

introduction to smart risk and the stupid line

Risk is a part of life. The smart risk and Stupid Line campaign provides opportunities for youth to rehearse choices about risk taking in a safe environment, BEFORE they are faced with the next potentially life altering decision.

The concept of smart risk has two predominant themes:

- Most injuries are predictable and therefore preventable.
- People can choose behavior to reduce the likelihood of injury.

Smart risk and The Stupid Line offer clear, simple, positive messages that emphasize the power of choice and strategies that anyone can use to manage risk. . .

The Stupid Line. It's the line of choice we each have that separates smart risk from stupid risk. The Stupid Line. Where will you draw yours?

Take smart risks: Buckle Up. Look First. Wear the Gear. Get Trained. Drive Sober. Seek Help.

Their choice. Their responsibility.

The campaign language and concepts can help positively influence youth's decision-making process around risk:

- **Knowing** where they draw their own Stupid Line gives youth a chance to decide whether to cross it.
- Developing problem-solving and decision-making **skills** through the exploration and rehearsal of smart risk strategies provides practice in risk management.
- **Defining their personal Stupid Line** gives youth the language, and hopefully some support, to fend off peer pressure at critical moments.

This is not a "safety" campaign. Using smart risk and Stupid Line materials and language requires an acknowledgement that people take risks and that life is about doing stuff and having fun. The campaign is about "can do" rather than "don't do". The campaign says "**do stuff and take smart risk**". Youth know that some risks are too big - they call them stupid risks. They can choose not to take them. Note, stupid risks, not stupid people, it is adults who are more likely to get the wrong impression from the campaign language.

Managing life is a balancing act. You must continually assess and choose behaviour to manage risk. How can we positively influence youth to take smart risks?



smart risk events

Knowing how to take smart risk means being able to identify risks beforehand, prepare for an activity, and make good decisions at the time. Risk assessment and risk management are skills and skills only develop with practice. Smart risk events and activities help provide youth with the opportunity to create real life meaning for the six smart risk strategies, and gets them talking about and thinking about where they draw their own line.

The 6 smart risk messages are the “how to’s” and they support the process of distinguishing between smart risk and stupid risk:

- **Buckle Up:** If you are traveling in a vehicle use a seatbelt, are there enough for everyone?
- **Look First:** Understand the risks and make plans to manage them.
- **Wear the Gear:** If you are going to participate in any activity for which protective equipment is available, wear it.
- **Get Trained:** When you are involved in something that has any element of risk for yourself or others — Get Trained!
- **Drive Sober:** It’s about being fully in control of your mind and body when you’re behind the wheel, with no impairment of any kind.
- **Seek Help:** Life’s issues and challenges can seem overwhelming when being faced alone. Seek help when needed.

To reach as many students as possible, smart risk materials are many and varied. The variety allows smart risk committees to select the components that will work best for their school community, and they do!

A survey showed that no two schools are the same in their delivery of smart risk events. A school’s staff, students and community health nurse often work together to provide an event that is tailored to their school’s needs. Smart risk events take place at the school, during the school day, and can include numerous components, such as the following:

- displays and guest speakers from various organizations
- the provision of injury prevention information
- educational presentations on the consequences of injury
- student activities

Possible activities for students include signing a pledge banner to take smart risk at grad time; undertaking routine activities while wearing Fatal Vision alcohol simulator goggles, taking part in a survey about seatbelt use; and playing games that explore stress management.

Youth need to have some practice rehearsing how to deal with risk BEFORE they find themselves in a risky situation. Smart risk events are opportunities to teach young adults the LIFE SKILL of smart risk management and to ask themselves important questions about ALL situations involving risk. Questions like

- Is the risk worth taking?
- Where do I draw MY Stupid Line?

This youth oriented social marketing campaign is developed and promoted locally by the Calgary Injury Prevention Coalition, and Calgary Health Region, Injury Prevention and Control Services. The smart risk concept originated from SMARTRISK, Toronto. For injury prevention information and smart risk campaign resources please visit www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/smartrisk or contact your school’s Community Health Nurse.



Where will you draw yours?



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