



# FOXY & SMASH

Information Session







# ABOUT US

- **FOXY (Fostering Open eXpression among Youth)** is a revolutionary way of working with young women and gender diverse youth to promote mental and sexual health and healthy relationships. Facilitators strive to pass on practical tools designed to aid youth in making decisions that are right for them, even in the most difficult situations.
- **SMASH (Strength, Masculinities, And Sexual Health)** is a program that educates and encourages young men and gender diverse youth to define their own masculinity. It includes practical, realistic discussions about sexual health and relationships, and straight-forward strategies for communication, consent, and discussions of boundaries.









# ABOUT US

FOXY's mission is to use the arts to enhance the education, health, and well-being of Northern and Indigenous youth. FOXY's vision for the coming five years is to be trauma informed in content and practice. We strive to provide quality sexual health education for youth of all genders, sexualities, and cultures in Northern rural and remote communities that is grounded in wholistic approaches, evidence-based practices, and reciprocal and experiential ways of learning across generations. FOXY intends to accomplish its' vision through five goals:



# ABOUT US

1. Integrated, wholistic sexual and mental health programming
2. Expanded and accessible programming inclusive of gender, sexuality, culture, and rural/remote location
3. High quality, comprehensive research plan as evidence for programming, long-term/core funding, and organizational sustainability
4. Rooted and functional organizational systems
5. Trauma informed content and approaches





# SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

- **A day in a FOXY or SMASH workshop is energetic, educational, and full of activity.** We use the visual and performing arts to talk about sexual health, healthy relationships, and positive life choices. Participants have the chance to act out different scenarios and discuss the benefits of different reactions to social situations. They can ask anonymous questions in a safe and non-judgmental atmosphere, and get relevant, realistic information. Introspective activities allow participants to look at their own personalities, motivations, and strengths.
- **FOXY and SMASH workshops aren't like a normal school day.** They are exciting, fun, and engaging. Youth don't just learn about sexual health – they learn about themselves, their own well-being, and gain confidence in the decisions that they make in their lives.







# YOUTH LEADERSHIP RETREATS

- In addition to the day long workshops in schools, FOXY and SMASH both run on-the-land Retreats during the summer months.
- Youth between the ages of 13 to 17 years who live in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and the Yukon are invited to apply to either the FOXY or the SMASH Retreat! FOXY is for all young women, female-identifying, and gender diverse youth and SMASH is for all young men, male-identifying, and gender diverse youth.
- All expenses for participants, including travel from their home communities to Yellowknife, is covered through the generous support of the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Arctic Inspiration Prize, and our other sponsors. There is no charge to any participant in the FOXY or SMASH Peer Leader Program.



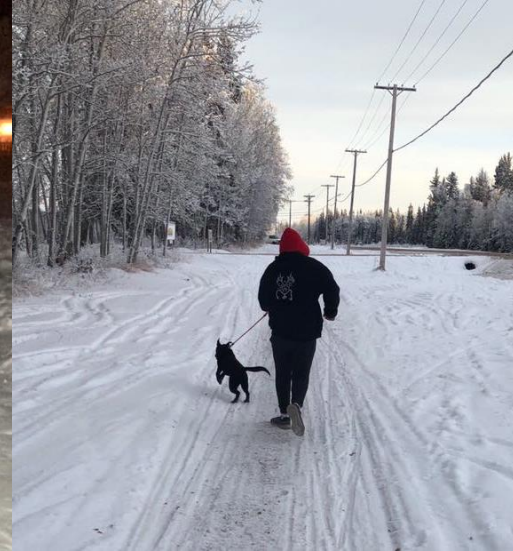
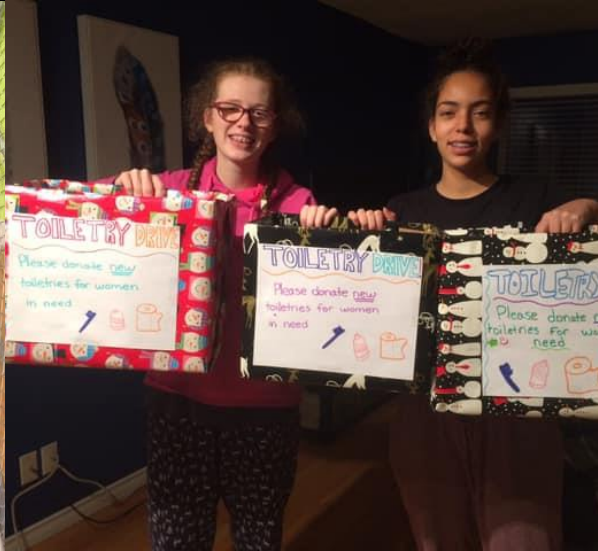




# YOUTH LEADERSHIP RETREATS

- Participants receive 2 high school credits for their active participation in the Retreat, and 2 additional credits for their completion of a Community Project when they return to home communities!
- Participants at the FOXY or SMASH Peer Leader Retreat have the opportunity to learn about sexual health and healthy relationships through various traditional and modern art activities. No previous experience with the arts is necessary!
- All participants spend time during the Retreat planning a small Community Project that they deliver when they return to their home communities with help from a mentor and FOXY or SMASH. The FOXY or SMASH team provide resources to assist with the planning and help connect the Peer Leader with supports when they return home.







# FOXY & SMASH ARE PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

- **FOXY/SMASH is a participatory action research project**, which means youth are involved with all aspects of the project, from its development to implementation, and evaluation. The research component of FOXY/SMASH looks at the effectiveness of FOXY/SMASH for empowering NWT youth and educating about sexual health in the North.
- **FOXY and SMASH conduct before and after surveys to maintain program quality**, help us to know where we are hitting our marks and where we can make improvements, and also gives northern youth the chance to be heard. The territories are routinely left out of “National” studies, which makes leveraging funding for health and social initiatives challenging. The data collected by FOXY and SMASH will help to benefit Northerners in the National arena for decades to come.
- **All research collected is voluntary and anonymous.** We take serious steps to ensure the answer provided will not be linked to a single individual. We explain this all before we begin.



# WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH FROM FOXY AND SMASH SHOW?

- At post-test and follow-up, there was a statistically significant improvement in sexual health knowledge among youth Participants.
- At 6-month follow-up, Participants reported engaging in healthy sexual behaviours, including safer sex and limit-setting as a result of FOXY. Participants who were not sexually active reported intended safe sexual behavior.
- These findings indicate a statistically significant improvement in HIV knowledge from baseline, to 6-month follow-up (in addition to post-Retreat), suggesting long-term improvements in HIV knowledge.
- 90% of Peer Leaders who completed the follow-up survey maintained their increase in sexual health knowledge at 6-month follow-up.







# WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT FOXY AND SMASH?

- **“I feel more confident.** I know personally I'm not ready to have an intimate relationship but now I'm confident that when I am ready, I'll know what to do properly because I've always kind of been scared about, what if the guy I'm with is not putting the condom on properly? Or what if I'm taking my birth control wrong? And now I know how to use most of those things. And I thought it was really important.”
- **“I really liked the Question Box** cause people are kind of scared to ask those kind of things. So it's one way to like, actually like, get to know. It's what you really want to know. Cause that's kind of like scary going up to someone and asking.”

# WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT FOXY AND SMASH?

- **“Being a teenager in the NWT**, healthy relationships aren’t as modeled as they should be. FOXY taught me what a healthy relationship looks like and helped me create meaningful relationships not only with significant others but with friends.”
- **“I haven’t used the knowledge**, but I have it and that’s really helpful for the future.”
- **“One skill I’ve used** is being more open to my parents.”
- **“This way of teaching sexual health** is, I think it’s the best way. Cause I feel safe to learn about it. Not shy to say anything or ask any questions. So, it’s just a really fun and knowledgeable way to teach sexual health.”



# WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT FOXY AND SMASH?

- **“In healthy relationships**, you always have to ask your partner if you can do this or not. If she’s okay with it or she’s not. And if she’s not, then you can just stop doing it. You always have to ask your partner first before you do stuff, like ‘Is this fine with you? Is this good with you? All that kind of stuff.”
- **“I think I have switched my way of thinking** because before I came to SMASH, I thought what people told me - like real men don’t cry, can’t show emotions, gotta be able to fight, use violence, yeah. So I always kept my emotions inside, which led me to snap at people. So now I know it’s okay to let your emotions out and real men are strong enough to show emotions.”





# WHAT ARE PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS SAYING ABOUT FOXY AND SMASH?

- **“I'm sure the positive tools, knowledge, and lessons** taught to her while participating in FOXY has not only taught her, but she is able to use those skills to teach and influence those around her in a positive way.”
- **“The most important lesson** that she's been taught I would say would be on sexual health and healthy relationships. The program certainly helped me [as a parent] especially because I was never taught or given much information on these two topics growing up, so it's been a struggle for me as a parent to teach these to my children and I'm very grateful for the people of the program who have taught her these lessons.”

# WHAT ARE PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS SAYING ABOUT FOXY AND SMASH?

- **“She was more open with communication** about how she was feeling, and what was going on with her days. I saw more confidence in her regarding her sexual health. She wanted to openly talk about boys, and how she felt, and that she knew she has the power for boundaries.”
- **“From what I’ve seen with my son,** this program helps him communicate more with his father. And has an open mind about a healthy lifestyle.”
- **“Prior to the Retreat, he was smoking. He quit while there.** He was also having depressed episodes and not wanting to talk about them too much. When he came back, he told me how refreshed he felt. He said he felt like it helped him be a better person and deal with his issues.”



# THE FOXY AND SMASH TEAMS

- Staff go through a rigorous selection process and are chosen based on their attitudes and knowledge regarding sexual health, experience working with youth, and ability to be inclusive and respectful.
- All staff undergo vulnerable sector criminal record checks screening from the RCMP.
- Staff adhere to language guidelines and follow the Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education.
- FOXY and SMASH regularly provide staff opportunities to expand their skill and knowledge base through various courses like Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Care Workshops, and Suicide Prevention Training.
- FOXY and SMASH Staff are diverse, northern, and culturally aware.







# FAQS

- **Q: How do I know FOXY and SMASH won't be telling my kid more than they need to know?**
- **A:** Every workshop begins with an activity that helps our facilitators assess where the group's knowledge level is at and draws out any inaccurate beliefs that may need to be addressed. This helps our facilitators to customize the workshop to meet the group's specific needs. The use of our anonymous Question Box activity also allows us to address the questions that the group would like answered and focus on filling their particular gaps in knowledge.

# FAQS

- **Q: Will FOXY and SMASH be encouraging my teen to be sexually active?**
- **A:** No. Just as we teach biology and math in school as general knowledge to help students should they choose a career that involves biology or math, our facilitators teach sexual health education “in the event of” and in the context of future use. Talking about sexual health won’t make them suddenly decide to become sexually active. In fact, research shows that rates of teen pregnancy and STIs are higher in groups that receive less sexual education. After learning more, many end up choosing to wait until they are certain they feel ready. A big part of our curriculum is how to draw healthy boundaries, say “no” to things that make them uncomfortable, and tips for how to listen to their own “yes” and “no” cues.



# FAQS

- **Q: What about relationships and all the stuff that goes with sex beyond just anatomy?**
- **A:** FOXY and SMASH believe in talking about sexual health in the greater context of life. This helps make the discussions more relevant to teens. Our facilitators encourage participants to ask themselves questions about any relationships they have, whether friendly or romantic, through a fun activity called “Relationship Charades”. This activity allows participants to discuss difficult dynamics in relationships, as well as brainstorm what qualities they want to see in the relationships in their own lives. Consent is a major theme that is woven into all of the FOXY and SMASH programming.

# FAQS

- **Q: What if my child has experienced trauma and could be triggered during a FOXY or SMASH Workshop?**
- **A:** FOXY and SMASH are committed to being trauma informed initiatives. Our programming is developed to be sensitive to the needs of those who have experienced trauma. Our facilitators receive trauma informed care training and understand that this is a reality for many. We follow specific language guidelines to avoid triggering participants as much as possible. Our facilitators explain during the beginning of every workshop that nothing they say will be shared outside of the group, except if we believe they are in some kind of trouble, at which time we would involve them in coming up with options for bringing in outside help. We are trained in handling these sensitive situations and take your child's physical and emotional safety very seriously.



# FAQS

- **Q: Will FOXY and SMASH facilitators be giving out birth control?**
- **A:** During a workshop our facilitators will inform the group on what options are available to them for birth control. We also discuss abstinence as an option for birth control and STI prevention. FOXY and SMASH facilitators are focused on providing accurate and reliable sexual health information and steer away from telling participants what to do. If your child is 13 or older and the school has given us permission, we do have condoms and condom cases available to hand out. When we do so we are sure to let participants know that our handing out condoms does not mean there is an expectation they will be having sex. We encourage them to carry them in case others might need them if they won't be using them themselves.





# FOXY AND SMASH CAN HELP GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED:

- **We can help to break the ice!** If your child attends a FOXY or SMASH workshop, we will discuss topics that range from healthy relationships and consent to anatomy, birth control options, STIs and testing, safer sex practices, knowing their own cues, and safety online. You can continue that conversation by asking them how their workshop went and if they have any questions that have arisen since attending.
- **With your help** FOXY and SMASH seek to support safer practices among northern youth and empower them to make excellent decisions for their health.

# THANK YOU!

