CANNABIS&PSYCHOSIS
Exploring the Link
Welcome

Schizophrenia Society of Canada
National Conference

Winnipeg, September 9-11, 2013
Laura Burke, Artist in residence
Amber Williams, Youth researcher
Amy Nash, Site Coordinator
Catherine Willinsky, Project Manager
What is the purpose of this workshop?

- Chance to share our perspectives
- Highlight the process and outcomes of the project
- Disseminate project resources
- Brainstorm about ways to bring resources to communities
Digital Stories
Digital Stories
Background

- 4 year project funded by Health Canada – the Drug Strategy Initiatives Fund

- Follow up to another HC project focusing on Concurrent Disorders – website www.schizophreniaandsubstanceuse.ca

- Lit review and environmental scan found little information for youth about cannabis and psychosis

- Granted an additional year to pursue KE activities, like this workshop
Increasing number of academic studies focusing on the link

More reports in mainstream media about relationship between smoking pot and mental illness, and potential increased risks of developing psychosis and schizophrenia, even years after stopping or cutting down on use.

Lack of youth-friendly information to help vulnerable youth become well-informed about this important issue.

SSC has few resources aimed at youth – increase networks and partnerships and fill a need for Canadian-based info.
The project

- The aim of the project: to increase awareness and understanding of the relationship between cannabis use and psychosis **from the perspective of youth**

- Worked with 3 EI clinics across Canada to implement project

- In each site, youth were been trained as researchers, asking their peers about their experiences with cannabis and psychosis
Goals of the project

- to figure out how youth who have experienced psychosis understand marijuana use in relation to their mental health
- to develop youth capacity as researchers and leaders
- to create innovative resources and information for youth to be shared with a range of partners inside and outside the mental health / addictions community
Why participatory action research?

- Youth from target population participated in all aspects of project:
  - Training in qualitative methods, participation in designing, conducting, evaluating and disseminating research
  - Process and product of research are key outcomes
  - Forming goals and research questions ensure that results are relevant
  - Enhancing skills and capacities of youth
Activities to date

- Formed advisory group
- Partnerships created with EI clinics
- Recruited and trained youth researchers
- Received ethics approval
- Digital storytelling workshop
- Data collection / analysis
- Research workshop with youth and artists
- Production of key messages / products
- Knowledge Exchange workshop Fall 2012
- Launch of website
Winner of the Mental Health Commission of Canada’s Research Award
Project Website

- Website: cannabisandpsychosis.ca

- Contains major work to date, including digital stories and videos, research reports, e-learning lit reviews, resources and links

- Please visit and let us know what you think
Research and Knowledge Exchange Workshops
Next steps

- Work with broad range of partners including SSC provincial affiliates to disseminate resources