

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER!

Jan to Mar -
Resilient Kids at Caring Place every Tuesday from 3pm - 5pm. Dates tbd.

Jan to Mar -
Resilient Younger and Older Youth on dates & location tbd.

Mar 22nd to Apr 19th -
Community Education Workshops at the Brighthouse library every Wednesday from 3pm - 4:30pm.

Ongoing -
Richmond Recovery Day Program continues to accept referrals!

DID YOU KNOW?

There are significantly more impaired driving accidents during the **Christmas and New Year's** holiday periods than the rest of the year? If you drink, don't drive! Designate a driver, use transit, take a cab, or try www.operationrednosedelta.com!

Call:
604.943.0460



RASS NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VI, ISSUE IV

DECEMBER 2016

Responding to the "Fentanyl Crisis"



Dr. Ross Laird spoke about how we can cultivate a more compassionate and caring perspective to addiction at this year's National Addiction Awareness Week event at the Ralph Fisher Auditorium.

Headlines have been flooded with sensational titles like *"too toxic to touch"* or *"overdose crisis is 'our ebola'"* heavily focused on the harms of the *'silent killer.'*

What more might we expect? Fentanyl is the current hot drug topic. There is no doubt that significant and lasting harms are occurring due to the increased presence of fentanyl. However, we must be careful about reactionary attitudes that further stigmatize and point to a problem with a "drug" – in this case fentanyl.

The recent coverage of the fentanyl crisis seems to miss asking the question *"why are people using?"* Only highlighting the harms does not make any impact on the problematic use and overdoses that continue to occur. Highly reactive campaigns focus on the tragic and extreme consequences. History teaches us that fear-based approaches have not been effective in preventing problematic substance use. If anything, it can cause detrimental

outcomes. Note the recent report that UBC students are not accessing lifesaving overdose response (Naloxone) kits for fear of identifying with *"drug users."*

This is why prevention priorities in Richmond have shifted away from programs that focus on the dangers of substances. Instead, Richmond needs to be pushing an agenda of creating healthy and whole individuals, families and communities who are ready and willing to support the (often) marginalized individuals who are using and overdosing on drugs like fentanyl.

When people feel supported, empowered, connected, and valued, substance use drops. Yes, harm reduction strategies are necessary for those who are actively using. However, in response to the prevalence of drugs like fentanyl, the best prevention conversations that can be happening are about how we can include and support everyone

from all life scenarios, and champion healthy and whole individuals and communities.

When these conversations do not occur, we find people suffer. Let's consider the conditions in people's lives that create motivation to use substances where great risk is involved. Why people are using is answered when we ask if people feel connected and supported. How do we develop and share skills to practice emotional, social, spiritual, and physical health? Are we creating conditions for all individuals to thrive?

Fentanyl is indeed dangerous, and precautions must be taken for active users to stay safe. Yet if we really endeavor to prevent overdoses, let alone illicit drug use to begin with, let us engage in the vital conversation of what is happening in people's lives and how Richmond can collectively create and participate in a society where all people are supported and included.

RASS wishes you and your loved ones a safe and happy holiday season!

See you in 2017!



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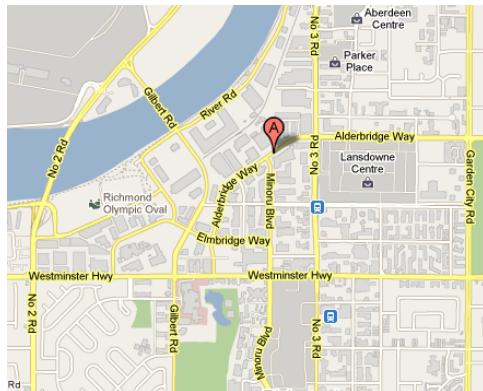
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RASS

Richmond
Addiction
Services
Society

Richmond Addiction Services is a non-profit, charitable society aimed at providing expertise in preventing and treating addictions in our community. RASS provides a wide range of services to residents of all ages in the City of Richmond and has been in the community for over 40 years.

*Excellence in Addiction Prevention—Education,
Engagement, Treatment*



❄️ **GET INVOLVED!** ❄️

Support our work and help us grow in 2017 by making a donation today!

Donate: Make a financial or in-kind contribution

Join: Become a Member of RASS

Volunteer: Email info@richmondaddictions.ca



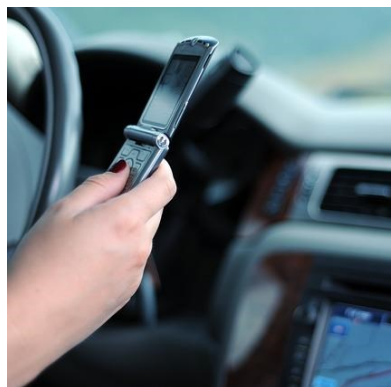
Your Brain on Texting

Scientists have found that text messaging has changed the way our brains work.

According to a new study, sending a text message can change the rhythm of a person's brainwaves. The study, published by Doctor William Tatum in the [Epilepsy and Behaviour journal](#), showed that 20% of participants experienced the unique change whilst texting.

The study involved 129 patients across a period of 16 months. Whether or not people have this "unique rhythm" is not dependent on people's age or gender, but another unidentified factor.

Participants were required to undertake various activities on their iPhone including text



messaging, finger tapping and talking on the phone, but only texting produced the different brain waves. Next to smartphones, the texting rhythm was also found in iPad users when they were performing a similar motion.

"We believe this new rhythm is an objective metric of the brain's ability to process non-verbal

information during use of electronic devices and that is heavily connected to a widely distributed network augmented by attention or emotion," stated Dr. Tatum.

They do not know why the pattern emerges during texting, but they hypothesize it may reflect some kind of brain reward system.

The findings have implications for a number of scenarios, including brain-computer interfacing and gaming. And most importantly, they say it sheds more light on the dangers of texting and driving.

Tatum noted, "There is now a biological reason why people shouldn't text and drive - texting can change brain waves."