



Youth Champions Role

What is the YMHAC Initiative?

The **Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions (YMHAC) Initiative** is a partnership between the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and Public Health Units across the province of Ontario. The program supports students to become mental health champions in their schools.

As a **Youth Champion**, you will work to improve the health and well-being of youth by promoting mental wellness initiatives, helping to reduce the stigma about mental illness, and discouraging the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances.

[Health Unit/Agency] has partnered with [school board] to identify and implement the YMHAC Initiative into interested schools.

How does the Initiative Work?

You will be trained and supported to take on the role of “Youth Champion” in your school and will form the **Network of Champions**.

The **Public Health Leads** will work closely with the **School Staff Lead(s)** (i.e., Child and Youth Worker, teacher), **Mental Health Lead**, **school principal/vice-principal or designate**, **Youth Leads** and **Youth Champions** to plan and carry out initiatives promoting mental health throughout the school year.

What is the role of a Youth Champion?

[# of] **Youth Champions** will be selected from each participating school. **Youth Champions** will:

1. Attend a local training session/workshop with other **Youth Champions** within your school/region (date & location TBD).
2. Learn about mental well-being, reducing stigma about mental illness and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances.
3. Work with the **Public Health Lead(s)**, other **Youth Champions**, **Youth Leads** and the **School Staff Lead(s)** to assess the needs of your community/school, plan and carry out Youth Engagement activities to promote mental health and





well-being within your school community. You will also learn how to get feedback about the effectiveness of your activities carried out in your school.

- 4. Respond in a timely manner to communications (i.e., text, email) from the Public Health Lead(s) or School Staff Lead(s).
- 5. Participate in evaluation activities (i.e., paper and on-line surveys, focus group, activity profile).

How will you benefit from being a Youth Champion?

By being a **Youth Champion**, you will have an opportunity to...

Gain skills in:	Learn about:	Gain experiences with:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Public speaking o Communication o Leadership o Facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mental health and mental illness o Stigma o Resiliency and coping skills o Supports in your community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Health promotion o Planning and delivering events/activities o Networking and meeting new people

Is being a Youth Lead a good fit for you?

Becoming a **Youth Lead** is a good fit for you if you;

- ★ Want to further your leadership skills.
- ★ Have a keen interest in creating an environment at your school that helps





promote good mental health for everyone.

- ★ Are eager to meet and work with new people.
- ★ Enjoy being creative.
- ★ Are passionate about voicing issues important to you and your peers.
- ★ Want experience to add to your resume.



If you are interested in becoming a Youth Champion, or for more information, please contact your School Staff Lead(s):

(insert name)

Or the Public Health Leads:

(insert name)

