

WalkAlong: Current State and Future Features

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Virtual Solutions for Substance Use Care Conference: Capacity, Quality, and Integration Across Settings

Overview

Launched in late 2013, **WalkAlong** is an online platform dedicated to providing resources for youths to evaluate, manage, and improve their mental well-being.



Highlights

- Provides evidence-based information
- Tailored specifically for youth
- Anonymous registration
- User-friendly interface
- Sharing stories and experiences feature (private and public options)
- Features self-help exercises to manage mental health problems more efficiently.
- Free of charge

Future Features: content on substance use and substance-related disorders.

Experiences

Look through the **Experiences** section to see a community of videos, quotes and stories of lived experiences.

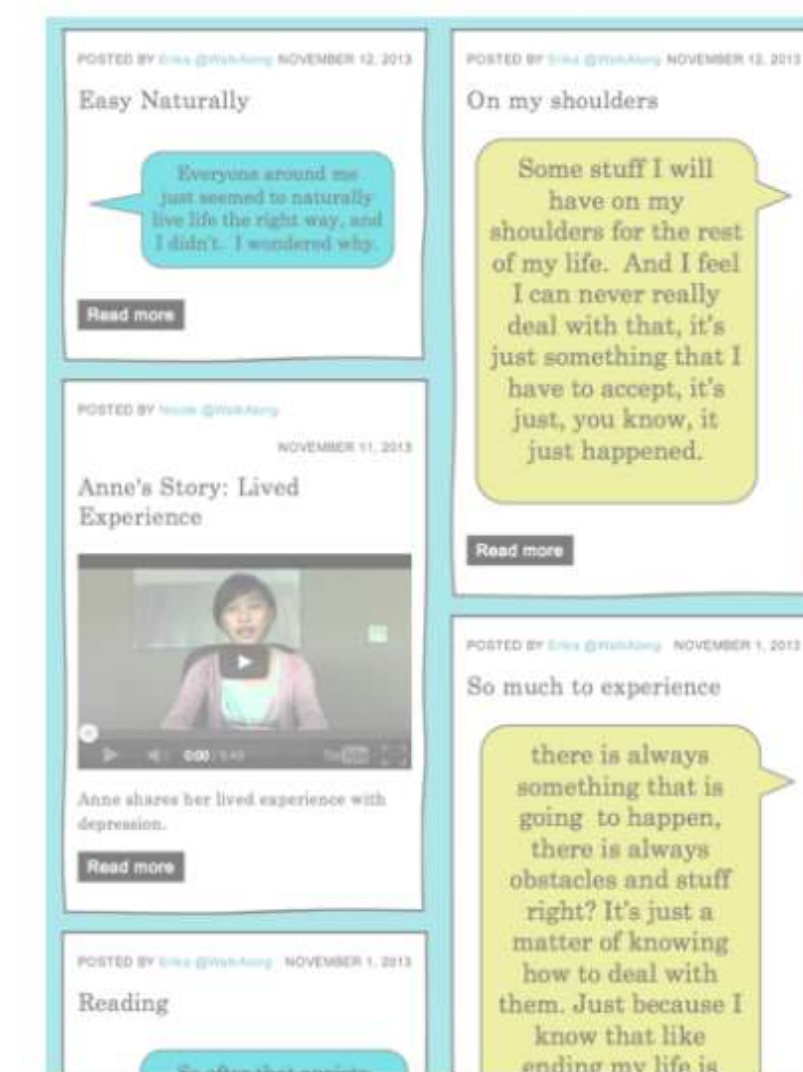


Figure 1. WalkAlong Homepage, Experiences feature

Speaking of Substance Use

Substance use is common among Canadian adolescents, correlated with other mental health disorders.

Prevalence of annual and 30-day use of cannabis and illicit drugs are highest among adolescents and young Canadians.

Rate of substance use is substantially higher amongst Indigenous youth.

Lack of education and stigma, amongst other social determinants of health, are some reasons for this problem.

Computer-based prevention and intervention strategies have gained more popularity and acceptability in the recent years, enabling a more extensive reach to a broader range of teenagers.

Climate Schools: An Australian Success Story

Similar to Canada, Australia has a major problem with substance use related disorders among youth.

Climate Schools was developed in 2007 in Australia.

Offers interactive, cartoon-based education

Programs on substance-use for Australian adolescence.

Has programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A Success Story:

More than 14,000 students from 157 schools took part in research trials of Climate Schools' courses.

Those students who took part in the climate schools' cannabis and alcohol modules were more informed about harms associated with cannabis and alcohol and also reduced both average weekly alcohol consumption and binge drinking frequency in contrast to the control group 12 months after the intervention ended.



Figure 2. A Module from Climate Schools Discussing Alcohol use

Looking Ahead

The WalkAlong team is working to develop content for substance use related disorders, with a special focus on empowering youth and using culturally appropriate content

The long-term vision of the WalkAlong team is to collaborate with various stakeholders in the industry, including but not limited to Indigenous leaders from British Columbia and the rest of Canada.

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