

Co-Creating Mental Wellbeing With Young People



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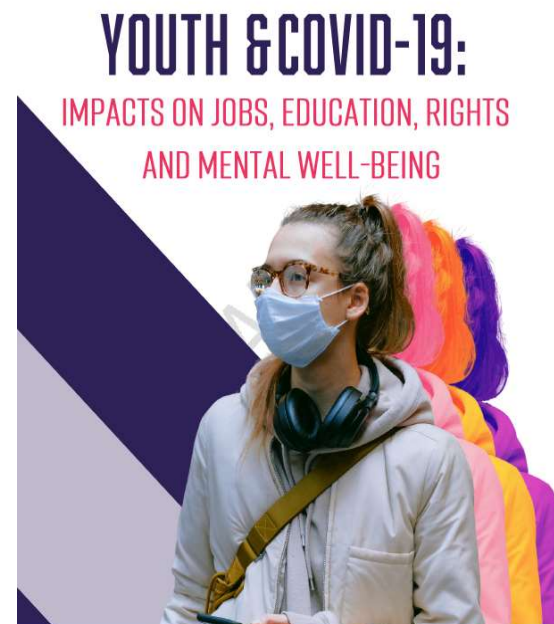
Youth and COVID

- Not consistent with youth development
 - sense of invulnerability
 - rules and authority, conflict with parents
 - restricted activities
 - key role of peers, missing friends
 - loss of extracurricular (engagement is protective)
 - Grieving many losses (prom, grad, sports, school events)
- Access to contradictory information
- Extra stressors at peak onset of MH problems
- +/- of increased online presence



Youth and Covid: What We Have Seen

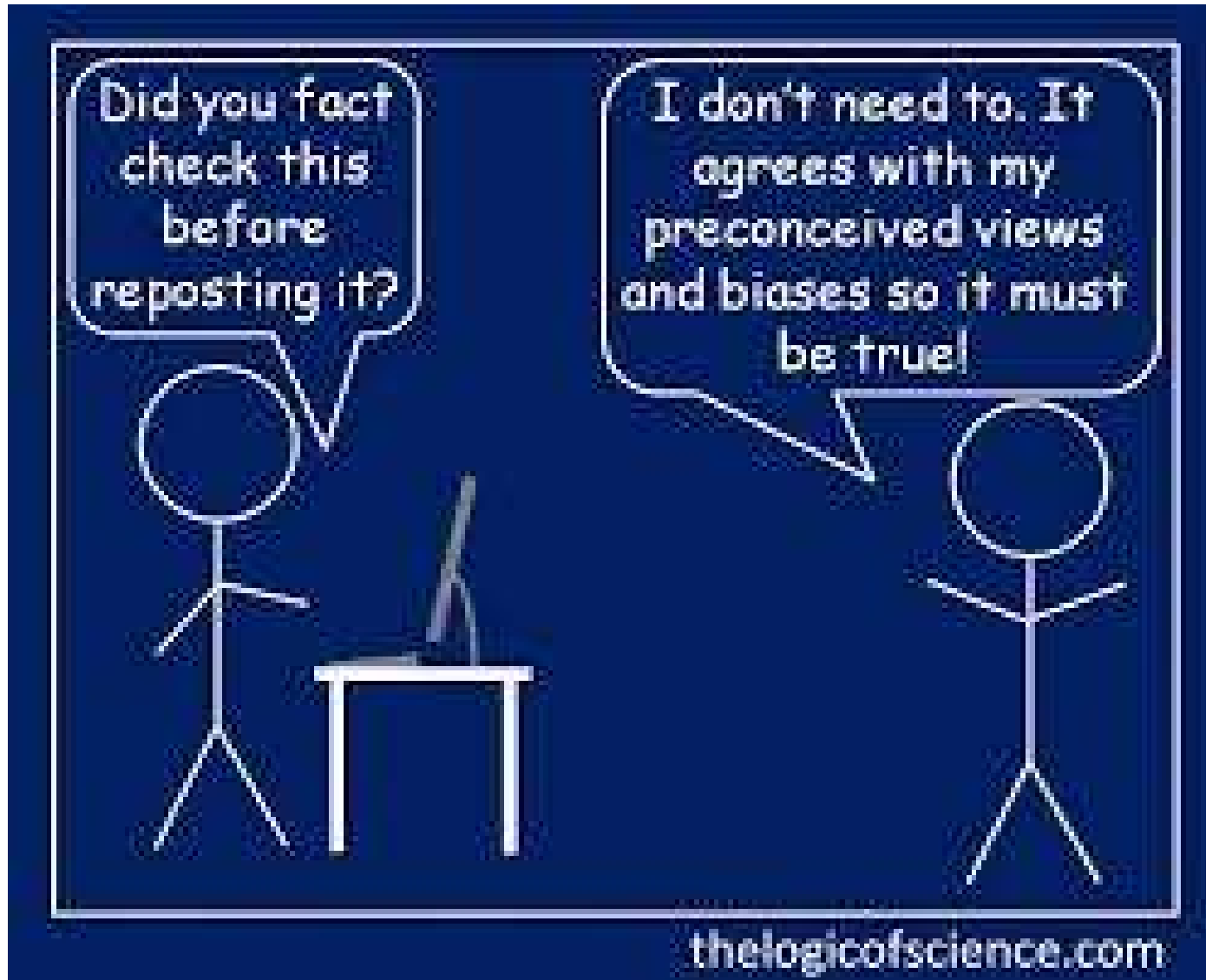
- PTSD symptoms, confusion, irritability, and anger ↑
- Stressors (boredom, isolation, school, family conflict, anxiety/fears of infection, future)
- Youth concerned about health of others
- 36% concerned about family stress
- 20% of youth ↑ alcohol and drug use
- All pre-existing MH issues made worse
- ↑ eating disorders



Introduction to Youth Engagement



Check Your Biases (we all have them)



Youth Engagement Is About

- Creating meaningful opportunities
- Youth making decisions on matters that impact them directly
- Authentic allyship and partnership between youth and the people who support them
- Recognizing that youth engagement is more than just a program, it's a method of being and operating

A Shift In Attitudes...

Youth are viewed as the
target audience

Youth are viewed as an
intermittent resource –
the focus group

Youth are viewed as a
volunteer source

Youth are viewed as
decision makers, equal
partners and agents of
social change

1

2

3

4

Adults are viewed as
authoritarians—
out of touch with the
younger generation

Adults are viewed as an
intermittent **advisor**—
someone to go to in
times of need

Adults are viewed as
mentors—someone to
learn from both in good
and bad times

Adults are viewed as
trusted guides and
lifelong learners—they
both teach and learn
from youth



A Venn diagram consisting of two overlapping circles. The left circle is blue and contains the text 'Youth Engagement' and a list of five items: 'Meaning', 'Belonging', 'Purpose', 'Hope', and 'Benefits to self'. The right circle is red and contains the text 'Knowledge Equity' and a list of five items: 'Research', 'Policy', 'Practice', 'System Planning', and 'Benefits to all'. The intersection of the two circles is the area where they overlap.

Youth Engagement

Meaning
Belonging
Purpose
Hope
Benefits to self

Knowledge Equity

Research
Policy
Practice
System Planning
Benefits to all

Why bother? Benefits for youth

Increases coping mechanisms and well-being



SOURCE: Armstrong & Manion, 2007; Bickman et al., 2010; Ramey et al., 2010

Reduces substance use and smoking



SOURCE: Chung & Elias, 1996; Youniss et al., 1999

Strengthens resiliency



SOURCE: Oliver et al., 2006

Increases ownership for one's own care



SOURCE: Schauer et al., 2007

Promotes personal growth and identity development



SOURCE: Dworkin et al., 2003; Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Pancer et al., 2002

Increases critical thinking



SOURCE: Zeldin, 2008

Improves academic performance and reduces drop out rates



SOURCE: Catalano et al., 1999

Broadens and strengthens social networks



SOURCE: Dworkin et al., 2003; McGee et al., 2001; Barber et al., 2001; Ramey et al., 2010

Enhances leadership skills



SOURCE: Gymafi et al., 2007

Youth Engagement Promotes Health and Decreases Risk

Armstrong & Manion, 2007; 2013

“The more meaning found in engagement, the less likely youth were to report suicidal thoughts in spite of risk factors”

Why bother? Benefits for adults



Why bother? Benefits for agencies



“Meaningful” Youth Engagement *Wherever possible and feasible!*

- At the individual level to promote wellness
- At the level of the therapeutic relationship
- At the programmatic level
- At the organizational level
- At the systemic level

Improved Outcomes for youth

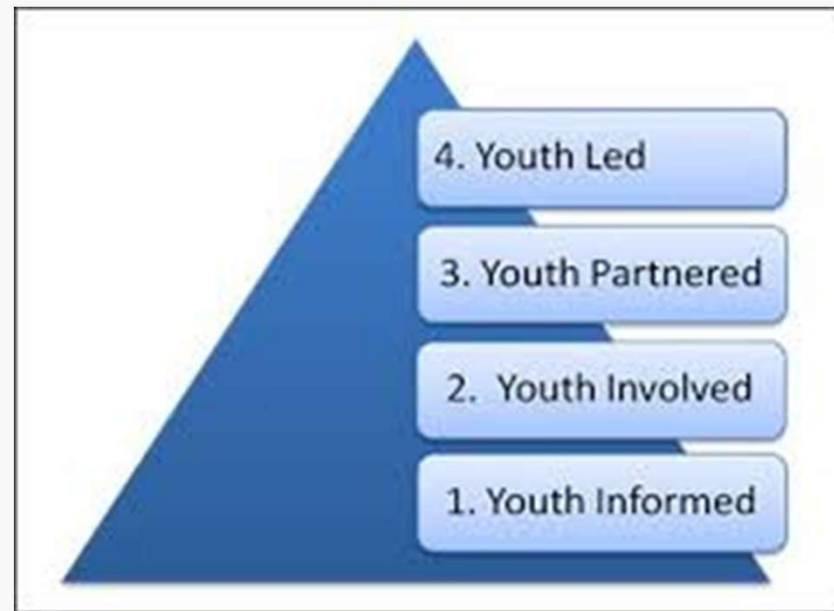
“It could be argued that knowledge creation about young people that does not involve young people could be perceived as incomplete or lacking real world validity”

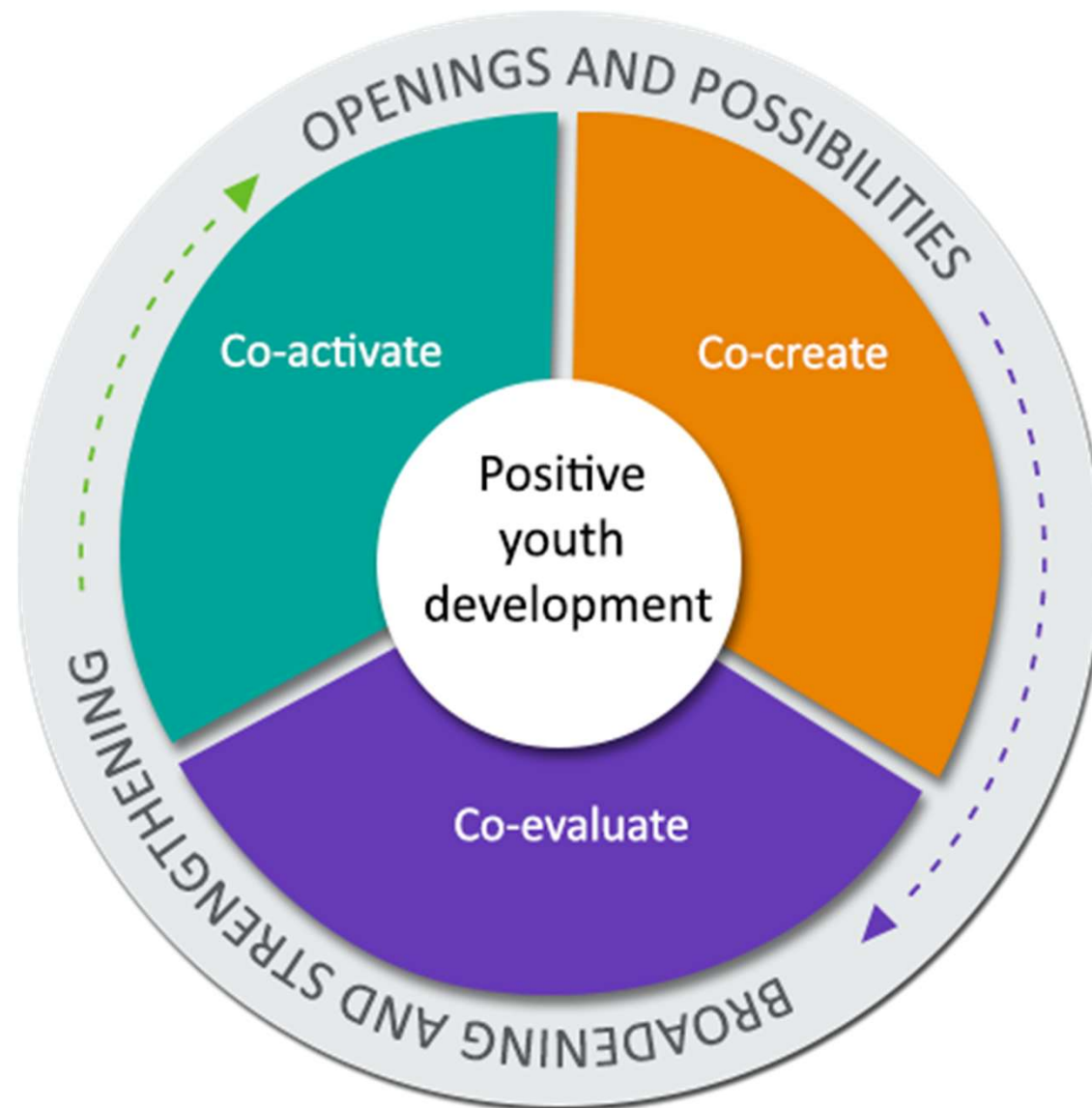
Jones, 2004



Guiding Principles of Youth Engagement

- Value youth as experts and assets
- Commit to participatory leadership
- Build authentic relationships
- Strive for health equity
- Meet youth where they are at
- Put safety first





Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, 2015

Youth Engagement in Action

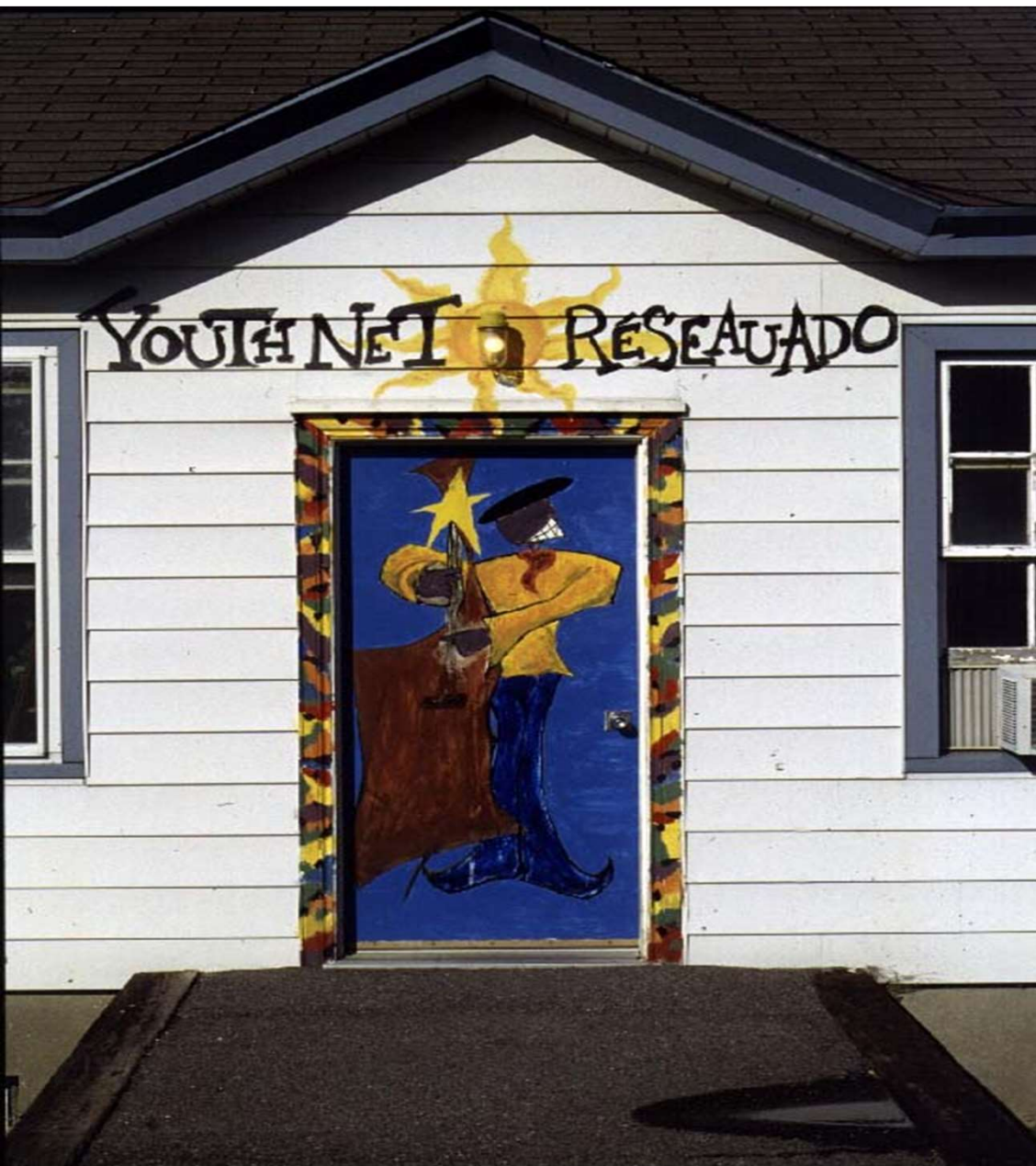




For youth, by youth mental health promotion and intervention organization

- Stigma reduction
- Promoting positive coping strategies
- Enhancing help seeking





Attitudes When We Started

“If these were kids
in my neighborhood
I would tell them to
go and play
somewhere else”

PROGRAMS

PENS & PAINTS



ROOTED



MINDFULNESS



WINTER WELLNESS



WORKSHOPS

❖ Virtual
Wellness 101

❖ Virtual
Stressless

❖ Virtual How to
Help a Friend





YAC Youth Advisory Committee

"Here we're not seen as kids,
we can make a difference
here and we're seen more as
partners with adults!"



1. Needs Assessment

What are the mental health needs of youth coming into YNRA?



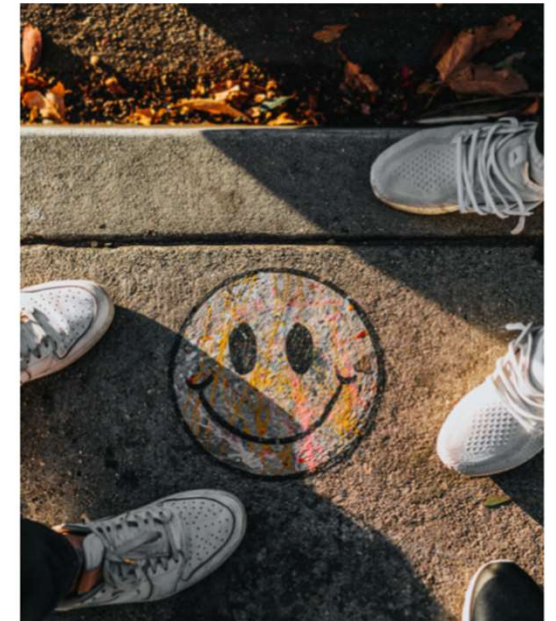
2. Process Evaluation

Do our programs do what we think they do to meet the current needs of youth?

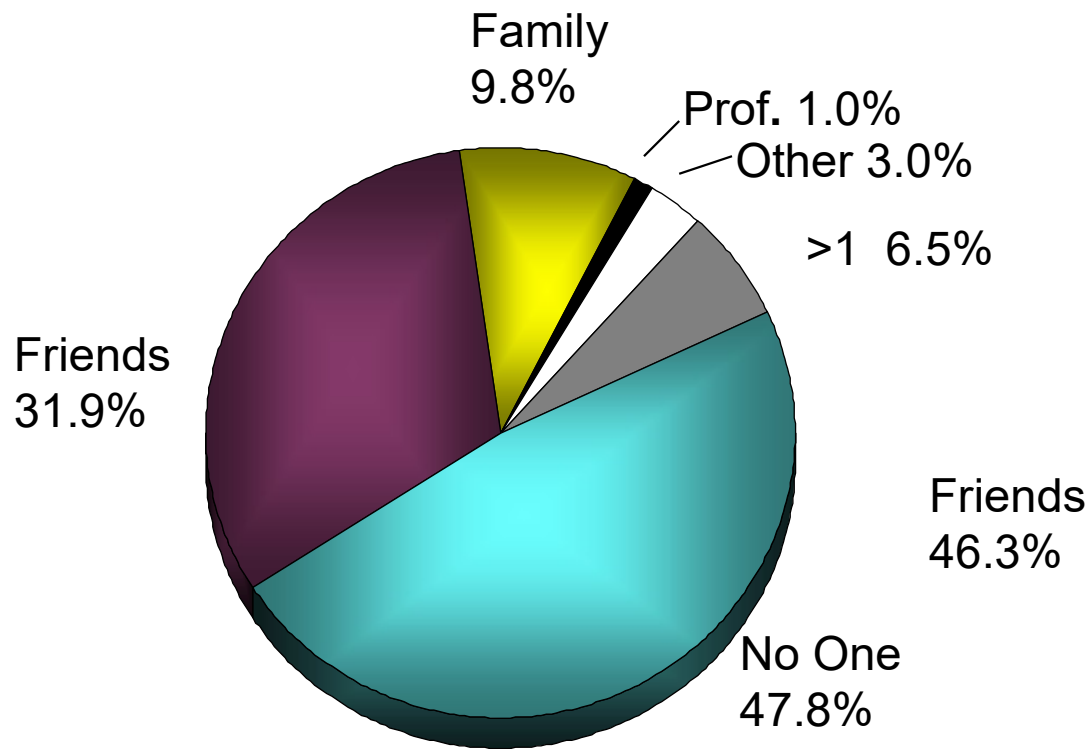


3. Impact Evaluation

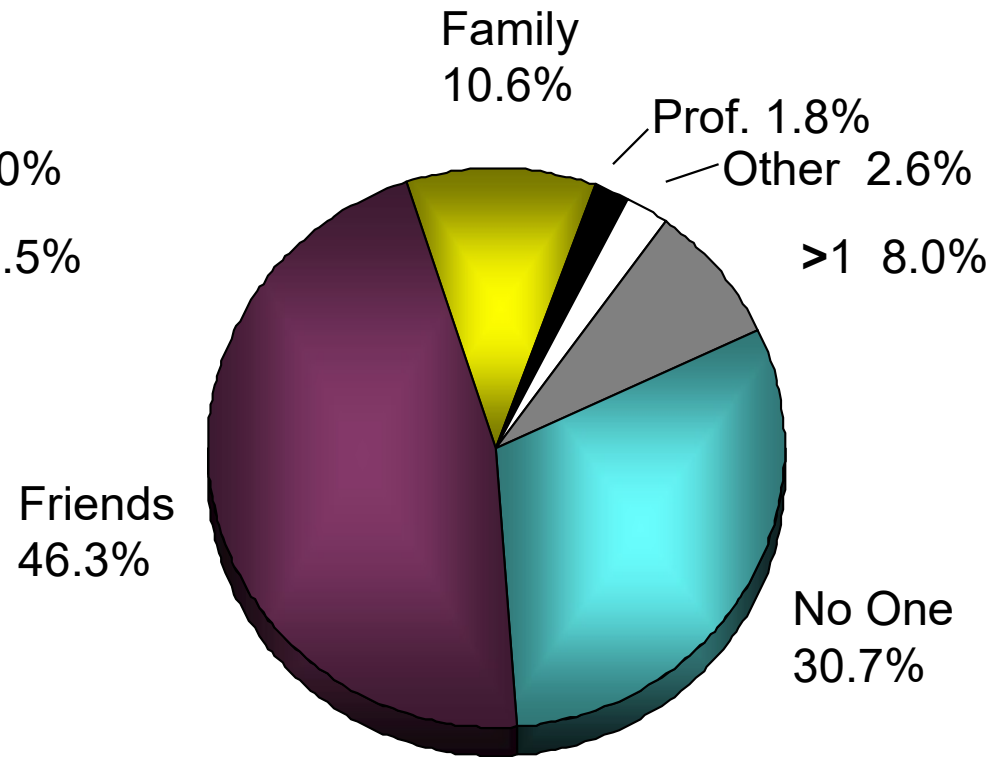
What impacts do our programs have on youth knowledge, skills and well-being?



Who do youth talk to about mental health?



Males

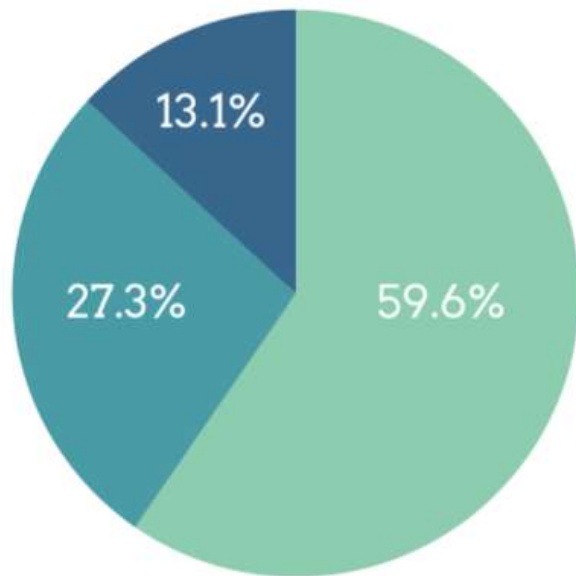


Females

WHAT ARE YOUTH TELLING US

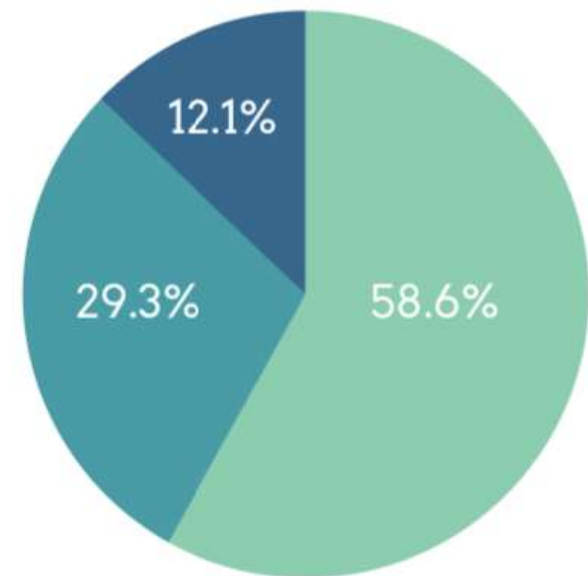
Suicidal Ideation

Thoughts of Suicide*



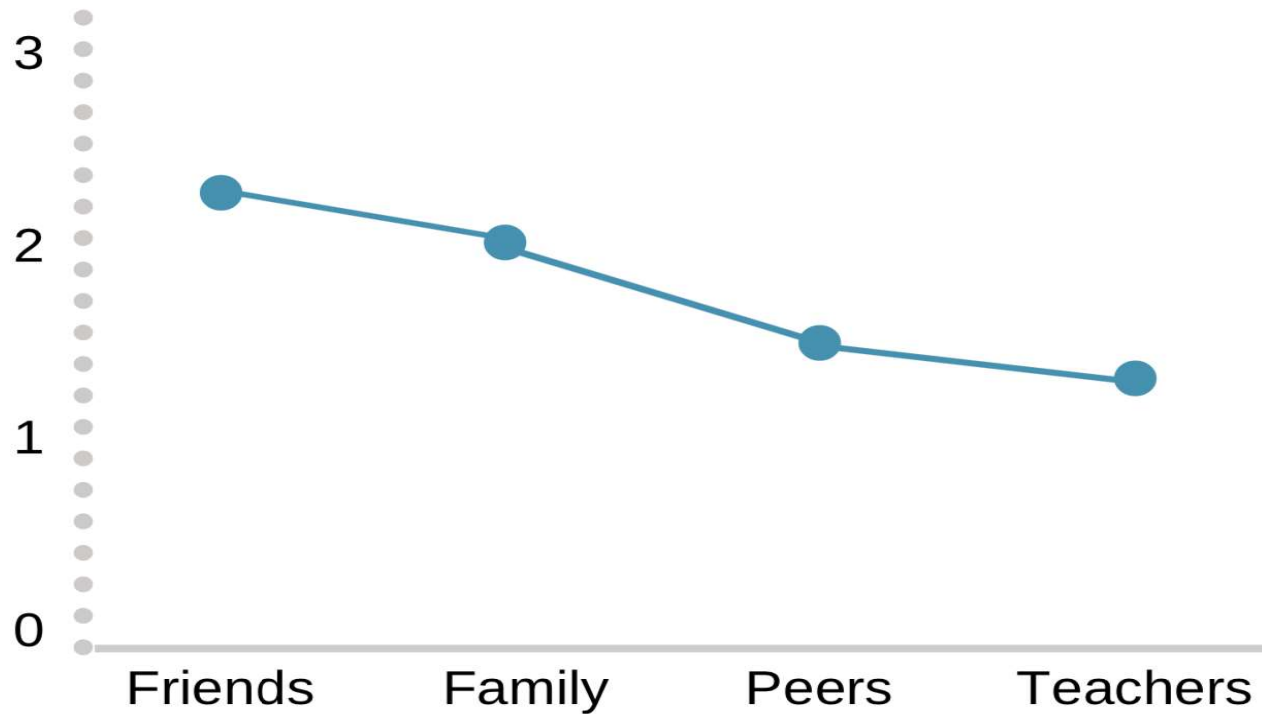
**From the question: In the past week, have you been having thoughts about killing yourself?*

Suicidal Behaviour*



**From the question: Have you ever tried to kill yourself?*

Connectedness*



*Youth connectedness scores at pre-test

73.6% of youth
felt that the program
helped them feel more
connected to
other youth

90.2% of youth
felt like they
belonged to
the group

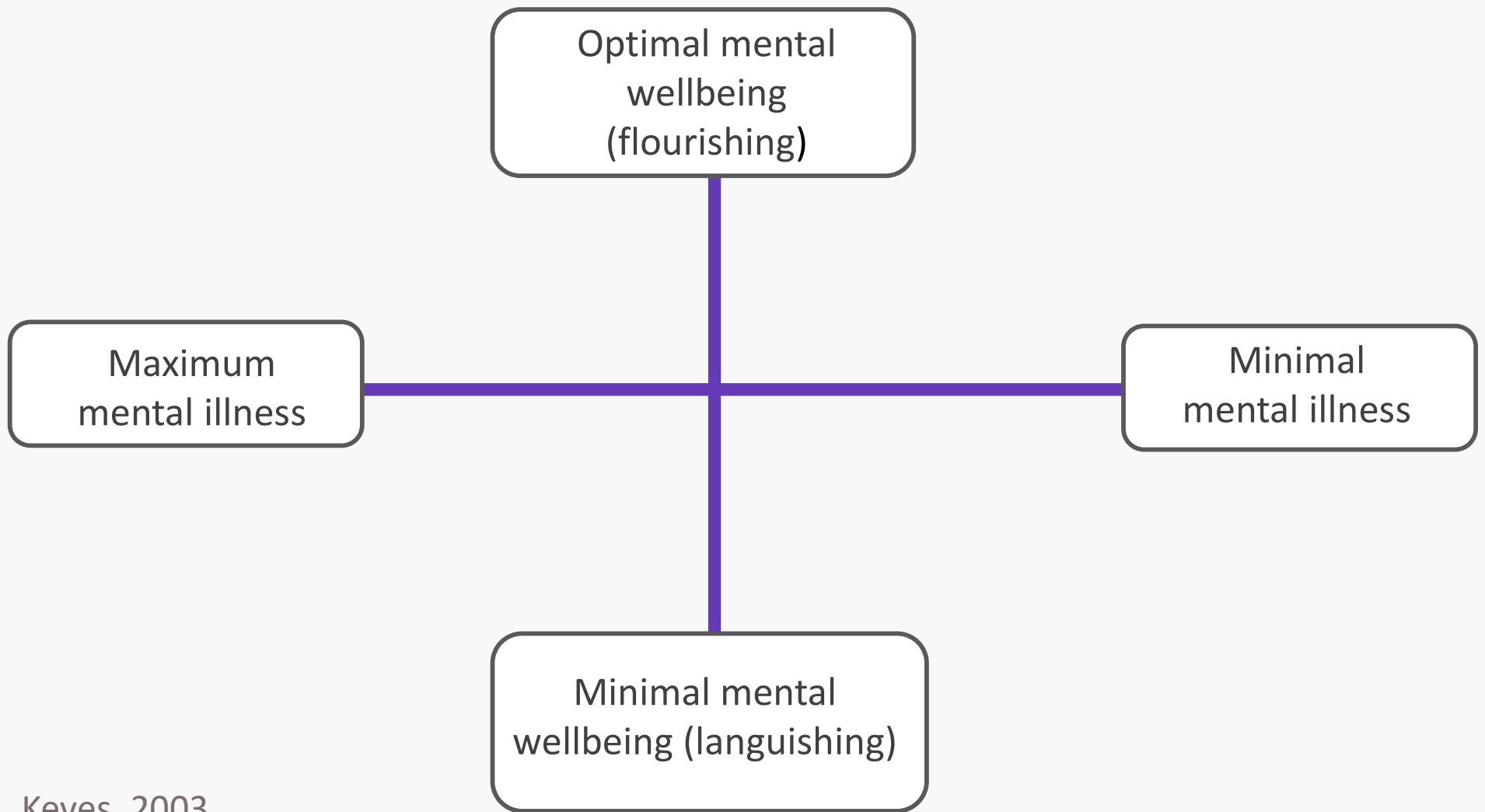


Resilience



Most simply put:
Resiliency is the ability to bounce back
from adversity

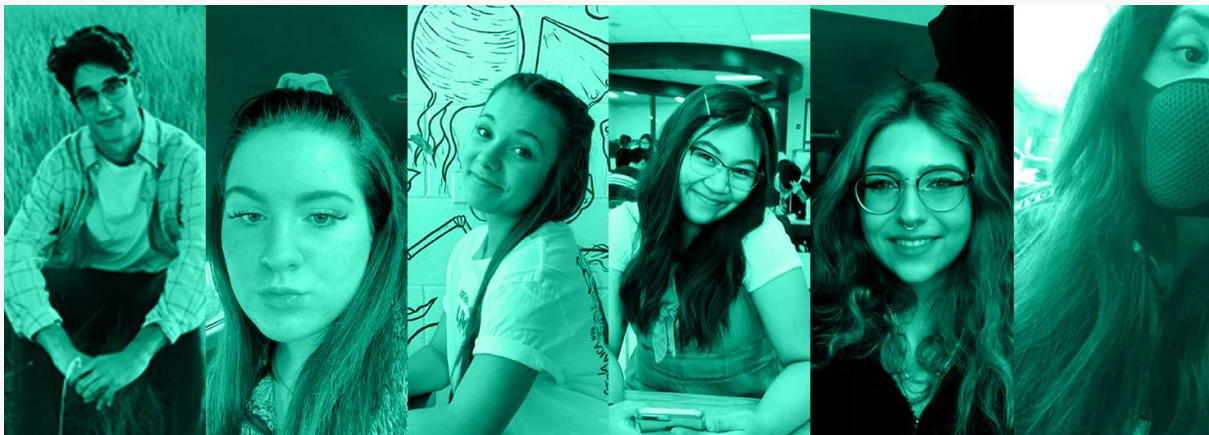
A Model for Mental Health and Wellness



Keyes, 2003



- space where mental health, wellness, engagement and technology meet
- promote wellness, reduce the stigma around mental health, and increase access to community supports, both professional and peer-based.
- work with young people aged 14 to 29 to co-create interactive tools and innovative resources to build capacity and resilience
 - Design Studio model
 - We explore, co-create and prototype using iterative cycles that involve youth and adult partners to discuss and design what matters to them in mental health.



Zen Garden
Design Lab
Spring 2021



Ontario Centre of Excellence
for Child and Youth
Mental Health

Bringing People and Knowledge Together to Strengthen Care.

- Mobilize Knowledge
- Improve Quality
- Commitment to engagement
 - Quality standards for youth engagement
 - Resources to support implementation

Dare to Dream



Art Mural Project



"Stigma is everyone's business"



Groundbreakers: 210+

- **Premier leadership and knowledge sharing network** for those who want to contribute to systemic change in the Youth Mental Health and Substance Use (YMHSU) sector
- Our **Groundbreakers Matching Support Service** connects those involved in the YMHSU sector with:
 - **YOUTH LEADERS**
 - **CAREGIVER LEADERS**
 - **ADVOCATES**
- Frayme supports **meaningful and equitable engagement** of youth, caregivers and advocates



See A Match



Fill Out The Intake Form



Collaborate



Frayme's National *LIVED EXPERTISE* Network

Learn more by visiting us at
frayme.ca/groundbreakers

• FOUNDRY •

WHERE WELLNESS TAKES SHAPE

- Province-wide network of integrated health and social service centres for young people ages 12-24.
- One-stop-shop (mental health care, substance use services, primary care, social services and peer support)
- **Offer services created with, and for, young people and their families**
- **The Youth and Family Ambassador Program**
 - a nation-wide and diverse network of young people and families to share their experiences of IYS.
 - provided with ongoing training and support to promote IYS in their communities while participating in a national IYS network.



Canada's only charity training and empowering young leaders to **revolutionize mental health** in every province and territory. We do this through three globally-recognized programs:

- **Talks**
- **Chapters**
- **Summits**

- Youth Program Supports
- YouthREX ED
- Knowledge Exchange

Committed to Youth Engagement

- ✓ particularly with marginalized youth
- ✓ racialized youth, newcomer youth, Indigenous youth, youth with disabilities or special needs, youth in and leaving care, Francophone youth, LGBT2SQ youth, youth living in rural & remote communities, youth from low-income families and youth in conflict with the law.
- ✓ engage youth in the design, development and evaluation of youth programs.

Take Home Messages

- Engage stakeholders at the front end
 - Be thoughtful in identifying the players
- Co-create
 - Planning, doing, sharing and sustaining
- Think about facilitators
 - Coaches, knowledge brokers
- Facilitate common forums
 - Communities of practice
- Sustain relationships
 - Profile, celebrate
- Evaluate your processes and impact



DO WHAT
YOU CAN,
WITH WHAT
YOU HAVE,
WHERE YOU
ARE.

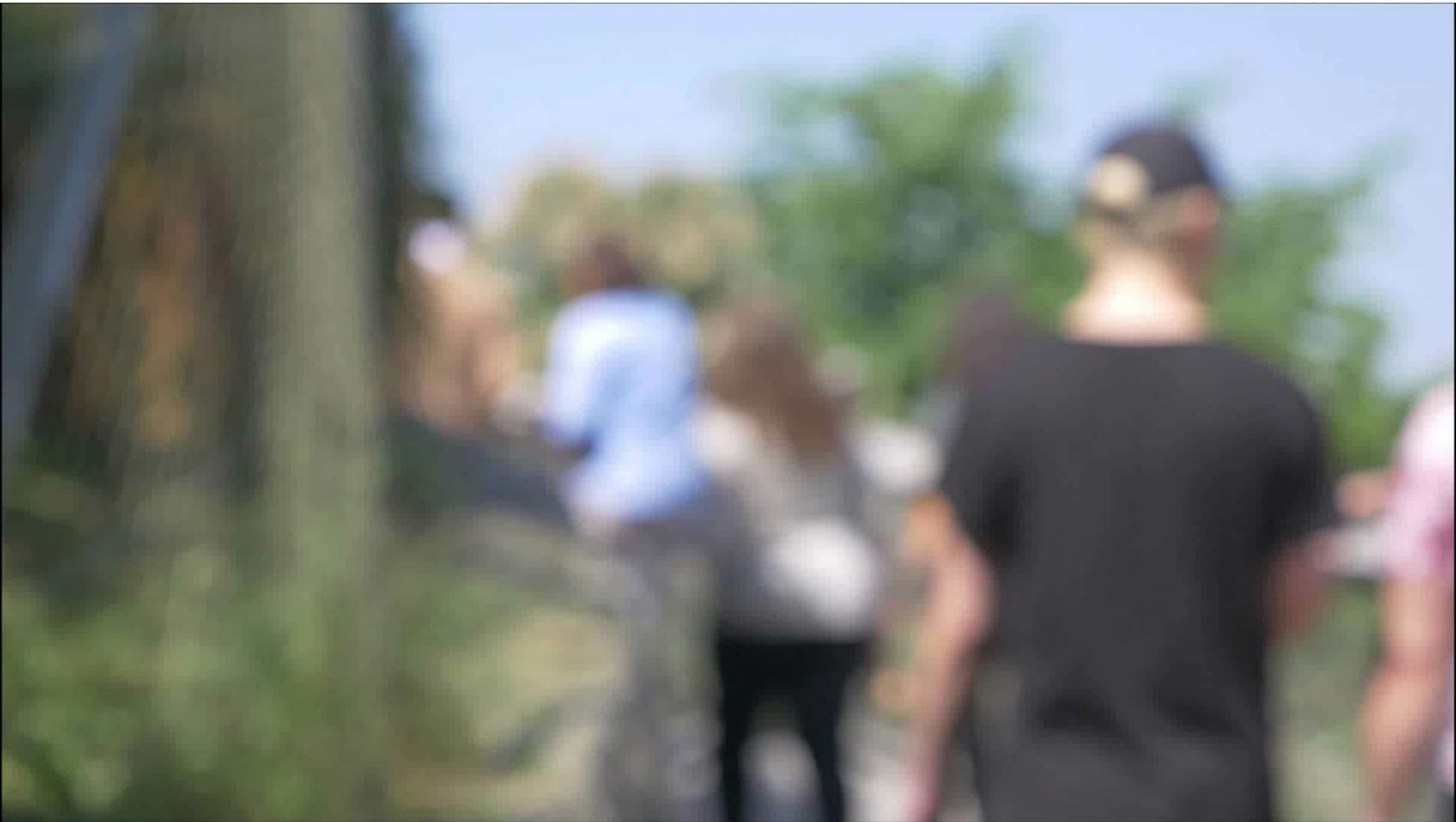


This is Very Messy Business!



**Be Prepared
to Step
Outside of
Your Comfort
Zone!**

International Initiative on Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL)



Thank You! Questions?



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Program / Organization Websites

- FoundryBC, <https://foundrybc.ca/youth-family-ambassador-program/>
- Frayme Groundbreakers,
- Jack.org, <https://jack.org/>
- Mind Your Mind, <https://mindyourmind.ca/>
- The Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, <https://www.cymh.ca/>
- The Students Commission,
<https://www.studentscommission.ca>
- Youth Net / Réseau Ado, <http://ynra.ca/>
- YouthREX, <https://youthrex.com>

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Some Key Resources

- A resource toolkit for engaging patient and families at the planning table (Alberta Health Service, www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/pf/pe/if-pf-pe-engage-toolkit.pdf)
- Institute for Patient and Family Centred Care(www.ipfcc.org)
- The New Mentality (policy paper, <http://www.thenewmentality.ca/what/speak-up/>)
- Margaret and Wallace McCain Centre for Child, Youth and Family Mental Health at the CAMH, <https://www.camh.ca/en/science-and-research/institutes-and-centres/the-margaret-and-wallace-mccain-centre-for-child-youth-and-family-mental-health>
- PAR at The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Research and Training Center. <https://www.umassmed.edu/TransitionsACR/research/projects-by-grant/rtc/>
- Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (multiple tools and videos, <http://www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca>)

Ontario Centre of Excellence

- Continuum of change in attitudes: towards meaningful youth engagement
- Positive vs negative youth engagement
- Steps and considerations to start youth engagement
- Potential youth roles within your service area
- Ways to engage families at different levels of your service area
- Potential family engagement roles within your service area
- Youth Engagement toolkit
- Videos: Youth and and Family engagement videos
- Online learning modules: Youth and and family engagement modules
- Youth and family engagement training and participant guides
- Evidence reports (Best practices in engaging families in child and youth mental health)