

**HORS**

**PISTE**

Talking about anxiety stress-free  
Introduction to the program

Expedition component

*Early intervention*

January 2023





Centre RBC  
d'expertise universitaire  
en santé mentale



Université de  
Sherbrooke

Centre intégré  
de santé et de  
services sociaux de  
la Montérégie-Centre

Québec 

*Avec le financement de*



Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

Public Health  
Agency of Canada

**Suggested Citation:**

Centre RBC d'expertise universitaire en santé mentale et ses partenaires (2021). *HORS-PISTE - Expedition Program Intervention Guide*. Université de Sherbrooke.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

The HORS-PISTE Expedition program (early intervention component), known as the HARDIS+ program in 2018-2019, is a production of the Centre RBC d'expertise universitaire en santé mentale ("Centre RBC" in the rest of the text), intended for children, adolescents, and young adults at Université de Sherbrooke (UdeS) (<https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca>). This program is the product of the joint efforts of more than a hundred people from various fields of expertise. This section is dedicated to acknowledging the invaluable contribution made by each and every one of them.

### THE DESIGNERS AND WRITERS

This program was initiated in 2017, by Robert Pauzé, former director of Centre RBC (until August 31, 2018).

**Version 1.0 (2018-2019)** was designed and written by Robert Pauzé (former director, Centre RBC), Joelle Lepage (coordinator, Centre RBC), Vanessa Gauthier (research professional, Centre RBC), Katia Mercier (psychologist, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS), Pasquale Roberge (professor, UdeS), Patrick Gosselin (professor, UdeS), and Isabelle Côté (psychoeducator, Collège Mont Notre-Dame). This version was produced under the coordination of Joelle Lepage (coordinator, Centre RBC) and Julie Lane (director, Centre RBC).

**Version 2.0 (2019-2020 and 2020-2021)** was designed and written based on the evaluation of version 1.0 by Vanessa Gauthier (research professional, Centre RBC), Joelle Lepage (coordinator, Centre RBC), Marie Pauzé (research assistant, Centre RBC), Isabelle Côté (psychoeducator, Collège Mont Notre-Dame), Marjorie Larouche (psychoeducator, École secondaire Mitchell-Montcalm), Caroline Mailhot (psychologist, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS), Pasquale Roberge (professor, UdeS), Patrick Gosselin (professor, UdeS), Andrée-Anne Houle (research professional, Centre RBC), Yannick Rivard (psychoeducator, École secondaire Jeanne-Mance), Annick Bujold (facilitator, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Jacynthe Gagnon (facilitator, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Catherine Turcot (facilitator, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Camille Morissette (facilitator, École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent), Annick Maltais (coordinator, Centre RBC), Karolanne Gagné (research professional, Centre RBC), and Véronique Rodier (social worker, CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec). This version was produced under the coordination of Joelle Lepage (coordinator, Centre RBC), Danyka Therriault (coordinator, Centre RBC), and Julie Lane (director, Centre RBC), and was revised by Francine Boisvert (reviser) and Rachel Simard (executive secretary). The layout was done by Salomé Drapeau (graphic design student, Cégep de Sherbrooke).

**Version 3.0 (2021-2022)** was designed and written based on the evaluation of version 2.0 by Vanessa Gauthier (research professional, Centre RBC), Danyka Therriault (coordinator, Centre RBC), Joelle Lepage (coordinator, Centre RBC), and Audrey Guy (research professional, Centre RBC). This version was produced under the coordination of Danyka Therriault (coordinator, Centre RBC) and Julie Lane (director, Centre RBC), and was revised by Francine Boisvert (reviser).

**Version 1.0 of the Expedition program** was designed and written based on discussions with the working committee by Vanessa Gauthier (research professional, Centre RBC), Danyka Therriault (Coordinator, Centre RBC), Joelle Lepage (coordinator, Centre RBC), and Audrey Guy (research professional, Centre RBC). This version was produced under the coordination of Danyka Therriault (coordinator, Centre RBC) and Julie Lane (director, Centre RBC), and was revised by Francine Boisvert (reviser).

The Mindfulness section of **Versions 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0** would not have been possible without the input of Marie-Christine Morin (kinesiology student, UdeS) and Félix Berrigan (professor, UdeS).

We also wish to thank Tommy Sansfaçon (web programmer-analyst) for developing the HORS-PISTE website for developing the HORS-PISTE website (<https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/hors-piste/>), Barbara Dufour (illustrator) for the illustration of the two characters as well as Traduction Proteus for translating the material into English. The program name, logo, and the graphic image were designed by Tam-Tam\TBWA.

## STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS

Several students played a role in various stages of the project: Marie Pauzé (social work student), Catherine Chapdelaine-Viger (psychoeducation student), Marie-Christine Morin (kinesiology student), Alexis Thibault (health sciences student), Camille Otis-Hébert (social work student), and Valérie Bolduc (psychoeducation student).

## PROGRAM EVALUATORS

The program's implementation and outcomes were evaluated for each version. These evaluations were conducted by a research team supervised by Robert Pauzé (until August 31, 2018) and then by Julie Lane (director, Centre RBC and professor at UdeS). This interdisciplinary, inter-university, inter-faculty, and inter-network team is made up of 29 people from various fields of expertise: Robert Pauzé (retired professor, UdeS), Patrick Gosselin (professor, UdeS), Pasquale Roberge (professor, UdeS), Danyka Therriault (doctoral student and scientific coordinator, Centre RBC), Félix Berrigan (professor, UdeS), Marc Bélisle (professor, UdeS), Isabelle Thibault (professor, UdeS), Pascale Morin (professor, UdeS), Anne-Marie Tougas (professor, UdeS), Magalie Dufour (professor, Université du Québec à Montréal), Frédéric Nault-Brière (professor, Université de Montréal, in memoriam), Patricia Dionne (professor, UdeS), Brigitte Brabant (director, CISSS Montérégie-Centre), Isabelle Côté (psychoeducator, Collège Mont Notre-Dame), Félix Guay-Dufour (organizational psychology doctoral student, Centre RBC), Fabienne Lagueux (professor, UdeS), Éric Tremblay (assistant director, CIUSSS Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Nancy Beauregard (professor, Université de Montréal), Saliha Ziam (professor, TÉLUQ), Lara Maillet (professor, École nationale d'administration publique), Chantal Camden (professor, UdeS), Mélissa Généreux (public health director, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS and professor, UdeS), Linda Pinsonneault (professor, UdeS), Mathieu Roy (associate professor, UdeS), Jonathan Smith (professor, UdeS), Chantal Viscogliosi (professor, UdeS), Martin Drapeau (professor, McGill University), Anne Lessard (professor, UdeS), and Sébastien DeGagné (computer engineer).

We wish to thank all the students, parents, and facilitators who participated in the various data collections.

## CONTRIBUTORS FROM THE UNIVERSITY AND PRACTICE SETTINGS

Several people participated in the expert committees, contributing to the co-construction of the program by developing its broad outlines, suggesting certain activities, or providing feedback so that adjustments could be made.

**We wish to thank the members of the Sherbrooke expert committee:** Marc Bélisle (professor, UdeS), Andrée-Anne Houle (research professional, Centre RBC), Anne-Marie Tougas (professor, UdeS), Chantal Brochu (parent), Emmanuelle Jasmin (professor, UdeS), Ève-Lyne Robitaille-Beaumier (occupational therapist, UdeS), Félix Berrigan (professor, UdeS), Hugo Carrignan (clinical professor, UdeS), Isabelle Côté (psychoeducator, Collège Mont Notre-Dame), Isabelle Thibault (professor, UdeS), Jean-Philippe Goupil (planning, programming, and research officer, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS), Joelle Lepage (coordinator, Centre RBC), Karine Lizée (facilitator, Arrimage Estrie), Katia Mercier (psychologist, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-

CHUS), Manon Côté (psychologist, École Mitchell-Montcalm), Marie-Claude Boulanger (parent), Marie-Claude Fortin (director, L'Autre-Rive), Marie-Julie Riopel (facilitator, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS), Marie-Michèle Audet (spiritual life and community engagement facilitator, École Mitchell-Montcalm), Marie-Pier Cartier (student, UdeS), Marjorie Desormeaux-Moreau (professor, UdeS), Martine Bélanger (psychologist, École Mitchell-Montcalm), Mélisa Audet (person who had an eating disorder as an adolescent), Pasquale Roberge (professor, UdeS), Patrick Gosselin (professor, UdeS), Robert Pauzé (former director, Centre RBC, until August 31, 2018), Sonia Vachon (guidance counsellor, École Mitchell-Montcalm), Sylvain Turcotte (professor, UdeS), Vicky Leblanc (psychoeducator, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS), Caroline Mailhot (psychologist, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS), Pascale Morin (professor, UdeS), Véronique Foley (occupational therapist, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS), Janie Tremblay (resource person for psychopathological disorders and motor and organic impairments, Services régionaux de soutien et d'expertise de l'Estrie), and Luce Cardinal (coordinator, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS).

**We wish to sincerely thank the members of the expert committee at École Mitchell-Montcalm in the Estrie region:** Claude Hackett (vice-principal), Pascale Bilodeau (principal), Amélie Martin-Caya (vice-principal), Éline Quintal (vice-principal), Marie-Michèle Audet (spiritual life and community engagement facilitator), Sonia Vachon (guidance counsellor), Martine Bélanger (psychologist), Marie Ayotte (guidance counsellor), Marjorie Larouche (psychoeducator), and Betty Gagné (department manager, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS).

**We wish to sincerely thank the members of the expert committee at École secondaire du Triolet in the Estrie region:** Julie Cayer (vice-principal), Manon Côté (psychologist), Véronique Grenier (social worker), Dominic Desmarais (spiritual life and community engagement facilitator), Betty Gagné (department manager, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS).

**We wish to sincerely thank the members of the expert committee at École secondaire Jeanne-Mance in the Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec region:** Annie Charpentier (Commission scolaire des Chênes), Audrey Guy (coordinator, Centre RBC), Dany Duhamel (psychologist, CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Diane Normandeau (CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Geneviève Lacharité (CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Jean-Sébastien Dumaine (CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Josée Morin (Commission scolaire des Chênes), Karine Lachapelle (planning officer, CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Louise Turgeon (nurse clinician, École secondaire Jeanne-Mance), Lucie Duchesneau (psychoeducator, École secondaire Jeanne-Mance), Marilyne Beauchesne (social worker in social pediatrics, CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Marjorie Belzile (CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Martine Fréchette (CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Mélanie Michaud (Commission scolaire des Chênes), Mélanie Perreault (parent), Mélysa Prince (Commission scolaire des Chênes), Mylène Savard-Ménard (suicide prevention worker, Centre d'écoute et de prévention du suicide Drummond), Robert Pauzé (director, Centre RBC, until August 31, 2018), Sonia Trudel (Commission scolaire des Chênes), Stéphane Guilbert (principal, École secondaire Jeanne-Mance), Véronique Fournelle (executive assistant, Le Rendez-vous familial), Véronique Rodier (social worker, CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Vincent Cabal (vice-principal, École secondaire Jeanne-Mance), Yannick Rivard (psychoeducator, École secondaire Jeanne-Mance).

**We wish to sincerely thank the members of the expert committee at École secondaire Jean-Nicolet in the Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec region:** Anne-Claude Morissette (teacher, École secondaire Jean-Nicolet), Annie Frohlich (teacher, École secondaire Jean-Nicolet), Annie Gauthier (executive director, Centre d'expertise en dépendances), Audrey Guy (coordinator, Centre RBC), Chantal Guilbault (department head, CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), France Doyon (special education technician, École secondaire Jean-Nicolet), Frédéric Pruvost (principal, École secondaire Jean-Nicolet), Josée Garon (psychoeducator, École secondaire Jean-Nicolet), Karine Lachapelle (planning officer, CIUSSS de

Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Marc-André Godbout (vice-principal, École secondaire Jean-Nicolet), Robert Pauzé (director, Centre RBC, until August 31, 2018), Roxanne Beaudet (social worker, CIUSSS de Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Véronique Treillet (school psychologist, École secondaire Jean-Nicolet).

**We wish to sincerely thank the members of the expert committee at École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent in the Montérégie-Centre region:** Amélie Boudreau (teacher, École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent), Angie Rock (parent), Audrey Guy (coordinator, Centre RBC), Chantal Leclerc (clinical activities specialist, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Claire Couture (program director, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Habiba Loukil (parent), Hélène St-Germain (special education technician, École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent), Marie-Ève Lavoie (social worker, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Robert-Pauzé (director, Centre RBC, until August 2018), Sébastien Vaudry (psychoeducator, École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent), Serge Caron (principal, École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent), Stéphanie Lévesque (psychologist, École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent), Véronique Leblanc (vice-principal, École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent), Véronique Ricard (teacher, École secondaire Mgr-A.-M.-Parent).

**We wish to sincerely thank the members of the working committee created in winter 2021 to co-develop the Expédition component,** created and designed by and for facilitators at the integrated health and social services centres (CISSS) and the integrated university health and social services centres (CIUSSS): Lyso-Pierre Boulé (facilitator, CISSS de la Montérégie-Est), Marie-Pier Desrosiers-Canuel (facilitator, CISSS de la Montérégie-Est), Marie-Claude Larouche (senior program administrator, CISSS de la Montérégie-Est), Caroline Mailhot (psychologist, CIUSSS de l'Estrie-CHUS), Mylène Lecours (senior program administrator, CIUSSS de la Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec), Marilou Groleau (facilitator, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Chantal Angrignon (senior advisor, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Josée Blanchette (planning, programming, and research officer, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Maxime Charest-Caron (planning, programming, and research officer, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), Marilou Hamelin (planning, programming, and research officer, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre).

#### **ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM**

We wish to sincerely thank the Royal Bank of Canada for the operating grant awarded to Centre RBC, which made it possible to develop the program.

We wish to thank the Réseau universitaire intégré de santé et de services sociaux de Sherbrooke (RUISSS) for the various grants (\$100,000 in September 2017, \$150,000 in September 2018, and \$80,000 in March 2019) that allowed the program to be implemented in the regions affiliated with the RUISSS, namely the Montérégie, Estrie, Mauricie, Centre-du-Québec, and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean regions. Special thanks also go to Richard Deschamps (President-CEO) and Brigitte Brabant (director, multidisciplinary services, CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre), who were appointed by the RUISSS to implement the program.

Finally, we wish to thank the Public Health Agency of Canada for the \$312,412 grant (2020-2022) received under the Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the program.



*Avec le financement de*



Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

Public Health  
Agency of Canada

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION TO THE HORS-PISTE PROGRAM</b> .....	8
<b>KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE HORS-PISTE PROGRAM</b> .....	9
A. What is the point of the HORS-PISTE program? .....	9
B. How does the HORS-PISTE program align with ministry guidelines? .....	10
C. What approach was used to develop the HORS-PISTE program? .....	10
D. Why HORS-PISTE as the program name? .....	11
E. What are the foundations of the HORS-PISTE program? .....	11
F. What approaches is the program based on? .....	13
<b>HORS-PISTE - EXPEDITION PROGRAM</b> .....	15
G. What are the objectives of the HORS-PISTE EXPEDITION program? .....	15
H. Who is the program for? .....	15
I. What support is offered to the program facilitators?.....	16
J. What does the program consist of? .....	16
K. What intervention strategies are used in the workshops?.....	16
L. What are the program’s key elements? .....	17

## INTRODUCTION TO THE HORS-PISTE PROGRAM

The mental health of the general population is raising red flags in Quebec and all over the world, prompting us all to make mental health promotion a goal to work toward, for the well-being and development of individuals, communities, and nations (Mantoura *et al.*, 2017). Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health disorders in young people (Costello *et al.*, 2011). In recent years, several innovations have been introduced across Quebec to prevent these disorders, although they are not systematically used or implemented (Piché *et al.*, 2017).



The HORS-PISTE program is hoping to make a difference in that sense, with its innovative approach to promoting mental health and preventing anxiety in schools, from preschool to post-secondary levels. Through the development of psychosocial competencies and the promotion of psychological well-being, this program fosters the development of a coherent continuum of interventions aimed at preventing anxiety disorders, from early childhood to adulthood.

This introduction to the program is intended for those of you who have agreed to facilitate the HORS-PISTE Exploration program (universal component). THANK YOU for joining us on this mission to improve the mental health of our young people. The purpose of this document is to help you understand the key principles of the HORS-PISTE program by addressing:

- A. The point of the program;
- B. The alignment of the program with ministry guidelines;
- C. The approach used to develop the program;
- D. The name of the program;
- E. The program's foundations;
- F. The fundamental approaches of the program;





It also aims to equip you for the Expedition component of the HORS-PISTE program by introducing you to:

- G. The objectives of the HORS-PISTE - Expedition program;
- H. The program's target audience;
- I. Aspects to consider in forming the groups;
- J. The support offered to the program facilitators;
- K. The program content;
- L. The preferred intervention strategies.

To comply with Université de Sherbrooke's writing standards, gender-neutral writing is used as much as possible in the HORS-PISTE material. However, to lighten the text or to preserve the meaning of certain words, parentheses are used in some cases: summary sheets handed out to the students, parents, or school staff members, speaker's notes for use by the facilitators, PowerPoint presentations.

## KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE HORS-PISTE PROGRAM

### A. What is the point of the HORS-PISTE program?

Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health disorders in adolescence (Costello *et al.*, 2011). They appear during early childhood or adolescence, causing a range of functional difficulties that can worsen over the course of a lifetime (Piché *et al.*, 2017).

The prevalence of anxiety disorders in adolescents is cause for concern. Affecting more than 10% of young people, anxiety disorders are among the most common psychopathologies in children and adolescents (Dumas, 2013), and among those that sometimes appear in early childhood, although most often between middle childhood and middle adolescence (Dumas, 2013). In its latest survey, the Institut de la statistique du Québec (2016-2017) found that 17% of high school students say that they have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder by a doctor or other healthcare professional. Finally, anxiety becomes more prevalent with age, with roughly 21% of adults experiencing an anxiety disorder during their lifetime (Dumas, 2013).



An anxiety disorder during adolescence has consequences that are both significant and far-reaching. In fact, anxiety affects a child's judgment (Tardif, 2008) and working memory (Cassady, 2010), and can cause learning difficulties (APA, 2013), ultimately leading to the child dropping out of school (Lapointe and Freiberg, 2007).

Anxiety can also cause low self-esteem, difficulties with social relationships (Charrette, 2012), depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation (APA, 2013; Dubé, 2009), eating disorders (Trudeau, 2006), and depression (Marcotte, 2013). Anxiety disorders can also precede—sometimes by several years—the onset of a panic disorder, depressive disorder, alcohol, drug, or tobacco abuse, and a higher risk of contemplating suicide and committing suicide (Dumas, 2013).

The situation is becoming especially alarming given that most young people with anxiety suffer in silence,

isolate themselves, and withdraw socially (Lambert-Samson, 2016). The situation is so dire that 70% of children and adolescents with an anxiety disorder have never received professional help (Bosquet and Egeland, 2006).

## B. How does the HORS-PISTE program align with ministry guidelines?

The HORS-PISTE program is fully aligned with MSSS guidelines, including:

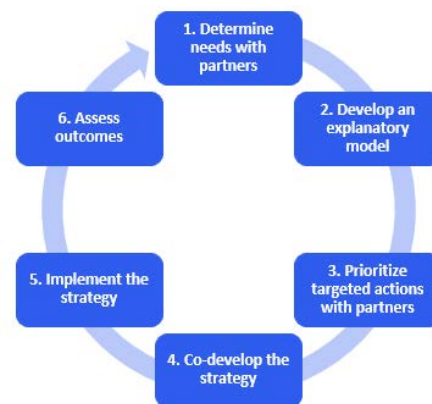
- The **2015-2020 Mental Health Action Plan**, because the HORS-PISTE program reinforces the continuum of services for young people (Measure 4), improves access mechanisms and service trajectories to meet the needs of young people (Measure 5), implements promotion and prevention measures in the school setting (Measure 9), and identifies and provides early support and intervention to vulnerable young people (Measure 14);
- The new **ÉKIP reference framework** to promote the health, well-being, and educational success of young people, because the HORS-PISTE program helps to develop the psychosocial competencies targeted by this reference framework as being critical to mental health promotion;
- The **Politique gouvernementale de prévention en santé**, because the HORS-PISTE program promotes the development of personal capacities from an early age (orientation 1) and promotes the strengthening of prevention actions in the health and social services system (orientation 4).

The HORS-PISTE program is aligned with the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur's *Québec Education Program* (QEP), because it plays a role in building up the focuses of development (self-knowledge and awareness of basic needs, awareness of the consequences of personal choices, active lifestyle and safe behaviour) and certain cross-curricular competencies (constructs identity, achieves potential, cooperates with others, uses creativity, communicates appropriately, solves problems, exercises critical judgment, uses information, uses information and communication technologies [ICT]).

## C. What approach was used to develop the HORS-PISTE program?

The program was developed by Université de Sherbrooke's Centre RBC d'expertise universitaire en santé mentale for children, adolescents, and young adults. Its mission is to promote collaboration between disciplines and sectors and to pool community expertise to meet the needs of children, adolescents, and young adults with or at risk for mental health problems. The approach used to develop each of its projects, including the HORS-PISTE program, is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Approach used to develop the HORS-PISTE program



This approach is used

to develop projects that correspond to identified needs and that are based on the scientific/experiential knowledge of the stakeholders involved in co-constructing projects and adapting them to their specific settings. It is also used to assess the implementation and outcomes of projects, which can then be adjusted on a continuous basis.

In addition to being based on good practices, the HORS-PISTE program was co-constructed by several people on various committees (see acknowledgements section). These committees are made up of

parents, school administrators, representatives of community organizations, professionals and managers from the health and social services network (HSSN), school facilitators, teachers, students, researchers, university students, etc. In particular, the HORS-PISTE program encourages stakeholders from the education network and the HSSN to join forces to tackle anxiety disorders in young people.

#### D. Why HORS-PISTE as the program name?



“Leave the roads; take the trails,” Pythagoras said! HORS-PISTE represents the road less taken that we want the students to embark on—the trail that few skiers or hikers ever dare to follow. Taking the road less travelled means taking risks, trying new solutions, and thinking about things from a different angle. Despite the risks, this trail provides opportunities to discover new things, challenge the status quo, and explore personal strengths and limits.

The HORS-PISTE program draws its inspiration from this concept. The workshops encourage students to take risks and face their challenges. The workshops give them an opportunity to venture into uncharted territory, to test new ways of dealing with their challenges and problems, to recognize their strengths and limits, etc. With your valuable support as a facilitator, the workshops will help them explore new ways to approach life with confidence, compassion, and perseverance.

#### E. What are the foundations of the HORS-PISTE program?

Using an ecological approach, a concept map was developed based on a literature review (Fournier and Pauzé, 2016) of risk and protective factors associated with anxiety disorders in adolescence (Pauzé, 2017). The HORS-PISTE program was developed based on this concept map, with a view to addressing the determining factors. Although this map was designed based on literature about adolescence, it is still useful to understanding the preventive factors that need to be addressed as early as preschool. This concept map, comprised of several figures, illustrates (see Figure 1, which shows part of the map): 1) the main categories of associated risk factors; 2) the biological, temperamental, psychological, and cognitive risk factors associated with anxiety; 3) the associated social risk factors; and 4) the associated family risk factors.

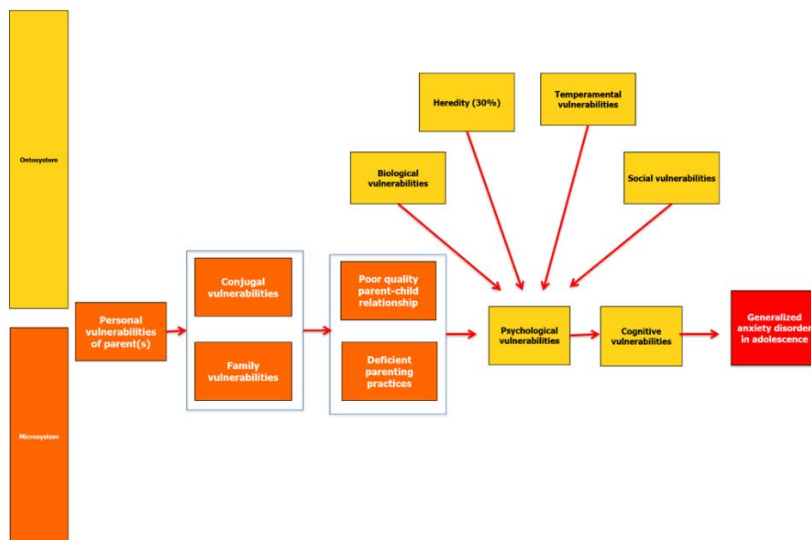


Figure 1. Main categories of risk factors associated with anxiety disorders in adolescence

This literature review also provided insight into the mechanics of anxiety disorders in adolescence (see Figure 2). The factors identified could be considered targets for prevention, early intervention, and specialized intervention programs.

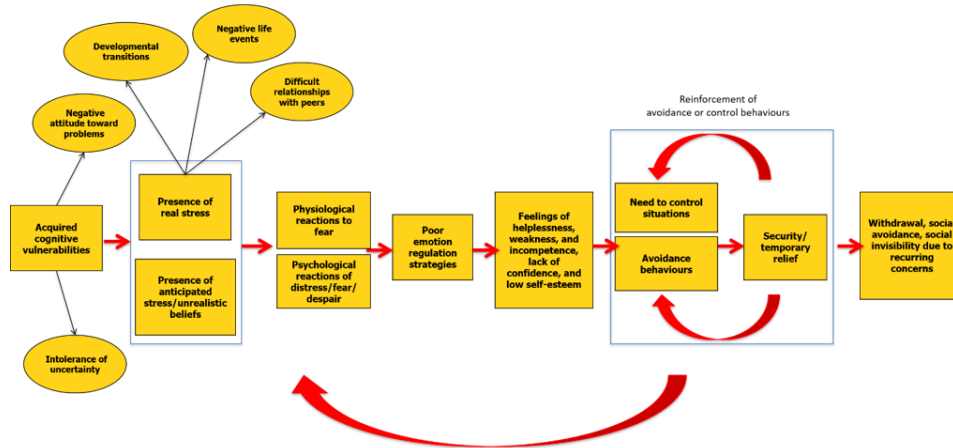


Figure 2. Mechanics of anxiety disorder in adolescence

Based on our literature reviews, we drew up the following profile of a young person: inhibited temperament, low level of emotion regulation capacity, insecure attachment style, low self-esteem, low level of social competence, negative attitude toward problems, intolerance of uncertainty, overprotective parenting practices, and exposure to anxiety-provoking stimuli. The major precipitating factors for these disorders include negative events, environmental stress, day-to-day and relationship problems, drug use, etc.

The Centre RBC also carried out a thorough review of evidence-based stress and anxiety prevention programs in adolescence (Houle, 2017). In addition to this review, a survey of programs for primary school students was also done. This review consisted in a critical survey of the school-based anxiety disorder prevention programs currently available for secondary and primary school students; it led to various findings:

- the programs that take a cognitive-behavioural approach generally address the greatest number of risk and protective factors and are shown to be the most effective;
- few programs are multi-modal and offer activities that relate to the student, their family, and the school;
- most of the programs are offered in group settings, during class hours, and almost all the programs identified incorporate breathing and relaxation techniques.

This literature review also identified the main targets of the prevention programs, based on the risk factors (see Figure 3). This review was completed with a survey of psychosocial competencies development programs. These reviews served as the basis for developing the program.

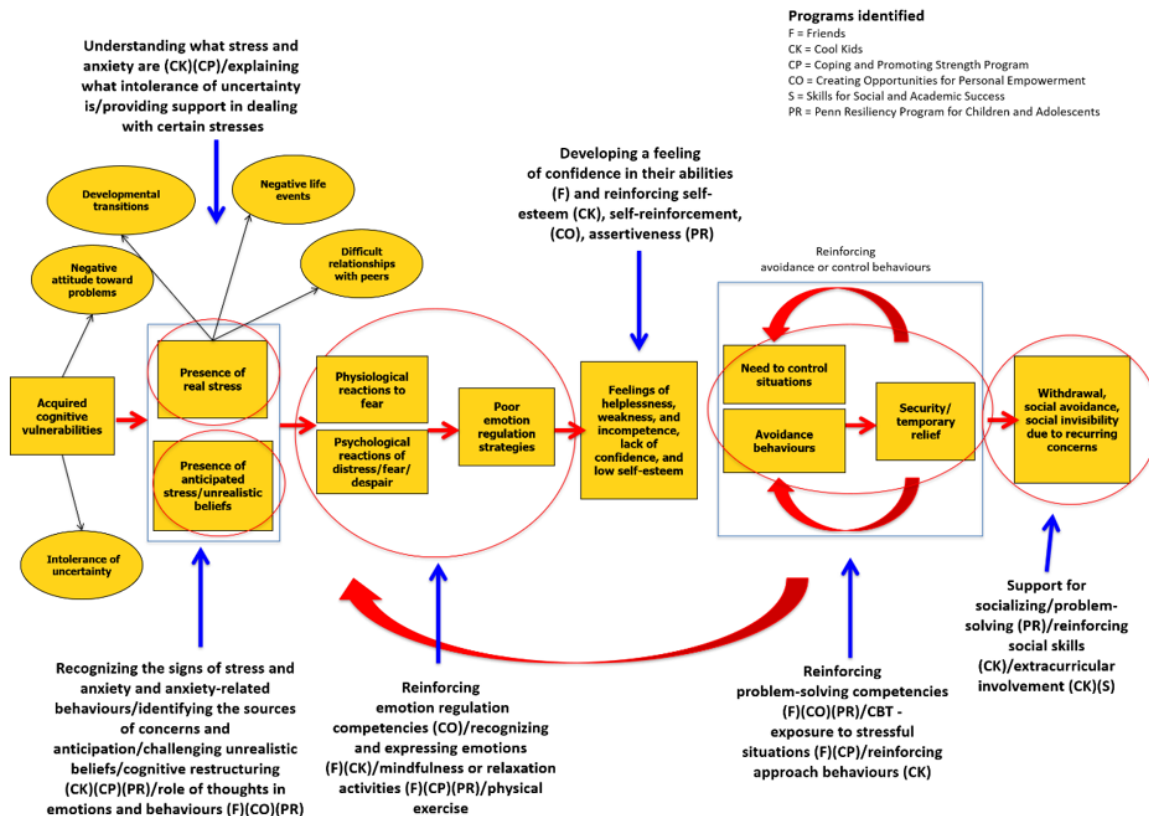


Figure 3. Main targets of the prevention programs surveyed.

The Centre RBC also drew up a portrait of the population to better tailor the HORS-PISTE program to the reality of Quebec secondary school students. A total of 8,690 students, from secondary 1 to 5, and from 14 secondary schools across Quebec, participated in this extensive data collection exercise at two separate times, namely in winter 2018 and fall 2018. The data collection was used to draw up a portrait of secondary students in terms of their personal, family, social, and school characteristics. It also revealed some key highlights. Thus, up to 1) 45 % of students report having difficulties related to hyperactivity, inattention, or emotions; 2) 29% of students say they are worried about being judged by others; 3) 26 % of students say they have low self-esteem; 4) 23 % of students report having symptoms related to social phobia; 5) 22 % of students say they have symptoms related to generalized anxiety disorder, and 5) 38% of students say that anxiety has an impact on their school, social, daily, or family activities.

## F. What approaches is the program based on?

The workshops of the HORS-PISTE program are based on the cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) approach. This approach has been proven effective in anxiety disorders, in terms of prevention and early intervention (Turgeon and Gosselin, 2015; Werner-Seidler *et al.*, 2017). Specifically, the program is based on third-wave CBT approaches, integrating a few of mindfulness activities (among others) and encouraging students to

examine the relationship between their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. This approach is based on the interaction between these three elements. The techniques used in this approach help the students to realize that their fundamental beliefs and various cognitive processes form the basis of the automatic thoughts that then influence their emotions and actions (Beck, 2011). In concrete terms, the workshops

of the HORS-PISTE program encourage the students to:

- realize that their thoughts are not necessarily an accurate reflection of reality. The students are encouraged to develop the habit of observing their thoughts, not immediately jumping to conclusions, and questioning their beliefs;
- de-dramatize the situation and place more emphasis on exploring their automatic thoughts and their beliefs, especially when they are wrong.

**Mindfulness is the central theme of several of the workshops.** Mindfulness is “the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). More precisely, living mindfully means being aware and fully present for the various moments of one’s life. There are many benefits to a mindfulness practice: better communication, more highly developed senses, better stress and emotional management, more conducive learning conditions, quality relationships (Keng, Smoski and Robins, 2011).



## HORS-PISTE - EXPEDITION PROGRAM

As you know, adolescence comes with several developmental challenges. Adolescents go through a number of physical, psychological, family, and social changes. This stage of life is characterized by a succession of changes that can spark concerns, stress, and anxiety for both adolescents and their parents. For all these reasons, adolescence is an opportune and crucial time to learn how to deal with uncertainty, especially since it corresponds to the time when anxiety disorders begin to develop (Claes, 2005).

### G. What are the objectives of the HORS-PISTE EXPEDITION program?

This program aims, on one hand, to help adolescents develop the competencies needed to deal with the anxiety-provoking situations they face and, on the other hand, to equip their parents with the means to promote the development of these new competencies. In developing these competencies, the HORS-PISTE Expedition program is designed to prevent the emergence of an anxiety disorder in students with certain risk factors.

Specifically, the student will find out how to expand their comfort zone by learning to:

- Recognize their sensations
- Reformulate their thoughts into helpful ones
- Manage their emotions to better cope with them
- Adopt new behaviours: Take action!
- Adopt healthy lifestyle habits
- Use stress management strategies
- Nurture and properly use their social network
- Draw on their strengths to help other group members progress



The parent will have the opportunity to:

- Understand anxiety and recognize its effects on their child
- Develop tools to help their child expand their comfort zone
- Adopt new behaviours to reduce accommodation
- Discuss their experiences and draw on their strengths to help other group members progress

### H. Who is the program for?

The HORS-PISTE - Expedition program is designed for junior high school students who have difficulty coping with anxiety-provoking situations, as well as their parents. When selecting students, you are asked to consider the severity of the symptoms, as well as the services already offered to the student.

For example:

- In the case of a student who presents with too much symptom intensity or severe distress, it is important to assess whether the student should instead receive specific or specialized services offered by the local CI(U)SSS;

- In the case of a student who is already receiving outpatient services for a problem related to anxiety, it is important to assess whether participation in the early intervention group is appropriate or whether there is a risk of duplicating services;
- In the case of a student who is waiting to receive outpatient services, it may be appropriate to encourage participation in the group while waiting for outpatient treatment, depending on the severity of the symptoms.

### I. What support is offered to the program facilitators?

An HORS-PISTE website was created for quick and easy access to all the program materials (<https://sante-mentale-jeunesse.usherbrooke.ca/hors-piste/>). Among other things, you will find the facilitation guide, the handy parent and student guides, the PowerPoint presentations for classroom use, the worksheets, etc.

You will also receive a half-day of basic training before the workshops begin. The goal of this training is to clarify the content of the HORS-PISTE - Expedition program, but above all to prepare you to lead the workshops by presenting the concept of mutual support, the stages of group development, and the role of the facilitator, while exploring different scenarios. Offered by the CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre implementation team, this training will also introduce you to mindfulness.

Throughout the HORS-PISTE - Expedition program, a support person from the CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre implementation team will be available for one-on-one consultations, as needed.

### J. What does the program consist of?

The HORS-PISTE - Expedition program is a specific intervention program that includes the following:

- A 60-minute parent-child preparatory meeting
- Eight weekly 60-minute workshops for students (approximately eight students per group)
- Three bi-weekly 90-minute group workshops for parents
- One 60-minute parent-child review meeting

The implementation of the HORS-PISTE program within the CIUSSS sometimes requires adding ad hoc individual or family meetings during the rollout. In fact, additional issues may arise during the process that cannot be addressed in the group intervention. Some students may also need to take what they learned in the HORS-PISTE program one step further in a group setting. The facilitator therefore needs to exercise clinical judgment in determining which additional measures are needed to adequately meet the students' needs. While participating in the HORS-PISTE program is enough to allow many students to cope better with their anxiety, some may need extended follow-up after the program ends.

### K. What intervention strategies are used in the workshops?

This program is based on group interventions. The mutual support provided in group interventions is key to allowing the students to develop their competencies for dealing with anxiety-provoking situations. Steinberg (2008) defines mutual support as a therapeutic mode accessible in all group interventions. Mutual support occurs when people share their knowledge and help one another. This is a fundamental aspect of the group process. As a facilitator, it's important to encourage mutual support.

Turcotte and Lindsay's (2008) stages of development are helpful to understanding the phases that the



group goes through and the facilitator's role during these stages. Once again, these stages of development based on a therapeutic model allow for a better understanding of any group process. These concepts are covered in more detail during the training.

In summary, one of your main roles is to reassure the students and their parents and to create a relationship of trust, a key pillar of the process. This trust will act as a foundation for the possible mutual support that will develop between the participants. At that point, you can gradually step back into more of a facilitator role, allowing the students and their parents to be open and honest about their experiences.

Other important roles include drawing out this experience and encouraging them to tap into it, along with their strengths and perceptions of themselves and others. To some extent, their experiences are the raw ingredients of the workshops. The workshop discussions and your observations of the HORS-PISTE activities will help you to better understand the issues experienced by each student, put the content into perspective, and help them understand and assimilate it.

Continue to emphasize the concept of baby steps as you celebrate all the changes and efforts, even the smallest ones, made by the student. Other important intervention strategies include making the student feel good about themselves and boosting their confidence in their ability to face anxiety-provoking situations. You also need to be able to encourage the student to step outside of their comfort zone and challenge them to act.

## L. What are the program's key elements?

This guide outlines the content of the parent-child preparatory meeting, the ten group workshops for students, the five group workshops for parents, and the parent-child review meeting.

It seemed only natural to us to include a section for parents. In fact, parents should not only be involved in the intervention but also receive support themselves (Turgeon and Gosselin, 2015; Yap *et al.*, 2014). Many programs for children and adolescents with anxiety include a section for parents. Research has shown a significant increase in positive impacts when the parents are involved (Barrett *et al.*, 1996).

As you read through this guide, you'll notice that each group workshop in the HORS-PISTE - Expedition program generally contains the following elements:

- Specific workshop objectives
- The material and preparation needed to lead the workshop
- A mindfulness activity
- A review activity
- Group activities aimed at achieving the specific objectives
- A recommended challenge or observation for the week ahead

Among the eight group meetings for students, two allow them to experience the exhibition *in vivo*. These activities are called HORS-PISTE activities and take place at the fourth and sixth meetings. An outline for the facilitation of these meetings is presented in each of these workshops. The exposure experienced in a group setting allows for a more significant anchoring of the learnings made in the program. Some programs for anxious students are even based solely on the exhibition.

