Recent data has shown poor mental health across Ottawa adolescents, as well as a lack of knowledge regarding how to seek support for these issues. Additionally, risky substance use behaviours have been found to begin around age 13. Alcohol and cannabis remain the most commonly used substances within this age group. ConnexOntario is an existing 24 hour online service for resource navigation and education about alcohol & drugs, mental illness, and gambling that we plan to work with in our program.

**Our Program**

**Goal**

To improve health literacy around substance use and mental health in Ottawa high school students.

**Audiences**

Primary: grade 9-12 students in OCDSB high schools
Secondary: teachers, principals and superintendents

**Outcome Objectives**

1. 30% increase in number of OCDSB high school students who feel they have the knowledge & ability to access substance use resources by June 2024.

2. 30% increase in number of OCDSB high school students who feel comfortable seeking support related to mental health & substance use by June 2024.

3. 20% decrease in number of OCDSB high school students who feel that their mental health is affected by substance use by June 2024.

**Key Strategies**

- Health Communication
- Self-Help/Mutual Support
- Creating Supportive Environments

**Key Activities**

- **Toolkit** provided as a resource for teacher supervisors
- **Student Mentor Conference** for student volunteers
- **Peer Mentorship Program** to educate peers & share resources using ConnexOntario

**Mission**

CityStudio Ottawa's mission is to inspire, connect and mobilize students, faculty, the city, and community members to collaborate on action to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and healthier city.

**Key Partners**

- Ottawa
- U of Ottawa
- ConnexOntario
- bgc Canada

**Outcomes, Impacts & Next Steps**

- Better overall mental health in the target audience
- Reduced substance use in the target audience
- Early intervention to reduce long term impacts of mental illness, substance use disorders, and overdoses
- Reduced stigma associated with mental health & substance use problems
- Increased likelihood/willingness of target audience to seek timely support or help