

# #RethinkTheDrink Talkback Tour: A Facilitated Discussion with Students on Binge Drinking

## Background

In 2016, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) collaborated with a social media company to organize events across Canada to discuss binge drinking with students. #RethinkTheDrink was inspired by *Girls' Night Out*, a documentary by White Pine Pictures based on *Drink*, a book by Ann Dowsett Johnston.

The #RethinkTheDrink Talkback Tour travelled to universities and colleges from St. John's to Victoria, engaging students on the topic of binge drinking. When asked what they planned to do as a result of participating in the #RethinkTheDrink event, about a third of students said they will talk about binge drinking with their friends, and another third planned to learn more about strategies for responsible drinking. Almost one-quarter of students reported that the discussion led them to consider changing their drinking habits and drinking within [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#).

In the fall of 2017, CCSA aims to extend the success of the #RethinkTheDrink Talkback Tour by organizing a new series of #RethinkTheDrink events on universities and colleges across the country. We are contacting you in the hope that your institution might be interested in participating.

## Approach

CCSA is a not-for-profit organization that has extensive experience in conducting research with stakeholders to facilitate change and work towards reducing the harms associated with substance use. CCSA proposes to work collaboratively with a few Canadian universities and colleges to organize #RethinkTheDrink events.

The #RethinkTheDrink Talkback Tour is a series of 90-minute interactive events specifically created for post-secondary institutions. The events use customized video content and are intended to create meaningful dialogue among students about binge-drinking. They will be facilitated by Catherine Paradis, a senior research and policy analyst at CCSA and co-chair of the Postsecondary Education Partnership – Alcohol Harms (PEP-AH), and journalist and author Ann Dowsett Johnston.

## Outcome

The goals of #RethinkTheDrink are:

- To engage students in a conversation about binge drinking culture; and
- To reduce alcohol-related harms on campus.

Of students who attended a #RethinkTheDrink event in 2016, 60% said their perspectives on binge drinking had changed.



Participating universities and colleges will be given a summary report featuring highlights, feedback and recommendations from attendees. These materials can be used by participating institutions to stimulate peer conversations, challenge harmful drinking patterns and promote campus services.

## CCSA Responsibilities

CCSA will provide participating institutions with a toolkit of all the materials needed for the event:

- A PowerPoint presentation with embedded video clips;
- Documentation defining event roles (organizer, moderator, panelists, AV technician, and microphone assistant);
- A moderator guide with a sample event agenda and discussion questions and topics;
- Promotional tips to help promote the event, including a guide and marketing materials; and
- A questionnaire for participating students to provide feedback about alcohol-related issues.

CCSA will work closely with student panelists to ensure that #RethinkTheDrink events are relevant to the priorities of each institution. We will collaborate with institutional representatives to customize the event and facilitate connections to ensure that each campus culture is reflected in the discussions.

## Campus Responsibilities

Interested institutions should be prepared to coordinate the #RethinkTheDrink event logistics. In preparation for the event:

- Secure a venue and necessary equipment (projector or large monitor, sound system, computer with PowerPoint, microphones, etc.);
- Recruit student panelists and a microphone assistant; and
- Promote the event.

On the day of the event:

- Set up the venue;
- Ensure an AV technician is present and the PowerPoint presentation works; and
- Set up a table of resources (pamphlets for campus and community services, alcohol-related information, etc.); and
- Ensure the event runs smoothly.

## Timeline

CCSA proposes September and October 2017 for the #RethinkTheDrink Talkback Tour.

## Next Steps

If you are interested in participating in the #RethinkTheDrink Talkback Tour or would like to discuss further, please e-mail [mpatterson@ccsa.ca](mailto:mpatterson@ccsa.ca) by **June 15, 2017**.



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Abuse  
Centre canadien de lutte  
contre les toxicomanies

CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

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