

Healthy Together (HT) is an initiative of individuals, families, communities and governments working together toward a common goal – to promote the achievement and maintenance of healthier weight practices in children (0-18y) and their families. As part of a National Innovation Project funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada<sup>1</sup>, HT has been developed by The Bridge Youth & Family Services<sup>2</sup>, and implemented in over twenty communities across Canada, with the aim to promote the achievement and maintenance of healthier weights in children and their families (including foster families, Aboriginal, multi-cultural, low-income and other underserved families).

### **What is HT?**

HT is an innovative family education program that enhances knowledge, skills and attitudes, and encourages learning to make healthier choices and building healthy relationships within families and communities. The program consists of weekly group sessions touching on key themes including food, nutrition, physical activity, relationships, and community. Each session provides tools and opportunities for families by engaging them in –

- group learning activities
- cooking and eating
- fun physical activities

HT values participation by all family members, therefore promotes universal access regardless of their knowledge/skill level; families need not be overweight/ obese to participate in HT groups.

### **How to integrate HT in core service?**

HT offers easy to integrate activities and resources that promote knowledge and skills' development for healthier weight practices in families. By integrating HT within core programming (as part of pre-existing group service), organizations create a cost efficient platform for supporting children, youth and caregivers in achieving a healthy lifestyle for themselves.

The revised toolkit integrates lessons learned from Canada-wide implementation, and is now more relevant and effective for population groups in different community contexts and capacities. Following are some examples of flexible approaches offered by HT–

- Explicit goals and key themes for each session, with an option to tailor content to meet unique participants' needs and age groups (0-6, 7-12, 13-18y)
- Use of practical instructions and participant handouts with examples of activities that reflect everyday life situations
- Program material to suit varying group formats and time frames i.e. for drop in or registered groups
- Group sessions to be offered in rotation, during a fiscal /school year as part of regular service (e.g. CAPC, CPNP, AHS, FRP, School based/youth groups)
- Facilitator Training to highlight literacy, poverty and trauma - issues that may impact HT facilitation
- Use of regional/ local resources to encourage adaptations per region, culture and context (e.g. activity modifications, recipe replacements when working with multi-cultural/ ethnic and Aboriginal groups)

### **Interested in bringing HT to your community?**

We offer HT Facilitator Training for professionals/ organizations interested in bringing HT to their community. For details please contact us at: [healthy-together@thebridgeservices.ca](mailto:healthy-together@thebridgeservices.ca) or visit [www.healthy-together.ca](http://www.healthy-together.ca).

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1. 'Healthy Together' is part of the Healthy Weights for Children Project, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada's Innovation Strategy for "Achieving Healthier Weights in Canada's Communities".  
2. The Bridge is a non-profit charitable organization located in Kelowna, BC, that has been developing and providing innovative and quality programming for children and families since 1969.