Be Scared by Cavities this October!

Keep your teen's smile BOO-tiful this Halloween!

Here are some tips to help keep your teeth healthy:

- Brush teeth twice a day for two minutes using fluoridated toothpaste
- Floss once a day
- Stay away from sticky, starchy and hard candy
- Limit sugary drinks. Drink water after eating tasty treats to rinse away sugar that may be stuck on your teeth.
- Book a FREE dental appointment at Public Health's dental clinics by calling 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7399 or [live chat with us](#).



To learn more on how to keep your family's teeth healthy, visit www.niagararegion.ca/dental.

Mental Illness Awareness Week #MIAW

This year, [Mental Illness Awareness Week \(MIAW\)](#) is from October 1-7. Mental Illness Awareness Week is an annual national public education campaign designed to help open the eyes of Canadians to the reality of mental illness.

Annual Memorial Forest Vigil:

The [Memorial Forest](#) seeks to reduce the stigma around mental illness and promote a greater understanding and compassion from the community as a whole. Each year, a Memorial Forest Vigil is held during Mental Illness Awareness Week to provide an opportunity to share stories of hope and success as told by individuals and family members living with mental illness.

Mental Illness and Stigma:

Stigma is when someone views you in a negative way because you have a distinctive characteristic or personal trait that is thought to be a disadvantage (a negative stereotype). Stigma can occur from a lack of understanding of mental illness. This stigma can lead to discrimination, and it may be direct or unintentional.

Some of the harmful effects of stigma can include:

- Hesitancy to get help or treatment
- Lack of understanding by family, friends or others
- Fewer opportunities for work, school or social activities
- Bullying, physical violence or harassment
- The belief that you'll never succeed at certain challenges or that you can't improve your situation

You can help reduce stigma by educating yourself, being aware of your attitudes and behaviours and choosing your words carefully when you talk about mental illness and substance use disorders.

Helpful Resources:

- [Addressing Stigma](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association: Stigma and Discrimination](#)
- [Words Matter \(CAMH\)](#)



Educational Resources

Niagara Healthy Schools Spotlights

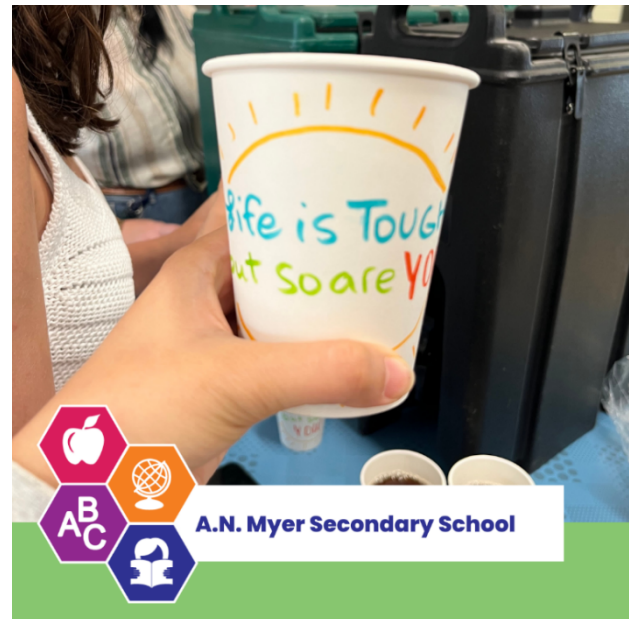
The School Health team anticipates the return of Healthy School Committees in many Niagara schools. We look forward to spotlighting the innovative health initiatives these committees will implement in local schools.

This month we would like to spotlight the past work of a Healthy School Committee, hoping to inspire creative initiatives this year.

A.N. Myer Secondary School has created their own twist on the word SMART - for the Myer Community **SMART** stands for "**S**tudents at **M**yer **A**chieving **R**esilience **T**ogether".

With the dedicated support of passionate staff, this Healthy Schools committee successfully completed various tasks and activities such as mental health-focused artwork around the school. They also found time to promote mental well-being, such as hosting art journaling sessions and connecting with peers over refreshing summer beverages.

A big round of applause and congratulations to this team! We are looking forward to the creative and fun activities to come in the new school year.



To see other Healthy School Spotlights from Niagara, visit our [Become a Healthy School webpage](#).

Asthma Friendly Schools

Back to school and the fall weather play a big part in an increase in asthma hospitalizations and every year. For support in creating asthma friendly environments, check-out [Ophea's free asthma resources](#), including the e-Learning module available for all school staff: [Implementing Ryan's Law and PPM 161: Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools](#).