

Module 3: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS, TOOLKITS, AND INDICATORS

What this section is about:

The following section is a review of existing toolkits, guidelines, and frameworks pertaining to youth engagement and mental health promotion. The information is categorized into different columns with the recommendations for application to the toolkit in the right column.

Organization and resource	Youth Engagement Theory	Overview of theory and principles	Indicators of success
<p>Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child & Youth Mental Health</p> <p>✓ (Quality Standards)</p> <p>Quality Standard for Youth Engagement (2021)</p>	<p><i>“youth engagement is about the meaningful and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity focused outside the self”</i> (p.7)</p> <p>Youth Engagement is recognized as a continuum of participation based on Hart’s Ladder of</p>	<p>Youth Engagement can occur along a continuum (from passive recipients of services to youths recognized as equal partners in their care) and across 3 levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the level of personal care (e.g., directly with healthcare professionals) • Within the organization • At the system level □ focus of this standard document <p>Nine pillars of Youth Engagement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Youth and partners work together to identify and address barriers to participation in youth engagement practices. 2. Authentic relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Youth and partners share genuine, trusting and collaborative relationships in which youth expertise and experience are respected and valued.

	<p>Children’s Participation (p.7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Engagement Traffic Light was created to visualize the continuum of youth engagement and participation (developed internally by the organization’s Youth Advisory Council) • Each section of the guide is colour-coded to determine whether it should be included (green) or avoided (orange/red), what the engagement type means, an example, as well as possible effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Red: Manipulation, decoration, tokenism 	<p>(see indicators of success for list and Appendix A Figure 1 for Quality Standards framework)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each pillar is associated with tasks for youths, agencies, and system decision-makers and a rationale is provided for the pillar. • Practical examples of activities and initiatives are provided under each pillar (e.g., work with youth on strategic planning by co-developing performance indicators) • Positive Youth Development: strengths-based approach that supports youths to thrive in adolescence and transition successfully to adulthood. Positive 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Co-development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Youth jointly develop all projects, services and processes that impact or interest them. 4. Commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ All partners are committed to youth engagement and those in system leadership roles are accountable for embedding this commitment in system planning and improvement efforts. 5. Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Communication between all partners is timely, clear, respectful and accessible 6. Diversity & Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Youth engagement practices are inclusive; the diversity of engaged youth is valued and representative of the community served. 7. Ongoing Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Youth and partners understand the principles of youth engagement and seek opportunities to continually increase their knowledge and skills
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Orange: Informed, consulted ◦ Green: Co-development and Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework (p.7) is recognized as the core of Youth Engagement 	<p>youth development initiatives include social connection, living skills, health and physical literacy, academic success etc.</p>	<p>relating to youth engagement practices and other relevant areas.</p> <p>8. Research & evaluation → Youth and partners jointly research, evaluate and make ongoing quality improvements to youth engagement practices and other relevant projects and processes.</p> <p>9. Safer Spaces → Youth and partners co-create and regularly check in to establish an environment in which everyone feels comfortable, embraced and able to speak freely.</p>

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<p>The Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions ✓ Toolkit</p> <p>Walking the talk: A toolkit for engaging youth in mental health (2019)</p>	<p><i>“Youth engagement is about empowering all young people as valuable partners in addressing and making decisions about issues that affect them personally and/or that they believe to be important.” —The New Mentality (p.6)</i></p>	<p>Engagement is seen as a continuum with passive recipients of care as the least engaged, to youth being seen as equal partners in their care.</p> <p>Seven Guiding principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value youths as community assets • Commit to participatory leadership □ invites those affected by an issue to generate priorities and goals • Build authentic relationships • Strive for health equity (AOP – Anti-Oppressive practice) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Anti-oppressive practice (AOP) is defined as a way of working that recognizes existing social inequalities and power imbalances and reduces them through meaningful engagement and collaboration with children, youth, families and service providers in all levels of decision making (p. 86) 	<p>The toolkit provides a link to a search engine on CYMHA’s website to select indicators of success: link here</p> <p>“Youth Engagement” can be selected in the dropdown menu and a variety of surveys and measuring tools can be chosen.</p>

	<p>Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet youths where they're at □ not only about the outcomes but the process of being involved • Use a whole community approach • Put safety first □ for youth and adults. Include accessible clinical supports <p>Strengths-based approach where youth are engaged within their communities, families, peers etc. PYD creates opportunities for youth to develop skills to make a successful transition to adulthood. Focuses on resilience and building protective factors (e.g., engagement in school community, mental health care, caring adults, positive family relationships etc.) to overcome adversity. Core components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships • Positive spaces • Positive opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youths turn to peers for support - Youth engagement increases self-esteem and resilience 	
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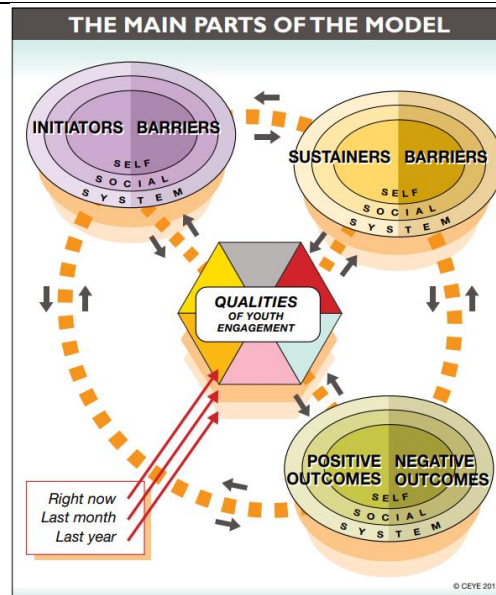
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adults benefit as well as it brings new perspectives to decision-making - Agencies benefit by promoting a culture of inclusion - Communities benefit from increase communication and community-building <p>Recruitment strategies using the FLEXIVOL (Gaskin, 1998) framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility (offer choice) • Legitimacy (explain how they are making a difference) • Ease of access • Experience • Incentives • Variety • Organization • Laughs <p>Safe spaces are defined and strategies are provided to enhance them</p> <p>- Reference: Gaskin, K. (1998). What young people want from volunteering. Institute for Volunteering Research.</p>	
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		<p>Tuckman’s theory of group development (1965) is used as a model for effective team building: teams go through clearly defined phases from a group of individuals to a cohesive task-oriented team. Stages are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming • Storming (tension may arise; important to create a safe space) • Norming (common objectives laid out) • Performing (work is being done well) • Adjourning (collective tasks are completed) <p>Evaluation steps are outlined in the guide. Youth Engagement Indicators can be obtained through the CYMHA database: Measures database (cymha.ca)</p>	
<p>Organization and resource</p>	<p>Youth Engagement Theory</p>	<p>Overview of theory and principles</p>	<p>Indicators of success</p>

<p>Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health ✓ Toolkit Youth Engagement Toolkit (2018)</p>	<p>The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement defines youth engagement as “<i>the sustained and meaningful involvement of a young person in an activity focussed outside of themselves.</i>”(p.11)</p> <p>Full engagement occurs when the head, heart, feet, and spirit are involved. (p.11)</p>	<p>This toolkit aligns youth engagement with the 4 pillars of comprehensive school health:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social and physical environment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Physical and psychological safety (e.g., group guidelines, safe spaces) b. Supportive relationships (partnership, accountability) c. Positive social norms (diverse viewpoints, peer support) d. Opportunities to belong (celebrate diversity, recognize growth and achievements) 2. Teaching and learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Appropriate Structure (clear, consistent boundaries, intentionally-designed activities) b. Supportive relationships (collaboration, support) c. Positive social norms 	<p>Indicators are included in each section of the toolkit; however, the link is not working at this time. Will revisit.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">d. Opportunities for skill-building (life skills, internships, mentorship) <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Healthy school policy<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Positive social normsb. Support for efficacy and mattering (youth voice, opportunities for meaningful contribution)4. Partnerships and services<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Integration of family, school, and community efforts (parent, caregiver and family involved, school and community collaboration) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See Figure 2 in Appendix A for the 4 pillars of comprehensive school health and how they align with YE. (Image retrieved from p. 10)	
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Uses the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement's (CEYE) Conceptual Model.



CEYE Youth Engagement Conceptual Model

4 key components:

1. Initiators and barriers (elements that encourage or hinder youth from participating/engaging - e.g., needing volunteer hours)
2. Qualities of Youth Engagement Activities (key features of how an activity or process is carried out - e.g., youth involved in setting goals)
3. Sustainers and barriers (elements that keep or hinder

	<p>Kirby's Institutionalizing Participation Framework describes 4 stages of change needed to promote YE</p>	<p>engagement over a prolonged period of time</p> <p>4. Outcomes (the impact on youth and the community as a result of the engagement process - e.g., more effective youth policies)</p> <p>Youth engagement occurs at three levels: individual/self, social, and system level</p> <p>5 steps to Youth Engagement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The Motivation": initiating youth engagement (YE) 2. "I Felt Heard": Qualities of YE 3. "Keep It Going": Sustaining YE 4. "When the Going Gets Tough": Addressing Challenges 5. "So What?" Evaluating the Impact <p>Kirby's framework:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unfreezing (recognize need for change and unblock existing attitudes), 	
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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Catalyzing (“champions” are established and supported by management), 3. Internalizing (build staff capacity so engagement is sustainable), 4. Institutionalizing (YE becomes policy) <p>YE is divided into steps for policy & decision-makers and steps for practitioners:</p> <p>Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate the culture shift • Assess organizational readiness • Find the internal catalyst <p>Practitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage early • Establish shared objectives • Establish partnerships • Maintain frequent contact • Identify background research • Use expertise collaboratively • Consider diversity • Recruit young people • Provide pre-engagement activities • Prepare youth-friendly materials • Develop a logistics plan 	
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		<p>Eccles and Gootman (2002): 8 qualities of positive developmental settings that promote YE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical and psychological safety 2. Appropriate structure 3. Supportive relationships 4. Opportunities for belonging and meaningful inclusion 5. Positive social norms 6. Support for efficacy and mattering 7. Opportunities for skill building and learning 8. Integration of family, school, and community efforts <p>Link to the assessment tool: https://www.jcsh-cces.ca/ye-book/resources/Assess_Qualities.pdf</p> <p>Steps are also included for how to sustain engagement long term.</p>	
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Ministry of Children and Family	“Youth engagement is about creating opportunities for young	Participants of the program include: Champion, Youth participants, Adult participants, Management	From the Evaluation Toolkit: 5 themes are included: 1. Organizational readiness

<p>Development, Province of British Columbia ✓ Toolkits</p> <p>Champion's Guide: Youth Engagement Toolkit Champion's Guide (2013)</p> <p>Resource Guide: Youth Engagement Toolkit Resource Guide (2013)</p>	<p>people to play meaningful roles in operational and governance issues, as well as in the decision-making structures of organizations. Youth engagement means that organizations partner with young people and engage them in the work of the organization. The ideas and expertise of youth can contribute to improved services and programs and lead to better outcomes for children and youth. Organizations change and evolve when the individual employees adopt youth engagement into their daily practice. Systemic change starts from shifting the practice of employees.” (p.13)</p>	<p>From left to right: Participation in programs or services – Program or organizational Assistance – Informal Influence – Formal Roles in Policy-Making and Decision-Making – Youth/ Adult Partnerships – Youth-Led</p> <p>See Figure 3 in Appendix A for Youth Engagement Spectrum (p.11 in the toolkit resource guide)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Youth-adult partnership 3. Youth leadership decision-making 4. Youth as evaluators and researchers 5. Diversity <p>Under each of the themes, the participant is asked to rate YE practice on a number of indicators/statements. There is a section for comments as well.</p> <p>Overall, there are 35 indicators measuring youth engagement. Link here: Youth Engagement Toolkit Evaluation Tool (2013)</p>
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<p>Evaluation Resource: Youth Engagement Toolkit Evaluation Tool (2013)</p>	<p>Youth Engagement Spectrum (HeartWood Centre)</p> <p>Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation</p> <p>Anderson & Sandmann (2007)'s model promoting empowerment, and balancing leadership opportunities (p. 24 and 25)</p>	<p>At the core of the toolkit is the theory of Hart's Ladder of Participation.</p> <p>Anderson & Sandmann's model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Fostering self efficacy (increasing youth's belief in their capabilities by helping them be successful and celebrating their success) by asking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How do I build members' confidence through ensuring small successes along the way? ◦ Do I share examples of others' accomplishments to build members' belief in their own capabilities? ◦ Setting a context for action (youth are more likely to be empowered if they understand the organization/program's mission and priorities and how 	
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	<p>Reference: Anderson & Sandmann. (2007). Toward a Model of Empowering Practices in Youth Adult Partnerships.</p>	<p>their participation aligns) by asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Do I give meaning to responsibilities by explaining how they align with the mission and priorities? ◦ How do I help members understand how responsibilities help to reach the group's goals? ◦ Structuring the task (ensure that youth are supported to meet expectations and complete tasks) by asking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Do I set clear timelines for responsibilities? ◦ Do I outline the major steps necessary to complete the responsibilities? ◦ Creating a sense of ownership (giving youth responsibilities and independence on how to decide which tasks are completed and that they are in charge of the work that gets completed) by asking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Do I rely on members to make their own decisions about how work gets done? 	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Do I resist taking back responsibilities once they have been delegated?◦ Coaching for performance (actively support youth as they work to achieve their goals by providing regular feedback and support) by asking:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Do I provide constructive feedback to members as they carry out responsibilities?◦ Do I have conversations with members to evaluate their performance? <p>There are recommendations for including participants from diverse backgrounds as well on page 37 and onward.</p>	
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