

PPM 169 memorandum and YWC mapping

Background

On July 28, 2023, PPM 169 – pertaining to the subject of student mental health – was released by the Ministries of Health and Education (Ontario, 2023). This memo outlines the requirements for school authorities and school boards to provide evidence-informed mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention services to the student population in a culturally safe manner. The wellbeing and mental health of students is acknowledged as integral to their learning (Ontario, 2023).

Schools represent an ideal place for mental health promotion, prevention and early identification through school-based programs and interventions and by equipping students with knowledge and skills to be aware of and

How does the Youth Wellness Champions Program fit in?

Requirements

The requirements outlined in PPM 169 support an integrated mental health system for youth and can provide opportunities for system alignment when implementing RNAO's Youth Wellness Champions (YWC) Program. RNAO recommends reviewing all requirements in PPM 169. The YWC Program directly aligns with the following PPM 169 requirements. youth workers, teachers), Public Health Lead, school principal/vice-principal or designate and Youth Champions to plan and carry out initiatives promoting mental health throughout the school year.

A. Requirement 1: Three-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and One-Year Action Plan

Requirement 1 outlines that school boards must develop and implement a three-year mental health and addictions strategy and one year action plan that outlines components of PPM 169, and how each component will be evaluated and measured. RNAO recommends that public health, community agencies, and school staff implementing the YWC Program align with the three-year strategy and one year action plan to support integration.

B. Requirement 3: Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Requirement 3 outlines that school boards must utilize a “multi-tiered system of support” when delivering school-based mental health services (Ontario, 2023). This includes a continuum of services ranging from mental health promotion, prevention, and early identification to more intensive clinical service pathways (Ontario, 2023). The YWC Program aligns well with the first tier of care – consisting of mental health promotion programs and services – as its primary focus is on primary prevention and implementing mental health promotion initiatives.

C. Requirement 7: Enhanced Educator and Staff Mental Literacy

Requirement 7 highlights the importance of increasing staff mental health literacy through the use of evidence-informed resources (Ontario, 2023). By participating in YWC, staff can gain an increased understanding of mental health, mental illness, and substance use to better be able to support students' wellbeing.

D. Requirement 8: Mandatory Mental Health Literacy Learning for Students

Requirement 8 relates to the implementation of the Mandatory Mental Health Literacy modules in grades 7 and 8, during which students learn about mental health, mental illness and the impact of stigma associated with mental illness (Ontario, 2023). The YWC Program directly relates to this content by supporting students in learning about mental health topics, and reinforcing this learning through the implementation of mental health promotion initiatives.

E. Requirement 10: Social Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning skills – as outlined in the Ontario curriculum – help students foster good mental health and wellbeing (Ontario, 2023). The YWC Program directly supports and supplements the learning of these skills.

Roles and responsibilities

Public health units

As a requirement of the Ontario Public Health Standards, boards of health address mental health promotion under four program standards including Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-being and School Health among others (Ontario, 2023). Boards of health are responsible for implementing health promotion public health interventions to improve the health of youth and school-aged children (Ontario, 2023). Public health nurses and health promoters can introduce the YWC Program to the schools they are working with and provide support in the planning and

Mental health leaders and staff

Mental health leaders and staff can provide support by participating in the YWC Program as Adult Allies.

Reference

Ontario. (2023). Policy/Program Memorandum 169. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-169>

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