

Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth Ontario Project 2014-2016  
Building Community Capacity to Increase Youth Resiliency through a  
Strengthening Families Model



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Part I. Building Youth Resiliency to Prevent Substance Misuse:  
Project Results and Participant Experiences

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## Acknowledgements

*Parent Action on Drugs would like to acknowledge the support of Health Canada in this project and thank the partnering agencies and their staff for their extensive collaboration and continued commitment. It is their dedication to their communities and the families they serve that has driven the success of this project.*

Funding for this project was provided by the Government of Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.

# Report on Building Youth Resiliency to Prevent Substance Misuse: Project Results and Participant Experiences

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## INTRODUCTION

This report on nine cycles of the Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth (SFPY) 9-week program is part of an overall report on the project ***Building Community Capacity to Increase Youth Resiliency through a Strengthening Families Model***. Funded by Health Canada, the project was led by Parent Action on Drugs (PAD) and conducted with multiple partners in diverse urban, rural and remote regions in Ontario between 2014 and 2016.

SFPY is a 9-week skills-building curriculum for parents and other significant family care-givers and their teens, aged 12-16. It is provided by trained facilitators delivering weekly sessions involving a family meal, separate sessions for parents and youth and a joint session for both. This program was adapted from a 14-week intervention developed by Dr. Karol Kumpfer. The SFP model has been extensively evaluated and has been shown to be effective in reducing multiple risk factors associated with later alcohol and drug abuse by increasing family strengths, child social competencies and parenting skills (Kumpfer, et.al. 2016). SFP is documented as a best practice model in Cochrane Collaboration Reviews, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and CCSA Guidelines. In 2008, the US SAMHSA Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) concluded that SFP prevented more youth from using alcohol and drugs than any other prevention program (Kumpfer, et. al., 2016). To determine the effectiveness of SFPY for this specific project across diverse regions in Ontario, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted.

This two-and-half year project had four objectives. Two are related to building the capacity of multiple health promotion organizations, networks and coalitions to deliver and sustain SFPY within their communities and service regions and are reported on in Report II: *Regional Capacity Building: Support strategies, implementation experiences and progress toward sustainability*. This current report is concerned with the following two objectives related to youth resilience and building the evidence of the SFPY program as a unique program of positive family change:

1. To increase resilience among youth, ages 12-16, in at-risk populations through participation in a 9-week skills-building family-change program with established outcomes in positive family functioning, increased parental skills, and increased youth mental health and improved capacity to avoid drug use
2. To increase the evidence base of a family-change program (SFPY) showing positive outcomes in substance abuse prevention related to specific high-risk populations and rural and remote regions

The primary evaluation of the outcomes of the 9-week SFPY program on the parent/caregiver and youth participants was conducted by an outside evaluator, Alta Institute, using a Parent Retrospective Pre/post-test template with 19 standardized measures to assess the effects on parenting skills, youth social skills and family change and compare these Ontario results to the norms established by an international data base of the Strengthening Families Program 12-16.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the regional partners implementing the SFPY program within this project collected attendance data and had

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<sup>1</sup> Karol L. Kumpfer, Ph.D., Keely Cofrin-Allen, Ph.D., Jing Xie, Ph.D., and Henry Whiteside, Ph.D. Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth 12-16: Evaluation Report Nine Ontario Sites, 2014-2016. Salt Lake City Utah.

parents and youth complete questionnaires concerning their experience of being in the program, their perceptions of the effects of the program on themselves and the family and their overall satisfaction with the program.

Information about the implementation of the SFPY in 9 cycles in 8 regions in Ontario is provided as a table in Appendix 1 of this report.

## **ABOUT THE FAMILIES**

Information collected about the family demographics came from the opening questions of the Parent Retrospective Pre/Post-test Questionnaire, distributed to parents in all cycles at the last (ninth) program session. Parents were asked to complete the information about themselves, their families and select one of their children participating in the program to report on. There were 53 completed questionnaires from 9 cycles in 8 regions for this component of the report with the data tables listed in Appendix 2 of this report.

The adult participants were primarily mothers or stepmothers (68%), with about a quarter being fathers or stepfathers (26%) and 6% being a grandparent or older sibling. The female to male ratio of respondents was almost 3:1 (72% to 26%). The parents' age fell primarily between 30 to 49 years of age, with about a fifth being in the older age range (50-59 years). The parent group was well-educated, with two-thirds having attained some or completed college or university education. About half the respondents indicated they worked 30 hours or more a week, with an additional 16% working between 10-29 hours per week. A quarter reported no weekly paid employment hours.

The identified gender of the youths was essentially equally divided between male and female, with only slightly more participants identifying as female (53%) compared to 45% males. About 60% of the youth were in the younger (12-14 years) age group, and about 40% in the 15-16 age group, with the average age of 14 years. They were about evenly split between middle school (grades 6-8) and high school.

Within the family, almost three quarters (72%) had their youths living with the parents/caregivers their whole life and only a very small minority (6%) had the child living with them less than 5 years. Almost all families spoke English at home, with a very few (4%) noting Spanish as the language used most often in the home.

Finally, more than a third of the youth were reported to be taking medication for behaviour or emotional problems in the last year, with drugs being listed for ADHD, depression, anxiety and other issues. Just less than a third of the families had an open Child Protective Services case file. These two factors tend to be two indicators of potential risk for the youth and families.

## **PROGRAM ATTENDANCE AND COMPLETION**

The session attendance data – and more importantly the completion or “graduation” rate – are strong indicators of the engagement of youth and adult participants in the session curriculum and their commitment to realizing the benefits of seeing the program through to the end. Careful records of youth and adult participants were maintained by the coordinators of all 9 cycles. For the tables showing the compilation of attendance data for all cycles, see Appendix 3 of this report.

Recruiting families to the Strengthening Families Program is recognized as a challenge by all who implement the program, but is particularly difficult when the program is being newly introduced by an agency or in a region. Having a viable number of participants depends on the combination of numbers of parents and youths, but on average having 10-12 families begin the program and having 8-10 families consistently attend throughout the sessions is seen as optimal. Attrition is a consistent issue in all Strengthening Families program deliveries.

In this project, there were 59 families beginning the program across the 9 cycles, with an average therefore of 6.5 families per cohort – somewhat less than the optimum number. Nonetheless 75% of all families completed or

“graduated” the program, i.e. attending a minimum of 7 out of 9 sessions and attending at least one of the final two sessions.

In additions there were 81 adults (parents/caregivers) who started the program, with an average of 9 per cohort. Of these, 58 completed the program (7 per cycle on average) with a completion rate of 72%. With the youth, we see that there were the identical number starting and completing the program, with the same completion rate of 72%.

However, if the participant numbers *not* affected by attrition is considered – i.e. those who attended 4 or more sessions – *the completion rate by retained youth and adults is actually 87%*. This rate is very significant since it represents the very high level of commitment and engagement by those parents and youth who continued with the program and realized the benefits of seeing the program through to completion.

## **PARENT, YOUTH AND FAMILY CHANGE OUTCOMES**

At the final session of all program cycles, parents and youth were each given different questionnaires to assess the effectiveness of the program regarding different factors. The primary evaluation was conducted with an outside evaluation team from the Alta Institute to determine the effectiveness of the 9 week SFPY for a large number of risk and protective factors for substance abuse and delinquency prevention. It was also important to determine if SFPY, when implemented in diverse locations in Ontario and with diverse populations, achieves outcomes similar to the established norms for this evidence-based SFP program. The full evaluation report (Kumpfer, K.L., Cofrin-Allen, K., XIE, J., & Whiteside, H. (2016). 2014-2016 PAD Nine Ontario Sites Strengthening Families Program 12-16 Years. Evaluation Report. Alta Institute, Salt Lake City, Utah) can be accessed online.

The questionnaires were practitioner friendly and administered by the site staff. They used a retrospective pre/post-test design, and standardized measures which have been found to have high reliability and validity in prior SFP studies. A total of 16 outcomes (6 parent change outcomes, 5 youth change outcomes, and 5 family change outcomes) plus 3 cluster variables were measured. Results were analyzed by Alta Institute, and compared to the norms for the SFP 12-16 Years National Database of 589 families. Attention was given to an important statistical outcome called “effect size,” which is similar to percent change, but a more scientific way to report how much participants in an intervention have changed. A Cohen’s (d) effect size equal to 0.5 or greater is considered a large effect size, and indicates that the program participant’s change was not only significant, but that a large degree of change occurred.

The SFP model, has a much larger effect size in reducing drug use (or reduces drug use in youth by much greater amounts) than most other substance abuse prevention approaches. To put this into perspective: the average effect size of youth-only substance abuse prevention programs are a small Cohen’s  $d = 0.10$ , compared to parenting skills programs which have an average effect size of  $d = 0.31$  (more effective), compared to family skills training approaches, such as SFP, which show average effect sizes which are much larger at  $d = 0.82$  (Kumpfer, et.al., 2016). The SFP program has been evaluated extensively and is rated as an exemplary evidence-based program for substance abuse prevention. In 2003, a meta-analysis conducted for the Cochrane Collaboration Reviews in Medicine and Public Health found it was twice as effective as the next best youth substance abuse prevention program, in 2008, the US SAMHSA Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) concluded that it prevented more youth from using alcohol and drugs than any other prevention program, and in 2012, another meta-analysis conducted in 2012 for the World Health Organization concluded that SFP was the most effective substance prevention program (Kumpfer, et. al., 2016). In determining the effectiveness of this SFPY project in reducing youth substance abuse, it will be important to determine if comparable results are obtained.

For this project, a total of 52 families from nine cohorts across 8 regions of Ontario, completed the pre-test and post-test evaluation instruments. A summary of the results are presented below.

## Parent Change Outcomes

A total of five parenting change outcomes, plus parental substance use, were measured in this evaluation. Improvements in all five (100%) of the parenting risk and protective factor measures (positive parenting, parental involvement, parenting skills, parental supervision and parenting efficacy) were found to be statistically significant. In addition, participants showed a large amount of positive change for all of these outcomes, except parenting skills (which still showed a medium change), and an even larger change than the SFP 12-16 norms for positive parenting, parental involvement, and parental supervision. A complete data table including pre and post scores and mean change is provided in Appendix 4 of this report.

Table 1: Changes in Parenting Risk and Protective Factors

| Protective Factor           | Significant Level (p=) | PAD Effect size (d) vs SFP 12-16 Norms |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1. Positive Parenting       | 0.00                   | 0.62 (large) vs. 0.57                  |
| 2. Parental Involvement     | 0.00                   | 0.56 (large) vs. 0.54                  |
| 3. Parenting Skills         | 0.00                   | 0.49 (medium) vs. 0.49                 |
| 4. Parental Supervision     | 0.00                   | 0.75 (large) vs. 0.61                  |
| 5. Parenting Efficacy       | 0.00                   | 0.56 (large) vs. 0.56                  |
| <b>Parent Cluster Scale</b> | <b>0.00</b>            | <b>0.71 (large) vs. 0.66</b>           |

Source: Kumpfer, et.al. 2016

These results “show amazing increases in parent child management skills, which show support for the long-term effectiveness of this program in preventing behavioural problems and substance use in the youth” (Kumpfer, et.al, 2016).

## Parent Substance Abuse

Although a small reduction in parents’ alcohol and drug use was found between pre-test and post-test scores, and a larger change was found than for the SFP 12-16 norms, the sample size was too small for these results to be statistically significant. In the SFP 12-16 norms, with a sample size of over 500 families, this change was considered statistically significant. It should be noted that parents’ reported alcohol and drug use was reasonably low at intake. A complete data table is provided in Appendix 4 of this report.

Table 2: Changes in Parent Substance Abuse Factors [Source: Kumpfer, et.al., 2016]

| Protective Factor       | Significant Level (p=) | PAD Effect size (d) vs SFP 12-16 Norms |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1. Alcohol and drug use | 0.17                   | 0.04 (small) vs. 0.03                  |

## Youth Change Outcomes

All five (100%) of the youth outcomes (reductions in covert aggression, overt aggression, and depression, and increased social skills and concentration) were statistically significant positive results. In addition, participants showed a greater amount of positive change than the SFP 12-16 norms for all of these measured outcomes, meaning that the program was having a greater impact on this project’s youth. A complete data table including pre and post scores and mean change is provided in Appendix 4 of this report.

Table 3: Changes in Youth’s Behavioural and Emotional Risk and Protective Factors

| Protective Factor         | Significant Level (p=) | PAD Effect size (d) vs SFP 12-16 Norms |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1. Overt Aggression       | 0.00                   | 0.43 (medium) vs. 0.35                 |
| 2. Covert Aggression      | 0.00                   | 0.25 (medium) vs. 0.20                 |
| 3. Concentration Problems | 0.00                   | 0.59 (large) vs. 0.52                  |

|                            |             |                              |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| 4. Social Skills           | 0.00        | 0.42 (medium) vs. 0.36       |
| 5. Depression              | 0.00        | 0.33 (medium) vs. 0.25       |
| <b>Youth Cluster Scale</b> | <b>0.00</b> | <b>0.55 (large) vs. 0.47</b> |

Source: Kumpfer, et.al. 2016

These results “are very positive because not only have the youth experienced a reasonably large behaviour change at the immediate post-test, but they are also expected to continue to show improvements as the family system dynamics change” (Kumpfer, et.al. 2016)..

The large effect size for improved concentration is important because the inability to concentrate can cause children to have school academic problems which is a major risk factor for later drug use. As well, “to see improvements in the covert conduct problems of the children [youth] now is very wonderful because this is the most important risk factor to improve that is linked to later delinquency and substance abuse.” (Kumpfer, et.al. 2016).

### Family Change Outcomes

All five (100%) of the family outcomes (family communication, family conflict, family resilience, family organization, and family cohesion) improved significantly. In addition, participants showed a very large ( $d > 0.6$ ) amount of positive change for family communication, family resilience, and family organization, and a larger change than the SFP 12-16 norms for all family outcomes except family cohesion. A complete data table including pre and post scores and mean change is provided in Appendix 4.

**Table 4: Changes in Family Risk and Protective Factors**

| Protective Factor          | Significant Level (p=) | PAD Effect size (d) vs SFP 12-16 Norms |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1. Family Communication    | 0.00                   | 0.80 (large) vs. 0.66                  |
| 2. Family Conflict         | 0.00                   | 0.25 (medium) vs. 0.23                 |
| 3. Family Resilience       | 0.00                   | 0.78 (large) vs. 0.66                  |
| 4. Family Organization     | 0.00                   | 0.72 (large) vs. 0.66                  |
| 5. Family Cohesion         | 0.00                   | 0.44 (medium) vs. 0.48                 |
| <b>Youth Cluster Scale</b> | <b>0.00</b>            | <b>0.79 (large) vs. 0.71</b>           |

Source: Kumpfer, et.al. 2016

These results show a very dramatic positive impact on the overall family environment, even beyond that found for the SFP 12-16 norms. These positive family changes will have a continued positive impact on the youth, and further build their resiliency and improved capacity to avoid drug use and other risk taking behaviours.

### Conclusions about Parent, Youth and Family Change Outcomes

Overall, there were statistically significant positive results for 100% of the parenting outcomes, 100% of the youth outcomes, and 100% of the family outcomes. Out of 19 measures, parental alcohol and drug use was the only non-statistically significant result, although drug use did decrease, but the sample size was too small to draw conclusions. A table showing all of the PAD Ontario project SFPY outcomes compared to the SFP 12-16 years norms, with Standard Deviations (SD), Mean Changes, and Effect Sizes is included as Appendix 4 of this report.

A major purpose of this evaluation was to determine if SFPY, when implemented in diverse locations in Ontario and with diverse populations, would be effective and achieve outcomes similar to the established norms for this evidence-based program. Given that the amount of pre- to post-test change was larger than the SFP 12-16 norms for 16 of the 19 outcomes (or 84%), it is clear that SFPY is effective across diverse locations and with diverse populations in Ontario. All positive changes measured were considered to be medium to large in size, with large positive changes ( $d > 0.5$ ) seen for 11 of the 19 outcomes. As summed up in the full evaluation report, “the results are outstanding and better than the SFP 12-16 Year norms.” (Kumpfer, et.al. 2016)

Not only did the results show immediate post-test improvements in all youth outcomes above the SFP 12-16 norms, which are the most important factors in reducing later substance abuse, but the large improvements in the parents and family environment will continue to act as a protective factor for the youth.

One reason that the results were greater than for the SFP 12-16 norms is that the families reported being higher-risk at intake, meaning that they had more room for improvement. Seeing such positive results for higher-risk families suggests that the “staff implementing in the agencies involved in this project are more capable in implementing SFP effectively with high risk families than were the agencies in [other international trials]” (Kumpfer, et.al., 2016). These results speak to the excellent job done by the program facilitators and site coordinators, as well as the robustness of the PAD SFPY 9-session version.

In conclusion, these findings show the effectiveness of this program at promoting positive family change and building youth’s resiliency and ultimately their capacity to avoid risk taking behaviours such as drug use. These findings also expand the applicability of this program across the province, including diverse locations (such as rural and remote regions) and diverse population groups (including those identifying as high-risk).

## YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM EXPERIENCE AND FAMILY CHANGE

While the strong results attest to the effectiveness of the program, it is also important to consider how the program was perceived by participants. The program experience and perceived benefits will affect the sustainability of the project – especially in recruiting new participants.

At the final session of all program cycles, youth were given a questionnaire with 30 statements about their program activities, experience and perceptions of changes in themselves and their parent(s) as a result of participating in the program. There were 59 respondents from 9 cycles in 8 regions completing this questionnaire. Ratings were on a scale of 1-5, where 5 indicated most strongly agree. The rating score for each question was averaged for each cycle and then an overall average (weighted by the number of respondents in each cycle) was calculated. The lowest and highest scores as well as the range between these are also noted. Following the rating questions, the youth were asked to write in their answers to three open-ended questions. The questionnaire and the response data is provided in table form in Appendix 5 of this report.

### Ratings

The overall rating for all 30 items across all cycles was 3.75 rating out of 5. The questionnaire had three sections relating to different aspects of the experience of being part of and completing the program, with the following averages:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Since I have been in the program there is an improvement in my relationship with my parents/ family [12 questions]  | 3.5         |
| Rate the sessions (skills/activities) according to how much you learned or how helpful you found them [9 questions] | 3.8         |
| Tell us what you thought of the program [9 questions]   | 4.0         |
| <b>Average rating across sections</b>   | <b>3.75</b> |

The highest ratings were given to items measuring satisfaction with the 9-week SFPY program.

Youth gave the very highest rating (over 4 on a scale of 1-5) to the following:

- **I am glad I completed the program (4.45)**
- **I appreciate the effort my parent(s) made coming here (4.22)**
- Overall, I like the SFPY program (4.18)



- I learned things that are helpful (4.13)
- I felt the topics discussed were important (4.13)
- I would recommend this program to other teens (4.12)
- I felt respected by the adults in the program (4.09)

Youth were more uncertain about the changes they were seeing in how their parents interacted with them and perceptions of positive family change, although results in this area primarily rested within the mid-range:

- My parent(s) make more effort to support me (3.58)
- I feel my place in the family is recognized (3.37)
- My parent(s) make(s) their expectations of me clearer (3.50)
- My parent(s) and I get along better (3.58)

Somewhat surprisingly, since “praise” is a skill that is emphasized in the program, the two indicators of being praised rated lower than other measures and the average rating of 3.75:

- My parents praise me more (3.22)
- My parents are less critical of me (3.10)

For most items there was a great disparity according to the average ratings given across the cycles. One third of the items had a range of more than 1.50 difference in the ratings and only 5 of the 30 items had less than a 1.00 point spread, showing that youth in the different cycles responded quite differently.

The interesting exception to the typical spread is in the two highest rated items:

- **I am glad I completed the program (Range = .70)**
- **I appreciate the effort my parent(s) made coming here (Range = .1)**

#### Youths’ Comments

The comments from the youth reflected a greater overall satisfaction with the program than the ratings did. The comments were positive concerning the relationships within the group, relationship with their parents, being listened to and in general finding the process enjoyable and helpful. As with the parents, they praised the food and prizes that are an integral component of the Strengthening Families Program model. A number of youth did comment that they felt they didn’t need the program, they already knew the material and it was boring for them. Nonetheless, there were comments showing appreciation for the experience and recommendation of the program to other teens.

#### General Observations

The youth were very receptive to being part of the 9-week SFPY program, although there were substantial differences in how they felt about any given item. They were somewhat less confident about the changes they saw in their interactions with their parents, although these responses were still in the mid-range of ranking. What is most remarkable is that they are very much in agreement that being part of the program was a worthwhile experience and even more so, that they appreciated the efforts their parents made in committing to this program of positive family change. These ratings and their comments indicate that in the end the youth were very much positively affected by their family’s participation in this program.

### **PARENT/CAREGIVER PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM EXPERIENCE AND FAMILY CHANGE**

At the end of 7 of the 9 program cycles, parents were given a questionnaire with 48 statements about the skills gained, their experience and perceptions of changes in themselves and their youth. Ratings were on a scale of 1-5, where 5 indicated most strongly agree. The score for each question was averaged for each cycle and then a weighted average

(i.e. depending on the number of respondents in each cycle) was calculated. The lowest and highest scores and the range between these were also calculated. In all 9 program cycles, parents were also asked to write in their answers to four open-ended questions, including one specifically about their comfort level discussing drugs with their teen as a result of participating in the program. This data is provided in table form in Appendix 5 of this report. Ratings

Because the full Parent Questionnaire was not given out in two of the 9 cycles, the ratings were averaged from **38 responses from 7 cycles in 6 regions**. The questions were grouped into three parts: the application of the specific skills taught in the SFPY parent sessions and the effects on their youths, the group process and experience and the overall effect on family relationships with their teens, with the following overall averages:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Application of skills learned and effects on youth [25 questions] | 3.5 |
| Participation in group/process [15 questions]                     | 4.5 |
| Improvement in family relations/ with youth [ 8 questions]        | 4.1 |

Overall, the parent ratings on the 48 items on the questionnaire were higher than the youth. More than half of the items averaged a 4 out of 5 rating on the 5 point scale. In particular parents felt they learned a great deal from the program, that the group was a good fit for them and that the program components (handouts, and in particular the group leaders) contributed greatly to that experience. There were 10 items that rated on average over 4.50 out of 5 on the scale in this regard.

- **I felt the topics discussed were important (4.79)**
- **The group leaders followed an organized session plan each week (4.79)**
- **I would recommend the program to other parents (4.76)**
- **The group leaders encouraged all family members to participate in the family group’s discussion and activities (4.76)**
- Overall, I liked the SFPY program (4.74)
- I felt comfortable speaking and participating in the group (4.71)
- I felt I belonged in this group (4.63)
- The group leaders helped me to understand the program (4.60)
- I enjoyed being with other families with similar issues( 4.60)
- The handouts helped me understand the program content better (4.59)

With the exception of one item (belonging in the group) there was less variance in these items with the range in the average responses from the seven cycles represented being less than 1.00.

Parents also rated improvement in their parenting skills highly as well (4 out of 5 and above), such as using positive approaches, communication skills, understanding skills, being respectful and solving problems. Rated less highly were the specific skills identified as part of the program, such as positive attention, “I feel...” statements, fair consequences and limits, which ranked in the mid-range of 3.50 and showed larger discrepancies in the averages ranking between the cycles. In particular, family meetings were shown as something with a very large range and ranked less than 3.00 on the 5-point scale overall.

An interesting observation is that the parents showed less confidence in the changes that their youth had made. Seven items concerning their teen’s behaviours (doing more chores, communicating respectfully, talking about feelings, dealing with anger, solving problems, communicating with others and following directions) all rated in the mid-range of around 3.5 on the 5 point scale.

## Parents' Comments

The comments from the parents reflect their ratings; they were very positive about being with other parents in similar situations and appreciative of the group leadership. They found the content helpful and felt the strategies they learned for improving the relationship with their teen to be helpful. A prevailing comment was that additional weeks and a slower pace would be helpful in improving the program. Nonetheless, another prevalent theme was a strong appreciation for the program and the changes it brought about in their own behaviour as well as some changes in their teens.

## General Observations

Like the youth, the parents were overwhelmingly pleased to have been part of the 9-week SFPY program. They showed strong appreciation of the program itself, the topics, being part of the group and the group leaders. They were positive about what they gained in terms of their own parenting skills, with more hesitation about the effects on their teen's behaviour.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO SUPPORT AVOIDANCE OF SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

In line with the specified Health Canada outcome *to improve capacity (knowledge and skills) to avoid substance use* an important component of this project was the improved capacity among parents and youth to support avoidance of illicit drug use and associated lifestyle choices. Research on the Strengthening Families Program model has shown decreases in parent and family use of alcohol and other drugs and increased youth resiliency measures consistent with the avoidance of substance use problems. Furthermore, the SFPY curriculum includes a full session with parent, youth and family components addressing knowledge, attitudes and skills about alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs and encouraging open, non-judgmental intergenerational discussion and family consideration of the impacts of substance use. To evaluate the impact of this session, we used measures of increased parent comfort in discussing drugs with their youth as an indication of parents' willingness to and comfort in having a discussion with their youth on this topic as support for their improved capacity to support youths' avoidance of illicit drug use.

Within the **38 respondents** to the three questions concerned with substance use,

- The large majority of parents (87%) said they let their teen know their expectations and standards about the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs since attending the program (29% of parents said they agreed and 58% of parents said they strongly agreed)
- The large majority of parents (85%) said they discuss alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and keeping safe with their teen since attending the program (31% of parents said they agreed and 54% said they strongly agreed)
- However, only two thirds (67%) of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their teen *talks to them* about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Parents were asked to give comments about their comfort level in discussing drugs with their teen [*How has your comfort level discussing drugs with your teen changed as a result of participating in this program?*] There were **46 responses** to this question; responses were grouped according to prevalent themes of the answers.

- **More comfortable, knowledgeable, open, skilled, better equipped after program**  
**N= 22 / 48% of respondents**

*My level of comfort has increased 100%*

*I feel more confident and comfortable. Feel better prepared.*

*We were able to have an open discussion about the topic and put a plan into place for what to do in certain situations.*

- **Comfortable before, but the program added new knowledge, skills, understanding**  
**N=7/ 15% of respondents**  
*We had always had open discussions about drugs/alcohol, but now there's more understanding of each other's perspective.*  
*We have always been fairly open but my teen has learned that it is ok to be open and talk about drugs with his parents.*
- **"Fine"/Already comfortable before the program/ the same/ "not an issue"**  
**N=17 / 37 % of respondents**  
*No change as these conversations were being held before.*  
*Good, feel open about the discussion.*

The comments from the parents in the open-ended section of the questionnaire reflect the responses from the survey that the program either reinforced parents' ability to discuss the topic of drugs with their teen or, to a greater degree, provided them with greater knowledge, skills and comfort in discussing this topic with them. Given these results, the program did accomplish the objective of increasing the comfort level of addressing the topic of drugs between parent and youth.

## **CONCLUSIONS: OUTCOMES FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH**

To present a strong and balanced picture of the effectiveness of program participation on the parents and youth, two distinct evaluation formats were used.

A comprehensive evaluation was conducted to determine if this program was effective at building youth resiliency for preventing substance misuse by improving family functioning, youth social competencies and parenting skills. Parents were given a comprehensive questionnaire to complete at the end of the program that asked them to compare their parenting and their youths' behaviours prior to participation in the 9 sessions and at the end of the program cycle. The outcomes of this evaluation, which used standardized measures and analytic tools, was reported by Dr. Kumpfer et al. Given that this program has been adapted from the SFP model developed by Karol Kumpfer – which has been documented as a best practice model for preventing alcohol and drug use among youth, it is important to compare the results of this Ontario project with the SFP norms.

The results were extremely positive – with improvements in 100% of the parenting outcomes, 100% of the youth outcomes, and 100% of the family outcomes. The results of this Ontario project actually achieved larger effect sizes (produced a larger positive change in program participants) than the SFP 12-16 norms for 84% of the outcomes. In regards to the youth outcomes specifically - immediate post-test improvements in all youth outcomes were above the SFP 12-16 norms, which are the most important factors in reducing later substance abuse. In addition to this, the large improvements in the parents and family environment will continue to act as a protective factor for building youth resiliency.

Also important was to get the responses from the parents and youth about their perceptions of family change, the program content and process, and their overall satisfaction with the program. This feedback is important to the program implementers as it gives them a sense of how participants are engaged and how they can operate to sustain the program in their community.

Overall, both parents and youth showed strong positive responses to being involved in the 9-week Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth program. They felt the topics were important, that they gained from being involved in the program and that they would definitely recommend the program to their peers. The 87% completion rate by parents

and youth who attended more than 4 sessions of the 9-week program attests to this engagement. The difference is that the parents felt they gained significant skills in making positive changes in their families, but the teens were more circumspect about the results of behaviour change within their parents and the ensuing relationship with themselves. In comparison to these subjective responses from the parents and teens, the standardized measures and analysis provided by the Parent Retrospective Pre-Post-test show even more significant effects of the program on the participants and family functioning. The two different tools to examine the program impact on participants provide complementary information and overall a very positive outcome of the participants' experience with the SFPY program.

While parental alcohol and drug use was the only non-statistically significant result due to a small sample size, drug use did decrease nonetheless. Parents' responses to the questionnaire about their program experiences revealed that this project did increase their comfort in addressing the topic of drugs with their youth, and provided them with additional knowledge and skills to do so.

In conclusion, this program is suitable and effective across diverse regions of Ontario (such as rural and remote regions) and diverse population groups (including those identifying as high risk). The outcome results show positive changes towards building youth resiliency to prevent substance misuse, and the results about their program experience show that it was a worthwhile program.

## Site Information Survey [9 Cycles/8 Regions]

### PAD Ontario Site Information for 9 SFPY Cohorts 2014 – 2016

| Cohort | Agency Type   | Program Delivery Site                   | Region / Population                                      | Day of Week | Participant Eligibility/ Referral                              | Participant Ethnicities           |
|--------|---|---|--|-------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1      | Volunteer mentor program  | Community space affiliated with program | South Ontario rural<br>Pop: 6,000                        | Thursday    | Open in community + families in program                        | White                             |
| 2      | Youth justice and counselling   | Agency office and community space       | Central Ontario city<br>Pop: 160,000                     | Thursday    | Open recruitment in community with contact with other agencies | White; Latin America              |
| 3      | Drug Strategy/ Coalition of Agencies  | Community space                         | Central Ontario city [moved from county]<br>Pop: 120,000 | Tuesday     | Open recruitment in community with contact with other agencies | White                             |
| 4      | Regional Mental Health agency   | Sports complex                          | Small town in central west Ontario<br>Pop: 20,000        | Thursday    | Open recruitment + health centres                              | White                             |
| 5      | Family Resource Centre + agency addressing homelessness                         | Resource Centre                         | Small towns and surrounding region<br>Pop: 20,000        | Wednesday   | Through partner agencies and open outreach                     | White                             |
| 6      | Early years centre with First Nation on/off reserve                             | Community Centre                        | First Nation<br>Pop: 5,000 by city in Western Ontario    | Monday      | General outreach + outreach to identified families             | First Nation                      |
| 7      | Youth justice and counselling [2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle]                           | Office and community space              | Central Ontario city<br>Pop: 160,000                     | Thursday    | Open recruitment in community with contact with other agencies | White, Caribbean, Aboriginal      |
| 8      | Coalition of Public Health, Addiction Service and Regional Mental Health agency | School                                  | Town in eastern Ontario county<br>Pop: 16,500            | Tuesday     | Outreach through partner agencies + youth centre               | White                             |
| 9      | Regional Mental Health/ Multi-service agency                                    | School                                  | Town; hub for northern health Services<br>Pop: 5,000     | Wednesday   | Outreach through multiple service partners                     | Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis) |

## Participant Information Data [9 Cycles/8 Regions]

### INFORMATION FROM PARENT/CAREGIVER PRE-POST RETROSPECTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

53 questionnaires were completed; respondents were asked to complete information on one child only

| 1. Respondent's Gender |     | 2. Respondent's Age |     |
|------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|
| Female                 | 72% | 20-29 or younger    | 2%  |
| Male                   | 26% | 30-39 years old     | 41% |
| Did not answer         | 2%  | 40-49 years old     | 36% |
|                        |     | 50-59 years old     | 19% |
|                        |     | Did not answer      | 2%  |

| 3. Identified* Child's Gender |     | 4. Identified* Child's Age |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|
| Female                        | 53% | 12 years old               | 29% |
| Male                          | 45% | 13 years old               | 19% |
| Did not answer                | 2%  | 14 years old               | 13% |
|                               |     | 15 years old               | 26% |
|                               |     | 16 or older                | 13% |

| 5. Identified* child's grade |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Grade 6 or 7                 | 28% |
| Grade 8                      | 19% |
| Grade 9                      | 15% |
| Grade 10                     | 23% |
| Grade 11                     | 15% |

| 6. Language used most often at home |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| English                             | 96% |
| French                              | 0%  |
| Spanish                             | 4%  |

| 7. How many children under 18 live in your home? |     |
|--|-----|
| 1  | 34% |
| 2  | 26% |
| 8. Where are you living now?                     |     |
| Rent home or apartment                           | 43% |
| Own home or condo                                | 53% |
| Group home/other                                 | 4%  |

| 8. How long has the child lived with you? |     |
|---|-----|
| Their whole life (12-17 years)            | 72% |
| Almost their whole life (10-12 years)     | 10% |
| About half their life (6-9 years)         | 12% |
| Less than 5 years                         | 6%  |
| Never                                     | 0%  |

| 10. Relationship to the child in the program |     | 11. Parenting status [check all that apply] |     |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| Mother/stepmother                            | 68% | 2 parents at home                           | 59% |
| Father/stepfather                            | 26% | Single parent                               | 36% |
| Grandparent                                  | 4%  | Joint or shared custody                     | 9%  |
| Older sibling                                | 2%  | Children with relatives/foster care         | 4%  |
|  |     | Other                                       | 2%  |

| 12. Highest level of education |     | 13. Weekly paid employment hours |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| Grade 10 or less               | 4%  | None                             | 26% |
| Grade 11-12                    | 17% | 10 to 19 hours                   | 8%  |
| Some college or university     | 21% | 20 to 29 hours                   | 8%  |
| Graduate college/university    | 56% | 30 to 39 hours                   | 21% |
| Skipped question               | 2%  | 40 to 49 hours                   | 21% |
|                                |     | 50 hours or more                 | 9%  |
|                                |     | Skipped question                 | 7%  |

| 14. Has the child taken medication for behaviour or emotional problems in the last year? |     | 15. Have you had in the past 6 months/ do you have an open CAS case? |     |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| No   | 62% | No   | 70% |
| Yes  | 38% | Yes  | 30% |



## Participant Attendance Summary [9 Cycles/8 Regions]

| <b>FAMILIES</b>                            | <b>Total Number</b> | <b>Average/ Cohort</b> | <b>Overall Percentage [9 cohorts]</b> |
|--|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Started Program                            | 59                  | 6.5                    |                                       |
| Attended < 4 sessions                      | 9                   |                        | 15 %                                  |
| Attended 4-6 sessions but did not complete | 6                   |                        | 10 %                                  |
| <b>Completed/Graduated Program</b>         | <b>45</b>           |                        | <b>75 %</b>                           |

| <b>ADULTS</b>  | <b>Total Number</b> | <b>Average/ Cohort</b> | <b>Overall Percentage [9 cohorts]</b> |
|--|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Started Program  | 81                  | 9                      |                                       |
| Females  | 56                  | 7                      | 70 %                                  |
| Males  | 25                  | 3                      | 30 %                                  |
| Retained: attended 4 + sessions                              | 66                  | 8                      | 81 %                                  |
|  |                     |                        |                                       |
| Completed/Graduated Program                                  | 58                  | 7                      | 72 %                                  |
| <b>Number of sessions attended by <i>retained</i> adults</b> |                     | <b>7</b>               |                                       |
| <b>Completion rate by <i>retained</i> adults</b>             |                     |                        | <b>87%</b>                            |

| <b>YOUTH</b>  | <b>Total Number</b> | <b>Average/ Cohort</b> | <b>Overall Percentage [9 cohorts]</b> |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Started Program   | 81                  | 9                      |                                       |
| Females   | 43                  | 5                      | 53 %                                  |
| Males   | 38                  | 4                      | 47 %                                  |
| Age 12-14 years   | 51                  | 6                      | 63 %                                  |
| Age 15-16 years   | 30                  | 3                      | 37 %                                  |
| Retained: attended 4 + sessions                             | 66                  | 8                      | 81 %                                  |
| Completed/Graduated Program                                 | 58                  | 7                      | 72 %                                  |
| <b>Number of sessions attended by <i>retained</i> youth</b> |                     | <b>8</b>               |                                       |
| <b>Completion rate by <i>retained</i> youth</b>             |                     |                        | <b>87 %</b>                           |

## All PAD Ontario SFPY Outcomes Compared to SFP 12-16 Years Norms

| Scale Name                  | Sample | Pre-Test | SD   | Post-Test | SD   | Mean Change | F       | p. sig | Effect Size d | ES d' |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|------|-----------|------|-------------|---------|--------|---------------|-------|
| <b>PARENT MEASURES</b>      |        |          |      |           |      |             |         |        |               |       |
| <b>Parental Involvement</b> |        |          |      |           |      |             | 0.07    | 0.79   | 0.00          | 0.02  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 584    | 3.36     | 0.89 | 4.20      | 0.67 | 0.83        | 694.06  | 0.00   | 0.54          | 2.18  |
| Ontario PAD sites           | 52     | 3.07     | 0.91 | 3.88      | 0.73 | 0.80        | 64.41   | 0.00   | 0.56          | 2.25  |
| <b>Parental Supervision</b> |        |          |      |           |      |             | 1.69    | 0.19   | 0.00          | 0.10  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 584    | 3.16     | 0.73 | 4.06      | 0.56 | 0.90        | 913.21  | 0.00   | 0.61          | 2.50  |
| Ontario PAD sites           |        | 2.89     | 0.65 | 3.92      | 0.60 | 1.03        | 150.92  | 0.00   | 0.75          | 3.44  |
| <b>Parenting Efficacy</b>   |        |          |      |           |      |             | 4.24    | 0.04   | 0.01          | 0.16  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 588    | 3.28     | 0.79 | 4.12      | 0.61 | 0.84        | 749.15  | 0.00   | 0.56          | 2.26  |
| Ontario PAD sites           | 51     | 3.04     | 0.62 | 3.66      | 0.65 | 0.62        | 64.10   | 0.00   | 0.56          | 2.26  |
| <b>Positive Parenting</b>   |        |          |      |           |      |             | 1.06    | 0.30   | 0.00          | 0.08  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 589    | 3.62     | 0.87 | 4.46      | 0.58 | 0.84        | 780.44  | 0.00   | 0.57          | 2.30  |
| Ontario PAD sites           | 51     | 3.53     | 0.75 | 4.26      | 0.57 | 0.73        | 80.89   | 0.00   | 0.62          | 2.54  |
| <b>SFP Parenting Skills</b> |        |          |      |           |      |             | 1.44    | 0.23   | 0.00          | 0.10  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 585    | 3.36     | 0.70 | 3.88      | 0.61 | 0.52        | 550.02  | 0.00   | 0.49          | 1.94  |
| Ontario PAD sites           | 48     | 3.40     | 0.73 | 3.83      | 0.63 | 0.42        | 44.83   | 0.00   | 0.49          | 1.95  |
| <b>Parent Cluster Scale</b> |        |          |      |           |      |             | 0.46    | 0.50   | 0.00          | 0.05  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 575    | 3.34     | 0.62 | 4.11      | 0.46 | 0.77        | 1092.32 | 0.00   | 0.66          | 2.76  |
| Ontario PAD sites           | 50     | 3.19     | 0.52 | 3.91      | 0.46 | 0.72        | 122.92  | 0.00   | 0.71          | 3.17  |
| <b>FAMILY MEASURES</b>      |        |          |      |           |      |             |         |        |               |       |
| <b>Family Cohesion</b>      |        |          |      |           |      |             | 0.83    | 0.36   | 0.00          | 0.07  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 588    | 3.58     | 0.97 | 4.34      | 0.67 | 0.76        | 534.56  | 0.00   | 0.48          | 1.91  |
| Ontario PAD sites           | 51     | 3.27     | 0.76 | 3.93      | 0.81 | 0.66        | 38.95   | 0.00   | 0.44          | 1.77  |
| <b>Family Communication</b> |        |          |      |           |      |             | 0.00    | 0.96   | 0.00          | 0.00  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 584    | 3.17     | 0.78 | 4.17      | 0.57 | 1.00        | 1143.67 | 0.00   | 0.66          | 2.80  |
| Ontario PAD sites           | 50     | 2.92     | 0.61 | 3.92      | 0.56 | 1.00        | 190.89  | 0.00   | 0.80          | 3.95  |
| <b>Family Conflict</b>      |        |          |      |           |      |             | 0.05    | 0.82   | 0.00          | 0.02  |
| SFP Norms 12-16             | 585    | 2.36     | 1.01 | 1.97      | 0.83 | (0.39)      | 171.79  | 0.00   | 0.23          | 1.08  |
| Ontario PAD sites           | 52     | 2.77     | 0.93 | 2.36      | 0.82 | (0.41)      | 16.57   | 0.00   | 0.25          | 1.14  |

|                                    |     |      |      |      |      |        |         |      |      |      |
|------------------------------------|-----|------|------|------|------|--------|---------|------|------|------|
| <b>Family Organization</b>         |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.35    | 0.55 | 0.00 | 0.05 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 586 | 2.77 | 0.86 | 3.92 | 0.72 | 1.15   | 1121.04 | 0.00 | 0.66 | 2.77 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 51  | 2.55 | 0.63 | 3.63 | 0.68 | 1.08   | 131.45  | 0.00 | 0.72 | 3.24 |
| <b>Family Strengths/Resilience</b> |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.20    | 0.66 | 0.00 | 0.04 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 586 | 3.27 | 0.81 | 4.20 | 0.61 | 0.94   | 1111.26 | 0.00 | 0.66 | 2.76 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 49  | 2.98 | 0.57 | 3.87 | 0.55 | 0.89   | 165.38  | 0.00 | 0.78 | 3.71 |
| <b>Family Cluster Scale</b>        |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.15    | 0.70 | 0.00 | 0.03 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 578 | 3.25 | 0.66 | 4.14 | 0.51 | 0.89   | 1425.92 | 0.00 | 0.71 | 3.14 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 47  | 2.98 | 0.48 | 3.84 | 0.45 | 0.86   | 177.63  | 0.00 | 0.79 | 3.93 |
| <b>YOUTH MEASURES</b>              |     |      |      |      |      |        |         |      |      |      |
| <b>Concentration</b>               |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.23    | 0.63 | 0.00 | 0.04 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 560 | 3.16 | 0.75 | 3.67 | 0.70 | 0.51   | 604.54  | 0.00 | 0.52 | 2.08 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 45  | 2.93 | 0.83 | 3.41 | 0.71 | 0.48   | 63.02   | 0.00 | 0.59 | 2.39 |
| <b>Covert Aggression</b>           |     |      |      |      |      |        | 1.17    | 0.28 | 0.00 | 0.09 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 565 | 2.01 | 0.63 | 1.76 | 0.58 | (0.26) | 140.68  | 0.00 | 0.20 | 1.00 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 49  | 2.26 | 0.84 | 1.92 | 0.64 | (0.34) | 16.06   | 0.00 | 0.25 | 1.16 |
| <b>Depression</b>                  |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.16    | 0.69 | 0.00 | 0.03 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 575 | 2.24 | 0.73 | 1.91 | 0.65 | (0.33) | 193.83  | 0.00 | 0.25 | 1.16 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 50  | 2.60 | 0.75 | 2.24 | 0.64 | (0.36) | 24.16   | 0.00 | 0.33 | 1.40 |
| <b>Overt Aggression</b>            |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.20    | 0.66 | 0.00 | 0.04 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 571 | 2.05 | 0.69 | 1.68 | 0.56 | (0.37) | 306.55  | 0.00 | 0.35 | 1.47 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 50  | 2.24 | 0.78 | 1.90 | 0.64 | (0.34) | 36.57   | 0.00 | 0.43 | 1.73 |
| <b>Social Behavior</b>             |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.03    | 0.86 | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 567 | 3.75 | 0.66 | 4.05 | 0.59 | 0.30   | 323.18  | 0.00 | 0.36 | 1.51 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 51  | 3.41 | 0.63 | 3.71 | 0.60 | 0.29   | 36.25   | 0.00 | 0.42 | 1.70 |
| <b>Child Cluster Scale</b>         |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.01    | 0.91 | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 531 | 3.70 | 0.48 | 4.03 | 0.43 | 0.33   | 473.62  | 0.00 | 0.47 | 1.89 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 51  | 3.46 | 0.55 | 3.79 | 0.47 | 0.34   | 60.39   | 0.00 | 0.55 | 2.20 |
| <b>Alcohol &amp; Drug Use</b>      |     |      |      |      |      |        | 0.36    | 0.55 | 0.00 | 0.05 |
| SFP Norms 12-16                    | 579 | 1.20 | 0.41 | 1.15 | 0.39 | (0.05) | 17.13   | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.34 |
| Ontario PAD sites                  | 51  | 1.43 | 0.59 | 1.36 | 0.48 | (0.07) | 1.89    | 0.17 | 0.04 | 0.39 |

Source: Karol L. Kumpfer, Ph.D., Keely Cofrin-Allen, Ph.D., Jing Xie, Ph.D., and Henry Whiteside, Ph.D. Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth 12-16: Evaluation Report Nine Ontario Sites, 2014-2016. Salt Lake City Utah.

## Youth Satisfaction and Perceptions of Program [9 Cycles/8 Regions]

### Part A.

Youth were asked about participating in the program, how they found the session activities and their perceptions of how the sessions affected their relationships with their parents/ family. Ratings were on a scale of 1-5, where 5 indicated most strongly agree. The highest ranking items are highlighted in the tables below. A large range (>1.50) in the scoring is noted by an asterisk.

The *range* of responses is according to the average score for each delivery cycle; the *overall weighted average* accounts for the variable number of participants in the different cycles.

| <b>59 respondents/ 9 cycles/8 regions</b>  | <b>Cycle averages</b> |             |              | <b>Weighted average over all cycles</b> |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|---|
|  | <b>Low</b>            | <b>High</b> | <b>Range</b> |   |
| <b>Please let us know what you thought of the program</b>  |                       |             |              |   |
| 1. Overall, I liked the SFPY program   | 3.60                  | 4.70        | 1.10         | 4.18                                    |
| 2. I learned things that are helpful   | 3.50                  | 4.55        | 1.05         | 4.13                                    |
| 3. I would recommend the program to other teens  | 3.50                  | 4.50        | 1.00         | 4.12                                    |
| 4. I felt I belonged in this group*  | 2.75                  | 4.50        | 1.75         | 3.85                                    |
| 5. I felt comfortable speaking and participating in the group*   | 2.90                  | 4.50        | 1.60         | 3.82                                    |
| 6. I felt the topics discussed were important*   | 3.00                  | 4.55        | 1.55         | 4.13                                    |
| 7. I liked interacting with adults other than just my parent(s) during the family session activities*  | 3.00                  | 4.75        | 1.75         | 3.77                                    |
| 8. I felt respected by the adults in the program   | 3.10                  | 4.50        | 1.40         | 4.09                                    |
| 9. I am glad I completed the program   | 4.30                  | 5.00        | .70          | 4.45                                    |
| <b>Please rate the sessions and/skills that were covered in the youth and family sessions according to how much you learned or how helpful you found the session activities.</b> |                       |             |              |   |
| <b>Please leave the answer blank if you don't remember the session</b>   | <b>Low</b>            | <b>High</b> | <b>Range</b> | <b>Weighted average</b>                 |
| 10. Praise and getting recognition for what you do*  | 2.60                  | 4.50        | 1.90         | 3.83                                    |
| 11. Teen time: the straw structure and the muffin or pancake mix (at home)   | 3.10                  | 4.00        | .90          | 3.44                                    |
| 12. Communication: listening and using the "I feel" statement  | 3.10                  | 4.50        | 1.40         | 3.71                                    |
| 13. Setting goals and creating my personal shield  | 3.50                  | 4.30        | .80          | 3.99                                    |
| 14. Setting limits and decision making: 4-corners discussion   | 3.10                  | 4.00        | .90          | 3.62                                    |
| 15. Stress and anger: teen stresses and anger styles   | 3.00                  | 4.40        | 1.40         | 3.94                                    |
| 16. Drugs: quiz, scenario and teen-adult 4 corners exercise*   | 3.10                  | 4.75        | 1.65         | 3.98                                    |
| 17. Identifying your own strengths and your family commitments   | 3.25                  | 4.00        | .75          | 3.81                                    |
| 18. Creating a message to our parents  | 2.90                  | 4.40        | 1.50         | 3.85                                    |
| <b>Since we have been in the program:</b>  | <b>Low</b>            | <b>High</b> | <b>Range</b> | <b>Weighted average</b>                 |
| 19. I feel more accepted at home*  | 2.50                  | 4.20        | 1.70         | 3.37                                    |
| 20. My parent(s) make(s) more effort to support me*  | 2.40                  | 4.40        | 2.00         | 3.58                                    |
| 21. I feel my place in the family is recognized*   | 2.60                  | 4.40        | 1.80         | 3.56                                    |
| 22. My parent(s) is/are less critical of me  | 2.25                  | 3.70        | 1.45         | 3.10                                    |

|   |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| 23. My parent(s) praise(s) me more*   | 2.40 | 4.00 | 1.60 | 3.22 |
| 24. I feel I really belong in my family   | 3.10 | 4.20 | 1.10 | 3.61 |
| 25. My parent(s) make(s) their expectations of me clearer*  | 2.60 | 4.20 | 1.60 | 3.50 |
| 26. I think my parent(s) has/have really tried to change  | 3.20 | 4.50 | 1.30 | 3.67 |
| 27. I appreciate the effort my parent(s) has/have made coming here  | 3.90 | 4.00 | 1.10 | 4.22 |
| 28. My parent(s) and I get along better   | 3.00 | 4.20 | 1.20 | 3.58 |
| 29. Communication between my parents and me has improved since being in the program                       | 3.00 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 3.58 |
| 30. I can see positive changes in some of the ways I interact with my parents since starting this program | 2.90 | 4.00 | 1.10 | 3.46 |

Part B.

Youth were given open-ended questions about what they liked and didn't like about the program.

**What I liked best:**

**1. Relationships**

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| The people (adults/teens/all)                         | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Adults and teens and kids were kind, respectful, open and listened to what I had to say</i></li> <li>• <i>The food, staff and people in the program</i></li> </ul> |
| My group, new friends/ social aspects                 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Meeting new people who are similar to me and have problems like me</i></li> </ul>  |
| Relationship with my parent/ time with parents/family | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Finding new strategies to cope with my parents</i></li> <li>• <i>Bonding better with my mom</i></li> </ul>   |
| Leaders, mentors                                      | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I like the instructors (and the food 😊)</i></li> </ul>   |

**2. The process**

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Non-judgemental, respectful, felt comfortable                    | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Nobody would judge anyone for what they would say or do</i></li> <li>• <i>I felt really welcomed to this program</i></li> </ul>       |
| Separated groups: parents & teens                                | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It's not with the parents, making a more comfortable environment</i></li> </ul>   |
| Communication/getting to talk/being listened to/sharing opinions | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What I like best is that everyone listens and respects what we have to say</i></li> </ul>   |
| Had fun/ found it helpful  | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Having to talk and discuss the topics, everyone having different opinions, learning more about other people and family</i></li> </ul> |

### 3. Activities, Skills, ideas

|                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Activities/games/role plays    | 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The things I liked best is how the activities are organized and how they are presented</i></li> </ul> |
| New ideas, learning new things | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>It taught me stuff I didn't know</i></li> </ul>   |

### 4. "Extras"

|                       |    |  |
|-----------------------|----|--|
| Dinners/ food/ prizes | 13 |  |
|-----------------------|----|--|

### Things I liked least:

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Strangers/small numbers in group, people dropped out | 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>There was only 4 people in our group, I wanted more</i></li> <li><i>Too many strangers</i></li> <li><i>Some people dropped out – I felt it was a bit disruptive</i></li> </ul> |
| Talking/Reading in front of everyone/ Writing        | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Talking out loud</i></li> </ul>  |
| Program too long/ boring /too much sitting/work      | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>When I already knew the material - uhhh</i></li> <li><i>Better if there was more....games, less sitting, shorter</i></li> </ul>  |
| Other  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I don't think my family needed to go to this</i></li> <li><i>People interrupting and coming on everything</i></li> </ul>   |

|                           |   |  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Nothing, liked everything | 6 |  |
|---------------------------|---|--|

### In general/ other comments:

#### Liked the program/had fun/thank you = 14

- I would recommend this program to other youth*
- Thank you for having me here <3*
- I really liked the program because I felt like I belonged there*
- I loved this program and I hope that it continues*

## Parent Satisfaction, Perceptions of Program and Family Change [9 Cycles/8 Regions]

### Part A.

Parents/caregivers were asked to rate how they are using the specific skills learned in the program, how their teen(s) are responding to the family change components and what they thought of the program process and skills.

Ratings were on a scale of 1-5, where 5 indicated most strongly agree. The highest ranking items are highlighted in the tables below. A large range (>1.50) in the scoring is noted by an asterisk.

The *range* of responses is according to the average score for each delivery cycle; the *overall weighted average* accounts for the variable number of participants in the different cycles. Note: two sites did not use this portion of the questionnaire.

| <b>38 Responses/7 out of 9 cycles/ 6 regions</b>   |   | <b>Cycle averages</b> |             |              | <b>Weighted average over all cycles</b> |
|--|---|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|---|
| <b>Now that you have completed the SFPY program, please take a little time to tell us how things have been for you and your relationship with your youth since you have attended this program.</b> |   | <b>Low</b>            | <b>High</b> | <b>Range</b> |   |
| 1  | I use positive attention (e.g., praise, smile) to show my teen I appreciate what they are doing.    | 3.25                  | 4.20        | .95          | 3.84                                    |
| 2  | I use my understanding of teen development in my interactions with my teen.                         | 3.40                  | 4.00        | .60          | 3.74                                    |
| 3  | I use “I feel...when you...because...” statements to state my feelings.*                            | 2.65                  | 4.20        | 1.55         | 3.39                                    |
| 4  | I listen attentively to my teen.  | 3.30                  | 4.25        | .95          | 3.74                                    |
| 5  | Our family holds family meetings on a regular basis.*   | 2.20                  | 3.80        | 1.60         | 2.97                                    |
| 6  | I try to manage my anger and express it in positive ways.   | 3.50                  | 4.40        | .90          | 3.82                                    |
| 7  | I let my teen know my expectations and standards about the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. | 3.60                  | 4.80        | 1.20         | 4.37                                    |
| 8  | I discuss alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and keeping safe with my teen.                           | 3.80                  | 4.70        | .90          | 4.29                                    |
| 9  | I use clear directions with my teen to let them understand what I expect of them.                   | 3.60                  | 4.50        | .90          | 4.00                                    |
| 10   | I use fair and reasonable consequences with my youth.   | 3.00                  | 4.40        | 1.40         | 3.79                                    |
| 11   | I negotiate fair and reasonable limits with my teen.  | 3.60                  | 4.20        | .80          | 3.87                                    |
| 12   | I am able to relieve stress in a positive way.  | 2.90                  | 4.00        | 1.10         | 3.58                                    |
| 13   | I try to be respectful when I am communicating with my teen.  | 3.75                  | 4.60        | .85          | 4.05                                    |
| 14   | I am able to use the skills I learned in this program to solve problems I am faced with.            | 3.70                  | 4.50        | .80          | 4.05                                    |
| 15   | I follow the Teen Time guidelines in spending time with my youth.                                   | 3.00                  | 3.80        | .80          | 3.37                                    |
| 16   | I feel better about the way our family life is organized.   | 3.40                  | 4.00        | .60          | 3.63                                    |
| 17   | I try to see things from my teen’s point of view.   | 3.40                  | 4.40        | 1.00         | 3.87                                    |
| 18   | My teen is doing more chores around the home.   | 2.60                  | 4.00        | 1.40         | 3.34                                    |
| 19   | My teen is communicating more respectfully.*  | 2.60                  | 4.40        | 1.80         | 3.47                                    |
| 20   | My teen talks about their feelings more.  | 3.20                  | 3.75        | .55          | 3.55                                    |

|    |   |             |             |            |             |
|----|---|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 21 | My teen deals with anger better.  | 2.75        | 3.85        | 1.10       | 3.49        |
| 22 | My teen is better at solving problems.  | 3.00        | 4.40        | 1.40       | 3.51        |
| 23 | My teen communicates better with myself and others.   | 2.80        | 4.00        | 1.20       | 3.46        |
| 24 | My teen follows directions better.*   | 2.60        | 4.25        | 1.65       | 3.47        |
| 25 | My teen talks to me about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.   | 3.00        | 4.25        | 1.25       | 3.76        |
|    |   |             |             |            |             |
|    | <b>Now let us know what you thought of the program.</b>   |             |             |            |             |
| 26 | <b>Overall, I like the SFPY program.</b>  | <b>4.50</b> | <b>5.00</b> | <b>.50</b> | <b>4.74</b> |
| 27 | The handouts helped me understand the program content better,   | 4.20        | 5.00        | .80        | 4.59        |
| 28 | This program has made a difference in my life.  | 3.80        | 4.50        | .70        | 4.14        |
| 29 | This program has made a difference in my teen's life.   | 3.40        | 4.60        | 1.20       | 4.09        |
| 30 | I think my teen liked the program.  | 3.60        | 5.00        | 1.40       | 4.33        |
| 31 | The group leaders helped me to understand the program.  | 4.20        | 4.80        | .60        | 4.60        |
| 32 | The group leaders helped me to use the program at home.*  | 3.75        | 5.00        | 1.25       | 4.44        |
| 33 | <b>I would recommend the program to other parents.</b>  | <b>4.50</b> | <b>5.00</b> | <b>.50</b> | <b>4.76</b> |
| 34 | I felt I belonged in this group.  | 4.00        | 5.00        | 1.00       | 4.63        |
| 35 | <b>The group leaders encouraged all family members to participate in the family group's discussions and activities.</b> | <b>4.50</b> | <b>5.00</b> | <b>.50</b> | <b>4.76</b> |
| 36 | I felt comfortable speaking and participating in the group.   | 4.50        | 5.00        | .50        | 4.71        |
| 37 | <b>I felt the topics discussed were important.</b>  | <b>4.60</b> | <b>5.00</b> | <b>.40</b> | <b>4.79</b> |
| 38 | <b>The group leaders followed an organized session plan each week.</b>  | <b>4.50</b> | <b>5.00</b> | <b>.50</b> | <b>4.79</b> |
| 39 | I learned a lot from the topics and homework.   | 3.65        | 4.75        | 1.10       | 4.24        |
| 40 | I enjoyed being with other families with similar issues.  | 4.15        | 5.00        | .85        | 4.60        |
| 41 | I learned effective parenting skills (positive approach, less critical, family meetings).*                              | 3.40        | 5.00        | 1.60       | 4.40        |
| 42 | I have improved my communication skills.  | 3.60        | 4.60        | 1.00       | 4.16        |
| 43 | I understand teens more.*   | 3.20        | 4.75        | 1.55       | 4.16        |
| 44 | My family has increased its quality time together.  | 3.60        | 4.75        | 1.15       | 4.03        |
| 45 | My family is closer, more respectful.   | 3.60        | 4.60        | 1.00       | 3.95        |
| 46 | Communication between me and my teen has improved.*   | 3.50        | 5.00        | 1.50       | 4.17        |
| 47 | I can see positive changes in my teen's behaviour since starting this program.  | 3.60        | 5.00        | 1.40       | 4.13        |
| 48 | I can see positive changes in some of the ways I interact with my teen since starting this program.*                    | 3.50        | 4.60        | 1.10       | 4.22        |



In all 9 cycles parents were given open ended questions about the program, with **56 parents** responding. Below are the themes that emerged from the responses.

**1. What did you like BEST about the program:**

|  |    |   |
|--|----|---|
| Being with other parents (similar issues, social, learning)  | 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Meeting the other moms and realizing that I am not the only mom with issues with my teens...</i></li> </ul> |
| Skilled facilitators (knowledgeable, open, motivating, provide comfortable space)  | 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Facilitators were very skilled and knowledgeable.</i></li> </ul>  |
| Learned strategies to help solve their problems/handle child   | 6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Learning new strategies in helping identify and solve problems with our teen.</i></li> </ul>                |
| Practical information (tools, tips, resources)   | 6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Variety of tips with skills and learning advice given with examples.</i></li> </ul>                         |
| Curriculum (well organized, structured, easy to follow/understand)   | 6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Curriculum was well organized and easy to follow.</i></li> </ul>  |
| Dinner provided  | 6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dinner served made the program easier (no rush between end of work, dinner, program 😊)</i></li> </ul>       |
| Topics overall (relevant, interesting)   | 4  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The topics were very relevant to our family.</i></li> </ul>   |
| Being together as a family and the overall structure (family and separate parent & youth sessions) were also mentioned by several respondents. |    |   |

**2. What did you like LEAST about the program?**

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Would have liked more time to expand on topics (program too short, rushing)   | 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I would have liked more time to expand on some of the topics.</i></li> </ul> |
| Finish time was late/long day   | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The 8:30pm seems late, makes for a long day.</i></li> </ul>                  |
| A couple of respondents had suggestions for other topics they would like covered (i.e. sex ed/healthy relationships, bullying, technology). |   |  |

**3. How has your comfort level discussing drugs with your teen changed as a result of participating in this program?**

|  |    |  |
|--|----|--|
| More comfortable, knowledgeable, open, skilled, better equipped              | 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>My level of comfort has increased 100%</i></li> <li>• <i>I feel more confident and comfortable. Feel better prepared.</i></li> </ul>   |
| Comfortable before, but this adds new ways (knowledge/skills/ understanding) | 7  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We had always had open discussions about drugs/alcohol, but now there's more understanding of each other's perspective.</i></li> </ul> |
| "Fine"/Comfortable before/ the same/ "not an issue"                          | 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No change as these conversations were being held before.</i></li> <li>• <i>Good, feel open about the discussion.</i></li> </ul>        |

**4. Please share an example of how this program has changed your home environment:**

Communication/Parenting Skills

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Open discussion/talk more  | 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We have had a lot more open discussions in our home.</i></li> </ul>   |
| Respectful/positive communication, listening, trust  | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I learnt how to listen to my teens and respond more positively.</i></li> </ul>  |
| Decrease in yelling, anxiety, attitude (can better deal with anger)  | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I control my stress more and have controlled my anger much better. Less yelling and screaming.</i></li> </ul>                           |
| Gained skills and tools for negotiating/problem solving  | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Kids/teen use specific examples from program too express self, when they previously did not know how to approach parent.</i></li> </ul> |
| <p>Several specific strategies being used in the home were mentioned, including teen time (n=3) and the use of I statements (n=3).<br/> <i>I use I statements more often. It has really helped me to keep situations from spiralling out of control.</i></p> |   |   |

Other commonly reported changes

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Better relationship/spending more time together        | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>It has brought us closer together. Thank you.</i></li> </ul>  |
| More understanding, appreciation for teen              | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>This has had a huge impact for me as I am more aware of my teen, his brain, his needs.</i></li> </ul> |
| Change in my child (more respectful, open, expressive) | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Children are more respectful and considerate of other family members.</i></li> </ul>                  |

**5. Other comments:**

|  |    |   |
|--|----|---|
| Excellent program/enjoyable/appreciative                           | 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Thank you for doing this workshop. My family really needed it and we are very fortunate to receive it.</i></li> </ul> |
| Would prefer a longer program (more in depth/more time for change) | 5  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The program could have been more weeks for more in depth talk.</i></li> </ul>   |