



RNAO'S

YOUTH

MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE TOOLKIT



RNAO

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers
autorisés de l'Ontario



SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH-ASSIST
ÉQUIPE D'APPUI POUR LA SANTÉ
MENTALE DANS LES ÉCOLES

Welcome to RNAO's YMHAC Initiative!

Sometimes we all need a little help from friends, and this is especially true for youth in terms of their mental health and well-being. Good mental health is important for everyone, including youth—no matter our age or whether or not we experience mental health issues.

Mental health, illness and addiction among youth is a very serious issue (we've outlined statistics [below](#)). The good news is that peer-support-based interventions like this one—The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions (YMHAC) Initiative—help address the problem.

Whether you're an adult or a youth seeking to pave a brighter future for young Canadians, this YMHAC toolkit will help you be better informed, inspired and most important of all, involved in helping to create resilient communities.

Check it out!

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SECTION ONE:

INTRODUCTION

By participating
in the Initiative, you
can help create a
supportive and resilient
school and community
environment for youth at
risk of mental illness and
addiction.

1.1—Mental Health, Illness and Substance Use Among Youth

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions (YMHAC) Initiative boosts mental health, illness and substance use education and awareness among youth through empowering youth champions. This peer-to-peer impact is so powerful that it helps shift attitudes from a mental illness focus toward mental health promotion.

YOUTH AT RISK

It's easy to diminish the emotional struggles youth cope with, but the journey into adulthood poses unique, complex pressures. At the same time, mental health problems that adults experience, such as depression and anxiety, do affect the young. In fact, youth mental illness and substance use is a serious health issue in Canada. People aged 15-24 are more likely to report mental illness and/or substance use disorders than any other age group ([Pearson, Janz, 2013](#)).

The following snapshot of statistics from the Canadian Mental Health Association ([CMHA](#)) is particularly alarming considering that many mental health disorders are recurrent and potentially chronic. In other words, many of these children and youth potentially face lifetime challenges.

- ★ Between 10 to 20 percent of Canadian youth are affected by a mental illness or disorder;
- ★ Depression affects 17 percent of youth age 12-19 (which is 3.2 million youth in Canada!); and
- ★ Canada's suicide rate among youth ranks the third highest in the industrialized world, and suicide is among the leading cause of death in 15-24 year old Canadians.

Source: [Canadian Mental Health Association \(CMHA\)](#)

There is also a well-established relationship between mental illness and substance use. Youth between 15 to 24 are three times more likely to have a substance use problem than people older than 24 years of age ([Pearson, Janz, 2013](#)); and those diagnosed with a substance use disorder have a substantially increased risk for a mental health disorder, including depression or other mood disorders. Similarly, children with mental health problems tend to initiate substance use at earlier ages and are more likely to develop problematic substance use than children without these disorders ([Armstrong et al., 2002](#)).

EARLY INTERVENTIONS ARE KEY

According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), establishing the foundation for healthy emotional and social development, **as well as prevention and early intervention, are key to ensuring the mental well-being of every Canadian.** Major health organizations contend that early interventions for youth with mental health issues not only improve quality of life, but provide significant cost savings ([MHCC, 2013](#)). This makes sense given that 70 percent of adults living with mental health problems had symptoms that developed during childhood or adolescence (MHCC).

Yet, while mental illness is increasingly impacting the lives of Canadian children and youth, only one in four Canadian children and youth who need mental health services currently receive them ([Waddell, C. et al, 2005](#)). One of the biggest barriers to promoting and addressing child and youth mental health is mental health stigma (CAMH, 2013). According to the Youth Services System Review ([YSSR, 2013](#)), education and awareness related to substance use, which is important to reduce stigma, has improved, but continued work is needed.

Here's where

YMHAC

fits in!



What is stigma?

"A social process, experienced or anticipated, characterized by exclusion, rejection, blame or devaluation that results from experience or reasonable anticipation of an adverse social judgment about a person or group" (Martin & Johnston, 2007, p. 8).

BREAKING BARRIERS WITH KNOWLEDGE

As you learn more about the YMHAC Initiative in the following sections, you will discover that a large component of its comprehensive training ([Section Four](#), [Section Five](#), [Section Six](#)) aims to improve mental health literacy of adults and youth involved. Why? Knowledge of mental health and illness can enhance and elevate the efforts of Initiative participants to assist with recognition, support, prevention, early intervention efforts, and, ultimately, resiliency.

Specifically, the ability to support those with potential symptoms of mental illness is influenced by an individual's mental health literacy. If proficient, they will most likely be able to manage symptoms.

Mental health literacy requires several components, including:

- ★ The ability to recognize mental health and illness;
- ★ Knowledge and beliefs about risk factors and causes;
- ★ Knowledge and beliefs about self-help interventions;
- ★ Knowledge and beliefs about professional help available;
- ★ Attitudes which facilitate recognition and appropriate help-seeking; and
- ★ Knowledge of how to seek mental health information.

To learn more, see [RNAO's Mental Health & Addiction Initiative](#).

For a list of national and provincial cross and inter-Ministry initiatives that support youth mental health in Ontario, see [Appendix A](#).

What is resiliency?

Resiliency involves being able to recover from difficulties or changes – to function as well as before and then move forward. People who are resilient can cope effectively with, or adapt to stress and challenging life situations (Barankin & Khanlou, 2007).

1.2—The Goal of the YMHAC Initiative

The YMHAC Initiative aims to improve the health and well-being of children and youth through:

- ★ A focus on mental health promotion;
- ★ Acceptance of mental illness and reduction of related stigma; and
- ★ Substance misuse prevention.

The pilot project was led by RNAO in partnership with six Public Health Units, and was implemented with the support of local Public Health Leads, School Mental Health ASSIST Leads, district school boards, School Staff Leads and Youth Leads. Other important stakeholders who also provided ongoing support to the project include mindyourmind, and the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health.

The pilot program engaged over 60 young people and resulted in over 75 activities being implemented across Ontario, over the school year related to mental health promotion, stigma reduction, raising awareness of mental health issues and awareness of locally based resources; all of which aimed to create a supportive and resilient school and community environment for youth.

One of the most important outcomes was a shift in stakeholder attitudes from a mental illness focus toward mental health promotion.

For more background, check out the [Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champion Project Executive Summary](#).

For a handy Definition of Terms used throughout this toolkit, see [YMHAC Definition of Terms](#).

The YMHAC program is unique and builds on the understanding that peer leaders are more easy to relate to than adults and therefore can readily contextualize messages and expectations to address the needs of their peers.

The YMHAC ADVANTAGE

The hands on training in mental health and substance use issues that youth engage in—featuring fun and insightful activities—helps to break down stigma and boost knowledge and awareness. Preparing youth peer leads in champion roles not only builds capacity and boosts resiliency of children and youth, it results in greater mental health advocacy.

Considering the results of the [Ontario Child Health Study](#) (Ontario Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2014) indicating that only one in six children and youth with a mental illness received some form of specialty mental health service, Youth Champions are ideal to assist with providing support and awareness of services and sources of assistance. Likewise, such a program can assist those one in six children and youth in Ontario who have mental illness including substance use disorders, begin to examine strategies for change and take action.

1.3—How The YMHAC Initiative Works

The YMHAC Initiative seems complex but it's actually straightforward. It uses a peer-led, multi-stakeholder, multi-component model, in which Youth Leads work with their local public health unit, district school boards and schools to mentor Youth Champions to plan, implement, and evaluate local youth engagement activities within their schools and communities.

The YMHAC Initiative incorporates five main components.

1. Orientation training for Youth Leads and Adult Leads (Public Health Leads, School Staff Leads and Mental Health Leads).
2. Foundational training for Youth Leads.
3. Development of Youth Champion cohort at the school level.
4. Program promotion and communication.
5. Partner collaboration and networking, and support and capacity building.



The Initiative's success hinges on adequate training, and that's why the Youth Leads participate in a minimum of five hours of [orientation training and full-day of foundational training](#) at the outset of the program to learn about mental health promotion, stigma reduction, substance misuse prevention, youth facilitation and leadership techniques, and how to work with Youth Champions. The Youth Champions then participate in a similar training, facilitated by the Youth Leads. The focus of this training is to develop local youth engagement activities designed to promote mental health, reduce stigma, and improve knowledge and awareness concerning substance misuse and its prevention.

1.4—Support Pillars for the YMHAC Initiative

A number of well-established models of mental health and illness, as well as youth engagement theories laid the foundation for the YMHAC Initiative. To help Initiative Leads better understand the foundations of the YMHAC approach, we've provided a brief outline of supporting influences here.

MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

To best understand the relationship between mental health and mental illness, experts look to the “mental health continuum” model. It describes mental health and illness as more than the presence or absence of emotional states; nor are they at opposite ends of a continuum. In fact every person lies somewhere along the mental health continuum and this can fluctuate on a day-to-day basis. That means individuals can experience complete mental health even if they have been diagnosed with a mental illness; similarly individuals who are free of a diagnosed mental illness can still experience poor mental health if they have poor coping mechanisms ([Keyes, 2002](#)).

Bottom line: mental well-being is seen as “a balance of the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional” that gives everyone—even the most vulnerable or mentally ill—an opportunity to live as a whole and healthy individual. The model explains that this balance is enhanced when people feel like their lives have a purpose, they have hope for their future, they feel a sense of belonging and connectedness, and they have a meaning and understanding of how their lives are part of creation and a rich history.

For more information, see [“Positive Mental Health and Mental Illness,” Statistics Canada.](#)

Also, see the [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health video: Promoting Mental Health: A shared language.](#)

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT MODELS

The concept of Youth Engagement (YE) models is relatively new and does not have a single universal definition. However, they can be a useful framework for use in various practice settings to involve youth as valued partners in addressing issues and making decisions that affect them or that they believe are important. Models generally recognize young people’s right to participate in decisions that impact them and acknowledge the great skills and strengths they bring to the table.

This type of youth participation leads to the development of the protective factors that promote positive youth development and prevent youth from engaging in risk taking behaviours ([Search Institute, 2006](#)). Current research indicates that YE Models offer a variety of positive outcomes for youth, including lower rates of substance use, lower levels of depression, a significant reduction in dropout rates in school, higher academic performance and lower rates of conflict with the law, particularly for youth who have been categorized as “high risk” (Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2007).

For more information see, [Enhancing Healthy Adolescent Development](#), a RNAO guideline that identifies multiple strategies that directs nursing practice in enhancing healthy adolescent development.

HARTS LADDER

The shift in working with youth as clients to engaging them as decision makers can at times seem overwhelming. In order to succeed, youth, adults and the organization as a whole must be open and willing to take risks, think outside the box and develop new attitudes towards youth—not as problems that need fixing, but rather resources to be tapped into.

Roger Hart's "Ladder of Youth Participation" highlights eight different levels of youth participation and decision making power. It is a useful tool that challenges us to reflect on the level of participation that is wanted, needed, and possible, as well as to identify barriers to meaningful participation and how they can be overcome. In Hart's model, the top rung is achieved when adults and youth share decision making as partners and work together (in synergy).

The YMHAC Initiative encourages the creation of opportunities with high levels of participation and decision making power so youth can make change, direct their own activities, and assume shared responsibility with appropriate levels of support. When working with young people, it is important to involve them as partners as early as possible in the decision making process for an issue, activity or initiative.

For more information, see [Roger Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation](#).

MINISTRY OF HEALTH—YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The Youth Engagement Advisory Group (YEAG) was created to advise the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care about establishing new models for engaging Ontario's youth in tobacco and health promotion initiatives. This group identified 11 key principles to youth engagement that are of critical importance in understanding youth development approaches. The principles are evidence-based practices, and can serve as a foundation for any program or outreach activity that involves or affects Ontario's youth.

For more information, see [Youth Engagement Principles](#)

FOUNDATIONS FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS APPROACH

It is important to apply a Foundations for a Healthy Schools Approach when implementing the YMHAC Initiative. The Healthy Schools Approach is an internationally recognized framework also supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education to support improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way. It's rooted in the theory that health and education are interdependent: healthy students are better prepared to learn, and education is a key determinant of health.

In Ontario, Healthy Schools uses five interconnected components to address school health in a comprehensive way.

1. Curriculum, teaching and learning: Different learning opportunities before, after and during school that help students to learn, practice and promote positive and healthy behaviours.
2. School and classroom leadership: An understanding

of shared goals and needs of a school community through dialogue that involves school staff, parents, students, and community partners.

3. Student engagement: Students are engaged in and lead academic and non-academic activities that help them develop a sense of self and belonging.
4. Social and physical environments: Creating safe and caring social and physical environments helps students to feel safe, engaged and empowered.
5. Home, school and community partnerships: Using the strengths of the community to support, enhance and promote opportunities for learning and well-being.

Here's where
YMHAC
fits in!

Taking an integrated approach while implementing the YMHAC Initiative means that schools are addressing health in a holistic way, and contributing to a positive school climate in which positive relationships between school staff, parents, students, and community partners are developed and sustained.

For more information, see [Foundations for a Healthy School](#).

1.5—Who Contributed to the Initiative

PILOT IMPLEMENTATION SITES/PUBLIC HEALTH UNITS 2013-2015

- ★ Grey Bruce Health Unit
- ★ Niagara Public Health
- ★ Porcupine Health Unit
- ★ Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- ★ Timiskaming Health Unit
- ★ Toronto Public Health

SPECIAL THANKS

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**PARTICIPATING SCHOOL
BOARDS**

Bluewater District School Board
Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board
District School Board of Niagara
District School Board of Ontario North East
Lakehead District School Board
Niagara Catholic School Board
Northeastern Catholic District School Board
Toronto Catholic District School Board
Toronto District School Board
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1.6 – Handy Resources

[National and provincial cross and inter-Ministry initiatives that support youth mental health in Ontario, Appendix A.](#)

[YMHAC Project Executive Summary](#)

[YMHAC Definition of Terms](#)

Mental health and illness model:

[“Positive Mental Health and Mental Illness,”
Statistics Canada.](#)

Youth Engagement Resources:

[Roger Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation](#)

[Youth Engagement Principles](#)

[Foundations for Healthy Schools Approach](#)

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SECTION TWO:

HOW TO GET STARTED

The YMHAC Initiative is a multi-stakeholder model, which means that getting started requires the identification of local participants for key roles on an Implementation Team; identifying stakeholders who can have a major influence on your program's success; and, finally, developing a local steering committee. These efforts provide long-term sustainability to the Initiative.

While you may already have some participants in mind, take the time to understand all different components of the YMHAC model first. Also, building out a program plan that includes objectives, deliverables and time lines will ensure a thriving, successful program.

Plan smarter!

The logic model, work plan and timelines for the YMHAC initiative will help you and your team in understanding the objectives, short- and long-term outcomes, deliverables and evaluation indicators to ensure a successful initiative.

2.1 Logic Model and Work Plan

The [YMHAC logic model](#) provides an overview and visual description of the YMHAC Initiative, including an explanation of the relationship between the five main components of the YMHAC model (below), their activities, and subsequent outputs.

1. Youth Leads training/skill development.
2. Development of Youth Champions cohort.
3. Program promotion.
4. Partner collaboration.
5. Support and capacity building.

A detailed [work plan](#) with objectives, major deliverables, target audience and timelines was created for each of the stages of YMHAC model implementation. It can be used as a sample template to assist in implementation at your local site.

2.2 Developing Your YMHAC Team

At the heart of the YMHAC Initiative is teamwork. You'll depend on motivated participants who each bring a unique perspective and voice to the program—especially youth. Here's a step-by-step guide to finding and organizing passionate team members.

STEP #1: DEVELOP YOUR IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

WHAT Your Implementation Team is a core team that is responsible for leading the planning, implementation and evaluation of the YMHAC Initiative. This team (also called the Project Team/Committee) can be either an internal team comprised of staff from your organization, or an external team comprised of staff from your organization, local school boards, schools and community organization members ([see Step #2: Identify Your Stakeholders](#)).

To determine if your Implementation Team should be an internal team or external team, you will need to consider your context, organization and local community factors.

WHO Members of the internal or external Implementation Team should include leadership from management (e.g., direct supervisor, principals, superintendents) and front-line staff (e.g., public health nurses, health promotion officers, School Mental Health ASSIST Leads and teachers) and Youth Leads (see 3.1). A common element among effective Implementation Teams is good representation from each sector.

WHY The role of the Implementation Team is to provide support in YMHAC implementation. Roles may include reviewing the [logic model](#) and [work plan](#) and signing up for responsibilities, recruiting participating schools and youth, recruiting and supporting the local steering committee, training, supporting youth in leading youth-led health promotion initiatives, evaluation, etc. You may wish to determine a [terms of reference](#) to help guide the team in understanding their role and responsibilities.

Integrate Youth Voice!

Young people are integral to your YMHAC Team. Seek out opportunities to include their voices at every stage.

Stakeholder Search Tips!

- ★ Have a clear understanding on the components of the project and implementation processes.
- ★ Include a youth voice.
- ★ Include a variety of members from the inter-professional team, including nurses, other health-care providers, School Mental Health ASSIST leads, educators, etc.
- ★ Look for management and leadership who can help support project implementation.

STEP #2: IDENTIFY YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

After you have recruited an Implementation Team, your next task will be to work with your Implementation Team to identify and develop a comprehensive list of key stakeholders in the YMHAC Initiative. Engagement of stakeholders—individuals, groups, and/or organizations that have a vested interest in YMHAC—play an essential role in the change process and need to be involved throughout the various phases of the Initiative in order for the program to be a success.

Internal stakeholders are from within the organization and can include leadership, front line staff and people with lived experience and youth.

Interface stakeholders operate across organizational and environmental boundaries, and include board members and staff with cross appointments.

External stakeholders operate outside the organization and can include organizations such as the RNAO, School Mental Health ASSIST, accreditation bodies, community agencies, youth groups, local teams, school boards, schools and community.

It is important to identify all types of stakeholder to understand who may have a vested interest in your initiative (RNAO, 2015). Work with your Implementation Team to collect information that helps you understand your stakeholders.

You may consider developing surveys, focus groups or individual interviews with key influential personnel to help you identify stakeholders who would be supportive to implementation. Here are potential questions to ask.

- ★ What are the school board local strategic directions we should be aware of and how do they align with the YMHAC Initiative?
- ★ What is the local strategic mental health plan in your school board? How do we ensure alignment and safeguards?

- ★ What other strategic plans should we be aware of?
- ★ Do you have suggestions on how to align the YMHAC Initiative to these plans?
- ★ Who are other key influential stakeholders in the local health unit, school boards, school and community we may want to connect with?

You may also consider developing a script and/or promotional materials for stakeholders so they are all receiving consistent information regarding the YMHAC Initiative.

STEP #3: ANALYZE STAKEHOLDER INFLUENCE AND SUPPORT

A stakeholder analysis should be conducted after you've identified your team. The goal of a stakeholder analysis is to maximize congruence between stakeholder interests and the goals of the implementation, in other words, minimize risks associated with stakeholder non-support.

Your stakeholder analysis should consider the vested interest of individual stakeholders, their level of influence and support for the proposed YMHAC Initiative, and the factors that may facilitate buy-in. Stakeholder analysis can also help in minimizing risks of non-support by providing the Implementation Team the knowledge of what may impede project implementation. Using the data collected in your stakeholder analysis, appropriate strategies for stakeholder engagement can be developed. For example, stakeholder analysis can provide the Implementation Team with knowledge of potential project implementation hurdles.

For more information on stakeholders and stakeholder analysis, please refer to the [RNAO Toolkit: Implementation of Best Practice Guidelines: Second Edition \(2012\)](#).

How to get school endorsement!

Getting local superintendents to recommend that a particular school participate in YMHAC carries a lot of clout. Therefore, stakeholder influence and support should include mention of the “buy in” from schools. In boards, schools selection should be recommended in conjunction with local superintendent.

Implementation Team versus Steering Committee: What's the difference?

The Implementation Team is the core group responsible for day-to-day Initiative activities. The Steering Committee may involve members of the Implementation Team, plus other community members, including youth and school board members, for example. It acts in an advisory capacity providing high-level program implementation direction and advice. Depending on the breadth of resources in your region, it is possible that the Implementation Team and Steering Committee are composed of the same stakeholders.

STEP #4: DEVELOP A LOCAL STEERING COMMITTEE

Once the stakeholder analysis is complete, you need to engage other individuals to provide their expertise and direction to the YMHAC Initiative. In the YMHAC pilot project, local sites formed a local steering committee to work closely with the Implementation Team and provide high level strategic advice in the implementation and evaluation of the Initiative, as well as networking and promotional support. Networking and promotional support can come from internal, interface and external stakeholders.

Consider if there are existing structures in place that can help support the implementation of the YMHAC Initiative or whether a new local steering committee needs to be formed. **In our pilot, we found that integrating the steering committee into existing structures provided support for sustainability of the Initiative.**

Composition of a local steering committee may include individuals from health, education and community services. The local steering committee also must include youth participation to ensure the Initiative has the youth voice present. A terms of reference will help guide the overall objectives, meeting frequency and responsibilities of each member; a [sample terms of reference](#) can be modified as needed.

SPOT QUIZ: BUILD THE BEST TEAM POSSIBLE!

- ☒ Is your Implementation Team an internal or external team?
- ☒ Does your Implementation Team have support from leadership/management and front line staff?
- ☒ Is your Implementation Team interdisciplinary?

- ☑ Is there youth on your Implementation Team or local steering committee? What is their role?
- ☑ Are there current existing structures in place that could support implementation of the YMHAC Initiative (i.e., committees that could function as a local steering committee)?
- ☑ Are there current groups that meet to discuss youth led initiatives and/or mental health initiatives? If so, would they be willing to integrate the project into their work plan on a long-term basis to ensure sustainability? And what would this group's role be?
- ☑ What is the strategic mental health plan or other strategic plans that the Implementation Team should be aware of? What are the goals and objectives of the plans and how do we align the YMHAC Initiative within these plans?
- ☑ How do we develop meaningful connections with public health sites, school boards, and schools?

2.3—Handy Resources

For an overview of the YMHAC model:

[YMHAC Logic Model](#)

To develop a work plan: [YMHAC Work Plan](#)

Recruiting team members and stakeholders materials:

[YMHAC Terms of Reference Template](#)

[YMHAC Memo English](#)

SECTION THREE:

WHO DOES WHAT

Collecting Consent!

You will need the formal consent of parents of youth who are interested in participating as Youth Leads or Youth Champions. See the the [YMHAC Initiative Parental Consent Form](#).

As you learned in Section Two, teamwork is the foundation of the YMHAC Initiative success. However, various roles are assigned while delivering the YMHAC Initiative, and five have been identified as integral.

- ★ Adult Mental Health Lead
- ★ Adult Public Health Lead
- ★ Adult School Staff Lead
- ★ Youth Lead
- ★ Youth Champions

Think of these roles as different spokes on a wheel: to ensure sustainability, each of the roles come with specific responsibilities that complement and support each other. Keep in mind that each role must have at least one individual assigned to manage the role's responsibilities; for Youth Champions the responsibilities can be split among a group of youth and young adults as long as one person oversees the tasks.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY EXCEPTIONS


Based on group dynamic and preference, there is the option of modifying the Youth Lead role so that it is combined with the Youth Champions role. Please note if this route is employed, the responsibilities associated to the Youth Lead must be distributed to the Youth Champions to ensure all tasks are achieved.

Also, if the Initiative is implemented in a community agency, rather than in a school-based environment, agency staff would take on the responsibilities of the School Staff Lead to the best of their ability.

Finally, changes to the responsibilities can be made; however all responsibilities must be assigned to a lead.



3.5—Mental Health Lead Role

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SECTION FOUR:

ADULT LEADS TRAINING

4.1—Adult Leads Training and Orientation

We've developed a comprehensive training and orientation package that aims to support all staff implementing the YMHAC Initiative, including Public Health Leads, Schools Staff Leads and Mental Health Leads.

The goal of this training orientation is to: a) develop familiarity with the Initiative; b) understand mental health literacy; c) learn about the foundations for a Healthy Schools Approach; and d) learn about best practices in youth engagement, all of which are fundamental approaches guiding this Initiative.

It is expected that all staff involved in implementing the Initiative, regardless of role, receive all training materials and accompanying materials. Staff who may be involved can include health-care providers and nurses at the schools or community, teachers, parents and/or volunteers.

School endorsement

It is essential that principals endorse this Initiative in order to ensure teacher involvement, and extracurricular support by other staff and parents/guardians. Mental Health Leads can assist in messaging superintendents and principals about this important school/student/staff leadership opportunity.

The training materials were created in partnership with youth, health-care providers, nurses and educators, and include:

- ★ An [Adult Leads Training Manual](#) for staff (which includes an Initiative Overview, Foundations for Healthy Schools, Understanding and Adopting Youth Engagement Principles, the Youth Lead Orientation Training materials and other supplementary resources); and

- ★ Two Webinars (which includes an overview of the YMHAC Initiative and Foundations for Healthy Schools).

* [Overview of the YMHAC Initiative Webinar](#)

* [Foundations for Healthy Schools Webinar](#)

This training should take approximately 6-10 hours to complete. The delivery format can be adapted to support and accommodate schedules of individuals involved, availability of work space, etc. Your site may also consider setting up a date and time where those involved can come together to do the training, watch the webinars and debrief.

Adult Leads must be aware of the importance of developing an Evaluation Plan for when the program's complete. Find out how in [Section Seven](#).

4.2—Adult Leads Training Materials

[Adult Leads Training Manual](#)

[Overview of the YMHAC Initiative Webinar](#)

[Foundations for Healthy Schools Webinar](#)

Tips for Successful Training

- ✓ Ensure all staff receive all training materials and webinar links.
- ✓ Ensure that there is internet access and accessible computers to access webinars.
- ✓ If possible, provide dedicated time for staff to complete activities.
- ✓ Schedule time when staff are able to do the training together, and debrief about content and plan for next steps.
- ✓ Be aware of psychological safety and triggers. Please refer to the Section 5.1 for more information on psychological safety plans.

SECTION FIVE:

YOUTH LEADS TRAINING

In Section Three, you learned about the important roles and responsibilities a Youth Lead plays in the YMHAC Initiative. This section covers a useful overview of the necessary tools and resources [Youth Leads](#) need in an informative and educational training program.

Your Youth Leads training program should meet the following objectives.

1. Provide background knowledge and understanding about mental health, stress and wellness through the use of an interactive web-based resource, videos and reflective activities.
2. Provide background knowledge and understanding about substance use, stigma reduction, resiliency building, youth leadership and youth engagement best practices.
3. Inform about local community resources available to support mental health and well-being.
4. Inform about the YMHAC Initiative and their role in the project.

Public Health and School Mental Health ASSIST Leads (see Section Four) can oversee the logistical aspects and planning of the Youth Leads Training to ensure all participating individuals and schools are aware of their roles and responsibilities for the day.

Don't skip planning for training; as well, Youth Leads are required to complete both planning for training ([Section 5.1](#)) as well, Youth Leads are required to complete both [Part I](#) and [Part II](#) of the their training.

As mentioned in [Section Three](#), based on group dynamic and preference, there is the option of omitting the Youth Lead role. In that case, the training in this section must be provided to the Youth Champions to ensure all tasks are met.

Who organizes
the training



5.1—Planning For Youth Leads Training

Collecting Consent! You will need the formal consent of parents of youth who are interested in participating as Youth Leads. See the [YMhac Initiative Parental Consent Form](#). Also, check with your participating school board for consent requirements and possible documentation materials.

Here are some useful considerations to help you plan a training session.

- ★ Where will the event take place?
- ★ When will the event take place? Is this a busy time for students and staff?
- ★ Will the training include multiple schools within a school board? If so, where will the training session be held?
- ★ How are participants going to get to the training if not hosted within their schools, and is the space accessible?
- ★ Will you require any audio visual equipment?
- ★ What materials do you need to prepare and/or purchase?
- ★ Do participants need to be provided meals? If so, where will this be purchased and are there dietary restrictions?
- ★ What are the overall costs of the training?

For help identifying an ideal venue location, see [Hosting a Workshop at Your Site](#).

Tips for Recruiting Youth Leads!

- ★ Engage with a variety of school staff including principals and guidance counselors to identify Youth Leads. Remember to include not just those students with clear leadership skills, but also those who might be experiencing challenges connecting with others, or who are high risk for mental health illness and substance use issues, and could benefit from participating in the unique training of the YMHAC Initiative.
- ★ Use opportunities such as morning announcements to draw attention to the YMHAC Initiative and request youth participation.
- ★ School fairs or lunch periods can also be used as opportunities to draw attention and recruit youth. Use this time to set up a powerpoint, booth, or poster board and collect names of those who have expressed interest.

IMPLEMENT A PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY PLAN

Given that mental health and mental illness can be a sensitive topic, organizers need to consider how to support the psychological safety of student and adult participants. The YMHAC Initiative recommends developing a Psychological Safety Plan that entails appointing an Adult Safety Lead and a Student Safety Lead, along with key intervention steps to support youth who experience psychological distress during YMHAC training. Additional safety considerations include:

- ★ Flagging sensitive topics;
- ★ Establishing a relaxation space or “chill zone” for students who may be triggered by content;
- ★ Enlisting the support of a school board mental health professional to participate in the Champions training/workshop as well as offer counselling support if the need arises;
- ★ Allowing students to opt out of participating in various activities. Check out the Psychological Safety Plan;
- ★ Be aware of locally based resources for support, including calling them to notify them of the training; and
- ★ Be aware of provincially based resources, such as Connexx Ontario, and including resources on all documents.

5.2—Youth Leads Training (Part I & II)

YOUTH LEADS YMHAC ORIENTATION (PART I)

Length: 5-6 hours

Organizers/facilitators: Public Health Leads and Mental Health Leads

If necessary, the delivery format of the orientation can

be adapted to support and accommodate schedules of individuals involved, availability of work space, etc. As well, you can break up the sessions over several extended lunch hours, for example.

However, you will need to include the following content:

- ★ Overview of the YMHAC Initiative;
- ★ Introduction of Youth Leads to their Youth Lead colleagues, Public Health Leads, Mental Health ASSIST Leads, and School Staff Leads;
- ★ Workbooks that include curriculum and activities focused on: mental health and well-being, stigma in mental illness, stress and self-management strategies, substance use, overview of provincial and locally based resources to support youth mental health and well-being. Use this tool containing handy learning activities; Youth Lead Orientation Workbook; and
- ★ A scavenger hunt to create awareness of locally based resources to support youth.

YOUTH LEADS FOUNDATIONAL TRAINING (PART II)

Length: 1 day

Organizers/facilitators: School Staff Leads, Public Health Leads, and School Mental Health ASSIST Leads, if available.

You may want to explore hosting this event at a site other than your school, and consider including neighbouring schools participating in the project.

Regardless of where you locate the training day, make sure the content covers the following themes:

- ★ Mental health and illness;
- ★ Substance use/misuse;

Tips for a Successful Training!

- ★ Explore ways to make the content exciting and engaging for youth.
- ★ Ensure that all food provided is healthy and nutritious.
- ★ Be sure to schedule breaks to prevent information overload.

Tips: Make Your Training Engaging!

- ★ Invite a guest speaker with lived experience. Use the [School Mental Health-ASSIST School Mental Health Decision Support Tool](#) to ensure the speaker has a message of hope.
- ★ Incorporate videos and activities that are fun and easy.
- ★ Include breakout activities throughout the day.
- ★ Allot free time! This will allow youth to get to know each other and discuss potential activities or ideas they have to promote the YMHAC Initiative within their schools and community.

- ★ Stigma reduction;
- ★ Resiliency building;
- ★ Youth leadership; and
- ★ Youth engagement best practices.

For a one-day sample itinerary, see [Youth Leads Foundational Training Agenda](#).

For sample presentation slides you can adapt to your training, see [Day 1 Sample Slides](#).

5.3—Handy Resources

Identifying a venue location:

[Hosting a Workshop at Your Site](#)

Developing a psychological safety plan:

[Psychological Safety Plan](#)

Youth orientation activity suggestions:

[Youth Lead Orientation Workbook](#)

One-day sample training itinerary:

[Sample Program](#)

Sample training presentation slides:

[Day 1 Sample Slides](#)

Parental consent form:

[YMHAC Initiative Parental Consent Form:](#)

Template for planning:

[Work Plan Sample](#)

A workshop on youth engagement by Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health:

[How to Initiate Youth Engagement Practice in Mental Health Centres.](#)

A toolkit for engaging youth in mental health by the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health:

[Walking the talk](#)

Informal evaluation sample to use after orientation and training:

[Head, Heart, Feet: Informal Evaluation Sample](#)

SECTION SIX:

YOUTH CHAMPIONS TRAINING

Let Youth Lead!

While School Leads should work with school staff, school board staff, and public health staff to develop a relevant Network of Champions training/workshop, students should ultimately drive the process with support from the adult allies.

Tips for Recruiting Youth Champions

Rather than recruiting students with the most experience, highest grades, or best skills, consider students who:

- ★ Are passionate about mental health and well-being and want to make a difference;
 - ★ Are “at-risk” for mental health, illness and substance use issues;
-

In Section Three, you learned about the important role [Youth Champions](#) play in the YMHAC Initiative. This section covers a useful overview of the necessary tools and resources needed in an informative and educational training/workshop for Youth Champions.

At the end of the training, Youth Champions should successfully start to plan for locally based initiatives at their schools.

A Youth Champion training program should meet these objectives.

1. Help raise student awareness of the mental health continuum (i.e., what is the difference between mental health and mental illness) and reduce stigma.
2. Help students increase their confidence and develop advocacy and leadership skills.
3. Help improve the health and well-being of children and youth through a focus on mental health promotion, acceptance of mental illness, reduction of related stigma and substance misuse prevention.

For more information about what content to include, see [Sample Champions Workshop Agenda](#).

REMEMBER: If you did not assign Youth Leads, your Youth Champions must take Youth Leads training ([Section Five](#)).

Each community should lend a local context to the YMHAC Network of Champions. And the Champions training/workshop held in each local community is an excellent way to provide the opportunity to place local context on the work of YMHAC.

6.1—Planning for Youth Champions Network Training and Workshop

CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUTH CHAMPIONS NETWORK TRAINING AND WORKSHOP

The Youth Champions Network Training and Workshop is the foundation of the YMHAC Initiative. Dedicate adequate time to take care of key considerations to ensure a well-coordinated, effective day.

School endorsement

It is essential that principals endorse this Initiative in order to ensure teacher involvement, and extracurricular support by other staff and parents/guardians. See [Section 4.1](#) for more information.

School selection

Selection of participating schools may involve many points of consideration such as:

- ★ Interest and passion in developing mental health and well-being initiatives in their school;
- ★ Strong Healthy Schools Committee with student involvement;
- ★ Strong existing mental health awareness initiatives;
- ★ Special High Schools Major program in health/wellness; and
- ★ Existing collaboration with Public Health (i.e., Healthy Schools).

Central coordination

Public Health and Mental Health Leads should work together to oversee the logistical elements of the

- ★ Are unengaged or struggling at the school or community level;
- ★ Have the potential and openness to learn, develop, and grow;
- ★ Are willing to invest time and energy, problem-solve, take risks, and work in a team with other students and supportive adults;
- ★ Are new to the school or experiencing challenges connecting with others; and
- ★ Represent the diversity of students at your school and could benefit and grow from participating in this initiative.

training/workshop and ensure all schools participating are aware of their roles and responsibilities for the day. They should also, with input from the Youth Leads, help secure space, oversee registration and communication to participating schools.

Supporting Youth Leads for participation in workshop delivery

Ensure School Staff Leads and Public Health Staff set aside adequate time to meet with Youth Leads prior to Champion Training/Workshop to:

- ★ Help students prepare for their part of the workshop;
- ★ Link to main workshop organizers (Public Health and/or Mental Health Leads) for additional information; and
- ★ Provide any additional orientation prior to the event.

Supporting Champions for participation in workshop delivery

Youth Leads will use knowledge and skills gained from their training to help support the Champions in preparing their portion of the workshop; Public Health Staff and School Staff Leads may assist as well. Consider inviting other schools to prepare an icebreaker or share what they are currently doing at their school to support mental health and well-being.

Psychological safety of student participants

Given that mental health and mental illness can be a sensitive topic for some, organizers need to consider how to support the psychological safety of student and

adult participants. The YMHAC Initiative recommends developing a [Psychological Safety Plan](#) that entails appointing an Adult Safety Lead and a Student Safety Lead, along with following key intervention steps to support youth who experience psychological distress during YMHAC training. Additional safety considerations include:

- ★ Flagging sensitive topics;
- ★ Establishing a relaxation space or “chill zone” for students who may be triggered by content;
- ★ Enlist the support of school board mental health professionals and public health nurses to participate in the Champions training/workshop as well as offer counselling support if the need arises;
- ★ Allowing students to opt out of participating in various activities;
- ★ Be aware of locally based resources for support, including calling them to notify them of the training; and
- ★ Be aware of provincially based resources, such as Connexx Ontario and Kids Help Phone, and including resources on all documents.

LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following details can make or break a successful Youth Champions Network Training and Workshop day.

Teacher release time

School boards will need to discuss costs associated with teacher release time locally, and determine how to support this valuable initiative, which intersects many board initiatives (e.g., mental health, safe schools, student success, etc.).

SPACE

Give thought to finding a central or regional location for training, one that is accessible for all, and that offers space that allows for a wide range of interactive activities in various locations and can accommodate food for lunch and breaks.

TRANSPORTATION

Plan to have busing and/or public transportation, and adequate parking.

DATE AND TIMING

Consider avoiding events on Fridays and Mondays to ensure opportunity for follow-up exists and to maximize attendance. Also take into account the timing in the school year, (i.e., exams, various religious/cultural holidays, system wide events, etc.). Look for opportunities to incorporate the training into another theme week (e.g., Children's Mental Health week in May). And ensure adequate timing between recruiting leaders and workshop delivery to allow sufficient group development and planning.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Make sure you share event details with everyone, including sending out frequent reminders of upcoming meetings and sessions to increase attendance.

6.2—Youth Champion Network Training Workshop Content

Once you have carried out necessary planning arrangements for the Youth Champion training/workshop,

you will need to focus on providing quality, impactful content. Focusing on engaging and involving Youth Leads in as many components and decisions regarding the workshop as possible will improve outcomes.

Additional tips include:

- ★ Encourage Public Health Staff Leads and Public Health Nurses to participate in training/workshop activities and facilitate small group discussions that are led by Youth Leads;
- ★ Encourage action-oriented, interactive and enjoyable activities;
- ★ Encourage creativity in the delivery of the training/workshop and be patient with each individual's process around preparation for presenting;
- ★ Provide incentives, recognition and resources;
- ★ Provide an opportunity at the training/workshop for students to start to develop a School Action Plan; and
- ★ Obtain workshop feedback (see [Section Seven](#)).

For a handy training tool, see [6.3—Network of Champion Interactive Tool](#).

Also, check out an example of a [Youth Champion Network Training Workshop](#).

Ease Tension!

When the conversation got too heavy, the YMHAC pilot project team used 'disruptor videos'—inspirational, fun and motivational tools—that helped keep everyone focused on learning in a positive way.

6.3—Network of Champions Interactive Tool

Enhance the workshop experience with an interactive game called “Reach Out.” It is designed to deliver mental health information to young people, and was co-developed by a team of youth and mindyourmind (a nationally recognized youth mental health program that develops relevant tools around the topic of mental health). In November 2014, a customized version of Reach Out was co-created with these partners and the YMHAC Youth Leads, and re-branded as the Network of Champions Reach Out game.

How it works: [Network of Champions Reach Out](#) is an interactive game which gets students into teams and challenges them to have conversations about what they know and don’t know about mental health issues, substance use/misuse and mental health advocacy.

Learn more at [Network of Champions Reach Out Guide](#).

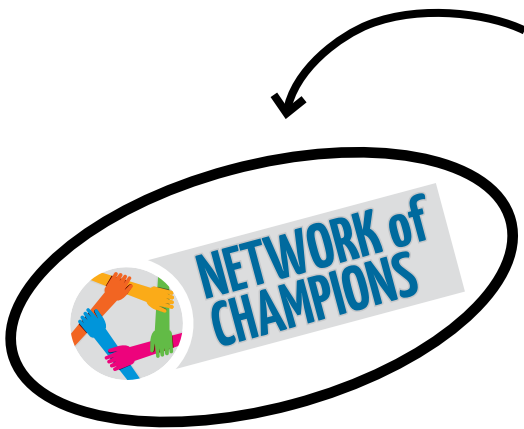
Equipment: You will need a computer, data projector and speakers to showcase the embedded video content.

TIP! Youth Leads should facilitate the Network of Champions Reach Out game.

6.4—Sample Youth Led Initiatives

The YMHAC Initiative aims to engage youth, help them understand what works and what doesn’t work, so they can problem solve and find solutions that support mental health promotion among peers. That’s why the Initiatives ultimately developed by youth during the training/workshop are such an important aspect of the program.

In the YMHAC pilot program, youth developed a broad array of meaningful activities that promote awareness of mental health and substance use among peers and worked towards building resilient and supportive school



environments and communities.

NOTE: These should be shared with Champions to help set expectations and inspire; not to replace the generation of new ideas.

Sample initiatives that were popular and/or unique include:

- ★ “Chill room” (a comfortable, non-judgment space);
- ★ Puppy visits to reduce stress;
- ★ Wall mural that focuses on students’ favourite well-being measures;
- ★ Worriless Wednesday (annointed monthly or weekly);
- ★ Caught You Caring (awards given to youth who demonstrate leadership in mental heath advocacy and promotion);
- ★ Yoga; and
- ★ Health Fair.

You can help focus activities and narrow objectives to achieve desired outcomes by organizing activities into the following categories:

- ★ Creating safe spaces;
- ★ Resource and service awareness campaigns;
- ★ Stigma reduction campaigns;
- ★ Coping and stress management education and training;
- ★ Caring and sharing moments; and
- ★ Acknowledging youth and their voice.

Check out more [Sample Activities](#) with descriptions and desired outcomes.

6.5—Handy Resources

Sample Network of Champions Training agenda:

[Sample Champions Workshop Agenda](#)

Training day tools:

[Psychological Safety Plan](#)

[School Action Plan](#)

Sample Network of Champions Training workshops:

[Youth Champion Network Training Workshop](#)

Network of Champions Training workshop planning template:

[Action Plan Sample.](#)

Sample Network of Champions Training workshop activities:

[Sample Activities](#)

SECTION SEVEN:

EVALUATION PLAN



7.1—Why Evaluate Your Program?

You didn't invest all this energy into a program that fails to meet its objectives. . . that's why evaluation is an important step in your program planning and implementation.

Assessing the activities, support, resources, and outcomes of your program will inform YHMAC Initiative's effectiveness, and identify improvements that may be required in future program development.

An evaluation plan should be developed as part of the initial program planning. This will help you to determine what data you will need, as well as why, where, when and how the data will be collected.

7.2—How to Develop an Evaluation Plan

The first step in evaluating your YMHAC Initiative program is to contact the local school board and/or health unit to determine if ethics is required. If so, consider what internal resources you have to support your ethics application, and work with the organization that is requesting ethics to find out what the steps are and what information is required. Once that's established, you'll need to undertake the following activities.

1. Engage your stakeholders in the need to develop an evaluation plan.
2. Determining what resources you will need for an evaluation plan.
3. Construct the Evaluation Design to align with the YMHAC Logic Model, and with what you are evaluating (process, means, resources, activities, and/or outcomes), the purpose of your evaluation, and the questions you are trying to answer.

Handy resource!

A comprehensive evaluation strategy was developed by RNAO in consultation with an evaluation expert for the 2013-2015 pilot of the YMHAC Initiative. From our learning's, we have outlined some critical components that include a brief background and samples of the evaluation tools we used during the pilot project.

[Download the YMHAC Pilot Evaluation Report](#)

Pre-Evaluation Considerations!

Before you conduct an evaluation, make sure you've checked off the following items:

- ☑ Obtained research and ethics approval from the school boards and/or public health units, where applicable;
- ☑ Provided an Information Letter to all participants including parents of participating youth to ensure that participants are fully informed and understand what their involvement will be; and
- ☑ Ensured a Letter of Consent is signed by the youth and their parents/guardians before participation in the program, including their consent to participate in any evaluation.

4. Decide on a qualitative and/or quantitative method of measuring and appropriate data collections methods (e.g., survey, focus group, key informant interview).

5. Develop an evaluation plan that aligns with code of ethics (if necessary) and that protects confidentiality.

6. Collect data/gather evidence.

7. Process data and analyze/interpret results.

8. Share and apply evaluation findings.

For more information on developing evaluation plans, see resources listed under [Tools to Support Evaluation](#).

7.3—Implementing Your Evaluation Plan

Now you're ready to begin with data collection and analysis/interpretation of results. Here are evaluation tools, approaches and tips that the YMHAC Initiative found useful.

PRE-SURVEY - YOUTH LEADS AND YOUTH CHAMPIONS

Training facilitators can administer pre-surveys to youth leads and champions at the beginning of their training workshops (store them in sealed envelopes and coded to protect confidentiality if using a paper copy).

See [Pre-survey Protocol Sample](#).

See [Pre-survey Questions Sample](#).

POST-SURVEYS OF YOUTH LEADS AND YOUTH CHAMPIONS

Post-surveys can be completed by Youth Leads and Youth Champions 3-6 months after the pre-survey. Provide the option to complete online (by emailing link directly to the youth), or via paper copies coded to protect confidentiality sent out by the Public Health Lead or School Staff Lead.

See [Post-survey Protocol Sample](#).

See [Post-survey Question Sample](#).

Both pre- and post-survey questions should assess the youth's:

- ★ Knowledge and awareness of mental health promotion and substance misuse issues;
- ★ Awareness of strategies to prevent substance use and misuse;
- ★ Knowledge and awareness of healthy coping strategies;
- ★ Understanding of the impact of stigma on youth; and
- ★ Awareness of available information and resources/ services in their local community.

In your post-survey, add a rating of the youth's satisfaction with the program and their confidence to work with other youth, and ask if the youth would be interested in continuing their work in the future.

FOCUS GROUPS WITH YOUTH LEADS

Hold a focus group to gain further information about the youth's experience in a leadership role, gain insight into their understanding of their role on the project, assess their satisfaction in their roles and gain insight about their role in future leadership work.

Who should lead?

The focus group should be led by an external person who does not have direct relationship with the project to avoid bias, if possible.

Be careful to pose questions that are semi-structured with probes to help the youth express their opinions. The YMHAC Initiative focus group questions looked at the Youth Lead's confidence to work with youth, satisfaction with the project, use of social media, ability to network with youth, their intention to continue their work and what could be provided to them to sustain their efforts.

Tip! Explore timing—school time, lunch hours or after school—in partnership with youth.

Check out the [Focus Group Guide and Questions](#).

FOCUS GROUPS WITH PUBLIC HEALTH LEADS

Hold a focus group with Public Health Leads to gain an in-depth understanding of their experience in the project, discuss sustainability strategies for future work and to further understand the impact the project had in regards to locally based youth programming within the health unit and within Ontario as a whole.

Be sure to develop questions that are semi-structured with probes to help the Public Health Leads express their opinions. The YMHAC Initiative focus group questions looked at the Leads' experiences working with youth, the impact of the project on their health unit, project successes, challenges experienced, sustainability issues, and key lessons learned.

Check out:

[Public Health Lead Focus Group Guide and Questions Sample](#)

SURVEY WITH ADULT ALLIES

When developing a survey for Adult Allies (any adult involved in the Initiative who have not completed another form of evaluation) or School Staff Leads, ask about their preferred role in the project, their overall satisfaction with their involvement, perceived benefits to the youth and to the schools as a result of the project, as well as their intent to continue their work. Conduct the survey towards the end of the project using an online format, if compatible with existing software systems and privacy rules.

Check out a [Survey Sample](#).

COLLECTION OF YOUTH ACTIVITY PROFILES

Provide Youth Leads and Champions with an Activity Profile template close to the activity start; this allows them to profile a minimum of one of their Initiative activities that they felt truly addressed mental health promotion. Information collected includes the activity goal, description, and anticipated outcomes as well as include any resources they had produced.

[See Activity Profile Template](#).

SHARING OF LESSONS LEARNED

A plan for sharing the results of your evaluation, lessons learned and recommendations should be developed in your evaluation plan and implemented once the evaluation is completed.

Ensure that you use the findings and recommendations from the evaluation to help support the continuation of the Initiative (i.e., what went well, what are we missing, what can we change for the future).

Handy technology!

If participants have access to computers, software programs could be used to administer the pre-survey. Check with local organizations about software compatibility and privacy issues. If suitable and permissible, these tools also help to gather and store data. Also, a statistical program such as SPSS can be helpful with comparative analysis used to show the differences in the distributions of responses from the pre- and post-surveys.

Tools to Support Evaluation

Developing an Evaluation Plan:

[Public Health Ontario's At a Glance: The 10 Steps to Conducting an Evaluation](#)

Center for Disease Control and Protection's [Introduction to Program Evaluation for Public Health Programming](#)

Metropolitan Area Planning Council's [Facilitator's Guide to Youth Community Safety Photovoice](#)

[YMHAC Logic Model](#)

For more information on logic models and program planning see [Public Health Ontario's Planning Health Promotion Programs: An Introductory Workbook](#)

Ethics review:

Contact your school board and/or public health unit.

Sample Project Information

Letter: [Sample Letter of Consent](#)

Evaluation methods:

[Activity Profile Template](#)

See a full copy of [YMHAC Final Evaluation Report, May 2015](#)

[Youth Pre-survey Protocol Sample](#)

[Youth Pre-survey Questions Sample](#)

[Youth Post-survey Protocol Sample](#)

[Youth Post-survey Questions Sample](#)

NOTES:

[illegible]

RESOURCES

Fun and engaging RNAO [postcard activities](#) that were developed by youth, with activities designed to engage youth.

[Network of Champions Reach Out Guide](#)

[RNAO Toolkit: Implementation of Best Practice Guidelines, Second Edition](#)

[School Board Decision Support Tool for Mental Health Capacity Building](#)

[RNAO Mental Health and Addiction Webinar: Youth Mental Health Promotion @ School](#)

[Promoting Mental Health: Finding a Shared Language, video by the CAMH Health Promotion Resource Centre](#)

APPENDIX A

The following national and provincial programs provide support for the mental well-being of youth in Canada. This not a comprehensive list: look for programs in your jurisdiction.

Mental Health Commission of Canada

Supporting the emotional and social development of youth lays the foundation for mental health and resilience throughout life. The Mental Health Commission of Canada (2012) reinforces the importance of incorporating the concepts of well-being and health promotion into mental health initiatives. When youth needs are considered, strategies that support youth promote mental health, well-being and resilience.

Priority 1.2 of the Mental Health Strategy for Canada (2012) specifically calls on diverse stakeholders such as caregivers, schools and community organizations to support early intervention, promote the mental health of children and youth, and prevent mental illness.

Here's where

YMHAC

fits in!



The Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champion (YMHAC) Initiative has supported this priority by collaborating with health, education and social services professionals to support students to be champions of change and to create enhanced levels of awareness, acceptance and healthy behaviours regarding mental health and substance misuse.

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/node/721>

Open Minds, Healthy Minds

Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy aims to "reduce the burden of mental illness and addictions by ensuring that all Ontarians have timely access to an integrated system of excellent, coordinated and efficient promotion, prevention, early intervention, community support and treatment programs" (Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, 2011, p 7). The over-arching goals of the Strategy include:

- ★ To improve mental health and well-being for all Ontarians;
- ★ To create healthy, resilient, inclusive communities;
- ★ To identify mental health and addiction problems early and intervene; and
- ★ To provide timely, high quality, integrated, person-directed health and human services.

The **Strategy** focuses on children and youth in the first three years, and is supported by several Ministries, including the leadership of the Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS), Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) and Ministry of Education (MOE). There are three key target areas:

- ★ Fast access to high-quality services;
- ★ Early identification and support; and

- ★ Help for vulnerable children and youth with unique needs.

The Strategy builds upon the foundational work of the MCYS Policy Framework, [A Shared Responsibility, Ontario's Framework for Child and Youth Mental Health](#), the related provincial mapping exercise, and the introduction of the Student Support Leadership Initiative.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has made several commitments in relation to the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. For example, there is a commitment to enhance the K-12 curriculum to feature student mental health and addictions, to provide a guide for educators in this area (Supporting Minds), and to support professional learning in school mental health. Funding to support the hiring of Mental Health Leaders to support board mental health strategy development and implementation across all boards is a critical contribution. School Mental Health ASSIST is also part of the EDU support for the Strategy.

The next phase of the Strategy will build on the first phase and expand to support the transition between youth and adult services, and to improve the quality of services for Ontarians of all ages who have mental illness and addictions. The next phase will be built on the five following foundational pillars.

Here's where

YMHAC

fits in!

- 1. Promoting Mental Health and Well-being:**
Focus on proven programs to promote mental health in schools and workplace.
- 2. Ensuring Early Identification and Intervention:**
Focus on using virtual applications to access services; expanding training, mentorship, and support programs led by service providers; expanding existing self-help and early intervention programs.

3. Expanding Housing, Employment Supports and Diversion and Transitions from the Justice System:

Focus on increasing supportive housing with focus on preventing homelessness; expanding workplace mental health programs; initiatives to reduce contact with justice system; improve transitions between police and emergency rooms.

4. Providing the Right Care, at the Right Time, in the Right Place.

5. Funding Based on Need and Quality:

Focus on establishing a new funding model linked to population need, quality improvement and service integration.

Ministry of Education— Achieving Excellence

A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario builds on the education system's three current priorities: increasing student achievement, closing gaps in student achievement and increasing public confidence in publicly funded education. It encompasses these goals and reaches deeper and broader, raising expectations both for the system and for the potential of children and students. The renewed goals for education are:

Achieving Excellence: Children and students of all ages will achieve high levels of academic performance, acquire valuable skills and demonstrate good citizenship. Educators will be supported in learning continuously and will be recognized as among the best in the world.

Ensuring Equity: All children and students will be inspired to reach their full potential, with access to rich learning experiences that begin at birth and continue into adulthood.

Promoting Well-being: All children and students will develop enhanced mental and physical health, a positive sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.

Enhancing Public Confidence: Ontarian's will continue to have confidence in a publicly funded education system that helps develop new generations of confident, capable and caring citizens.

“The above four goals are interconnected—success in one contributes to success in the others. Progress over the last 10 years tells us that when educators, students, parents and guardians, and our many other partners focus on a small number of clearly defined goals, those goals can be achieved” (Ministry of Education Achieving Excellence, 2014, page 3).

This is a seminal point for School Mental Health in Ontario. Achieving Excellence places student mental health and well-being firmly on the map of Ontario's Vision for Education.

Mental Health Leaders should familiarize themselves with Achieving Excellence, as it is a foundational piece to the work of School Mental Health and Mental Health Leaders.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/excellent.html>

School Mental Health (SMH) ASSIST Priorities

Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, [School Mental Health \(SMH\) ASSIST](#) is a provincial implementation support team designed to provide leadership, resources, and direct implementation support to district school boards in their efforts to promote student mental health and well-being by maintaining a clear scope, and recommended sequence for implementation of school mental health practices.

SMH ASSIST's core areas of focus are:

- ★ Leadership and organizational conditions to support effective school mental health;
- ★ Capacity-building for educators and system leaders; and
- ★ Selection and implementation of evidence-based mental health promotion and prevention programming.

Using the foundational work of the first three years, the SMH ASSIST Strategy for 2014-2017 aims to deepen the focus on implementation going forward, particularly in relation to introducing sustainable evidence-based mental health promotion and prevention programming, and with enhanced attention to the needs of specific populations. In addition, as the Ontario context evolves in relation to the Strategy and Achieving Excellence, SMH ASSIST will maintain an explicit focus on contributing to the emerging system of care for children and youth.

Leading Mentally Healthy Schools

This [Resource](#) was created by school administrators, for school administrators, with the support of mental health professionals and Ministry of Education staff. It is part of the suite of resources prepared through SMH ASSIST.

Leading Mentally Healthy Schools is intended to complement school board initiatives related to promoting student well-being and is meant to be used as a companion to the Ministry of Education Guide: Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-being, 2013.

Connecting the Dots Report

The YMHAC Initiative provided an opportunity for the RNAO to partner with six health units, local school boards and youth to support youth mental health. Connecting the Dots (2013) is the first report in Ontario to survey all 36 health units in order to describe the range of child and youth mental health activities, initiatives, services and programming occurring in Ontario public health units.

The report demonstrates that a substantial amount of work is already underway by Ontario public health units to address mental health in children and youth. Health units are responding to local needs, working with a variety of partners, and showing resourcefulness by integrating mental health into existing programming. While the report suggests the role of public health in mental health is not a new one, it remains largely unresolved in Ontario.

[Connecting The Dots](#)

School Board Strategic Direction

SMH ASSIST provides a vision for mental health and well-being in schools along with a wide variety of resources. However it is the role of the Mental Health Leader, in consultation with the School Boards Mental Health Leadership Team, to plan and implement a mental health strategy that best fits the unique needs and organizational conditions of their specific District School Board. **In order for the strategy to be successful, it is vital that the Mental Health Lead and their team develop and implement a strategy that works in their context.** The landscape of mental health and well-being in education is still relatively new.

Here's where

YMHAC

fits in!



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NOTES:

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RNAO'S

YOUTH

**MENTAL HEALTH
& ADDICTION CHAMPIONS
INITIATIVE TOOLKIT**

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