



## IDEAS FOR PROMOTING THE LOW-RISK DRINKING GUIDELINES (LRDGs)

The Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines effectively balance the risks and benefits of alcohol. They were developed to minimize public confusion on alcohol and health and reflect the best advice of respected Canadian scientists based on current research. Below are some tips for promotion and dissemination. For additional information, please visit [LINK to “resources”].

### # 1

#### Orient yourself to the LRDG and the role of key players

- Read background reports and review material from current and previous LRDG campaigns.
- Become familiar with the relevant roles and responsibilities of key groups such as Public Health [Units/Departments](#), the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the FOCUS Communities.
- Get a clear picture of what your organization has done and what it plans and/or is mandated to do with respect to the Guidelines.
- Get consensus on what's expected of you and your colleagues regarding LRDG promotion over the coming year(s).
- Find out what resources and supports you have or will need.

#### Useful Resources

- *Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines Phase 1 Campaign Report and Communications Frameworks*, 1997, 2001 and 2004
- *LRDG Campaign Kits*, Aug 1997, Mar 2001, and May 2004, particularly the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- *Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines*, aka "Core Program Guidelines"
- *Directory of Substance Abuse and Injury Prevention Contacts in Public Health*, 2006.
- *Directory of Potential Sources of Funding for Substance Abuse and Injury Prevention Projects in Ontario, 2004*
- Low-Risk Drinking Position Statement, Addiction Foundation of Manitoba  
<http://www.afm.mb.ca/pdfs/lowriskdrinking.pdf>

For copies or links to these documents visit the Alcohol Policy Network website, [www.apolnet.ca](http://www.apolnet.ca), particularly the Information Pack on the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines.

For general resources on alcohol and health see:

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)
- Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, [www.ccsa.ca](http://www.ccsa.ca)
- Canadian Health Network, Public Health Agency of Canada, <http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/>
- Health Canada, [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
- Canadian Medical Association, [www.cma.ca](http://www.cma.ca)
- MADD Canada, [www.madd.ca](http://www.madd.ca)

### # 2

#### Become a champion for the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines

- Become familiar with emerging research on alcohol and health.
- Know the Guidelines' core messages.
- Understand the difference between the LRDGs and other guidelines developed for treatment settings or populations for whom the LRDGs do not apply.
- Know where to find the latest data/statistics on drinking patterns and consequences. (e.g., Canadian Addiction Survey, 2005; Ontario Student Drug Use Survey (OSDUS))
- Know whom to contact for more information on campaign materials and the research behind the Guidelines.

## #3 Promote a consistent, coherent message

- Orient other staff members to the Guidelines and their role. This can be done through presentations, email notices, postings on internal bulletin boards or newsletters, updates to the staff and volunteer manuals or program plans, etc.
- Ensure that all those who interact with the media on a regular basis, or intermittently as a result of events or emerging issues, are well versed in the Guidelines. Help them to communicate the LRDG core messages clearly and consistently. Of particular importance is the role of alcohol in chronic diseases, and the connection between alcohol and injuries.
- Review brochures, presentations, program and media materials, displays, website content, etc. to ensure that alcohol-related messages are consistent with the Guidelines. If they are not, find out whether there's a clear rationale for the differences (eg. resources were developed to reduce harm among a key group rather than for general health promotion purposes). Carefully weigh the pros and cons of keeping outdated material in use.
- Find out if your organization has a protocol for updating, reviewing or signing off on internal and public education materials or campaigns. Lobby for changes to ensure you and other colleagues with expertise on the LRDG are consulted on alcohol-related content.
- Consider developing an official policy or position statement in support of the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines. This may help clarify roles and responsibilities and ensure there's awareness and support for your initiatives at all levels of the organization. It will also help institutionalize some of the related staff orientation and training that need to take place on a regular basis.

### Useful Resources

- *Travelling Together, A Hands-On Guide for Moving Your Community Group to Action*, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 1-800-661-111 or [marketing@camh.net](mailto:marketing@camh.net)
- Publications on Health Promotion, Community Development and Organizational Development, Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse, [www.opc.on.ca](http://www.opc.on.ca),
- [National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol, Other Drugs and Substances in Canada](http://www.nationalframework-cadrenational.ca/), <http://www.nationalframework-cadrenational.ca/>
- Building a Successful Prevention Program, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), <http://casat.unr.edu/bestpractices/>

FOCUS Resource Centre, <http://www.frcentre.net/>

## #4 Develop a comprehensive, long-term strategy

- Incorporate the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines into a broader campaign on low-risk drinking.
- Recruit a knowledgeable, committed team to work with you. Even if a campaign consists of only one or two elements, there's always more than enough work to go around. Agree on the principles that will guide your work. Determine how decisions will be made and who needs to be involved along the way.
- Develop a comprehensive long-term strategy to plan, implement and evaluate your efforts. Changes in alcohol consumption patterns and consequences, particularly at the population level, take time. A single event or 3-month campaign is not going to have much of an impact if it's a "one-shot deal" or not linked to your long-term goals.
- Carefully weigh the pros and cons of collaborating with or accepting funding from the alcohol industry, particularly when targeting youth. Decide how donors and partners will be recognized on campaign materials. For information and resources on alcohol sponsorship, go to <http://www.apolnet.ca/resources/pubs/LTA-Sponsorship.pdf>
- Set achievable goals. Focus on those activities that will give you the "biggest bang for the buck." Time your deliverables and milestones to boost team spirit and strengthen organizational commitment.
- Get support from the key decision-makers for your plan and at key points throughout its implementation.

# #5

## Focus on policy

- Check to see if your organization has an alcohol policy and / or your municipality has a Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP). If not, consider taking action to develop one.
- Find out if policies and practices covering the sale, service, promotion and consumption of alcohol at corporate events and facilities are consistent with the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines.
- Check to see if the local Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP) has a goal to reinforce low-risk drinking behaviour and whether LRDG messages could be included in the facility signage or rental package, for example.
- Ensure workplace and campus alcohol and other drug policies explicitly refer to the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines. Integrate LRDG messages and resources into workplace, community and campus displays, annual drug awareness campaigns and other alcohol-related initiatives.
- Advocate for such policy measures as standard drink labels on alcohol beverage containers, improved training for all those involved with the sale and service of alcohol, and more balanced alcohol messages on radio, TV and other media.
- Support population-based alcohol policies such as controls on alcohol service, advertising and promotion practices, prices and taxes, number of alcohol outlets, days and hours of operation. Policy has the biggest potential for impact and should go hand in hand with any social marketing or media campaign on the Guidelines.

### Useful Resources

A good source of Canadian alcohol policy information is APOLNET,, [www.apolnet.org](http://www.apolnet.org).. Particularly recommended are the following information packs:

- Alcohol Policy 101
- Alcohol Advertising
- Liquor Licensing and the Public Interest [

See also the Let's Take Action series, three how-to manuals on policy development in the workplace, schools, colleges and universities and community settings.

- Also recommended are CAMH public information materials, setting-specific alcohol policy resources and best advice series (e.g. CAMH's Alcohol Policy Framework paper).. To view the online catalogue go to [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net). To access CAMH Library Resources call 416-535-8501 ext.6991

The Municipal Alcohol Policy Guide is a practical guide for successfully managing drinking in recreational facilities. This useful step-by-step manual helps people to develop a new MAP, or review, revise or consolidate existing MAPs. The resource can be ordered by going to:

[http://www.orfa.com/MAP/MAP\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.orfa.com/MAP/MAP_Guide.pdf)

# #6

## Use the media

- Monitor the local media for alcohol-related stories. Balance positive stories on the benefits of alcohol with letters to the editor, opinion articles, etc. on the risks and effective prevention.
- Take advantage of media interviews on related issues to reinforce low-risk drinking messages and advance support for alcohol policy issues. Find out if they would welcome stories, short columns or health tips for use as "fillers" on slow news days.
- Get to know editors, reporters, PSA directors and other media personnel in your area. Find a way to recognize/thank them when they do a good job or if they support your efforts.
- If your campaign includes public service announcements, call around to find out whether your local media has a preferred format, length or time during which they air them. Be sure to label them "Alcohol Education PSAs" so broadcasters know they will help them comply with the requirements of the Canadian Radio-Telecommunications Commission CRTC).
- Incorporate a policy component into your media relations strategy. For example, when referring to low-risk drinking discuss the importance of alcohol policies in promoting population health and community safety. Alternatively, use the opportunity to encourage debate on new policies such as standard drink labels, mandatory server training, etc.

# #7

## Use sound health communication principles

- Agree on your communication objectives. Determine whether you'll focus on the general public or professional intermediaries. Identify what short and long-term changes you'd like to see, keeping in mind that the overall goal is to reinforce broad-based consistency in the low-risk drinking behaviour of the majority of the population and to persuade those who drink at higher levels or in inappropriate situations to modify their behaviour.
- Know your audience. Use demographic, psychographic, organizational and other data to help you understand the incentives and disincentives of particular behaviours, practices or policies.
- Target your message and refine it through focus testing with the target group, and consultation with colleagues and professional intermediaries whose support you may need. Test your messages for unintended consequences, particularly when alcohol and health are linked (eg. encouraging abstainers to start drinking; rationalizing/reinforcing the behaviour of heavy drinkers).
- Use care when targeting those under the legal drinking age. The LRDGs provide a picture of healthy, low-risk drinking for adults. Young people may be more vulnerable to alcohol's effects and consequences due to smaller body size, lower tolerance or inexperience with drinking.
- When developing an identity for a local campaign, consider whether the LRDG logo and slogan could be integrated into your overall message. The more consistent the messages and visual cues, the more likely we are to have an impact province-wide. Permission to use the LRDG logo or to include all or part of the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines in your printed or electronic promotion materials must be obtained from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). The rationale for this is to ensure that all materials, websites, etc that discuss these Guidelines do, in fact, contain information that accurately reflects the science upon which they are based. Groups interested in developing new resources in support of the LRDGs, or submitting existing resources for review, can contact the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (see below) for details.
- Sequence activities so they build on and reinforce one another. For example, you may begin by letting people know that low-risk drinking guidelines exist and where they can find more information. In Phase 2, you could focus on helping professional intermediaries to use the guidelines. Alternatively

### Useful Resources

- Statistical Profiles of Canadian Communities, Statistics Canada, [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)
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- Guide to On-line Sources of Alcohol-Related Statistics, Alcohol Policy Network, [www.apolnet.org](http://www.apolnet.org).
- Social Marketing Tutorial and Resources, Health Canada
- [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/activit/marketoc/tools-outils/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/activit/marketoc/tools-outils/index_e.html)
- Health Communications Resources, The Health Communication Unit, <http://www.utoronto.ca/chp/THCU.html>
- Ontario Health Promotion E-Bulletin Archives, <http://www.ohpe.ca/>
- Social Marketing Links, Weinreich Communications, [www.social-marketing.com/SMLinks.html](http://www.social-marketing.com/SMLinks.html)
- Literacy and Plain Language Resources, Canadian Public Health Association, <http://www.nlhp.cpha.ca/>
- CSAP Technical Assistance Bulletins, US National Clearinghouse on Substance Abuse, [www.health.org/](http://www.health.org/)
- Health Promotion Journal of Australia, [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/hpja/](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/hpja/)
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you might want to focus on a particular low-risk drinking message. For example, the daily/weekly limits for men and women and the definition of a standard drink.

- Collect data; evaluate effort and results. Set aside a portion of your budget for these functions. Contact The Health Communication Unit at the Centre for Health Promotion, 416-978-0522, for assistance in planning and evaluating your local campaign.

### Maximize Resources

## #8

- Identify opportunities for cross-promotion of low-risk drinking messages or materials. Work collaboratively within and outside your organization to promote the Guidelines. This gets buy-in from a cross-section of people, spreads out the work and makes everyone an advocate for your cause.
- Ask key organizations in your community to support the campaign by publicly endorsing the Guidelines and helping to promote them among their staff, volunteers and/or members.
- Forge regional partnerships whenever possible. These can be structured in various ways. Some will involve joint planning, collaborative development of campaign materials or negotiations with local media to help produce or broadcast educational messages. In other cases, it may simply mean that one group takes responsibility for one aspect of the campaign (e.g. media), while another addresses a gap in programming for a specific target groups (e.g. bar patrons in rural area).
- Look for opportunities for broader collaboration. Sometimes money can be pooled provincially to develop more or higher quality resources. Other times, it may be useful to know who's doing what across the province and whether your idea is already been implemented elsewhere.

### Learn from others

## #9

- Review background documents and resources produced by other groups or campaigns.
- If using materials developed in other jurisdictions, ensure they are adapted for consistency with the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines.

#### Useful Resources

- Media Campaign on Alcohol as a Risk Factor for Stroke and Cancer, FOCUS Resource Centre, 2006 <http://frcentre.net/ASC.htm>
- [Drinking. Where are Your Choices Taking You?](http://www.alcohol.gov.au/) , Commonwealth of Australia - <http://www.alcohol.gov.au/>
- The Interactive Campaign Planner, The Health Communication Unit, Centre for Health Promotion, <http://www.thcu.ca/infoandresources/ohc/myworkbook/login/login.asp>
- How To Work With The Media To Promote the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines In Your Community, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2004) [LINK to "resources"]

### Share your stories

## #10

- Post your stories or questions on the APOLNET Listserv, an email service that broadcasts your message.
- Add your campaign dates and events to the APOLNET Upcoming Events <http://www.apolnet.ca/databases/events/EventsHome.php>.
- Register in the APOLNET AOD Key Contacts Database as a media or program contact for your local LRDG campaign.
- Add your campaign resources, planning and evaluation reports and other resources to the, Online Database Listings <http://www.apolnet.ca/resources/dbaselistings.html>

#### Useful Resources

- For more info and links visit APOLNET, [www.apolnet.org](http://www.apolnet.org)

## **For further information**

Connect with the partners that have been involved in developing the guidelines:

**Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)**

<http://www.alphaweb.org/>

**Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)**

<http://www.camh.net>

**Alcohol Policy Network at Ontario Public Health Association (APN)**

<http://www.apolnet.ca/>

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