



# Youth and HIV/AIDS

“With HIV/AIDS infection rates increasing among young people in Canada and around the world, there is an urgent need to increase access to discussion of HIV/AIDS in the community and specifically with and among young people, providing the exchange of information on this common global issue, and increasing HIV/AIDS prevention knowledge.”-411 Initiative for Change

## **Introduction**

**Youth HIV infection rates are on the rise in Canada and around the world. This means it is a crucial time to be in discussion with youth about safe sex and the myths and facts about HIV/AIDS. We need to support our youth by giving them the education they need to make healthy choices instead of risky ones that fuel the rising rates of HIV and STI contraction. The ACYR Ambassador program promotes peer education and leadership building to help strengthen the prevention message and empower youth in their schools. Here are some statistics, stories, and resources to further your understanding about youth and HIV/AIDS and where some supports are available in York Region and surrounding areas.**

## **Statistics**

Statistics from the Public Health Agency of Canada [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php)

- Youth represent a small proportion of the total number of reported HIV and AIDS cases in Canada. Individuals between the ages of 10 and 24 account for 3.5% of cumulative AIDS cases. For positive HIV test reports, youth between the ages of 15 and 19 account for 1.5% of all reports. In spite of these low proportions, risk behaviour data on young Canadians show the potential for HIV transmission.
- A national study found that approximately 50% to 60% of grade 9 and 11 students think there is a vaccine available to prevent HIV/AIDS.
- The same survey found that 36% of grade 11 students think that there is a cure for HIV/AIDS.
- Data from targeted studies show that street-involved youth, youth who inject drugs, and young men who have sex with men are particularly vulnerable to HIV.

## **Reflections**

**These words are the beginning of a collection that will continue to grow and will value the lived experiences of those living with HIV/AIDS in York Region.**

## **Strength**

*What is strength measured by?  
Is it by how much you lift,  
Or how much you can take?  
Is the strength or the foundation  
That I have sanctified by my deeds?  
What is my strength?  
How did I acquire such strengths?  
I look within me every day  
Trying so hard to find a way  
A way to make it through that day  
With a strength I hope to reach within  
And use as a shield from everything  
And even though my strength should not be my shield  
It is  
Does my strength really hold me?  
Is this foundation that my inner strength has built  
Built on hope or loyalty?  
No matter what, I'm still left with the question  
What is strength, my strength measured by? - Anonymous*

## **Resources**

### **The AIDS Committee of York Region**

Youth Care services, The Ambassador Program

[www.acyr.org](http://www.acyr.org)

### **Services for LGTTBQ Youth**

#### **PFLAG York Region: Richmond Hill**

[pflagyork@yahoo.ca](mailto:pflagyork@yahoo.ca)

#### **Rainbow Youth Coalition**

at Petabourough AIDS Resource Network (PARN)

[www.rainbowyouth.ca](http://www.rainbowyouth.ca)

#### **Central Toronto Youth Services**

[www.ctys.org](http://www.ctys.org)

Youth Program: Pride and Prejudice

#### **Lesbian, Gay, Bi Youth line**

[www.youthline.ca](http://www.youthline.ca)

## **Youth Shelters**

## **Blue Doors Shelter**

[www.bluedoorshelters.ca](http://www.bluedoorshelters.ca)

## **Salvation Army Shelter**

[www.suttonyouthshelter.ca](http://www.suttonyouthshelter.ca)

## **Youth Education and Support**

### **The 411 initiative for change**

[www.whatsthe411.ca](http://www.whatsthe411.ca)

### **Health Canada**

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/hiv\\_aids/youth/journey/aids.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/hiv_aids/youth/journey/aids.html)

### **Live Positive**

[www.livepositive.ca](http://www.livepositive.ca)

### **Planned Parenthood of Toronto**

Youth Program: Teen Sex Information Program

[www.spiderbytes.ca](http://www.spiderbytes.ca), [www.ppt.on.ca](http://www.ppt.on.ca)

### **Positive Youth Outreach**

[www.positiveyouth.com](http://www.positiveyouth.com)

### **Native Child and Family Services**

Youth Programs: Youth Drop in services, Youth Outreach Program

[www.nativechild.org](http://www.nativechild.org)

### **Voices Of Positive Women**

Youth Program: Social support Group for Young HIV positive women

[www.vopw.org](http://www.vopw.org)

### **Let's Talk**

<http://www.kidstalkaids.org/program/index.html>

## **Clinics**

### **Anonymous Testing Sites in York Region**

Call 905-726-1282 to find out about one in your area

### **Hassle Free Clinic**

[www.hasslefreeclinic.org](http://www.hasslefreeclinic.org)