



WECOSS Prevention and Education Working Group

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 6, 2025 | 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Microsoft Teams

Present: Jennifer Bradt (WECHU), Kim Willis (CMHA), Alexis Erickson (WECHU), Kelly Barill (WECHU), Kelly Farrugia (WECHU), Ashley Kirby (WECHU), Amy Lofaso (WECDSB), Allyson Hallahan (VON), Michelle Bloomfield (CSC Providence), Jodi Pearce (weCHC), Margo Cameron (CMHA), Michella Mollicone (Essex-Windsor EMS), Joe Bell (GECDSB).

Regrets: Sean Patterson (WPS), Christian Morneau (New Beginnings), Stacey Yannacopoulos (New Beginnings), Melissa Major (HDGH – MHART), EMS MHART Representative.

Co-Chairs: Kim Willis & Jennifer Bradt

Agenda Item		Action Items
1.0	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome to all. 	
2.0	Approval of Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved. 	
3.0	Review of Action Items from September 11th, 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share meeting presentation with the minutes (A. Erickson) – Complete. Share preliminary results from the Action Plan Consultation at upcoming Working Group meetings (WECHU) – To be shared during this meeting. Continue with Family and Youth Substance Use Prevention Workshops and attendance at relevant community events (WECHU) – Ongoing. Complete and release education, progressive enforcement, and policy tools for schools on student smoking and vaping (WECHU) – In progress. Approval of Minutes from September 11th, 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes approved. 	
4.0	Meeting Goals <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide closing updates on the 2025 PEWG project. Discuss the prevention and education priorities that emerged through the WECOSS Action Plan Consultation. Review next steps following the WECOSS Action Plan Consultation. 	

5.0	<p>2025 Project – Youth and Family Engagement and Outreach for Substance Use Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icelandic Prevention Model (Planet Youth) grant – no results on the funding request as of yet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Addendum (December 2025)</i> – Grant was not received. • Next year, goal is to look at key data sources on youth substance use and in turn, make recommendations on different initiatives around youth substance use prevention. • 7 workshops were delivered on youth substance use prevention this year. • 11 community events were also attended where youth substance use prevention resources were distributed. • School support: Ashley Kirby is updating resources and creating an e-module to assist schools in addressing vaping/smoking at school. Harm reduction lens is the focus this year. • WECHU will be joining the WPS on November 8th for a Medicine Cabinet Clean Out event. 	
6.0	<p>WECOSS Action Plan Consultation – Results and Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexis Erickson provided a presentation on results from the WECOSS action plan consultation. The presentation will be included with the minutes. • Four priority areas identified for the WECOSS through the consultation – Prevention and Education, Harm Reduction, Data and Accountability, and Advocacy and Policy. • Potential action areas under the Prevention and Education priority included early school and family intervention, incorporating voices of youth, professional development, and public awareness campaigns. <p>Group Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim Willis: Continued focus of this table to incorporate voices of youth is amazing. Data piece shared is invaluable. • Kelly Farrugia: Primary prevention and the focus on parents and families is very important to educate and provide information prior to youth trying substances. The WECHU has connections with family groups. • Group Poll #1 – Teams poll was launched to the group to assess the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>To what extent do you agree that “Harm Reduction” should be a future priority area for the WECOSS?</i> 	Share meeting presentation with the minutes (A. Erickson).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 responses received. ▪ 70% strongly agreed; 20% agreed and 10% disagreed. ○ <i>To what extent do you agree that “Prevention and Education” should be a future priority area for the WECOSS?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 responses received. ▪ 80% strongly agreed; 20% agreed. ○ <i>To what extent do you agree that “Data and Accountability” should be a future priority area for the WECOSS?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 responses received. ▪ 50% strongly agreed; 20% agreed; 20% were neutral; and 10% disagreed. ○ <i>To what extent do you agree that “Advocacy and Policy” should be a future priority area for the WECOSS?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 responses received. ▪ 40% strongly agreed; 50% agreed; 10% disagreed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded list of potential activities for the Prevention and Education Pillar (spanning across the individual, family, community, and societal levels) was presented. Second group poll launched asking members to rank the potential activities from most to least important to them. • Group Poll #2: <i>Please rank the potential action areas discussed for the WECOSS’ Prevention and Education Pillar from most to least important to you.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Top three ranked activities were 1) resilience and emotional skill building at individual level; 2) parent and family engagement at family level; and 3) substance use education at individual level. • Margo Cameron: Thought about if ACES should be at the top to discuss factors of substance use like childhood trauma and violence-informed care. • Joe Bell: Integrating ACES and pre- and post-natal care in programming offered at the Children’s Aid Society (Joe sits on their board now). CAS has dropped down to two staff supporting this work: https://app.principals.ca/Files/Vault/Trauma_Sensitive_School_Leadership_Advocacy_Paper_Final_Report.pdf • Kelly Farrugia: Comprehensive Health Promotion Department at the WECHU is doing early intervention on ACES, starting with educating WECHU staff and then bringing this to the community (including schools) in the new year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-modules and Board report will go out using a 	
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	<p>trauma-informed lens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resource shared: https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/EarlyAdversityandResilience/ontario-early-adversity-and-resilience-framework---final--aoda-1.pdf?sfvrsn=2 ● Kelly Farrugia: Personal skills are important; however, work is being done on this across the community. The WECOSS may be better positioned to look at community and societal-level work, such as supportive community environments. ● Margo Cameron: Pre-pandemic, former CEO at WECHU had embarked on an initiative on a trauma informed community approach. WECOSS is the right place to be a champion in this work with a broader framework. May look at changing wording. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pre-pandemic, partners had completed Brain Story certification, which is free: https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/training/ ● Kim Willis: Over the past year, what has worked and hasn't worked with family engagement events? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jenny Bradt: For school/school board workshops, parents we are looking to reach are not showing up. Good feedback overall, but not necessarily reaching the target group. ○ For events in the community, the team went directly to the families in areas of higher priority populations. ● Kelly Farrugia: Parent engagement is challenging. ● Joe Bell: Example: During parent/teacher night, they heard a lot of staff had great conversations with parents, but the parents they hoped to speak to did not attend. What are the barriers preventing these parents from attending? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RCC and Children First are piloting a program where they go to the families of children ages 7-10 in high priority areas. ○ Need community hubs and schools that have medical facilities and childcare. ○ Some effective engagement strategies include providing food, having interpreters, and ensuring the information shared is culturally appropriate. ● Kim Willis: Food and meeting people where they are at are both good strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to ask "what and how" from peers/youth. ● Kelly Farrugia: Need to address societal level issues as a comprehensive approach to help our community. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenny Bradt: Discussed influence of social media. Seeing judgmental comments online regarding substance use. Creating a supportive environment for children so they do not have to turn to substance use. • Margo Cameron: During a provincial meeting, a physician stated that being homeless is a full-time job. Finding somewhere safe to sleep every day is a full-time job and if there is a substance use issue involved, that too becomes a full-time job. • Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many ideas were reviewed for potential Prevention and Education activities – some that align with the initial results from the polls and others that had emerged through additional group discussion. ○ Will review/collate the feedback from this meeting and use this to inform activities for the new action plan. Will review with group once complete. 	<p>Review/collate group feedback on future prevention and education activities for the WECOSS and use this feedback to inform the new action plan (WECHU).</p> <p>Reconnect with the PEWG once new plans are ready to review (WECHU).</p>
7.0	<p>Community Agency Roundtable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joe Bell: Ministry of Education, through School Mental Health Ontario, released substance use and digital dependency modules for grade 6 students. Mobilizer kits were also provided. 	
8.0	<p>WECOSS Pillar Updates</p> <p>Harm Reduction Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing Substance Use Stigma Policy Template and e-learning modules for organizations will be launching soon. • In person workshop will be held for policy makers to support implementation of the policy and e-learning modules at their organization. • Workshop is on November 26th at the Caboto Club. • Eventbrite invite will be sent to partners by end of day. • Workshop will be co-facilitated by the WECHU and the Welcome Centre. <p>Treatment and Recovery Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a webinar for frontline service providers on opioid agonist therapy (OAT). • Webinar will be held on November 28th as a Lunch and Learn. Promotional material will be sent out soon. <p>Enforcement and Justice Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with SSNAPP partnership on neighbourhood safety planning project. • In the process of creating Leamington and Essex safety 	

	<p>plans. Survey was launched to gather input from Leamington and Essex communities on safety needs in these areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data is being analyzed. Results will be used to inform the safety plans. • Mental health and substance use workshops for first responders and service providers in Essex-County will be coming up. 	
9.0	<p>Summary of Action Items and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share meeting presentation with the minutes (A. Erickson). • Review/collate group feedback on future prevention and education activities for the WECOSS and use this feedback to inform the new action plan (WECHU). • Reconnect with the PEWG once new plans are ready to review (WECHU). 	
10.0	<p>Meeting Wrap-Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjourned: 2:55 p.m. 	

Next Meeting: TBD