

# Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week

## PERSONAL IDENTITY....THE TREE OF ME

### Background Discussion:

It is easier to make *Healthy Choices* from a position of knowledge and strength. Help students explore their personal strengths and support systems, as well as the dreams, goals and positive challenges in their lives. First brainstorm some of the challenges, adversity and choices life can throw at us. Then discuss the concept of personal identity and growth using the symbol of a tree. As a class or in small groups brainstorm:

- **Growing Environment** - What are some of the challenges we face in our environment. E.g. finding friends, earning money, finding a job, scary choices, trusting people, etc.
- **Roots** - Who are the people and what are the things that give us strength and stability? E.g. grandparents, family, cultural traditions, friendships, sports, hobbies, youth groups, etc.
- **Trunk** - What are the things that nourish us and help us grow, flourish and ultimately reach our goals? E.g. family, friends, education, work, culture, religion, learning, etc.
- **Branches** - What are your goals/dreams, the areas or directions you would like to grow in? E.g. be a singer, graduate from high school, get my driver's license, go to college or university, start my own business, pass math, win at chess, make the team, etc.
- **Leaves** - What are your present accomplishments? E.g. playing soccer, playing an instrument, part-time job, babysitting, drawing, singing in a choir, acting/dancing in the school play, etc.
- **Stars** - Contributions - Just as a tree gives off oxygen, seeds and leaves that biodegrade into soil, we can contribute to our personal growth and to the lives of others. With all of these things working together what might be possible? Reach for the stars! NASCAR Driver, Canadian Idol, Discover a Cure, Famous Author, Prime Minister, Save the Planet, Protect the Forests, Become an Astronaut or Stop Pollution!

### Activity Instructions:

- ✓ Using the image of the tree as a metaphor, have students draw themselves as a tree in the forest of life. Use as is or enlarge the tree template provided, or make it into a class mural.
- ✓ Each part of the tree and its surroundings can be labeled as follows:
  - ❖ **The soil - Growing Environment** - Label the challenges/risks that surround you.
  - ❖ **The Roots** - Label the **6 roots** with the people and things that give you strength and stability.
  - ❖ **Trunk** - Label the trunk with the things that nourish you and help you grow, flourish and reach your goals.
  - ❖ **Branches** - Label the **6 branches** with your goals and dreams and the directions you would like to grow in.
  - ❖ **Leaves** - Label the **6 leaf bunches** with what you've accomplished so far.
  - ❖ **Stars** - Reach for the stars and label all **8 Stars** with what you might accomplish that could make a positive difference to the people, community and the planet you care about.