

ANNUAL  
IMPACT  
REPORT  
**2020**

**DRUG  
FREE  
KIDS**  
CANADA.ORG



**Drug Free Kids Canada** Where families come for help

# DFK ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2020



**DFKC PREVENTION EFFORTS ARE REDUCING THE NUMBER OF YOUTH STRUGGLING WITH PROBLEMATIC SUBSTANCE USE BY 1400 KIDS EVERY YEAR. <sup>1</sup>**

## **2020 – FACING NEW CHALLENGES**

The pandemic had a major global impact in 2020 – and like many non-profit organizations, we’ve faced many challenges during the year. Our team met these challenges head-on – with calm, compassion and a lot of creative innovation. We are grateful for the continued support of our valued corporate and media partners who stood beside us throughout the year - we have continued to make great strides together, despite these challenges.



**EDUCATE**



**ENGAGE**



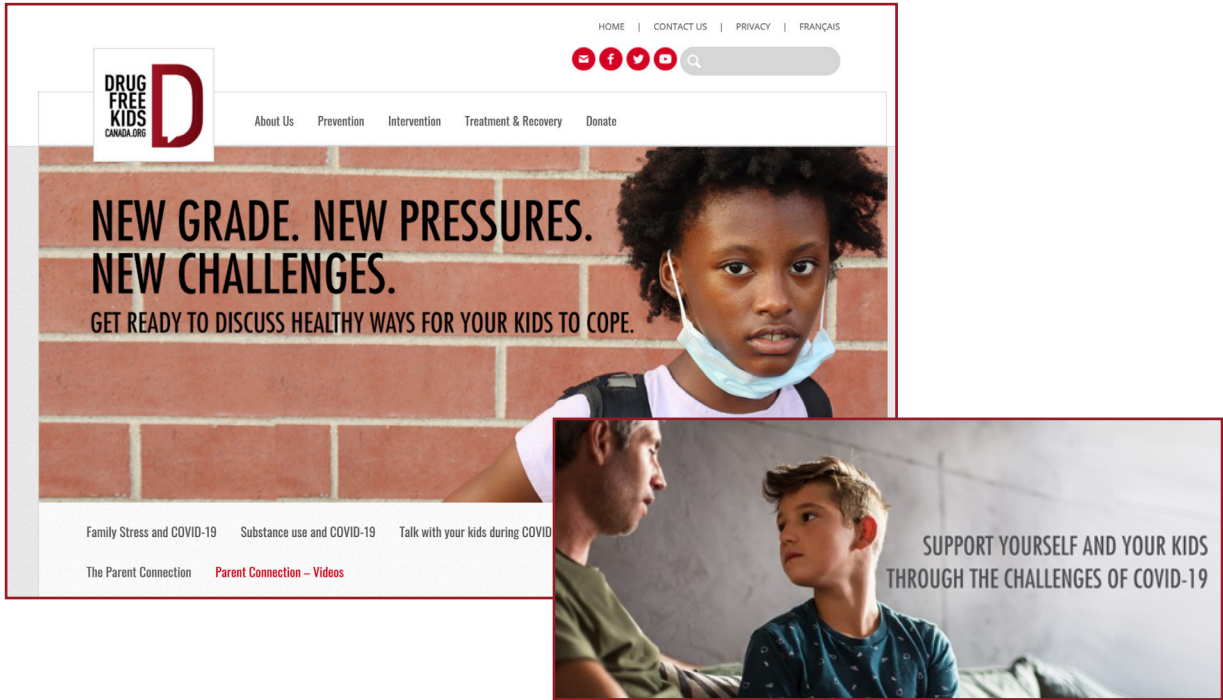
**EMPOWER**

DFKC educates, engages and empowers parents and supportive adults to have ongoing, non-judgemental dialogue with youth about substance use - at every stage - to ensure they have the right information to make healthy choices for themselves.





Life for families during a pandemic has proven to be drastically different and has negatively impacted families across the country. Parents and kids face isolation, financial and employment uncertainty, concerns over the health and welfare of their family and friends, and regular disruptions to daily life - all causing a substantial increase in anxiety and stress levels as the months drag on, and more people are turning to alcohol, cannabis and other drugs to help them cope.



**We realised early on in the year that parents would need much more support to help them deal with these challenges.**

- 21% of Canadians (aged 18–34) reported their alcohol consumption increased.
- 25% of Canadians (aged 35–54) increased the amount of alcohol they drink while spending additional time at home.
- The main reasons reported for their increased alcohol use are: the change of schedule (51%), boredom (49%) and stress (44%). (Source CCSA)

By providing valuable information on our website about stress management, as well as the impacts of using substances like alcohol, cannabis and nicotine within the context of COVID, we undertook to help parents understand that taking good care of themselves, modelling positive behaviours and openly discussing stress with their kids are just some of the ways parents can help their children develop positive coping skills to help them get through the tough times.

The DFK website continued to be an informational hub for parents. In 2020, there were a total of 200K sessions on the website, an increase of 12% over the previous year.



# DFK RESOURCES

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Over the last year we've produced timely, compelling and easy to read informational graphics to better support families, including:

**Support yourself and your family** – This resource was developed at the onset of COVID-19. Its supportive tone, which encourages balance and wellness, has been very popular, and public health agencies, such as the Vancouver Island Health Authority, have opted to use it in their cache of community supports.

**Cannabis - Inhalation vs Ingestion** – This one-pager contains information about the delayed and unpredictable effects of ingesting cannabis along with tips for parents on how to have age appropriate conversations with their kids about cannabis products.

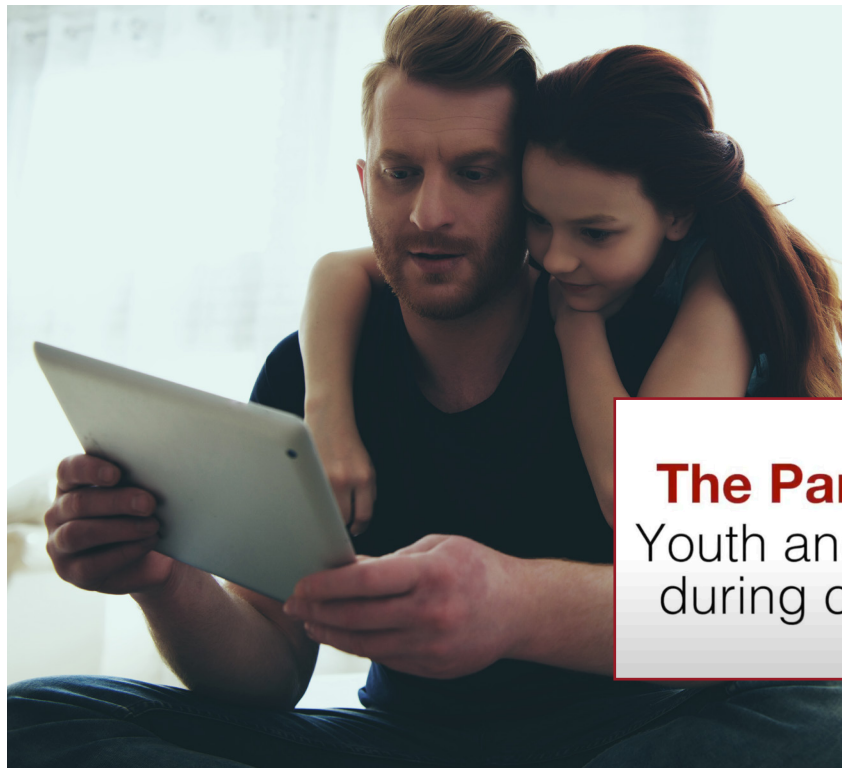
**Mind Your Medications** – This guide reminds parents to keep their kids safe during the pandemic lockdown by securing all prescription and OTC medications safely in the home.

# DFK INOVATIONS 2020

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**The Parent Connection** – A Video learning series.

This year's Back to School Campaign highlighted video conversations with our Advisory Council experts about youth substance use in the context of COVID. These videos feature a variety of topics including vaping, self-medicating with substances, cannabis, and how to promote the mental wellness of youth during stressful times.



**Corporate Engagement** - DFK also moderated informative webinars for our corporate partners that featured Advisory Council experts David Hammond, PhD, one of Canada's foremost experts on the harms of vaping by youth and youth psychologist Dr. Abby Goldstein.

**The Parent Connection**  
Youth and mental wellness  
during challenging times



# ENGAGE

While the topic of substance use is familiar to most parents and supportive adults, many parents don't feel their kids are at risk, or they don't feel comfortable discussing drugs with their kids. One of the guiding principles at DFK is "Talk with your kids." This year it seemed more important than ever.

We launched two awareness campaigns to address substance use by young people, one about cannabis edibles and one with a focus on securing medications during lockdown. These unique and impactful media campaigns encourage and engage parents and adult allies to have frequent, meaningful and effective conversations with their children about the potential harms of substance use.

## Dark Gummies Campaign

In February 2020, DFK rolled out an edgy, award-winning PSA on cannabis edibles, featuring humorous animated characters that illustrate the darker side of what can appear at first sight to be innocent and cute.

The Dark Gummies campaign, featured on television, radio, billboards, digital, and social media has been the most provocative, talked about campaign we have ever produced – with 80K views on YouTube alone.

In our DFK Tracking study, a third of parents told us they had a discussion about cannabis with their kids as a result of having seen the ad. Of those reporting having a conversation, 95% stated that the conversation had a positive influence on their child's behaviour.



Cannabis edibles aren't as innocent as they look.



## The Pill Fairy 2.0

Young Canadians aged 15 to 24 are the fastest-growing population requiring hospital care from opioid overdoses.<sup>2</sup>

DFK brought back the successful «Pill Fairy» campaign – using the 30 sec television spot and new radio and print creative – all with a humorous reminder that the Pill Fairy doesn't exist – so it's up to parents to protect their kids by securely storing all prescription and OTC medications safely in the home, as many pharmacies were not able to accept medication returns this year.



## Community Engagement

We continue to check in regularly with our community through our newsletters, focus groups and parent surveys to ensure we are providing them with the information they need about youth and substance use and support to enhance mental wellness.

By maintaining open channels of communication with our DFK community, we can identify the information parents and adult allies are looking for and respond accordingly in a timely fashion.



**21% OF THE CANADIAN POPULATION WILL MEET THE CRITERIA FOR ADDICTION IN THEIR LIFETIME.<sup>3</sup>**

### **2020 - A Year of Research**

Our prevention approach is a highly cost-effective means of disseminating evidence based drug education messaging on a national scale; and saves hundreds of millions in healthcare, criminal, and lost productivity dollars annually.

To understand and articulate DFK's value as an organisation to society, we gathered current, quantitative data that can validate the impact of our campaigns and youth drug prevention initiatives in two ways: the Social Return on Investment (SROI) Study a collaboration with McMaster University ; and the DFKC Tracking Study for 2020.

The SROI data collected confirms:

- DFKC is reducing the number of youth struggling with problematic substance use by 1400/year
- The combined healthcare, crime, and lost productivity costs to society per teen suffering from problematic substance use is \$490,000 over their lifetime.
- \$1 invested in DFKC equals \$33 saved by society, representing a strong social return on investment.

### **DFKC Tracking Study 2020 - Tracking the attitudes of parents and teens**

An online survey was conducted to gather the data, targeting parents of youth aged 11 to 19, and teenagers aged 13-19.

#### **Attitudes and behaviours around youth drug education**

- 96% of parents feel that youth drug prevention messaging is 'important or very important', and the majority of those (75%) think DFKC is a knowledgeable source of information on drug and alcohol misuse.
- 45% of parents say they've spoken '2 or 3 times' about substance use.

#### **Substance use and mental health**

Feedback from both parent and youth groups indicates one third of teenagers have experienced a negative change in behaviour or mood because of the pandemic. Among them, almost 20% have considered using substances to cope. Cannabis was the first choice cited, at 65%, followed by alcohol at 61%.

**In 2020, the mental wellness of families was severely impacted by the pandemic.** As we move forward into 2021, mental health and wellness supports will be further mainstreamed across DFKC's programming – PSAs, education resources and website - and we are working closely with our Advisory Council experts and others to further this goal.

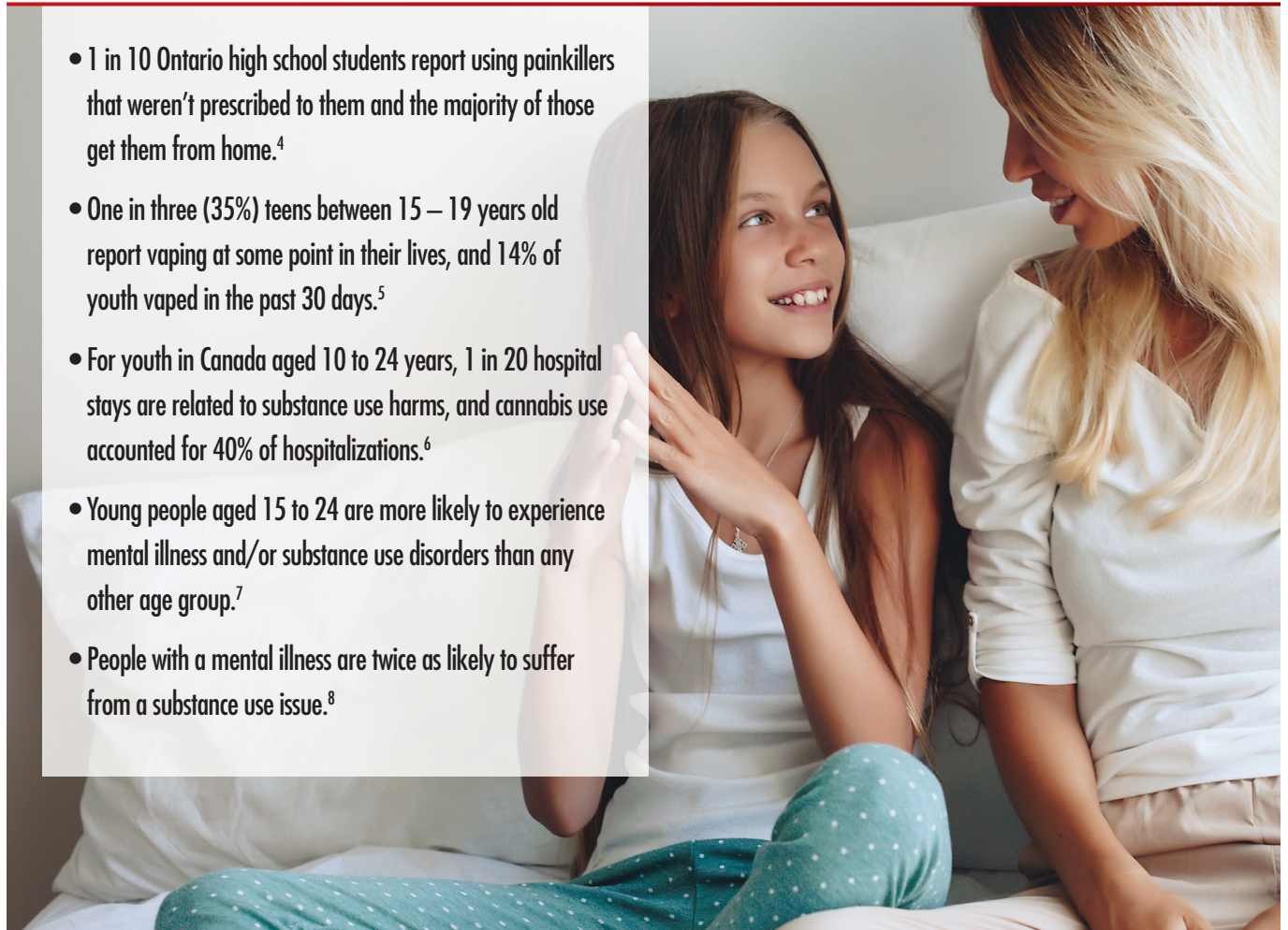


# EMPOWER

Throughout the trials of this pandemic, parents and other supportive adults continue to be the most important agents of change in preventing the problematic use of substances by young people, and we are excited to develop improved and more direct ways of supporting them.

## HAVING MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS WITH KIDS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- 1 in 10 Ontario high school students report using painkillers that weren't prescribed to them and the majority of those get them from home.<sup>4</sup>
- One in three (35%) teens between 15 – 19 years old report vaping at some point in their lives, and 14% of youth vaped in the past 30 days.<sup>5</sup>
- For youth in Canada aged 10 to 24 years, 1 in 20 hospital stays are related to substance use harms, and cannabis use accounted for 40% of hospitalizations.<sup>6</sup>
- Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness and/or substance use disorders than any other age group.<sup>7</sup>
- People with a mental illness are twice as likely to suffer from a substance use issue.<sup>8</sup>



### Parents are the leading source of information for teenagers about substances.

63% of teenagers 13 to 19 years old reported that they get their information on drugs from their parents and in the classroom.<sup>9</sup>

DFK continues to be on the forefront of drug prevention education that helps parents and adult allies with the information and tools to support effective, honest, and meaningful conversations with their children.

### With your help, we can do so much more.

4 CAMH, OHSDUS 2019

5 The Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey, 2019

6 Canadian Institute for Health Information 2019

7 Pearson, Janz and Ali (2013). Health at a glance: Mental and substance use disorders in Canada. Statistics Canada

8 Rush et al. (2008). Prevalence of co-occurring substance use and other mental disorders in the Canadian population. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*

9 DFKC Tracking study 2020

# A MESSAGE FROM

PAUL ALLISON  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD



CHANTAL VALLERAND  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*When the storms of life come...adjust your sails.*

This year, COVID 19 created unprecedented challenges for all businesses, and philanthropy has been hit especially hard. We've had to adjust our approach to highlight the relevance of our message within the pandemic context.

More than ever, it became important to support families to find ways to stay well, stay calm and stay mentally healthy.

Our team showcased commitment, resourcefulness, and perseverance to ensure that Drug Free Kids Canada would remain a steady support for families.

Our core mission remains to reduce the prevalence of problematic substance use by youth. Ninety percent of addiction begins before the age of 18 , and our goal is to guarantee that every young person will be able to live a life free of this burden. DFKC engages parents as the key agents of change in promoting healthy behaviors and reducing problematic substance use among youth.

Since our inception, DFK Canada has been very successful at creating drug education and prevention by enlisting top advertising agencies to work pro bono. Over the last decade, we have delivered 15 game-changing PSA campaigns and generated countless media impressions. Our unique relationships with more than 60 media partners provided over \$20M of in-kind media support this year, allowing us to reach millions of Canadians - making DFK one of the top not-for-profit advertisers in its category. Even in a pandemic context, our generous partners were by our side and we want to convey a heartfelt thank you to each of them.

We also extend our gratitude to our Advisory Council experts who took part in our video series this year and to our Board Members for their unwavering support.

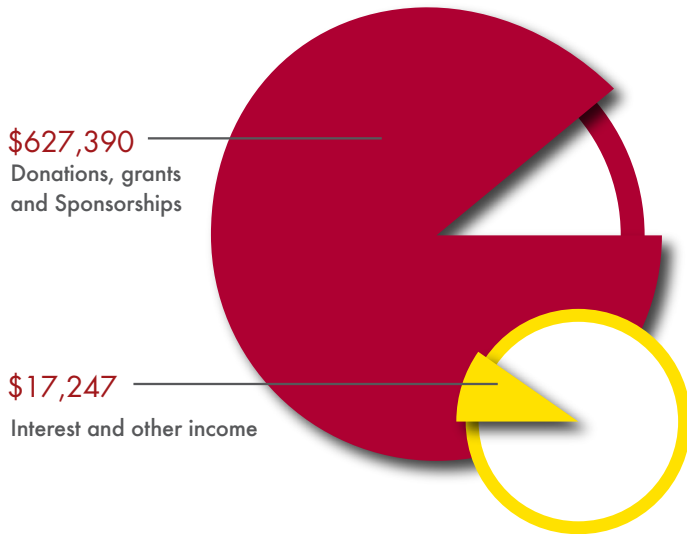
Together, we will tackle 2021 with renewed energy and will make even greater strides for Canadian families, who need us more than ever.

Paul Allison  
Chair of the Board

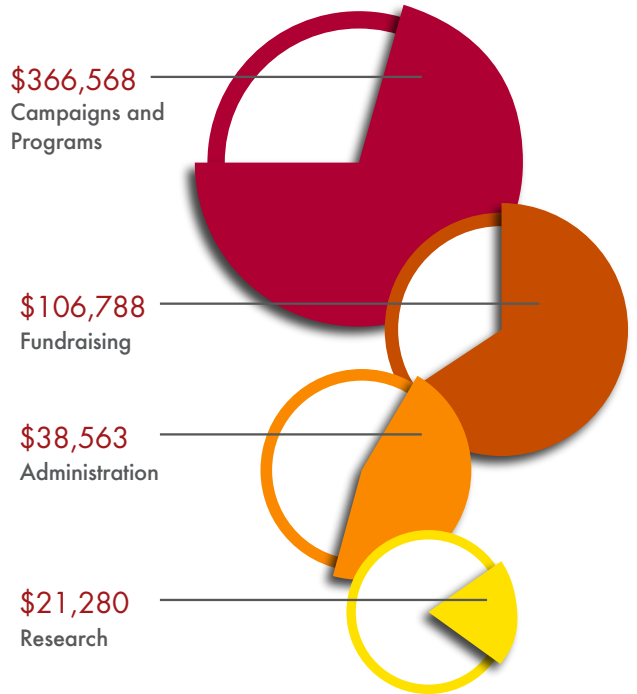
Chantal Vallerand  
Executive Director

# FINANCIALS

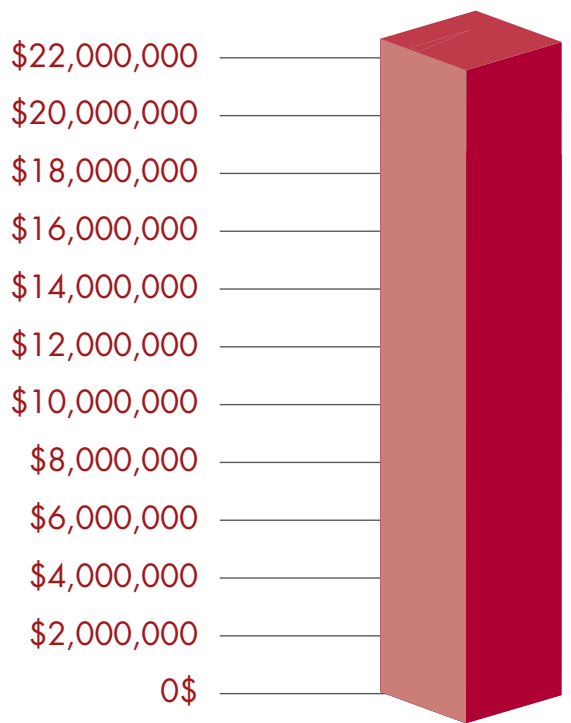
## Revenue \$644,637



## Expenses \$533,199



## 2020



Pro bono Services

# KEY CORPORATE DONORS

We would like to thank the following companies for their financial support without which we could not accomplish our mission.

aphria inc.

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# ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Drug Free Kids Advisory Council is comprised of a group of thirty subject matter experts closely involved in the fields of youth substance abuse, addiction, research and drug prevention.

DFK Canada is honored to have access to their combined expertise to ensure that our website content, our educational tools, products for parents and our communications are up to date with the latest evidence-based information available.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors is comprised of prominent Canadians who oversee the activities of Drug Free Kids Canada and guide the staff to achieve the DFK mission.

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