

Credits

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The OPHA provides leadership on issues affecting the public health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
What is the purpose of this toolkit?.....	5
How is this toolkit organized?	6
How was this toolkit developed?	7
SECTION 1 - THE THEORY: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AS A HEALTH PROMOTION STRATEGY	8
Background: Resiliency and the health of middle school-aged youth	9
Understanding youth engagement.....	12
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AS A HEALTH PROMOTION STRATEGY	15
What are the benefits of youth engagement for health promotion?.....	15
What roles can public health play in youth engagement?	20
Putting youth engagement into practice: The Youth Engagement Formula	21
Additional Reading and Resources.....	28
SECTION 2 - YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES.....	29
Youth-friendly engagement strategies	30
Strategies for helping young people understand public health issues	39
Building critical awareness.....	40
Strategies for building and maintaining high-functioning teams	42
SECTION 3 - THE FIVE PHASES OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT	45
PHASE 1: GET READY FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT	45
Purpose of this phase	46

Get yourself ready for youth engagement 46

Get your public health unit ready for youth engagement..... 49

Working with community partners 51

Develop a youth engagement program plan 51

How to develop a youth engagement program plan 57

Resources needed for Youth Engagement 65

Questions to consider 67

Activities to support this phase 68

Additional reading and resources 68

PHASE 2: BUILD THE TEAM AND THEIR CAPACITY..... 69

Purpose of this phase 69

How to find, recruit, and select youth..... 69

How to build the youth team 71

Questions to consider 77

Activities to support this phase 78

Additional reading and resources 78

PHASE 3: EXPLORE AND IDENTIFY 79

Purpose of this phase 79

**How to engage youth in exploring social problems and
selecting an issue of focus..... 79**

Questions to consider 81

Activities to support this phase 81

Additional reading and resources 82

PHASE 4: PLAN AND ACT 83

Purpose of this phase 83

How to engage youth in project planning and implementation	84
Questions to consider	87
Activities to support this phase	88
Additional reading and resources	88
PHASE 5: REFLECT, EVALUATE, AND CELEBRATE	89
Purpose of this phase	89
How to engage youth in reflection.....	89
How to engage youth in evaluation	90
How to engage youth in celebration	91
Questions to consider	92
Activities to support this phase	92
Additional reading and resources	93
SECTION 4 - THE TOOLBOX.....	95
Youth engagement activities	97
Glossary	154
About the Author and Contributors.....	156
About the OPHA Youth Engagement Project Team	157
References	160



Windsor-Essex County Public Health Pilot Site's Youth Group Mural

Introduction

What is the purpose of this toolkit?

How can we help young people make decisions that support their health and well-being today and in the future while avoiding behaviours – like substance misuse and sexual risk-taking – that put them in harm’s way?

This is a question asked by the many people who care about young people, including parents, teachers, researchers, youth workers, public health professionals, social workers, and young people themselves. Research-based and practice-based evidence in youth health promotion is increasingly pointing away from trying to prevent specific risk behaviours such as substance misuse and sexual risk-taking through education and awareness-based approaches, and towards solutions that strengthen young people’s resilience and enhance the protective factors in the environments in which they live, learn, and play. Youth engagement is increasingly seen as an important strategy for promoting young people’s health and development.

This resource is part of a series of resources developed by the OPHA. Visit www.youthengagement.ca to access additional resources on youth engagement.

This resource was developed by the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) to support public health professionals in using youth engagement as a strategy to promote young people’s health. It is also relevant for schools, community agencies, parents, and others who want to improve the lives, health, and well-being of young people.

Similar to other community empowerment approaches used in health promotion, youth engagement is an art rather than a science. It is a process that happens over time, is based on relationships, and works best when tailored to the young people and their local context with whom you will work. As a result, the toolkit does not provide a recipe for “doing” youth engagement but rather a roadmap and tools to start and support this process.

There are many different definitions for youth. This toolkit focuses on youth in middle school (i.e., Grades 6 to 8 and typically 11 to 14 years old), also known as “tweens”. The

This toolkit is intended to:

- Ground resiliency and youth engagement within a health promotion and social determinants of health framework.
- Define good practices in youth engagement as a health promotion strategy.
- Provide practical information to help public health professionals advocate for, plan, implement and evaluate youth engagement programs.

information and strategies in this toolkit can be adapted for use with an older youth population.

How is this toolkit organized?

The toolkit is intended for a wide range of adult allies – adults who support youth empowerment and leadership – from those who are experienced and are looking for additional ideas to those who are new to youth engagement. It is recommended that practitioners who are new to youth engagement read the toolkit sequentially from cover to cover. Those who are more experienced may find it more useful to reference the sections that are most relevant for their needs.

**Section 1:
The Theory - Youth
Engagement as a
Health Promotion
Strategy**

This section provides a brief introduction to resiliency, protective factors, and youth engagement including what it is, how it differs from traditional youth-serving models, and the role of adults in this process. Here the toolkit explores how youth engagement can be used to promote young people’s health.

**Section 2:
Engagement
Strategies**

This section provides an overview of common strategies for engaging youth and nurturing high-functioning teams.

**Section 3:
The Process**

This section provides an overview of the youth engagement process and a detailed look at the five phases in this process.

**Section 4:
The Toolbox**

This section provides tips, tools, and strategies for maximizing your effectiveness at each phase of the youth engagement process.

Glossary

The glossary defines words and ideas with which readers may be unfamiliar. Many of these words and ideas are also described as they occur in the toolkit.

A number of icons are used throughout the toolkit to highlight different kinds of information:



Key Message
Summarizes
important messages



Tip! Gives useful hints
when building youth
engagement

How was this toolkit developed?

The toolkit was developed in four stages:

1. We conducted a review of available peer-reviewed and gray literature about youth engagement and resiliency.
2. An initial draft of this toolkit was developed and reviewed by an advisory committee.
3. Six public health unit pilot sites across Ontario collaborated by OPHA in youth engagement and implemented projects with middle school-aged youth in their communities. Staff from the public health units and participating community partners along with the youth participated in an ongoing evaluation.
4. The lessons learned and best practices from the pilot sites were integrated into this toolkit.

Section 1 - The Theory: Youth Engagement as a Health Promotion Strategy

- Resiliency and the health of middle school-aged youth
- Understanding youth engagement
- What are the benefits of youth engagement for health promotion
- Public Health's Role in Youth Engagement
- Putting Youth Engagement into Practice

Background: Resiliency and the health of middle school-aged youth

Understanding middle school-aged youth

An important first step in working with middle school-aged youth to improve their health and well-being is to understand them. There are many physical, social, and cognitive transitions as young people move from childhood to adolescents. Middle school-aged youth experience changes in their bodies as they go through puberty and changes in their social relationships such as spending more time with friends and developing romantic interests (Peel Public Health, 2007). This is a time when young people are trying to figure out who they are and what they believe in, and to make sense of the world, its conflicting ideas, and their place in it (Johnson & Freedman, 2005).

Youth are influenced mainly by their parents, their friends, the media, and what is going on in their community (THCU, 2004). They tend to look up to and identify with older teens. Although the media is a key source of information about issues like drugs and sex, many youth do not have the media literacy skills needed to deconstruct and critique these media images (THCU, 2004).

In addition to developmental changes common to all youth, some youth face challenges such as immigrating to Canada, or coping with economic and social exclusion.

Understanding health issues affecting middle school-aged youth

The findings from the *Health Behaviours in School-aged Children* indicate that many young people experience challenges to their health and well-being during the middle school-aged years, including increased stress; increased bullying and violence; declining sense of belonging and acceptance in their schools, particularly for boys; and, for girls, significant declines in self-confidence and mental health (Boyce, 2004). These challenges can affect young people's health in the present and into the future.

Understanding what affects the health of middle school-aged youth

Some young people thrive amid, effectively cope with, and bounce back from adversity and challenging circumstances. This is known as **resiliency**. There has been growing interest among researchers and practitioners over the past 25 or so years in understanding the factors that support resiliency in young people so that we can better support other youth to be healthy and happy and to successfully transition into adulthood (Worsley, 2006; Barankin & Khanlou, 2007).

A range of risk factors and protective factors have been identified that affect young people's resiliency and, in turn, their health and development. These factors are characteristics that increase or decrease the likelihood that a young person will be resilient, engage in risk-taking behaviours, or

experience health issues. Factors that increase the likelihood that a young person will be resilient are known as **protective factors**. Whereas factors that decrease the likelihood that a young person will be resilient are known as **risk factors**.

Young people are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours or experience health issues when the risk factors in their life outweigh the protective factors. Enhancing the protective factors in young people's lives increases the likelihood that they will follow positive developmental pathways. The balance between risk factors and protective factors is affected by their number, nature, frequency, duration, and severity as well as the developmental stage in which they occur.

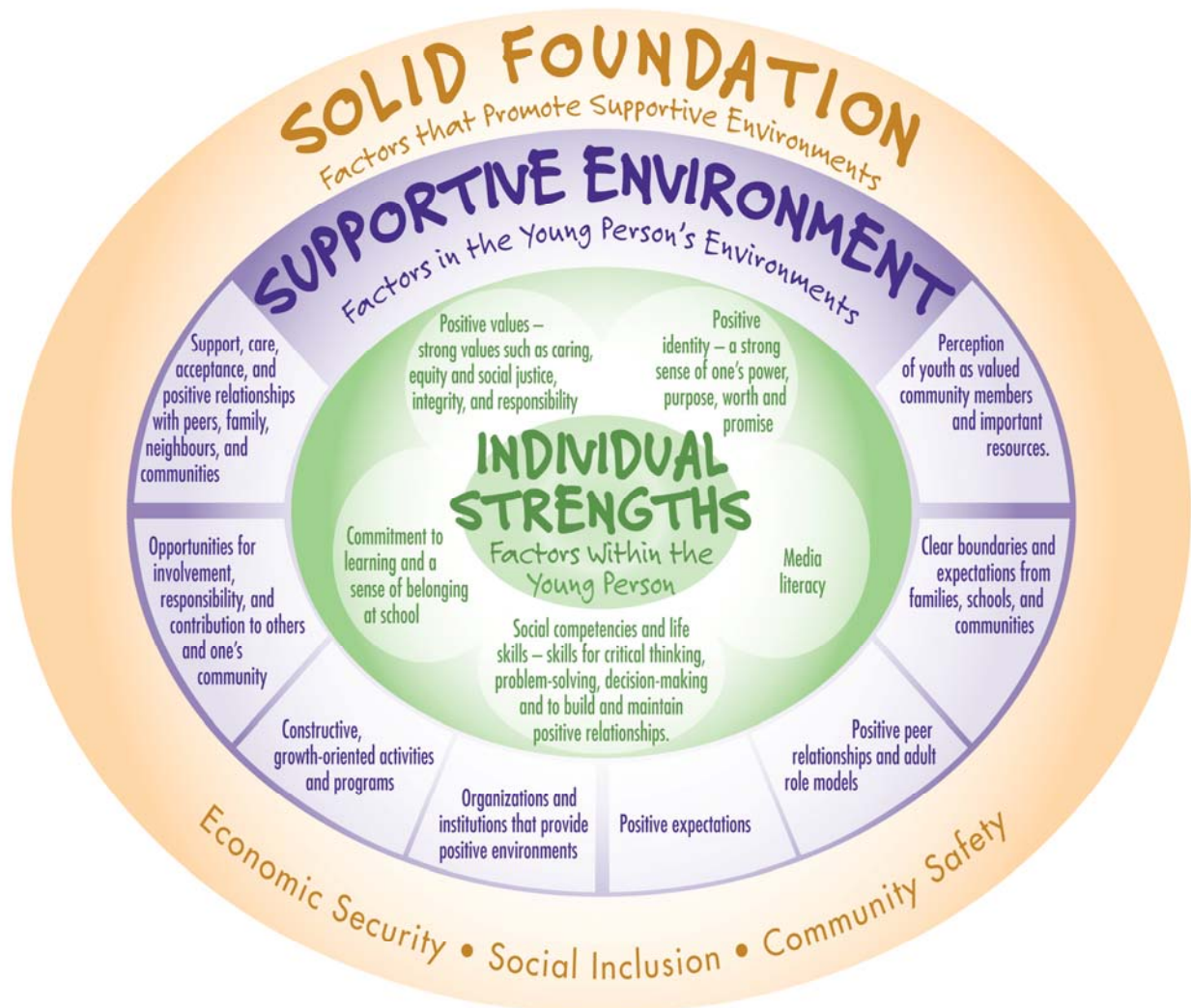
**Key Message:**

Resiliency supports young people's health and well-being. It means that they are able to cope with and recover from difficult life situations. Resilience does not mean that young people will always have happy and productive lives or that they will not face difficulties or challenges. Protective factors help to build young people's resilience.

Figure 1 highlights key protective factors. These factors occur at three levels: individual strengths, supportive environments (i.e., factors in their families and communities), and a solid foundation (AADAC, 2003; Ryder, 2006; Barankin & Khanlou, 2007; SEARCH Institute, 2009). Social, economic, and political conditions affect young people's access to these protective factors. Social inequities make it hard for some youth to have or get the social support, education, food, decent housing and other things they need to live comfortably, take part in society, and feel that they are valued and respected members of the community (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Sabo, 2003; Barankin & Khanlou, 2007; Delgado & Zhou, 2008).

Figure 1:

Protective Factors for Substance Misuse/Illicit Drug Use



Adapted from AADAC, 2003; Ryder, 2006; Search Institute, 2009

Understanding youth engagement

What is youth engagement?

Youth engagement is a community empowerment approach. Youth engagement is about young people being actively involved in addressing issues that affect them personally and/or that they believe are important (Pereira, 2007). Youth engagement means amplifying young people’s voices and leadership, creating safe spaces where they can discuss issues that affect their lives, and taking action.

A multisectoral view

The potential of young people to make valuable contributions on social issues is catching on across Ontario. The Ministry of Education encourages students to take an active role in the classroom and education system, including funding student-led projects to make the education system better. The Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth seeks to actively involve in their work the children and youth who are seeking or receiving services under the Child and Family Services Act and the Education Act, and youth engagement was a key component in the developmental phase of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services’ 2011 Youth Policy Framework. Youth are also playing an important role in breaking the stigma of mental illness and helping to create youth-friendly mental health services through the New Mentality program sponsored by Children’s Mental Health Ontario.

How is youth engagement different from traditional youth services?

There are a number of key differences between the traditional youth-serving model (i.e., working *for* youth) and the youth engagement model (i.e., working *with* youth), see Table 1 below.

Table 1: Working *for* Youth vs. Working *with* Youth

Traditional Model	Engagement Model
Preventing and responding to problems	Nurturing assets and positive development
Young people as passive and/or helpless “clients” in need of outside intervention	Young people as active community members with the wisdom, skills, and expertise to contribute to solutions
Short-term one-off projects, programs, and services	An ongoing process of empowerment, capacity building, and action
Professionals as experts who “work for” young people, their families, and communities	Professionals as catalysts and facilitators who “work with” young people

Laverack, 2005; Delgado & Staples, 2008

What are the different levels at which youth are involved in health promotion?

Youth are involved at many different levels in health promotion. These levels can be seen as a pyramid (see Figure 2). The lowest level of involvement is when youth are a target audience, with activities, programs and services being conducted for them. A slightly higher level of involvement is when young people are asked to share their views at events and meetings as spokespeople or representatives, but otherwise they have little involvement or influence.

At the middle two levels of the pyramid, youth are involved as implementers, carrying out instrumental roles such as peer educator but having little influence in how the program is designed or run.

At the top two levels of the pyramid, youth are involved as experts in the design, implementation, and evaluation of health promotion initiatives and as decision-makers in governance bodies.

The highest levels of involvement are only possible when adults recognize and respect young people's expertise (for example, youth know what it is like to be young and how to best reach their peers), wisdom, and skills.

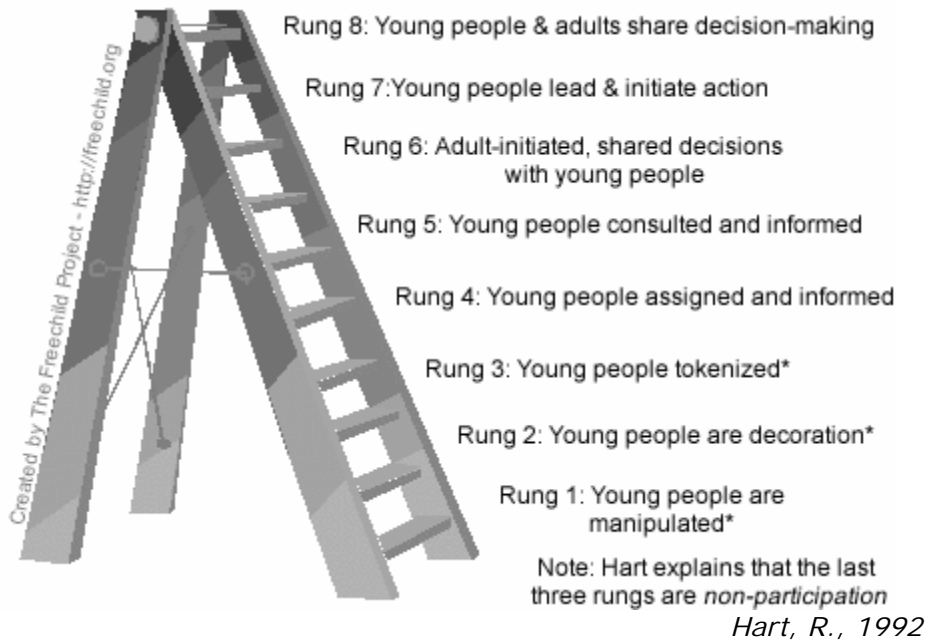
Figure 2: Pyramid of Involvement



Adapted from AIDS Alliance, 2004

The primary distinguishing factors between these six levels of involvement is the degree of youth participation and shared decision-making among young people and adults (Pereira, 2007; Delgado & Staples, 2008; Delgado & Zhou, 2008). Hart’s Ladder of Participation highlights eight rungs of participation and decision-making (see figure 3), which range from youth being used by adults at the lowest three rungs (also considered non-participation and non-engagement), to youth working for adults in the middle of the ladder, to youth working in partnership with adults at the highest rungs of engagement.

Figure 3: Roger Harts Ladder of Young People’s Participation



How can youth be involved in health promotion?

There are many different ways that youth can be engaged in public health. Many public health units involve youth in leading health education workshops, doing outreach in the community, and other awareness raising activities. Youth across Ontario have also participated in health school committees and advocated for smoke-free policies in their schools, communities, and at the provincial level. Youth can also be involved in planning and evaluating health promotion interventions, from one-off events and to large-scale programs.

Youth Engagement as a health promotion strategy

What are the benefits of youth engagement for health promotion?

There are many practical and ethical reasons for youth engagement. These include:

Reason 1: Youth engagement responds to the Ontario Public Health Standards, along with other provincial and federal priorities.

The Ontario Public Health Standards (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2008) state the minimum criteria for effective practice in public health. Youth are identified in the Standards as one of many community partners with whom public health must collaborate to promote health and prevent injuries and substance misuse. Youth engagement is also recognized by both the Ontario's Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services as an important strategy for young people's health, development, and well-being. Youth engagement is also a priority at the federal level; it is integrated in Health Canada's Federal Tobacco Control Strategy and is a key strategy among the projects funded through Health Canada's Drug Strategy Community Initiatives.

Box 1: Standard on Injury Prevention and Substance Misuse

The Ontario Public Health Standards (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2008) state minimum criteria for effective practice in public health in collaboration with community partners.*

One standard identifies the need to address injury prevention and substance misuse and charges health units to:

1. "Work with community partners, using a comprehensive health promotion approach, to influence the development and implementation of healthy policies and programs, and the creation or enhancement of safe and supportive environments that address(es) alcohol and other substances (as well as others).
2. Use a comprehensive health promotion approach to increase the capacity of priority populations (children and youth) to prevent injury and substance misuse/illicit drug use by:
 - a. Collaborating with and engaging community partners;
 - b. Mobilizing and promoting access to community resources;
 - c. Providing skill-building opportunities; and
 - d. Sharing best practices and evidence for the prevention of injury and substance misuse/illicit drug use."

* Community partners include students, school boards, staff, and councils, as well as other non-school partners.

Reason 2: Youth engagement puts the Healthy School Model into practice. Youth participation and empowerment are core principles of the health promoting school model (International Union for Health Promotion and Education, 2007) and the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Foundation for a Healthy School*.

Reason 3: Youth engagement leads to more effective programs and services. Involving young people in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services makes these programs and services more accessible and responsive to young people's needs and priorities (London et al., 2003).



Key Message:

Youth engagement has many health promotion benefits.

These include:

- Getting the youth involved in community work and volunteering
- Hanging out with friends, camaraderie
- Learning new skills
- Getting youth and adults excited
- Building developmental assets
- Developing relationships with other students
- Adults developing relationships with students
- School connectedness

Reason 4: Youth engagement enhances protective factors and resiliency among youth. Young people can catalyze positive change in the settings in which they live, learn, work, and play (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Delgado & Zhou, 2008). This can enhance protective factors for all youth in your community. Being involved also benefits young people; youth who are engaged tend to have a greater sense of control, empowerment, meaning, and connectedness and other social and emotional capacities that enhance well-being and reduce the likelihood of risk-taking behaviours than their peers (see for example CEYE, 2003; Oliver et al., 2006; Clea, 2002; CCSA, 2009).

“ *Successfully engaged the boys in getting involved in their school “off shoot” of the project – participated in helping to support the basket ball tournaments at the school, and has strengthened their relationships with each other giving them increase in confidence as stated by some of the boys.* ”

- Halton Public Health

“ *This group “solidified” relationships amongst some of the boys. The boys became more involved in school activities - opportunities made available to them by the Principal, e.g. tree planting, helping with the basketball tournaments, which would not have happened if the youth engagement project had not occurred. Two of the teachers who were involved got to know the boys better. This would not have occurred if they had not been involved in the group. Some of the parents have told the Principal that being in this group has made a world of difference to their sons as they now have more sense of belonging to the school and with friends.* ”

- Halton Public Health

Reason 5: Youth engagement respects young people’s rights. Youth engagement also responds to young people’s desire to be heard and to take part in decisions that affect their lives (Ungar, 2007), as well as their right to be actively involved in such decisions (UN, 1989; Pereira, 2007; Sabo, 2003).

Logic model: Youth engagement as a health promotion strategy

Figure 4 illustrates the process and outcomes of youth engagement as a health promotion strategy.

The ultimate goal is that young people will make healthier decisions about substance misuse/illicit drug use – including abstinence, delayed use, and safer use - and that this will reduce negative health, social, and economic consequences of substance misuse/illicit drug use for young people, their families, and communities.

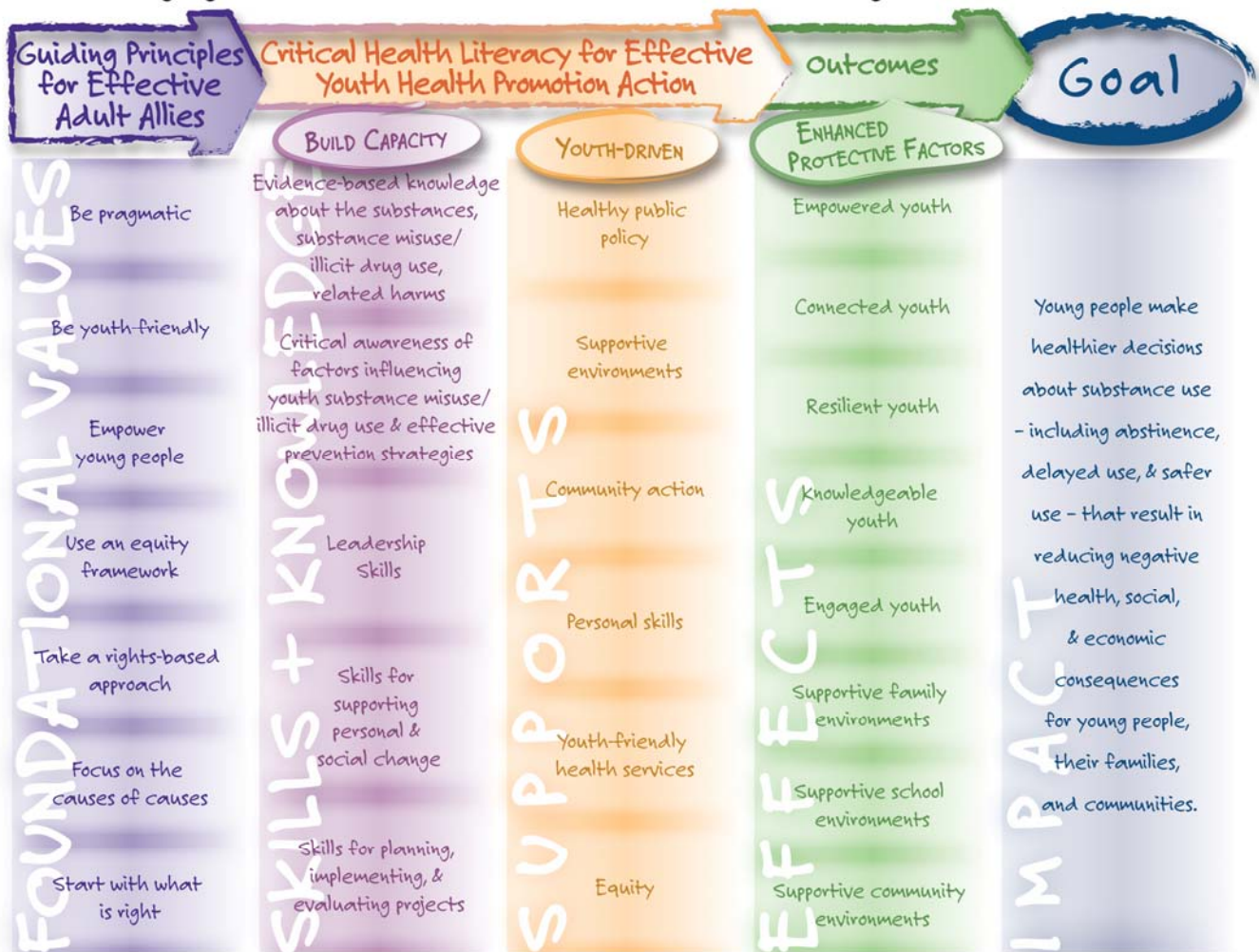
This goal is achieved by enhancing protective factors at three levels: individual strengths, supportive environments, and a solid foundation. These protective factors are enhanced through youth-driven health promotion action. Young people can draw on the action areas in the World Health Organization’s Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1989) to catalyze personal and social change that fosters protective factors.

Strengthening young people’s critical health literacy – the ability to gain access to, critically analyze, and understand information as well as to take personal and social action to promote and maintain good health (Nutbeam, 2006) – builds their capacity to successfully undertaken health promotion actions.

The readiness of adults to work with young people in an empowering manner provides a foundation for successfully engaging youth in making healthier decisions, which results in reduced negative health, social, and economic consequences for themselves, their families, and communities. We have identified guiding principles that support adult allies to effectively work with youth and foster active and meaningful youth participation in health promotion (see Box 2 for further information).

Figure 4:

Youth Engagement for Substance Misuse/Illicit Drug Use Prevention Model



Box 2: Guiding Principles for Youth Engagement in Substance Misuse/Illicit Drug Use/Illicit Drug Use Prevention

- **Be pragmatic** – Substance misuse/illicit drug use prevention efforts need to be realistic and support young people to navigate a world in which licit and illicit substances are common (VCH & VSB, 2008). Broaden your focus from solely abstinence to supporting healthier decision-making, which may include delayed use and reducing the negative social, health, and economic consequences associated with licit and illicit substance misuse/illicit drug use.
- **Be youth-friendly** – Youth-friendly adults and environments are essential for youth engagement (Pereira, 2007).
- **Empower young people** - Recognize that young people are experts in their own lives, listen to their voices, and support them in their ability to find solutions to their problems. Work with organizations and young people to ensure that youth wisdom and ideas shape the design, implementation, and evaluation of the policies, programs and services. Such involvement empowers the young people and also enhances the relevance and effectiveness of policies, programs, and services (London et al., 2003; Delgado & Zhou, 2008; CCSA, 2009; Youth Voices, 2009).
- **Use a social justice and equity framework** – Youth are not a homogeneous group; they are richly diverse in terms of gender, sexual orientation, ethno-racial background, citizenship, and length of time in Canada, (dis)ability, and socio-economic class (Hutchinson et al., 2004). Promote social inclusion and equity in the process and outcome of youth engagement projects by: acknowledging diversity and social inequities; actively working towards inclusiveness, accessibility, and social justice within the group and society; and, creating a space where young people are safe and can be challenged to confront their own and society's biases (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James, 2002; Shen, 2006; Delgado & Zhou, 2008; CCSA, 2009).
- **Take a rights-based approach to young people's health** – A rights-based approach to young people's health means working with parents, community leaders, and governments to fulfill, respect, and protect young people's rights in order to support positive development. This includes respecting young people's right to comprehensive, accurate, evidence-based information about substances, substance misuse/illicit drug use prevention strategies, and addiction services.
- **Focus on the causes of the causes** – Young people's substance misuse/illicit drug use and other risk-taking behaviours do not happen in a vacuum, but rather are shaped by social, cultural, political, historical and economic factors such as poverty and social exclusion based on gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James, 2002; Delgado & Zhou, 2008; CCSA, 2009). Moving beyond individual behaviour change by using awareness and education to provide opportunities for open dialogue and action on these factors promotes critical thinking and actions. This can support personal wellness and spark social change that increases protective factors and resiliency (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).
- **Start with what is right with young people and their communities** All people and communities have assets. Start by identifying and building on these assets (Delgado & Zhou, 2008). For example, ask youth what they like about their families, schools, neighbourhoods, and communities as well as what would make them even better. Note that this does not mean negating problems or overlooking needs.

What roles can public health play in youth engagement?

There are many ways that public health units can encourage the use of youth engagement as a health promotion strategy. Public health staff can:

- **Administer youth engagement** by designing, coordinating, and/or evaluating youth engagement programs that are facilitated by others. When administering youth engagement projects, public health unit staff may be responsible for building support for youth engagement among their senior management and Board of Directors, researching best practices in youth engagement, developing evidence-based logic models and programs, writing grant proposals, managing the financial and reporting requirements of grants, liaising with funders, hiring and supervising staff and volunteers, and managing internal and external partnerships.
- **Fund youth engagement** by developing granting programs to support youth-led and/or community-based projects. When funding youth engagement projects, public health unit staff may be responsible for building support for youth engagement among their senior management and Board of Directors, researching best practices in youth engagement, developing calls for proposals, fostering interest in youth engagement among community partners, evaluating proposals, and overseeing funded projects to ensure financial and programmatic accountability.
- **Implement youth engagement** by working directly with young people and supporting them to design, implement and/or evaluate health promotion initiatives. When implementing youth engagement, public health unit staff may be responsible for coordinating logistics such as space and food, recruiting and selecting youth group members, planning activities and coordinating speakers to train the youth, supporting the youth to plan and implement their initiatives, and coordinating communications and recognition activities.
- **Be a champion for youth engagement** by advocating within your public health unit, community, or provincially for policies and funding to support youth engagement. Public health unit staff can be a champion for youth engagement by sharing their knowledge about youth engagement, including its benefits to young people, the organizations that work with them, and the communities in which they live.
- **Partner in youth engagement** by supporting community partners to implement their youth engagement projects. This may include sitting on advisory committees, acting as a guest speaker, and helping community partners learn more about specific health issues.



Tip! Youth engagement can be time and energy intensive and works best when adults have the competencies to collaborate with young people. The “right” way for public health units to support youth engagement in their community depends on many factors, including available staff and financial resources.

Putting youth engagement into practice: The Youth Engagement Formula

Like other community empowerment approaches, youth engagement is an art rather than a science. It is a process that happens over time, is based on relationships, and works best when tailored to each group of young people and their local context. The following formula is offered to help you plan and administer effective and sustainable youth engagement initiatives.

<p>The Youth Engagement Formula</p> <p>Adequate, appropriate, and sustainable resources</p> <p>+</p> <p>Strong youth-adult collaboration</p> <p>+</p> <p>A facilitated process</p> <p>=</p> <p>Effective and sustainable youth engagement programming</p>
--

Component 1: Adequate, appropriate, and sustainable resources:

Youth engagement can be done on a shoestring budget or a multi-million dollar budget, depending on your access to funding. Video projects, for example, can be filmed on cellphones, edited on personal computers, and disseminated through free social media, or filmed by videographers, edited on specialized equipment and disseminated through time bought on TV. Youth can benefit in both cases from the experience of working together and expressing their views and solutions. Community partners are an important resource for youth engagement projects.

Component 2: Strong youth-adult collaboration: What is the role of adults in youth engagement? The core role of adults in youth engagement is as facilitator and adult ally (Laverack, 2005; Delgado & Staples, 2008; Delgado & Zhou, 2008; CEYE, 2007; Valaitis et al., 2007). Facilitators are enablers and catalyzers; their core role is to help individuals and groups tap

into their own existing wisdom and assets, gain additional knowledge and skills, and figure out how to work together to achieve their goal.

Which model of working with youth is best for your project?: Some people think that youth engagement programming means that adults must hand over all authority and responsibility to young people, with adults only providing support as requested. This reflects a youth-led model of youth engagement. There are two other broad models: adult-led and youth-adult partnerships. The primary distinguishing factors between these different models is the degree of youth participation and shared decision-making between young people and adults (Pereira, 2007; Delgado & Staples, 2008; Delgado & Zhou, 2008).

The best model for a specific program depends on a number of factors and may also change over time as these factors change. Table 2 highlights factors to consider when choosing the model that is most appropriate for your program.



Tip! Clarity as to which youth engagement approach you want to use is important for determining the program design and for managing the expectations of participating youth and adults

Table 2: Factors to Consider when Choosing a Model for Working with Youth

Factors	Considerations	Levels of Youth Engagement Approaches		
		Adult-led	Youth-led	Youth-Adult Partnership
Staff readiness	Working <i>with</i> youth rather than <i>for</i> youth is new to many adults. Staff may not feel comfortable or confident in their abilities to facilitate youth engagement programming and may need to start from an adult-led approach and move towards handing over increasing levels of responsibility and decision-making to the youth.	Tentative	Enthusiastic	Enthusiastic
Staff capacity	Strategies and skills to successfully facilitate youth engagement are developed over time.	New	Experienced	Experienced
Organizational culture and readiness	The areas in which and the degree to which staff can share decision-making with youth depends on the culture and readiness of their organization.	Resistant or tentative	Supportive	Supportive
Partners' organizational culture and readiness	Public health often delivers youth engagement projects through community partners, which have their own organizational culture and readiness for youth	Resistant or tentative	Supportive	Supportive

Factors	Considerations	Levels of Youth Engagement Approaches		
		Adult-led	Youth-led	Youth-Adult Partnership
	engagement.			
Project/ program lifetime	High levels of youth participation are more feasible when there is time and resources for a sustainable program.	One-off	Ongoing	Ongoing
Project timeframe	More time is needed when decisions are made in collaboration with or by the youth (or any other group).	Short	Medium or long	Medium or long
Grant requirements	Youth engagement is often funded through project grants. You may need to specify conditions like the project goal and output when applying for grants. This will influence the degree of flexibility and input the youth have during project implementation.	Stipulated	Open or flexible	Open or flexible
Group lifetime	Groups need time to form and learn how to work together. A facilitator can provide much needed structure and leadership in the early stages to help the youth develop into a high-functioning team. As the group matures, the youth may be ready to	New	Experienced	Experienced

Factors	Considerations	Levels of Youth Engagement Approaches		
		Adult-led	Youth-led	Youth-Adult Partnership
	take over or share the leadership of the group with the adult facilitator.			
Young people's readiness	Many young people are not used to being asked for their opinions, developing their own projects, or sharing leadership with adults.	Tentative	Enthusiastic	Enthusiastic
Young people's capacity	The capacity of the individual youth and groups of young people to plan, implement and evaluate their own projects varies and develops with time and opportunities.	New	Experienced	Experienced

Component 3: A facilitated process: Many public health practitioners are aware that youth engagement is seen as a best practice in health promotion and they may be familiar with the theory of youth engagement through the many trainings, books, and resource guides. Turning theory into action, however, can be a challenging task.

Our five-phase model of youth engagement provides a roadmap to guide you through the process (see Figure 5). These five phases are fluid, emergent and overlapping; it is normal to move back and forth through the phases in a nonlinear way. The process works best when it is iterative and developmental, with one cycle building on and leading to the next. This enhances the capacity of the involved adults and youth to work together to design, implement, and evaluate health promotion action projects.

The five phases are:

Phase 1: Get Ready for Youth Engagement

- o Prepare yourself, your team, and your organization to be increasingly youth-friendly and to work *with* youth instead of *for* youth. This often means reflecting on and changing one's practices, policies, and partnerships.

Phase 2: Build the Team and Their Capacity

- Support the youth to systematically explore the problem or issue, its consequences and root causes, and existing assets that can be harnessed and strengthened; and to identify the issue they want to focus on.

Phase 3: Explore the Problem and Identify the Issue of Focus

- Support the youth to identify the issue they want to focus on and to systematically explore the problem or issue, its consequences and root causes, and existing assets that can be harnessed and strengthened.

Phase 4: Plan and Act

- Develop and implement a plan for creating a health promotion action project to catalyze personal and social change. Keep the plan on track by taking time to review progress and reflect on process.

Phase 5: Reflect, Evaluate, and Celebrate

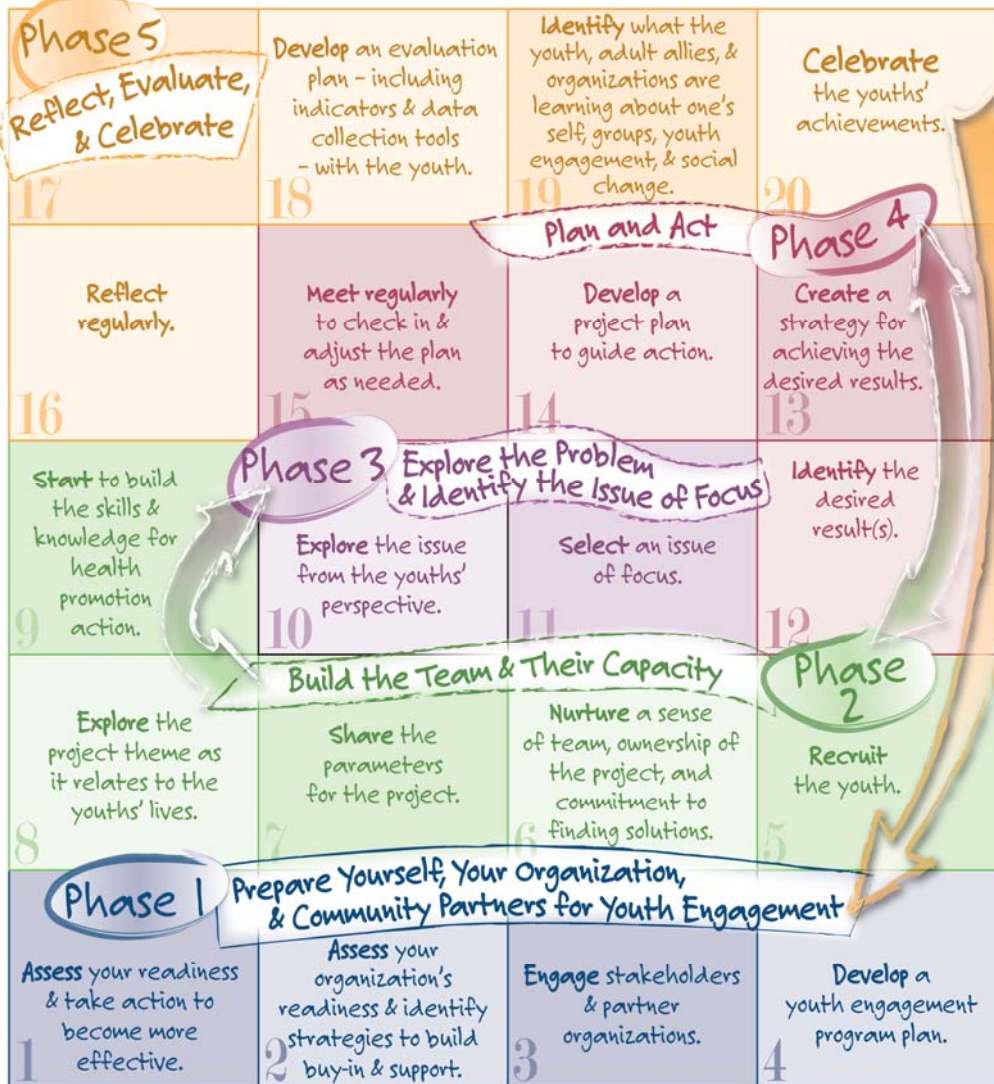
- Take time to look back on the health promotion action project, reflect on what has been learned and changed, and celebrate the young people's accomplishments.

The youth engagement process takes time and patience to implement and the process will vary drastically depending on the adult ally facilitating the youth, the youth involved, and the community in which they live.

Figure 5:

Youth Engagement Process

The goal of the youth engagement process is not to 'race to the end.' Rather, the process is as important as the end product. The process works best when it is responsive, dynamic and non-linear. Expect movement back and forth between the phases.



Questions & Considerations

- Phase 5**
- How does what happened (outcome and process) compare to what you expected to happen?
 - What role will the youth have in designing and implementing the evaluation?
- Phase 4**
- What project planning and coordination skills do the youth need to successfully move their idea to reality?
 - What actions fit with the project's time frame, financial and human resources, etc.?
 - How will the identified strategy enhance protective factors and foster resiliency?
 - Be willing to think outside of the box and to support the youths' project ideas.
- Phase 3**
- Encourage youth to think beyond the immediate causes of issues to identify root causes.
 - Focus on assets to build on and not just problems and deficits.
 - Look for and build upon successes. Can the group realistically influence the identified issue?
 - How will the identified issue enhance protective factors and foster resiliency?
- Phase 2**
- Which youth does the project need to reach to be successful?
 - What strategies are needed to reach marginalized or disengaged youth?
 - What do the youth need to know, do, or feel to be effective in this project?
 - What training do the youth need upfront and what can be provided 'just in time'?
- Phase 1**
- What level of decision-making will the youth have?
 - Which aspects of the project will the youth define?
 - Which aspects are pre-determined (e.g., funding requirements)?
 - Who among the partners is best positioned to work directly with the youth?
 - How will you know that you have been successful? (see Phase 5)

Additional Reading and Resources

For more information about substance misuse/illicit drug use prevention please see:

- The Canadian School-based Standards for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention
www.ccsa.ca/ENG/PRIORITIES/YOUTHPREVENTION/CANADIANSTANDARDS/Pages/default.aspx
- Preventing Substance Use Problems Among Young People - A Compendium of Best Practices
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/adp-apd/prevent/index-eng.php

For more information about understanding resiliency:

- Growing Up Resilient: Ways to Build Resilience in Children and Youth
www.camh.net/Publications/Resources_for_Professionals/Growing_Resilient/index.html
- The Resilience Doughnut: The Secret to Strong Kids
www.theresiliencedoughnut.com.au/
- The Resilience Research Centre
www.resilienceproject.org/

Section 2 - Youth Engagement Strategies

- Youth-friendly Engagement Strategies
- Building Critical Awareness
- Strategies for building and Maintaining High-Functioning Teams

Youth-friendly engagement strategies

There are many different ways or strategies for engaging young people in addressing health issues and promoting health. Some common strategies are arts-informed approaches, sports and play, social media, and dialogical methodologies (see Table 3).

Strategies for engaging youth



Tip! Section 4 outlines a variety of activities from these youth-friendly engagement strategies.

Arts-informed Approaches

Digital media activities

Today's young people engage with more media and media-based technology than any other generation before them and, as a result, are extremely adept at connecting to and interacting with digital media. Young people's interest in digital media and the ability of digital media to tell a story makes this a powerful tool for youth engagement, advocacy, and social change.

The right digital media activity for your group depends on many factors, including your end goal, the technology you have or can afford, and the talents and resources of your group.

Things to consider: Digital media projects raise important ethical issues that need to be discussed with the youth before they start making images. These include:

- **Privacy and consent:**
 - Ensure that the youth understand that documenting someone and sharing their image, opinions, or stories can be a very vulnerable experience.
 - Recording should always be conducted with respect for the subject(s), and only once permission to record has been given through a written agreement or verbally on video.
 - Make sure that the subject(s) understand the intentions for the media piece and its potential use before you begin recording.
 - Youth can further respect the subject(s) privacy by taking and editing pictures in ways that conceal their identity, if requested.
- **Misrepresentation:**

- Consider whether issues, organizations, and individuals are being represented accurately and fairly.

Materials: Digital media projects are quite flexible and can be undertaken with everyday or specialized technology. You will need:

- **Camera:** Anything that captures an image can be used. Web cameras and cell phone cameras produce usable images and can have a “gritty” personality sufficient for web viewing. Low-end still and video cameras offer easy point-and-shoot documenting. Higher-end equipment that record with higher pixel ratios or in high definition may be necessary if the final product will be broadcast on television or the project intends to be large-scale.
- **Recording media:** This is what the footage will get recorded onto. DVDs are useful because they can be easily popped into DVD players once the recording is completed; however the quality is less suitable for broadcasting or projecting, and they have approximately 8.5GB storage capacity. Video tapes (mini dv) provide good quality images, but the tapes are fragile and uploading can be timely and require specialized equipment, such as video cables and software. Memory cards provide fast plug-and-load transferring capabilities through USB ports and can produce good quality images, but are limited their storage capacity (4GB or higher).
- **Computer:** A computer with enough RAM to house video editing software (usually 2-5GB) as well as sufficient hard drive space to store video files, which can be quite big (at least 10GB or higher). An external hard drive to store video data is recommended, so you do not overtax your computer.
- **Editing software:** Programs such as Final Cut Pro, Avid, and Premier are of high quality with many features but are quite expensive and will require technical support. Programs such as iMovie are more reasonably priced or come pre-installed on newer computers and are very basic and user-friendly.

Some digital media projects include:

- **Fotonovelas** are comic strips that use photos combined with written narratives in caption bubbles to tell a non-fiction or fiction story; they are easy to read, entertaining, and can be used for health education or advocacy (Fotonovela Company, 2009).
- **PhotoVoice** is a participatory action research strategy that can use photos and stories to help people explore social and health issues, and create social change (Ridgley et al., n.d.).

- **Brokered dialogue** can be used to help people and groups overcome communication gaps and bridge differences in perspectives (Lavery et al., 2009). This technique is particularly useful for difficult conversations between groups with different levels of power, such as students and school administrators. Both the process of participating in a brokered dialogue and the final video can contribute to personal and social change. The process encourages interviewees to question their own thinking and assumptions, hear and reflect upon the perspectives of the other groups, and see new possibilities. The final video can also be shown to a wider audience as a catalyst for discussion and further dialogue.
- A **documentary video** strives to document reality, as well as providing an opinion, and a specific message, along with the facts it presents.



Tip! See Section 4 for examples of digital media activities.

Visual Arts

Visual Arts activities are relatively easy-to-use tools for education, discussion, and social change: all that is needed is some creativity, paper, and markers, paints, or crayons! Visual arts activities can be used for training, issue exploration, or as part of the youths' action projects.



Tip! See Section 4 for examples of visual arts activities.

Theatre

Theatre provides a space for young people to explore social issues, process their own realities and emotions, and practice solutions to life's challenges (Diamond, 2000). Image theatre invites youth to use their bodies to create pictures of their own experiences, questions, uncertainties and fears in the form of "fictional" characters and scenarios. These images can be taken apart for investigation and exploration. Solutions can then be generated which put the images back together in a way that creates a happier, safer, more supportive world.

Things to consider when using drama-based activities:

- **Role of the facilitator:** The facilitator's role is not to tell the youth how to act or what they should think, but rather to use activities and discussion to create a space where youth can explore issues in order to

better understand themselves and the world around them (Diamond, 2000). One of the best things the facilitator can do is ask questions that encourage the youth to further explore the issues.

- **This is not a test and there are no (or very few) rules:** Rather than being about finding the “right answers”, drama-based activities are about opening space to discuss issues, thoughts, and feelings, and solutions. Some youth may look to the facilitator for rules; an important rule in drama-based activities is that “anything that is not expressly forbidden is allowed” (Boal in Diamond, 2000).
- **Promote self-care:** Workshop participants should be invited to participate at the level they are comfortable. This means that it needs to be okay for the youth to pass on any exercise in which they feel uncomfortable; to choose the role they are most comfortable with – actors, observers, commentators; and, to choose how much to share or engage in conversations. This flexibility increases the likelihood of more students being actively involved.
- **Access to referrals and supports:** Drama-based activities can create an opening for young people in distress to disclose difficult issues in their lives. Be prepared to link distressed young people to appropriate support services in their schools and communities.
- **Customize the activities to your group:** Understand your group and tailor the activities to them.



Tip! See Section 4 for examples of theatre activities.

Sports and Play

Sports and play can be used to help youth explore health promotion issues. The following activities illustrate how games can be used as a launching pad for learning about values – fair play, teamwork, respect, and participation – or specific public health issues. The way you do this is by using the game as an experience to stimulate reflection and discussion during the debrief.

Things to consider:

- Know how many youth are playing. This will help with forming teams and choosing activities.
- Gather the youth together at the beginning to provide the instructions.
- Ask the youth an opening question related to the activity. An opening question should get the youth thinking about the topic, encourage the youth to be involved and share their perspectives, and give the

- facilitator a sense of what the youth already know about the topic.
- Carefully explain the game step-by-step.
 - Demonstrate the game with a small group of the youth.
 - Encourage everyone to participate, but respect those who choose not to participate. Find a different role for youth who do not want to participate, such as being an observer.
 - If the game is competitive, make sure the groups are divided equitably and have an equal opportunity to win.
 - Be clear about when the game starts and ends.
 - Walk around to see how the game is going. Provide clarification and help to those who are having difficulties.
 - Have the youth form a circle at the end of the game for the debrief (Right to Play, 2007; Right to Play and CARE USA, 2007).



Tip! See Section 4 for examples of Sports and Play activities.

Social Media

Social media brings together the power of social interaction with accessible, easy-to-use online technologies. Unlike traditional forms of media - television, radio, print materials, and first generation websites – that are built on a one-to-many communication model, social media is based on a many-to-many model. Social media blurs the line between providers and users of information and encourages social network building, sharing, dialogue, debate, and problem-solving among users.

Some examples of social media include:

- **Blogs** are online journals kept by one or more people (called bloggers) used to engage readers in an informal way. Bloggers share opinions and information by posting content such as written text, audio files, video clips, and images. Blogs generally have a comment feature that encourages readers to respond to the blog content and interact with other users.
- **Discussion forums** (also known as bulletin boards or message boards) are spaces where people can start, participate in, and read conversations. Unlike blogs, discussion forums rely entirely on content generated by users with little direction from the site owners and operators beyond providing basic themes and rules. Most discussion forums have a “moderator” who ensures that the terms of service are followed, intervenes when conflict arises, does basic site maintenance, provides technical support for users, and animates or “seeds” the site with content for discussion when necessary.

- **Social networking websites** are tools that help people communicate with their online friends, family, and acquaintances. Users sign up for an account, create a profile with as much information as they want to share, and link up with other users. Social interaction happens by sharing personal updates, pictures, videos, and links to other websites they find interesting and want to share. Some sites also provide “groups” that people can join if they wish to support a cause or simply communicate with people who share the same interests.
- On-line tools are available for **sharing videos, audio files, and images** with other people. Many sites also incorporate social networking and blogging features, such as space for comments below the posted file. These video/audio/image sharing sites are often used in conjunction with other types of social media. For example, bloggers post YouTube videos and then comment on them, and discussion forum users often include links to videos, audio files, and images in their posts.

Important things to consider:

- **Privacy and Safety:** Many of the most popular social networking and social media websites are aimed at older youth and adults, and either do not allow children and tweens to use their services or do not have effective supervision or parental controls in place to ensure online safety and age-appropriate content.
- Creating your own online space also requires consideration of:
 - The collection and safeguarding of their personal information;
 - Exposure to age-inappropriate material;
 - Online bullying among peers;
 - Online stalking and luring by adult predators; and
 - Media literacy and Internet safety skills.

Visit the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (www.coppa.org) to learn more about the standards that US-based website operators must comply with to protect the privacy of children under the age of 13. Privacy commissioners and oversight officials in Canada also urge website operators to adopt the highest standards in their privacy policies in order to protect children's personal information (www.priv.gc.ca/media/nr-c/2008/res_080604_e.cfm).

Should we build our own website or use what's already out there online?

Both creating your own space online or using existing social media sites comes with advantages and disadvantages. One of the greatest benefits of using existing online social media tools is that someone else does the technical work, which means that you do not have to worry about hosting or maintaining your own website. However, you may not be able to find a site

that meets all the needs of your group. While building your own website means that it is tailored to your needs, the drawback is that you will need a lot more technical support to build and maintain the site. You will also need to buy a domain name (or piggyback on your organization's website) and create the site from scratch.

Work with your information technology (IT) team: It is important to involve your IT team as soon as possible when launching a web-based project (Valaitis et al, 2007). IT staff can help you determine the design and features you will need; provide advice on the back-end technology that will be required; create a plan for developing and maintaining the website – including a realistic budget; ensure that the website complies with your organization's standards and is compatible with available software; determine if the IT team will be able to provide ongoing support; and, provide training and support to staff and youth health promotion leaders.

Dialogical Methodologies

Dialogical methodologies tap into health promotion's core aim of empowering and enabling people and communities to solve their own health issues. They accomplish this by bringing groups of people together for conversations that help them to better understand themselves, their communities, and the issues that affect their lives; this, in turn, can spark personal and social change (Bojer et al., 2006).

Dialogical methodologies promote open communication, honest speaking, and genuine listening; encourage people to take responsibility for their own learning and ideas; provide a safe space for people to explore and question their own and other's thinking, assumptions, worldview, etc.; promote a holistic, contextualized understanding; and catalyze new ideas, solutions, and "Ah-HAH! Moments" (Bojeretal, 2006).

Dialogical methodologies are particularly useful when dealing with issues in which many of the causes are distant in time and space from the effects, there are conflicting points of view and assumptions, and the solution involves many different stakeholders (Bojeretal, 2006).

Things to consider when using dialogical methodologies: The following considerations will support your use of dialogical methodologies (Bojer et al., 2006):

- **Clarity of purpose:** It is important to have a clear purpose for bringing people together. Consider the need or problem that will be discussed, and what you hope to achieve through the dialogue. The purpose should be compelling and attractive, but not too specific or structured as this can be a barrier to creativity and open communication.
- **Generate a good question:** Good questions fuel dialogical methodologies by catalyzing critical thinking, curiosity, and the desire to

get involved. Work closely with representatives of the group(s) you want to bring into dialogue to generate a question that will have power and meaning to them.

- **Invite participants:** Dialogical methodologies are based on a deeply rooted belief in the collective wisdom and intelligence of groups and communities. Dialogues work best when they bring together and create connections between all the people within a system who affect and are affected by the issue.
- **Understand the structure – moving from divergence to convergence:** Understanding the rhythm of dialogical methodologies helps to design the process and support the participants. These methodologies start with divergent thinking: wondering, questions, voicing and exploring differences, and generating ideas. Convergent thinking follows, with participants highlighting new insights, drawing conclusions, coming up with solutions and actions, and generating new questions. This cycle of divergence and convergence can happen several times within a dialogue.
- **The role of the facilitator:** The facilitator's role is to create a structure or container in which the dialogue will happen along with a clear purpose, and then to allow the dialogue to unfold without getting too caught up in a pre-determined structure and timetable.
- **The space:** The physical space influences the dialogical process. Remember that you want people to talk and interact when you are selecting the location and setting up the space. An inviting setting, moveable chairs, and open wall space are all important.

Some examples of dialogical methodologies include:

- **Appreciative Inquiry (AI)** can be used with the youth leaders in Phase 3 and with broader groups in Phase 4 to identify existing protective factors and strategies for further enhancing social environments. AI is also a useful technique for adult allies and organizations that want to enhance their ability to work with youth. AI turns problem-solving on its head, focusing on possibilities and what is working, why, and how to get more out of it (Bojer et al., 2006). AI is based on the idea that every group, community, and organization:
 - Works to some degree and is capable of becoming more than they currently are;
 - Has the ability to guide their own evolution;
 - Is aware that focusing attention towards the positive facilitates change;
 - Is aware that problem-solving should focus on what is possible as well as what is relevant and doable; and
 - Is aware that the process and outcome are interrelated and inseparable.

- **Open Space Technology (OST)** can be used with the youth leaders in Phase 3 and with broader groups in Phase 4. OST provides a structure for groups to self-organize around a central theme or question. It encourages participants to identify what matters to them and to engage with other people in meaningful conversations and solution finding (Owens, 2008).

- **World Café** can be used with the youth leaders in Phase 3 and with broader groups in Phase 4. The World Café uses the metaphor of a café to connect people around “questions that matter”, encourages inquiry and sharing of knowledge, and discovering new possibilities and solutions (Bojer et al., 2006).

Strategies for helping young people understand public health issues

The Debrief: Making Meaning from Experiences

A common feature across the youth-friendly engagement strategies is that the facilitator creates a structure through which the group can participate in an activity or experience and then explore and discuss issues through a “debrief”. A debrief is a guided conversation in which the facilitator asks questions that encourage group members to reflect on and make sense of what happened, how they felt, and how it relates to their real world experiences. Youth can also use these strategies to catalyze personal and social change in their communities.

In its simplest form, a debrief involves the questions: What?, So what?, and Now what? Consider the following questions when debriefing the activities that follow:

What?

- What just happened?
- What are all the facts? Who can tell me more?
- What are the assumptions? Who holds these assumptions?
- What surprised you about this experience or situation?
- What are your thoughts, feelings, or impressions of this experience or situation?
- What is working? What is not working?
- What could be done differently?
- What affect does (a particular influence or factor) have on the situation?
- What change would you like to see happen?
- What is needed to make this change happen? Who needs to be involved to make this change happen?
- What did you learn from this experience?

So what?

- How did this happen? Why did this happen?
- How is this connected to other things?
- Who’s story is this? What other perspectives are out there?
- So what? What difference does it make? Who cares?
- What impact does this experience or situation have on you, your peers, your family or your community?
- How will the desired change make a difference in your life and the lives of your peers, family and community members?
- What if...?

Now what?

- What can you or others do differently to achieve the change you'd like to see?
- How will you change or influence other's perspectives or behaviour?
- How can this change be sustained?

Building critical awareness

Critical awareness is essential for achieving the full potential of the youth-friendly engagement strategies. Critical awareness is the understanding of how people's life circumstances, beliefs, choices, and actions are shaped by historical, social, cultural, economic, and political factors (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Johnson & Freedman, 2005.) It is an essential ingredient for thorough issue exploration and social action.

Critical awareness broadens young people's understanding of health issues from immediate causes towards root causes – i.e., the causes of the causes. This encourages youth to think beyond personal change solutions like awareness and education towards more comprehensive, social change solutions that target policy and social environments.

Critical awareness combined with social action fosters resiliency by helping young people see and articulate the ways that their own lives are affected by broader social issues and the use and misuse of power (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). This can bolster self-esteem and foster healing and empowerment, particularly among youth who have been socially and economically excluded.

The following pedagogical approaches are intended for use in conjunction with issue exploration and action activities.

Approach 1: Don't Underestimate the Ability of Tweens to Engage in Substantive Dialogue

- Many adults underestimate the ability of tweens to engage in substantive discussion about how the world works and their place in it.
- Early adolescence is a time when young people are eager for opportunities to wonder, ask questions, and grapple with ideas (Johnson & Freedman, 2005).
- These are years in which young people try to make sense of the world, its conflicting ideas, and their place in it, as well as explore their identity and figure out who they are and what they believe (Johnson & Freedman, 2005).
- Tweens own efforts to take increasing ownership in their lives enhances their sense of justice, fairness and freedom, providing an important foundation for understanding social justice and getting engaged (Johnson & Freedman, 2005).

Approach 2: Encourage Critical Thinking

- Critical thinking supports the development of critical awareness.
- Critical thinking means approaching the world, one's life, and one's own thinking from a question-posing stance (Johnson and Freedman, 2005).
- Capitalize on tweens' natural tendency towards wondering and questioning through the "five habits of mind" (Meier, 1996 in Johnson & Freedman, 2005).

Box 3: Five Habits of Mind

1. **Cause and Effect/Connections:** Explore questions such as "How did this happen?" and "How is this connected to other things?"
2. **Point of View/Perspective:** Explore questions such as "Who's story is this?" and "What other perspectives are there?"
3. **Evidence:** Explore questions such as "What are the facts?", "Where did these facts come from?", and "What are the assumptions?"
4. **Suppose/Wondering:** Explore "What if. . ." questions.
5. **Debate:** Explore questions such as "So what?", "Who cares?", and "What difference does it make?"

Approach 3: Start with Self-Awareness and Move to Social Awareness

- Self-awareness and social awareness can be nurtured by exploring social identity, social biases, and how the use and misuse of power influences individuals, groups, communities, societies, and the world (Ginwright & Cammorota, 2002).
- As self-awareness and social awareness increase, young people's knowledge base about social issues and cognitive skills such as inquiry, analysis, and problem-solving increase (Ginwright & Cammorota, 2002).
- Middle school students tend to be concrete thinkers and eager to figure out themselves and their place in the world (Johnson & Freedman, 2005).
- Provide opportunities for the youth to explore their own social identity and how the use and misuse of power has affected their own life experiences.
- Once the youth have a good understanding of these concepts, it is possible to expand the focus towards social awareness – the capacity to think critically about social issues in one's community and potential solutions (Ginwright & Cammorota, 2002).
- A key part of social awareness is developing an understanding of how power operates within groups, communities, and institutions, and how this can sustain or address social inequities.

Strategies for building and maintaining high-functioning teams

The dynamic and functioning of the youth group is critical to the success of youth engagement projects. One of the most important things an adult ally can do is foster a positive group dynamic and a high-functioning team. Here are some tips and tools to help.

- **The circle:** Arranging your seating space in a circle is a simple but important way to promote open communication (Diamond, 2000; Owen, 2008). Circles also help to break down the power dynamic between adults and youth which is common within many learning contexts. The circle communicates different roles and rules compared to learning contexts in which rows face forward - making it clear who will talk and who will listen (Owen, 2008).
- **A familiar structure for meetings:** Establishing a structure for your team meetings helps youth know what to expect.
- **Group guidelines:** High-functioning teams pay attention to both the task that brought the group together and the process that the group uses to accomplish that task. A group's process includes how team members communicate with and treat each other, how team members communicate about the group and its project with other people, and how each team member handle their responsibilities. It is a good idea to develop group guidelines with the youth when forming a team. Group guidelines identify characteristics and actions that help groups work well together and outline the youths' expectations of each other.

“*Building the youth team and their capacity – After approaching all the classes within the school for recruitment volunteers, we had only a few students that decided to participate. Teachers assisted by approaching students that they felt would benefit from the experience. We had a mixture of boys and girls, grades 7 and 8 including a few identified as at-risk youth within the classroom. Our youth group number stayed consistent with between 11 to 12 students. Only 2 students quit during the duration of th project. We made it clear to the youth that their involvement was always voluntary. Deciding on a name for their group and the color involvement for their t shirts presented a challenge. While it involved a great deal of discussion, it was important to the youth for their group identity.*”

”

- Windsor-Essex County Public Health

- **Warm-up activities - icebreakers, energizers, and team builders:** Icebreakers, energizers, and team builders are games that are used to break down social barriers and help people connect, create a fun and supportive group atmosphere, encourage people to think outside of the box, and energize and motivate groups.
- **Identifying Ideas and Making Decisions:**
 - **Sticky Note Brainstorm** - Brainstorms are a great way to generate a wide range of ideas. The sticky note brainstorm supports individual creativity and helps groups to see the issues that many people are thinking about. It also highlights the issues that only one or a few people are thinking about – and these divergent thoughts can be very insightful! Give each group member a pad of sticky notes and a marker. Working individually, each person writes one idea per sheet based on the topic at hand until they have run out of ideas. The sticky notes are then posted randomly on a wall, and the youth are invited to work together to group the sticky notes into similar themes. This technique can be used for multiple purposes, such as to identify aspects of a problem, causes of a problem, or ideas for an action project.
 - **Dot Democracy** - This technique can help streamline group decision-making by providing a quick visual of the group's interest in different ideas. It is usually done following a brainstorm. Once the ideas are written down, each participant is given a set number of dots and instructed to place one or more dots on the idea(s) that they are most interested in. Stickers or coloured markers can be used for the dots.
 - **Thumb Consensus** - This technique helps groups to make consensus decisions. Participants are invited to provide their assessment of each of the proposed ideas: "Thumbs up" means that they fully support of the idea; "thumbs down" means that they cannot support the idea; and "thumbs to the side" means that they can live with the idea. Participants who provide a "thumbs down" are asked to provide ideas on what would need to happen in order for them to support the idea, and/or for alternative ideas.



Tip! See Section 4 for examples decision making activities.



Key Message:

- Common youth-friendly engagement strategies include arts-informed approaches such as media arts, music, spoken word poetry, drama, dance, and murals; dialogical methodologies such as unconferences and World Cafes; social media such as online discussion boards and blogging; and sports and play. These strategies can be used to engage youth and work with them to create social change.
- Critical awareness is essential for achieving the full potential of youth engagement as a health promotion strategy, encouraging youth to think beyond personal change solutions towards more comprehensive, social change solutions.

Section 3 - The Five Phases of Youth Engagement

- Phase 1: Get Ready for Youth Engagement
- Phase 2: Build the Team and Their Capacity
- Phase 3: Explore and Identify
- Phase 4: Plan and Act
- Phase 5: Reflect, Evaluate, and Celebrate

Phase 1: Get Ready for Youth Engagement

Checklist of things to complete during this phase

- Assess your personal readiness for youth engagement.
- Identify strategies for being an (more) effective adult ally.
- Assess your organization's readiness for youth engagement.
- Identify strategies to strengthen organizational buy-in and support.
- Develop and implement a strategy for stakeholders and partner organizations.
- Develop a youth engagement program plan.

Purpose of this phase

The aim of this phase is to support adults and organizations get ready to work *with* youth, instead of *for* youth. This often requires changes in the ways that adults and organizations think about, relate to, and work with youth (Family Health International [FHI], 2005; Zeldin et al., 2005; Pereira, 2007).

Ideally, youth will be actively involved in these processes. This may not be possible or appropriate in all situations, particularly for organizations that are just getting started in youth engagement.

Get yourself ready for youth engagement

What are the qualities and skills of adult allies in public health?

“Adult allies” support youth empowerment and leadership (CEYE, 2009) by bringing a positive attitude and skill sets that support youth voice and action, including:

- Acknowledging and managing their biases about young people's capacities;
- Striving to work *with* youth instead of *for* youth;
- Supporting youth ownership in the project;
- Trying not to impose their ideas or judgments;
- Sharing decision-making and accountability with youth;
- A willingness to take risks like trying new and unfamiliar ways of doing things.

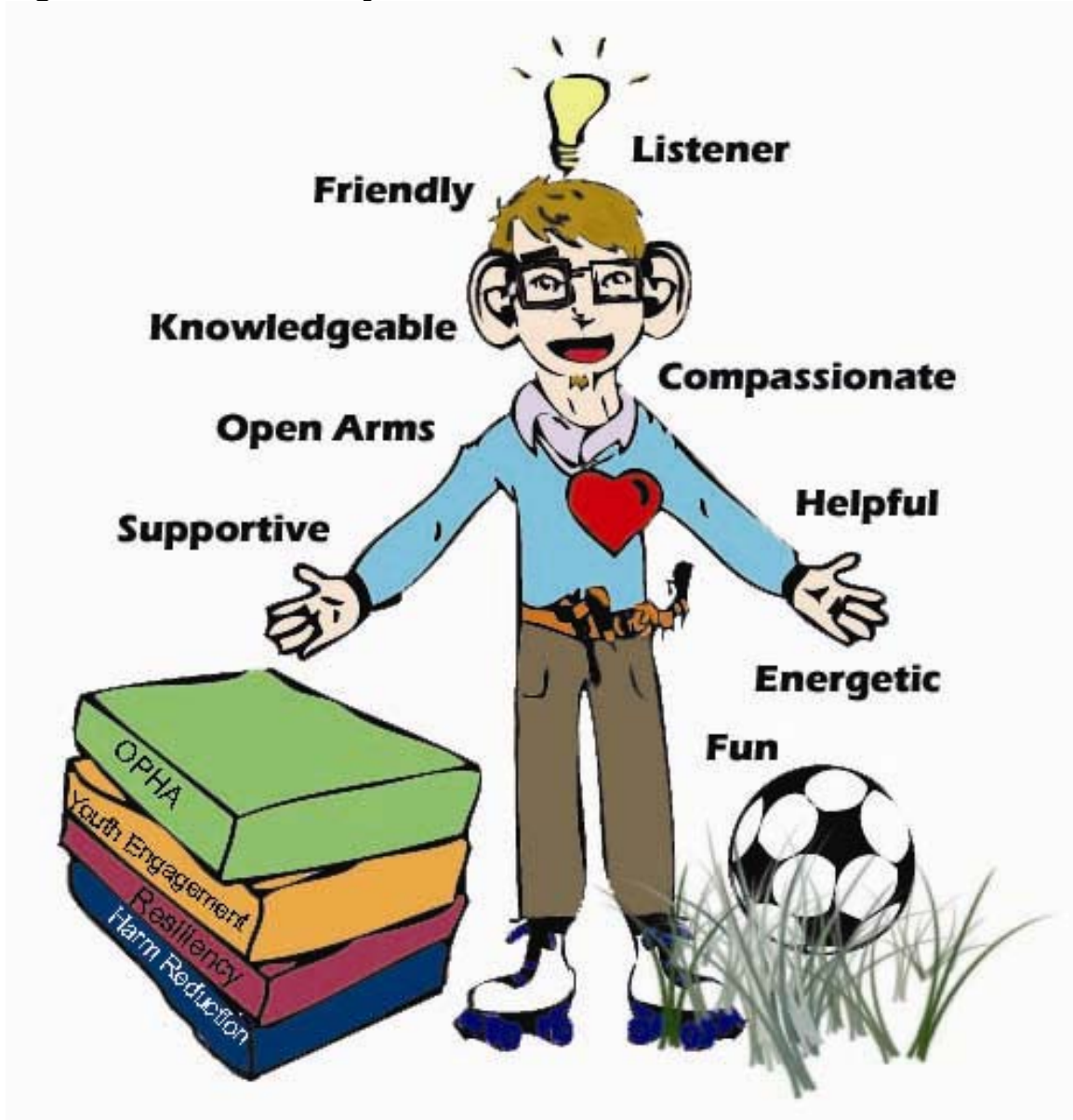


Tip!

The move from a traditional youth-serving model to a youth engagement model takes time, patience, and ongoing learning. Expect to continue working on this phase. Appreciative Inquiry is a great tool for ongoing learning and capacity building in youth engagement. See Section 4 for more information.

Public health staff from our six pilot sites were asked to identify the qualities and skills of a youth-friendly public health practitioner. Figure 6 indicates the top qualities deemed important in a youth-friendly adult.

Figure 6: Youth-Friendly Adult



Best practices for adults working with youth

There is not “one way” or a magic formula for working successfully with young people. The following information and best practices provide useful guidance for developing your own approach. These best practices will need to be adjusted and adapted to the capacities, needs and interests of the young people with whom you are working. See Table 4 for more information.

Best Practices for Adults Working with Youth

Be intentional... Change starts with you

Being an adult ally often requires rethinking one's values, beliefs, and assumptions about young people, their behaviour, and their capacities. A particularly challenging shift for many adults is the move from attempting to *control* young people and their behaviour towards *influencing* their behaviours. Take time to be a reflective practitioner; make a realistic assessment of your current strengths and areas of growth, identify realistic goals, and monitor your progress. See Section 4 for a self-assessment tool.

Everyone is learning, everyone is teaching

Youth engagement means new types of relationships, roles, and expectations for the young people, adults, and organizations involved. Time is needed to move from one way of doing things to another. Open communication and acceptance help to create a safe space for reflection, supportive feedback, and ongoing learning.

Cultivate four key values in adult-youth relationships - respect, listen, understand, and communicate

Positive relationships between adults and youth are a likely outcome when four key values are nurtured: **Respect** provides a foundation for listening, **listening** provides a foundation for understanding, and **understanding** supports **communication**, learning and growth (Students Commission in Pereira, 2007). It is particularly important for adults who are not representative of the young people's community to listen to and validate young people's voices and perspectives about *their* lived experiences.

Manage expectations by being honest and upfront

It is important that you have a clear understanding of and are able to clearly articulate the parameters of the project to the youth. For example, What is the model of youth engagement that is being used and why?, What kind of role and relationship do you hope to build with the youth?, which aspects of the project are negotiable and what are not?, What are the external constraints, such as budget, policies, funding agreements, etc.?, and When do the youth have decision-making power, when will they be consulted, and when will they merely be informed?

Find the balance between structure and freedom

Too much or too little freedom and structure can be problematic. Freedom is important for young people to share their ideas, make decisions, and address the issues that they see as important in youth-friendly ways. Structure – such as, clear expectations about the project, roles and responsibilities, and group guidelines as well as training and skills building - provides a framework that supports active participation, team functioning, learning, and leadership development. Too much structure can stifle creativity and motivation, while too much freedom can be overwhelming and paralyze the group.

Value the wisdom and assets of adults and youth

Adults and youth both bring a unique set of skills, knowledge, and experiences. Strive to capitalize on and learn from all of the assets within the group.

Be realistic about young people’s capacities while providing opportunities for ongoing growth

Overestimating and underestimating young people’s capacities can be problematic (Pittman et al., 2003 in Pereira, 2007). Start by understanding the current skills of the youth and provide training and opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills. Keep in mind that while youth have much to offer, they also may need support and opportunities to demonstrate their talents (Norman, 2001 in Pereira, 2007).

Help amplify young people’s voices

Adults are frequently the target of youth-driven social change efforts, as adults have considerable authority and influence over young people’s lives (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Be prepared to help the young people share their ideas, vent their frustrations, and explore ways to ensure their voices will be heard by adults.

Get your public health unit ready for youth engagement

Youth engagement works best when embraced by the entire organization¹ and not just one staff person (Pereira, 2007). While public health units are increasingly interested in youth engagement, organizational readiness and capacity to work *with* young people does vary.

What are the qualities of a youth-friendly public health unit?

Public Health staff and youth from our six pilot sites were asked to identify the qualities of a youth-friendly public health unit. Here’s what they told us:

Steps towards creating a youth-friendly public health unit

The following tips can help catalyze support for and integration of youth engagement within organizations (also see Box 4 for youth-friendly characteristics):

Step 1: Analyze your organization’s current position, identify openings for change, and set realistic goals

- Examine your organization’s values, perspectives, and assumptions about young people and your current model for working with youth. Identify where the organizations – or parts of it - are already doing

¹ In larger organizations with multiple functions and serving multiple population groups, such as public health units, it may be more feasible to focus on creating support within youth-centered departments, teams, and program areas.

well, where improvements are needed, as well as the realistic openings for change. See Section 4 for a self-assessment tool.

Step 2: Work with champions and early adopters to mobilize support for youth engagement

- Identify people in your organization who are eager to work with youth as well as those who are vocal supporters of youth engagement. Show others that youth engagement can and does work by documenting and sharing stories of success.

Step 3: Highlight the benefits of youth participation to the organization

- Some adults may think that youth engagement is too difficult or only benefits the youth who are directly involved. Increase buy-in by demonstrating the benefits of young people's involvement to organizations and their programs.
- Young people's meaningful involvement, for example, can enrich an organization's understanding of youth, increase the ability to design programs and services that are relevant and effective for youth, and connect with youth who are marginalized or difficult to reach (London et al., 2003).

Step 4: Build a youth-friendly environment

- Youth engagement works best within youth-friendly environments (see Box 3 in Section 2). Foster a youth-friendly environment through trainings (including anti-adultism training), sharing stories of success, and assessing how your organization's policies and governance support youth engagement.

Step 5: Establish policies to guide youth engagement

- Clear rules and consequences are important for everyone involved. They help organizations manage potential risks, staff to make decisions that are seen as fair, and youth to know what to expect and what is expected of them. It is important that your policies and expectations of young people are flexible enough to support their growth and learning.
 - Work with youth and staff to develop policies around:
 - Participation incentives such as stipends, honoraria, and transportation subsidies;
 - Use of organizational equipment for other purposes;
 - Absenteeism and lateness; and
 - Guidelines to support health, safety, and a positive team environment.

Step 6: Be patient and persistent

- Keep in mind that, just like personal change, organizational change is a process that can be quick or slow. Most organizations do not move from a youth service model to the highest levels of youth participation

overnight. Change is often incremental and built on a foundation of past successes.

Box 4: Characteristics of Youth-friendly Organizations

- Creates a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment for youth.
- Assigns an adult who works with the youth.
- Encourages young people to share their opinions and perspectives, including honest feedback about what is and is not working.
- Respects young people's autonomy and capacity to make informed choices.
- Respects the diversity among youth and within youth culture.
- Accepts young people as they are without expectations that they conform to adult standards.
- Meaningfully involves youth throughout the program cycle and not just roles such as peer leader or spokesperson.
- Uses inclusive selection criteria such as the potential of young people to grow into the role, their passion for the issue, and their willingness to commit to being involved.
- Engages youth in developing the policies that guide the organization's work with youth.
- Selects hours of operation and locations that are convenient to youth.
- Provides participation supports such as subsidized transportation.

Pereira, 2007; Shen, 2006; Youth Voices, 2009

Working with community partners

Often, public health units promote youth health by seeking to influence the conditions, policies, and practices of the settings where young people live, learn, and play such as families, schools and communities (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

Table 5 outlines potential partners for youth engagement, how they might be involved and considerations. Table 6 provides an overview of roles and responsibilities among partners.

Develop a youth engagement program plan

Planning youth engagement projects

Most youth engagement programs will include multiple short-term projects, often with different groups of youth. Each project needs a plan to guide it through the five phases of youth engagement. Table 8 shows a sample project plan that illustrates how these five phases might take place during a 10-week period. The plan assumes that the weekly sessions are 1.5 hours in duration. Section 4 provides an agenda template for weekly meetings.

Table 3: Potential Partners, Possible Contributions and Considerations

Potential Partners	Possible Contributions	Considerations
Public Health Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project leadership and management • Influence and advocacy • Human resources – facilitator, guest facilitator, support staff • Health knowledge / expertise • Meeting space • Resources – health promotion information and health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health-focused • Required to respond immediately to health priorities (e.g., H1N1) • Adult authority • Adults promote health and healthy behaviours • Serves all ages • Typically delivers set programming • Has limited staff time for process-driven activities • Potentially overcommitted
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence and advocacy • Human resources – support staff • Education knowledge / expertise • Knowledge / expertise relating to youth • Meeting or event space • Resource – educational supports, sporting goods supplies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education-focused • Adult authority • Adult-led education and extracurricular activities • Serves children and youth • Familiar youth-oriented environment • Often responding to multiple priorities with dwindling resources
Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project leadership and management • Influence and advocacy • Human resources – facilitator, guest facilitator, support staff • Varied knowledge and expertise • Potential knowledge / expertise relating to youth • Meeting or event space • Resources – sport / activity-oriented supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation and leisure-focused • Adult authority • Adults/older youth instruct lessons or supervise drop-in programs • Serves all ages • Various facilities – gym, pool, courts • Potentially a youth-friendly environment
Youth Centre or Youth-Serving Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project leadership and management • Influence and advocacy • Human resources – facilitator, guest facilitator, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth focused • Adult-youth partnership • Adults guide and support youth • Serves youth only

Potential Partners	Possible Contributions	Considerations
	support staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge / expertise relating to youth • Meeting or event space • Resources – partnerships with youth organizations, youth-friendly info and supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to youth issues and needs • Youth-friendly environment • Potentially under-resourced
Faith-based Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project leadership and management • Human resources – facilitator, guest facilitator, support staff • Religious knowledge / expertise • Potential knowledge / expertise relating to youth • Meeting or event space • Resources – religious information, community partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith focused • Adult authority • Adult-led education and activities • Preach and teach lessons • Serves all-ages • Formal, regimented environment
Activity-based Organization (sport, art, games, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project leadership and management • Human resources – facilitator, guest facilitator, support staff • Activity based knowledge and expertise • Potential knowledge / expertise relating to youth • Meeting or event space • Resources – sport / activity oriented supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity focused • Activity expert authority • Expert instructs and coaches • Serves all-ages • Activity focused environment

Table 4: Project Stakeholders - Roles and Responsibilities

Project Partners	Roles	Responsibility
Lead Organization	The organization that has dedicated resources (staff, financial, space, etc.) to support the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be youth-friendly • To ensure that the necessary resources are available and in place to support the project • To control the project resources • To report to project funders and/or management • To promote and support youth engagement
Project Administrator	The staff person assigned by the Lead Organization to coordinate project activities and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be youth-friendly • To coordinate project activities • To provide resources to effectively deliver the project • To ensure people and resources are used appropriately • To promote and support youth engagement
Community Partners	The people living, working and/or playing in the neighbourhood shared by the youth that are assigned to or volunteer to support the youth and project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be youth-friendly • To provide ideas, expertise and advice in the planning of a project • To provide additional resources (staff, financial, space, in-kind contribution, other) to support project implementation • To promote and support youth engagement
Project Facilitator	The adult ally that leads/facilitates the work with the youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be youth-friendly • To lead and support the youth group in project activities • To create opportunities for the youth to gain knowledge and understanding and learn new skills • To create a safe space for the youth to express themselves and have a voice • To support the youth in planning and implementing a project to bring about personal and social change • To communicate with multiple project stakeholders • To support youth engagement
Guest Facilitator	The invited person that leads/facilitates an activity or series of activities with the youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be youth-friendly • To lead and support the youth group in specialized project activities • To support youth engagement

Project Partners	Roles	Responsibility
Parent / Caregiver	The person who provides consent for the youth to participate in project activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be youth-friendly To provide consent for the youth to participate in the project (where appropriate)
Youth Group	The collective youth that meet regularly to participate in project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet regularly To plan and implement a project to bring about personal and social change
Youth in the Youth Group	The individual youth that meets regularly and makes a contribution to the youth group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attend and contribute to regular youth group meetings To respect and support the project facilitator and the other youth To contribute to and support the planning and implementation of a project to bring about personal and social change

Get community partners ready for youth engagement

Engaging youth in health promotion action requires the buy-in and participation of key stakeholders in these settings in both the idea of youth engagement and enhancing protective factors and resiliency. There will likely be a range among your community partners in the readiness and capacity for youth engagement. Some partners may be thought-leaders in youth engagement with the desire and capacity to work directly with the youth while others may be resistant to working *with* youth.

Along with the following strategies, the organizational change tips can help you maximize your success in building support for youth engagement among your community partners.

Take time to gather information and develop an engagement strategy before reaching out to potential stakeholders.

- o What is the goal and scope of the present project? Is it a limited-term project? Is this project intended to catalyze a shift in organizational culture and standard practices?
- o Who has a stake in this project? Which stakeholders are likely to support the project approach and why? Which stakeholders are likely to oppose the project approach and why?
- o What are the current practices that the school and/or community partner use to prevent youth substance misuse/illicit drug use and work with youth? Do they have competing priorities and how might these affect this project?
- o Are there any supportive standards or policies to which your stakeholders are accountable or influenced by? Examples of supportive standards and policies include the *Foundation for a Healthy*

School (Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d.) and the *Canadian School-based Standards for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention* (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2009).

- Consider how youth engagement could support stakeholders to achieve their existing goals (see Box 5, for example).

Now that you are prepared, it is time to meet with the stakeholders.

- Use an assets-based approach by first seeking to understand and build on their goals and priorities and what they are already doing around youth substance misuse/illicit drug use and youth engagement.
- Introduce the concepts and evidence around protective factors, resiliency, and youth engagement, and explore how this could build upon their existing efforts (VCH & VSB, 2008; CCSA, 2009).
- Once it is clear that you both want to work together, take time to discuss and develop a program plan.

Box 5: Supporting Schools to Nurture 21st Century Skills through Youth-Driven Health Promotion Action

Align your youth engagement project with school or community initiatives to garner support and facilitate stakeholder buy-in.

Potential alignments with the school include:

The Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum helps students develop an understanding of what they need in order to make a commitment to lifelong healthy, active living and develop the capacity to live satisfying, productive lives. Youth engagement activities that align with the curriculum provide teachers with a resource rather than an additional responsibility.

Take a look at the curriculum to explore the opportunities:

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/healthcurr18.pdf

The Ontario Ministry of Education Healthy Schools Recognition Program promotes and celebrates healthy behaviours and practices in Ontario schools. Schools commit to participating in healthy school activity and receive recognition from the Premier and the Ministers of Education and Health Promotion for their efforts. Visit their website to learn more:

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/challenge.html

How to develop a youth engagement program plan

Public health organizations are frequently program-driven and use “top-down” planning processes, requiring that fully articulated program and evaluation plans be developed (Laverack, 2004). This can seem antithetical to youth engagement at first glance, but does not have to be. One strategy for overcoming this tension is to parallel-track youth engagement into a “top-down” program (Laverack, 2004). This parallel-tracking process needs to be considered at each stage of the program cycle (See Table 7).

Table 5: Parallel Tracking Process for Youth Engagement

Program Cycle Stage	Strategies
Program design and planning	<p>Many of the tensions between top-down and youth engagement programming can be avoided by developing a program design that provides an overall structure for engaging the youth while leaving enough flexibility for the youth to identify and take action on issues that are important to them.</p> <p>The parameters of the program design can be broadly specified at this stage. The overall goal of the program, for example, may focus on strengthening youth resiliency by enhancing protective factors; this leaves room for the youth to target a range of protective factors through a series of short-term projects that are completely or partially youth-led.</p> <p>Elements that could be included in your program design include: the health issue(s) that will be addressed; the goal and objectives for the program (consider desired change in the protective factors and youth engagement); the groups of youth who will be engaged; and, the youth engagement approach and strategies that will be used. The program design should provide sufficient time and resources to support an ongoing youth engagement process.</p> <p>The relevance and effectiveness of the program is enhanced when young people are involved in the program design and planning process. Young people can be involved in a number of ways, such as participants in consultations, members of advisory groups, or joining your team as a staff or volunteer.</p> <p>Take time to discuss with community partners: who is best positioned to work directly with the youth, what resources (i.e., expertise, funds, space, etc) each partner can contribute, and any important constraints.</p>
Program evaluation	<p>Evaluation is an important program management tool. It is a systematic way of determining whether one’s efforts to create a desired result is bringing about that result, and to use that information to improve one’s chances of success.</p> <p>The following types of evaluation are recommended to help identify and communicate the results of your youth engagement program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tracking personal growth and empowerment: Youth engagement presents many opportunities for growth and learning for both youth and adults. Regular reflection and self-assessment can support ongoing learning and empowerment.

Program Cycle Stage	Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tracking organizational development: Youth engagement is a new way of working for many organizations. Regular assessment and reflection can support goal setting, learning and effective youth engagement practices at the organizational level. ○ Program process: Support ongoing learning, the development of problem-solving skills, and get projects back on track by reflecting on how the project was intended to work, how it worked in reality and why, as well as what could have been done differently. ○ Program outcomes: Assess the results (intended and unintended) of the overall program. Reduced substance misuse/illicit drug use and related harms among youth for example is too broad of a result to use as the measuring stick with which to assess the action projects and the program. Instead, work with the youth to measure the changes that are more directly related to their action projects (Nutbeam, 2000); for example, changes in their target audience’s knowledge, attitudes, behavioural intentions, and skills, or in the social systems and institutions that affect young people’s lives such as family communication, school climate, school policies, and availability of activities for youth. <p>Involving young people in the evaluation process can enhance the relevance and validity of evaluations by ensuring that the evaluation design is well aligned with young people’s realities, that a high response rate is received, and that the data is accurately interpreted.</p>

Table 6: Sample 10-week project plan

	Desired Objectives	Potential Activities
Pre-project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To plan, prepare for and resource a youth engagement project. • To build support for the project among community stakeholders (e.g., parents) • To recruit a team of youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit a team of adult allies to support the youth engagement project – consider multiple project stakeholders • Complete the planning template with the team of adult allies • Find the necessary financial and in-kind resources • Take steps to prepare yourself, your organization and your community partners to work with the youth • Plan your youth recruitment strategy • Draft your project framework and evaluation plan • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Prior to each weekly meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To plan and prepare for weekly youth meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select icebreakers and activities • Gather information and resources to support planned activities • Arrange project logistics (i.e., reserve meeting space, set-up meeting space, purchase food or other resources, make photocopies, confirm guest speakers, etc.) • Remind youth of the next meeting • Meet with project partners and prepare reports when required • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get to know each other • To describe the project and the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name games and icebreaker activities • Share information regarding the project

	Desired Objectives	Potential Activities
	<p>parameters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish group guidelines • To explore different youth project ideas (if the strategy has not been assigned) 	<p>purpose, constraints, roles, and expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View examples of other youth projects (e.g., fotonovelas , PhotoVoice, event posters, etc.) and ask the youth what they think of the different projects and what is involved in creating them • Brainstorm ideas on how to best work together as a team • Reflective check-out • See Section 4 for activity template
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build the team and a sense of ownership over the project • To introduce the concepts of risk factors and protective factors • To explore youth issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up/icebreaker activities • Review of last meeting’s activities and set activities for the day • Decide on a group name and/or establish a mission and values statement • Create a Challenges and Allies Map • Assign homework: bring a photo, a drawing or an object that relates to an issue that affects youth in the community to the next session • Reflective check-out • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build the team • To explore youth issues and identify an issue to focus on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up/team building activity • Review of last meeting’s activities and set activities for the day • Debrief homework and look back on the Challenges and Allies Map • Brainstorm major youth issues in the community and identify an issue to focus on using Dot Democracy

	Desired Objectives	Potential Activities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective check-out • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build the team • To confirm the issue to focus on and to begin planning the youth project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up/team building activities • Review of last meeting's activities and set activities for the day • Confirm the issue to focus on and create a Problem tree • Decide on the message the youth want to communicate to their target audience and the desired change they'd like to see as a result of their project • Brainstorm and decide on a youth event or activity that will bring about this desired change • Reflective check-out • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To plan a youth project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up/icebreaker activities • Review of last meeting's activities and set activities for the day • Use Backwards Planning to plan the event or activity • Assign tasks to each person • Reflective check-out • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn skills for executing the event or activity • To use skills to accomplish assigned tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up/icebreaker activities • Review of last meeting's activities and set activities for the day • Have youth report back on their progress in planning the event or activity. Brainstorm

	Desired Objectives	Potential Activities
		<p>solutions to any challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for skill-building that will help them with their tasks • Reflective check-out • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use skills to accomplish assigned tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up/icebreaker activities • Review of last meeting's activities and set activities for the day • Have youth report back on their progress in planning the event or activity. Brainstorm solutions to any challenges. • Work on assigned tasks • Reflective check-out • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complete all preparations for the event or activity • To prepare evaluation materials • To decide how they want to celebrate their accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up/icebreaker activities • Review of last meeting's activities and set activities for the day • Have youth report back on their progress in planning the event or activity. Brainstorm solutions to any challenges. • Complete assigned tasks and make final arrangements for the event or activity • Complete the evaluation matrix and develop required evaluation tools • Brainstorm and choose a celebration activity • Reflective check-out • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>

	Desired Objectives	Potential Activities
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver the event or activity to the target audience • To evaluate the effectiveness of the event or activity in getting their message across 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event day • Evaluation • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To debrief the project • To analyze and interpret the evaluation data • To celebrate project successes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up/icebreaker activities • Debrief the event or activity • Examine and interpret the evaluation data and make recommendations • Debrief the project process • Celebration activities • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>
Post-project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate the youth engagement project • To document lessons learned about youth engagement and strategize for future projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a SWOT analysis • Prepare a report on lessons learned • <i>See Section 4 for activity template</i>

Resources needed for Youth Engagement

Table 7 outlines key resources for youth engagement projects.

Table 7: Resources for Youth Engagement

<p>Incentives</p>	<p>Many youth engagement projects rely on youth to volunteer their time. Incentives can be used to encourage participation from a broader group of youth and to overcome barriers that would otherwise limit participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do projects that you know will appeal to your target audience ○ Provide snacks or a meal during meetings ○ Provide transportation support ○ Organize school credits or reference letters for participation ○ Solicit prizes and incentives from local stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide an honorarium or hourly wage for youth participants ○ Purchase prizes and incentives
<p>Specialists</p>	<p>Many youth engagement projects use specialized skills such as video making, theatre production, or graphic design.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask community partners with specialists on staff to provide the needed services ○ Ask specialists to volunteer their services ○ Partner with groups and organizations that have the needed expertise and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hire specialists to provide services
<p>Equipment and supplies</p>	<p>Most youth engagement projects require equipment and supplies, such as cameras, computers, poster boards, sports equipment, and music. The type of equipment and supplies required will vary according to the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Borrow equipment and supplies from a community partner ○ Ask the youth to bring equipment and supplies that some or many of the youth are likely to have ○ Use free online services such as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Purchase or rent professional quality equipment and supplies ○ Develop customized websites

		<p>social media websites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Partner with groups and organizations that have the needed equipment and supplies	
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Key Message:

- Youth engagement requires people and organizations to work with youth.
- Youth engagement works best when embraced by the entire organization and not just one staff person.
- Involving appropriate community partners who have a stake in the project will lend additional support to the youth and the youth engagement process.
- When developing a youth engagement program plan, provide an overall structure for your work with the youth while allowing sufficient flexibility for the youth to identify and act on issues that are relevant to them.

Questions to consider - Preparing yourself, your organization, and community partners for youth engagement

- What role do you envision playing in youth engagement?
- What role do you envision your health unit playing in youth engagement?
- Who are the current or potential community partners for youth engagement in your community?
- What resources (financial, in kind, expertise) do you and your current or potential community partners have to support youth engagement?
- What roles do you envision your current and potential community partners playing in youth engagement?
- How can you strengthen organizational buy-in and support for the youth engagement process?
- What do you, your organization, and your current or potential community partners need to do to get ready to work with youth?
- What kind of relationships do the youth have with you and your current or potential community partners?
- How can the relationship between the youth and you and your current or potential community partners be improved?
- Who is best positioned to work with the youth in a youth engagement process? (Who will the youth feel most comfortable working with?)
- Does the person who is best positioned to work with the youth in a youth engagement process embody the guiding principles for effective adult allies? If not, what will this person have to do?

Questions to consider - Developing a program plan

- What are the start and end dates for the project?
- What are you and your current or potential community partners hoping to achieve with the youth during this time?
- What are your expectations?
- How will you know you are successful?
- What are some of the project constraints?
- How often will the youth meet as a group? Where and when will they meet?
- To what extent is the meeting space youth-friendly?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure that the meeting space is (more) youth-friendly?

Activities to support this phase

(see Section 4 for activity templates)

- Self-Assessment Rubric for Adult Allies and Organizations who want to Work with Young People
- Youth Engagement Project Planning Template for Adult Allies and Organizations

Additional reading and resources

Centre for Excellence in Youth Engagement (CEYE)
www.engagementcentre.ca/

Child and youth participation resource guide: Basics of child and youth participation
www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/resourceguide_basics.html

The Free Child Project
www.freechild.org

Ready, Set, Engage: Building Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships for a Stronger Child and Youth Mental Health System.
www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/about_us/new_mentality.php

Youth Participation Guide: Assessment, Planning, and Implementation
www.fhi.org/en/Youth/YouthNet/rhtrainmat/ypguide.htm

Phase 2: Build the Team and their Capacity

Checklist of things to complete during this phase

- Develop and implement a youth recruitment strategy.
- Nurture a sense of team and project ownership.
- Establish the parameters for the project (i.e., group guidelines, project expectations, project theme, etc.).
- Start to build the skills and knowledge for health promotion action.

Purpose of this phase

The aim of this phase is to bring together a group of young people and build a foundation for success. This means recruiting young people, nurturing a sense of ownership and commitment to the project, and beginning the process of building the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to effectively enhance protective factors and resiliency within their school or community.

How to find, recruit, and select youth

Understand why young people get involved

It will be easier to recruit youth if you understand and act on evidence about why young people get engaged and stay engaged, as well as potential barriers. Table 10 provides an overview of the many intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for engagement, as well as barriers to engagement, based on research conducted by the Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement (2003).

Table 8: Factors Affecting Youths’ Decisions to Get and Stay Involved

	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
Get Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to make a difference, have a voice, fulfill a personal interest or passion, and develop personally or professionally • Bored • Attracted to a youth-friendly environment • Respond to a social norm or personal values and beliefs • A sense of obligation, guilt, or responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required by their school • Encouraged by a parent/guardian or someone else
Stay Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfilled at a personal level (e.g., they enjoy what they are doing as well as the social aspects of the project, they see personal benefits and rewards, etc.) • A sense of contributing to their community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization provides a supportive environment (e.g., there are opportunities, incentives, role models, and recognition for accomplishments)
Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient time • Indifference • Lack of confidence • Previous negative experiences • Life circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/peer disapproval or non-support • Organizational culture that is not youth-friendly • Negative group dynamics • Discrimination • Limited community resources • Lack of respect for youth •



Tip! Take time to identify the reasons that your involvement opportunity would appeal to young people in your community, the likely barriers, and possible incentives and supports. For example, transportation is a barrier for youth engagement in rural communities; possible incentives and supports include transportation subsidies, holding meetings at school over lunch, and using Internet-based tools to communicate and collaborate.

How to build the youth team

Criteria for identifying and selecting youth

Recruitment for youth engagement differs significantly from recruitment for most salaried positions. Rather than trying to find the candidate(s) with the best experience, knowledge, and skills, the goal is to attract young people representative of other youth in the community (Shen, 2006). This often means trying to recruit youth who face social and health disparities.

Here are some qualities to consider when designing selection criteria:

- **Passion:** Desire to make a difference in an issue that affects their lives, peers, community, or the world (Shen, 2006). This may take many forms such as anger over social injustice, a belief in social justice and their ability to create change, and questioning the status quo (Delgado & Staples, 2007 in Delgado & Zhou, 2008).
- **Potential:** A foundation to build upon and an openness to learn, develop, and grow (Shen, 2006; Delgado & Staples, 2007, in Delgado & Zhou, 2008). Young people's potential to work with their peers and the social systems that affect youth substance misuse/illicit drug use is particularly important.
- **Willingness:** Desire and ability to invest time and energy in the project, to work with adult allies, to take calculated risks, and to mentor and be mentored (Shen, 2006; Delgado & Staples, 2007, in Delgado & Zhou, 2008).
- **Representation:** One of the benefits of youth engagement is more relevant and effective programs and services. This outcome is closely tied to how representative the engaged youth are of the young people in the community and, particularly, to vulnerable young people. Most often, this requires that recruitment efforts focus beyond the youth who are already actively engaged or recognized by adults as leaders (Delgado & Zhou, 2008). Consider previous leadership experience, length of time in the community, and diversity characteristics such as ethno-racial background, gender, sexual orientation, and physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities (Delgado & Zhou, 2008). At the same time, keep in mind that being from a community does not necessarily mean that someone represents or can speak for that community (Shen, 2006).

Where to find youth

There are many ways to reach out to youth. The best approaches for your project depends on factors such as which youth you want to engage (e.g., are you looking for in- or out-of-school youth?), your community (e.g., are you in rural or urban community?), and your access to youth (e.g., can you reach youth directly or do you need to work through a gatekeeper?).

Some possible outreach strategies include:

- Have teachers and/or youth service providers identify and approach potential youth who would be most appropriate for your project. Be explicit with partners about who you want to engage, particularly if your goal is to connect with disengaged or hard-to-reach youth. Be cautious, however, that your recruitment materials do not stigmatize youth – for example, making them feel that they are being targeted because they are perceived as being “at-risk” or “troubled”.
- Posters and announcements in schools, youth centres, and other places young people frequent.
- Attend community events and distribute flyers.
- Hold a community event like a conference and invite attendees to join the project.
- Work with youth who are already engaged with your project or organization to approach and connect with other youth.

Outreach and recruitment materials should be youth-friendly:

- Use colours and graphics.
- Keep the language short and simple.
- Use words and phrases used by youth.
- Make explicit what the youth will do, the benefits to them, and any participation incentives.
- Include your contact information, instructions on how to apply, and any eligibility criteria.

Selecting the youth

It is a good idea to have youth apply to participate in youth engagement projects – even if you intend to select everyone who applies. This demonstrates their interest in the project and also increases the perceived investment of those selected. Box 7 provides suggested questions for your application form.



Tip! See Section 4 for a worksheet to help you develop your application form.

Box 6: Key Questions for Youth Application Form

Resumes and cover letters are foreign concepts for many middle school students. Application forms are a good strategy to help young people think through their interest in your project. Here are some things to include:

- Their name and contact information.
- Why they are interested in the project.
- What they think about the issue as it relates to youth in their school or community.
- What they want to learn through the project.
- Why they are a good addition to the project team.
- Key events such as training days, planning sessions, etc. and confirmation of their availability.
- Permission from parents or guardians, if required by the host or partner organizations.

How to build the youth team, a sense of ownership, and the capacity to enhance protective factors and resiliency

The idiom “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is a useful reminder of the importance of intentionally building a group that works well together and has the capacity to catalyze change. A well-designed training session lays the foundation for effective action. Consider a balance of “upfront” and “just-in-time” trainings to avoid overloading the youth and to ensure that the training remains engaging and relevant. The knowledge, skills and understanding of all the youth in the youth group will have an impact on how much time you devote to building the team and their capacity.

Training Content: Building competencies for effective youth leadership in health promotion

Your training program should build the following core competencies needed for critical health literacy. The following five core competencies are designed to build and strengthen critical health literacy that will support youth to effectively identify and catalyze personal and social change which enhances protective factors and resiliency.



Tip! See Section 4 for activities that you can use to build these competencies.

- 1. Evidence-based knowledge about the health issue that is relevant and meaningful to the youth:** Access to realistic, evidence-based information about an issue supports young people to engage in honest

and informed dialogue, think critically, and make healthier, more informed decisions.

2. Critical awareness of factors that influence youth and the identified issue and effective prevention strategies:

Move young people beyond education and awareness projects by broadening their understanding of, and ability to think critically about, the protective and risk factors associated with the identified issue, the broader determinants of health, and the processes of social and economic exclusion that result in social and health inequities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2005; Delgado & Zhou, 2008).

3. Leadership Skills: Effective leadership is an essential ingredient for social change. New models of leadership tell us that leadership is a collaborative process rather than a position; that it is values-based and ultimately about fostering change; and that all people are potential leaders (Astin & Astin, 2000).

Capacity among youth to use leadership for social change can be strengthened by focusing on values and qualities at three levels (see Table 11):

- i. Personal values that prepare people to work in groups and engage in social change
- ii. group qualities that enable people to work effectively together
- iii. Group action that results in social change (Astin et al., 1996)

4. Skills for supporting personal and social change: Youth leaders need skills to help them identify and understand the issues and themes that are important to young people's health, existing assets within their peers and communities, and the range of strategies for creating change.

5. Skills for planning, implementing, and evaluating projects: Project management skills can help young people to succeed and take their action project, from idea to real change (TakingITGlobal, n.d.). These skills include: visioning; setting goals and objectives; backwards planning; delegating roles and responsibilities; monitoring project implementation; evaluating the project; and, identifying lessons learned.

Table 9: Qualities that Support Leadership for Social Change

Level	Value	Description
You	Consciousness of Self	Awareness of one’s beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions and how they motivate one’s actions.
	Congruence	Thinking, feeling and behaving in ways that are authentic, consistent, and honest.
	Commitment	Motivation, passion, and perseverance.
You within the Group	Collaboration	Working with others towards a common goal.
	Common Purpose	A shared goal.
	Controversy with Civility	Recognition that within any group effort differences and conflicts are inevitable, and that these differences and conflicts need to be handled with civility.
Group within Society	Citizenship	Being an active citizen who recognizes and is concerned about the rights and well-being of others. A sense of social responsibility and desire to make a positive contribution to others and the greater community.

Astin et al, 1996

Training design

There is no one magic formula for effectively training youth. One thing that is critical is that the learning methodologies and the relationships between adults and youth need to be qualitatively different than what the youth experience in the classroom (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Use active learning strategies, such as activities, inquiry-based learning, field trips and other immersions, role-plays, multi-media, and reflection. Use the youths’ lived experience as a starting place, without getting too personal or making the youth too vulnerable. Box 8 provides an overview of elements to include in your training.

Box 7: Elements of an Effective Training

- Develop a Social Contract or Ground Rules together with the youth that describes what qualities and rules will help the group work well together (e.g., respect, turn your cell phone off, one person speaks at a time, etc.).
- Share the parameters of the project, including budget, constraints related to the funding source or organizational priorities, key dates, and role expectations.
- Team building and leadership development activities that build mutual understanding and skills in communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, and diversity.
- Training to support critical awareness of substance misuse/illicit drug use, protective factors, and the determinants of health, skills for creating personal and social change, and, skills in project management.



Youth Group T-Shirts Designed by Oxford County Public Health's Pilot Site Youth Group



Key Message:

- When building a youth recruitment strategy it is important to consider why youth in your community get engaged and stay engaged, and what the barriers and incentives to youth engagement are.
- Your recruitment strategy will need to appeal to the youth that you want in your youth group. Develop your recruitment message and approach with your target audience in mind.
- Building your team and their capacity will involve a combination of “up-front” and “just-in-time” training to avoid overloading the youth and to ensure that the process remains engaging and relevant.
- The core competencies needed by youth to effectively identify and create personal and social change that enhances protective factors and resiliency include: knowledge of the subject area, critical awareness of influencing factors, leadership skills, personal and social change support skills, and project planning, implementing and evaluating skills.

Questions to consider - Youth recruitment

- Which youth does the project need to reach to be successful?
- Where will you find the youth you want to reach for the project?
- How will you recruit these youth for the proposed project?
- What are some of the barriers to reaching these youth and what strategies will need to be put in place to reach them? And to keep them engaged?
- Why would youth be interested in the proposed project?
- How can your community partners assist you with youth recruitment?

Questions to consider – Building capacity among the youth

- What do the youth need to know and do to be effective in this project?
- What is the current capacity of the youth?
- What knowledge, skills, and understanding will the youth need to develop for this project?
- How can your community partners support the youth?

Activities to support this phase

(see Section 4 for activity templates)

- Group Guidelines
- Snowstorm Reflection and Brainstorm
- Sticky Note Brainstorm
- Dot Democracy
- Thumb Consensus
- Risky Business
- Tower page
- Challenges and Allies Map
- Pre-Project Letter to Oneself
- Four Corners

Additional reading and resources

Icebreakers, Fun Games, Group Activities

www.icebreakers.ws/

Icebreakers, Warm Ups, Energizers, and De-inhibitors.

www.wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html

Phase 3: Explore and Identify

Checklist of things to complete during this phase

- Explore the central theme, its consequences and root causes, and the assets of youth and their families, schools, and communities.
- Select an issue to focus on changing.

Purpose of this phase

The explore and identify phase is critical for helping the youth to focus their health promotion action projects (Delgado & Zhou, 2008). How an issue or problem is understood and framed shapes the solutions seen and the actions taken (Dorfman et al., 2005; Westley et al., 2007).

The purpose of this phase is to facilitate the youth to a) systematically explore the problem or issue, its consequences and root causes; b) the assets of youth, families, schools, and communities that can be harnessed and built upon; and c) identify the issue(s) they want to focus on.



Tip!

The explore and identify phase can be embedded within your capacity building plan. Use activities that encourage the youth to explore the issue within their own community. Integrate theory and evidence into the debrief discussions.

How to engage youth in exploring social problems and selecting an issue of focus

Step 1: Identify the central theme or question

- o A central theme or question provides a focus or starting point for exploratory activities, reflection, and group discussion. The theme or question should be grounded in the young people's lived reality. Examples include: Why do youth use alcohol and drugs in our community?, or, What makes a community youth-friendly?

Step 2: Explore the central theme or question with the youth

- Choose the activity that will help the youth to explore the central theme or question and express their ideas, experiences, and feelings. Create your own activity or use one of the activities from Section 4.

Step 3: Nurture critical awareness

- Many young people – and the adults who work with them – believe that individuals are fully in control of the choices they make and responsible for the consequences on their health, educational success, etc. (Johnson & Freedman, 2005). As a result, the first solution to be suggested and attempted is to provide more information or education, assuming that if people know more they will change their behaviour (Morris, 2005).

Strengthening critical awareness can encourage youth to broaden their focus towards the protective and risk factors for youth substance misuse/illicit drug use, the broader determinants of health, and the processes of social and economic exclusion that result in social and health inequities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2005; Delgado & Zhou, 2008).

Step 4: Select an issue that the young people want to focus on

- Work with the young people to generate a list of issues that they think are important and want to work on. Choose one or two issues from this list as the focus for their health promotion action project.

It is important to choose an issue that the youth have a good chance of changing. Take time and assess each issue against the following criteria before selecting the issue:

- Is the issue winnable?
- Is the issue specific?
- Would it have a positive benefit for many young people if addressed?
- How does it fit with the broader strategy of increasing protective factors for youth?

See Section 4 for activities to use in this phase.



Tip! Find out more about youth-friendly engagement strategies, fostering critical thinking, and building high-functioning teams in Section 2. Additionally, Section 4 has many activities to help you with all aspects of this phase.



Key Message:

- How an issue or problem is understood and framed shapes the intervention.
- Explore issues that are grounded in the youth’s lived reality by having them identify its consequences and root causes, as well as sharing their questions, feelings and shared youth experiences (rather than their personal experiences).
- Encourage critical thinking to broaden the youth’s focus, moving them from self-awareness to social awareness.
- Create opportunities for the youth to focus on assets to build on and not just problems and deficits.

Questions to consider – Exploring issues and identifying an issue to focus on

- What activities can you use to help the youth explore the issues affecting their lives, the consequences and root causes?
- What activities can you use to help the youth to explore their individual assets and the assets of their families, schools, and community?
- How can you use your community partners to support the youth in exploring issues and assets?
- What can you do to encourage the youth to think critically about the issues?
- How does the identified issue impact the youth and the community in which they live?
- How will addressing the identified issue enhance protective factors and foster resiliency?
- What strategies can the youth use to select an issue they want to focus on changing?

Activities to support this phase

(see Section 4 for activity templates)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ○ Snowstorm Reflection and Brainstorm | ○ Image Theatre |
| ○ Sticky Note Brainstorm | ○ Scavenger Hunt |
| ○ Dot Democracy | ○ Fotonovela |
| ○ Thumb Consensus | ○ PhotoVoice |
| ○ Risky Business Tag | ○ Brokered Dialogue |
| ○ Problem Tree | ○ Short Documentary |
| ○ Challenges and Allies Map | ○ Appreciative Inquiry |
| | ○ Open Space Technology |

- World Café
- Evaluation
- Four Corners

Additional reading and resources

Social Media Sites for Children and Youth

KidzWorld www.kidzworld.com

TakingITGlobal www.tigweb.com

Blogs

Blogspot www.blogspot.com

Wordpress www.wordpress.org

Audio/Video/Image hosting

YouTube www.youtube.com

Flickr www.flickr.com

Photobucket www.photobucket.com

Social Networking Sites

Facebook www.facebook.com

Twitter www.twitter.com

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com

MySpace www.myspace.com

LiveJournal www.livejournal.com

Discussion Forums

Yahoo Groups www.ca.groups.yahoo.com/

Google Groups www.groups.google.com/

An Educator's Guide for Changing the World: Methods, Models and Materials for Anti-Oppression and Social Justice Workshops

www.socialjustice.org/index.php?page=peace-and-justice

Cool Tools for Schools

www.cooltoolsforschools.wikispaces.com/

Tailoring On-line Health Promotion: A Toolkit for Communities

www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/OHPToolkit

Techsoup Canada

www.techsoupcanada.ca

Phase 4: Plan and Act

Checklist of things to complete during this phase

- Identify the desired result(s) of the project.
- Identify a strategy for achieving these results.
- Develop a project plan.
- Implement the project plan (and adjust as needed).

Purpose of this phase

The aim of this phase is to support the youth group to develop and implement a plan for creating personal and social change. Box 9 highlights how the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* can help youth identify strategies for creating personal and social change.

Box 8: Areas for Youth-driven Health Promotion Action

The *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* has guided health promotion efforts around the world since it was created in 1986. The health promotion action identified in the *Ottawa Charter* highlights possible areas for youth action projects.

Healthy Public Policy - Policies of governments and organizations affect young people's daily lives and their access to reliable, accurate, and evidence-based health information and services. Encourage youth to identify healthy and unhealthy "rules" (i.e., policies) and practices at their schools, community health clinics, and community. This includes rules about substance misuse/illicit drug use as well as those that affect the risk and protective factors, such as the availability and accessibility of after-school recreational opportunities, and young people's sense of belonging in their schools.

Supportive environments – A sense of belonging and positive relationships with peers, parents, guardians, teachers, and other community members is important for young people's health and well-being. Work with youth to create safe spaces in which young people can talk with peers, parents, teachers and other community leaders about the issues that affect their lives. Such open dialogue can catalyze positive change in relationships, community norms, and lead to broader actions that support youth health.

Community action – Work with youth to engage and empower other young people to take action in support of their health, by bringing together larger groups of youth to analyze substance misuse/illicit drug use issues in the community, make decisions, and take action to achieve better health.

Box 8: Areas for Youth-driven Health Promotion Action

Personal skills – Health education and life skills training remain as important components of a comprehensive approach to substance misuse/illicit drug use prevention, even if they are not a magic bullet. Work with youth to design and implement workshops, discussion groups, and communication campaigns that build critical health literacy among their peers.

Health services – Early adolescence is a time of many physical, social, cognitive, and emotional changes. Tweens have different health needs than children and adults but often face challenges accessing youth-friendly health services (WHO, 2002). Work with youth to identify their health service needs and support them to advocate for new services or to enhance the youth-friendliness of existing services.

Promote Equity and Social Inclusion – Social and economic exclusion - discrimination on the basis of gender, ethno-racial background, ability, or sexual orientation – are a root cause of health inequities among youth (Hutchinson et al., 2004). Work with youth to identify and challenge social biases and injustices that make it hard for some youth to have or get the education, food, decent housing, health care and other things they need to live comfortably, to take part in society, and to feel that they are valued and respected members of the community.

How to engage youth in project planning and implementation

Step 1: Identify the desired results

- The youth will have the best chances of creating the change they desire, if they begin with the end in mind (Covey, 1989, 2002). Encourage them to take time to vision or dream about what changes they would like to see with regards to the identified issue, and to explore how these results would enhance protective factors and resiliency for youth in their community.

Step 2: Develop a strategy for achieving the desired results

- Start by exploring what would need to change or be different in order to achieve the desired results. Ask questions such as: Who would need to think, feel, or act differently and how? and, What would need to be added to the community or taken away?
- Work with the group to prioritize which of these changes has the highest potential of creating change.
- Identify allies and opponents by exploring: Who has power in the issue? Who is likely to support the desired change and why? Who is likely to resist the desired change and why? Who is likely to be neutral about the desired change and why?

- Brainstorm ways that the group could catalyze the desired change. This is a good time to share the health promotion actions from the *Ottawa Charter* (see Box 9).
- Select one or two strategies for creating change and take time to assess each idea against the following criteria:
 - Do we have the time and resources to use this strategy?
 - What are the risks of using this strategy?
 - Would all group members be involved in a meaningful way in trying to address the issue at hand?
 - How does this strategy fit with our broader goal of increasing protective factors in our community?



Supportive Environments: Once the youth group had brainstormed and identified their issue for the project, three members of the youth group took the top activities to all of the Grade 6, 7 and 8 classes to conduct a poll with their peers. It was their idea to do this so that they could see what their peers wanted. The top choice was selected and then modified to incorporate the rest of the activities. This evolved in to a Health Living Week, with an event on each of the 5 days. Three subgroups were formed to work on specific activities (with teacher guidance). The mural was painted by the entire group under the guidance of an art consultant.

- Winsor-Essex County Public Health

Step 3: Use backwards planning to develop a project plan

- A project plan helps the youth to move from idea into action. The project plan should identify the major milestones in the project, what tasks need to be completed for each milestone, the timelines for completing each milestone and its task, the resources needed, who will be responsible, possible obstacles, and strategies for overcoming these obstacles. The time spent in planning will pay off in keeping the project on track. See Section 4 for the backwards planning template.



TIP!

Planning is a new skill for many youth. Taking the time to teach the youth how to plan will increase their capacity for future action. Backwards planning is a simple and useful technique for developing project plans and timelines, and for monitoring their progress.

Step 4: Put the plan into action! And adjust as needed:

- Maintain the momentum around the project through regular meetings in which the youth:
 - Report back on their progress;
 - Cross off tasks completed and celebrate milestones reached;
 - Identify their next steps;
 - Help each other problem-solve when needed; and
 - Adjust the plan as needed.



Key Message:

- Challenge the youth to plan and implement projects that will allow for both personal and social change. Consider projects that could influence healthy public policy, supportive environments, community action, personal skills, health services and/or equity and social inclusion.
- For youth to create the change they desire it is best to start planning with the end in mind. Once they know what they are working towards the project planning can begin.
- The project plan should include; the major project milestones, the tasks that need to be accomplished to achieve the milestones, the timelines associated with the tasks and milestones, the required resources and the assignment of who will be responsible for each task.
- Maintain momentum around the project through regular meetings where you ensure that the project is on track and that issues are resolved.

Questions to consider – Planning and implementing a youth project

- What project will the youth take on to address an identified issue?
- What is the desired result of the project the youth will take on?
- What change do you anticipate?
- How will achieving this desired result impact the youth, the community in which they live, and the broader community?
- How will achieving this desired result enhance protective factors and foster resiliency?
- What strategies will you use with the youth to develop a project plan?
- What project planning and coordination skills do the youth need to successfully accomplish their project?
- What additional knowledge, skills, and understanding will the youth need to develop and implement their project plans?
- Does the developed project plan take the project's timeframe, financials and human resources into consideration?
- How will you and your community partners support the youth in developing and implementing their project plans?
- What other resources are available in the community to support the youth in developing and implementing their project plans?
- What strategies will you use to keep the youth motivated and to ensure that they are accountable for the tasks they agree to?

Activities to support this phase

(see Section 4 for activity templates)

- Snowstorm Reflection and Brainstorm
- Sticky Note Brainstorm
- Thumb Consensus
- Risky Business Tag
- Image Theatre
- Scavenger Hunt
- Fotonovela
- PhotoVoice
- Brokered Dialogue
- Short Documentary
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Open Space Technology
- World Café
- Backwards Planning
- Evaluation
- Four Corners

Additional reading and resources

Guide to Action, TakingITGlobal (TIG) www.tigweb.org/action/guide/

Phase 5: Reflect, Evaluate, and Celebrate

Checklist of things to complete during this phase

- Create opportunities for reflection.
- Engage youth in understanding evaluation and its relevance to their work.
- Work with the youth to develop an evaluation plan, including indicators and data collection tools.
- Collect, analyze, and interpret the data, identifying lessons learned and key recommendations.
- Celebrate the youths' achievements.

Purpose of this phase

This phase includes three activities that contribute to the sustainability and ongoing success of youth-driven health promotion action:

- 1. Reflection:** With youth engagement comes many opportunities for growth and learning for both youth and adults, such as learning about one's self, how to work in groups, the central issue(s), personal and social change, and youth-adult relationships. Reflection provides a tool for learning from and making meaning of one's experience and using this knowledge to inform future action (Ash & Clayton, 2004).
- 2. Evaluation:** Evaluation supports ongoing learning and program improvement. It is an integral step in the youth engagement process, as well as in program management.
- 3. Celebration:** Cultivate cooperation, ownership, and commitment among the youth by taking time to recognize and celebrate their achievements. This includes everyday achievements like reaching a milestone in the project planning as well as larger achievements like completing a video project or meeting with the mayor.

These three activities work best when woven throughout the youth engagement process.

How to engage youth in reflection

What is reflection?

Reflection involves stepping back and thoughtfully examining an experience, one's reactions and thoughts, making links with past knowledge, questioning one's assumptions, and deciding what actions to take next.

How to do reflection

There are several well-known techniques for structuring reflective discussions and generating guiding questions. All of these techniques move through the thinking processes of description, analysis, and application/action.



Tip! Refer to debrief strategies in Section 2 to learn more about leading reflective discussions.

When to do reflection?

Reflection works best when integrated throughout the youth engagement process:

- **At the start of the project**, reflection can be used to help youth identify their hopes and fears, skills they want to learn, and existing ideas about youth substance misuse/illicit drug use, their school and/or community, and social change.
- **During issue exploration**, reflection supports the development of critical awareness as the youth examine the relationship between social issues, identity, and power.
- **During the project**, reflection encourages youth to continually learn from and make meaning of their experience, as well as to identify strategies for adjusting the project and solving arising problems.
- **At the end of the project**, reflection supports youth to explore what they have learned; how their understanding of the social issues, community, client population, etc. have or have not changed; and what their next steps will be.

How to engage youth in evaluation

Why involve youth in evaluation?

Engaging the youth in evaluating their action projects and the broader youth engagement program can further support their empowerment and positive development (Sabo, 2003). Young people's active participation as researchers also enhances the overall evaluation by tapping into young people's wisdom. This helps to ensure that the issues and questions most important to young people are addressed, youth-friendly data collection tools used, and the data analysis, interpretations and recommendations accurately reflect young people's realities and needs (London et al., 2003; Sabo, 2003; Delgado, 2006).

Engaging youth in evaluation and other forms of research parallels youth engagement in programs, services, and social action (Delgado, 2006). It is important to define the role and level of participation of youth and adults; the aspects of the research in which young people will be involved (e.g., question selection, research design, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, dissemination, etc.); and, to ensure that the youth, adults,

and organizations have the competencies needed for success (Delgado, 2006).

Regardless of the level of youth involvement in designing and conducting the evaluation, it is advisable to integrate emerging and unorthodox research approaches and methods - such as empowerment evaluation and arts-based methods - that are more “youth-friendly” than conventional approaches and methods.

How to evaluate with youth

Step 1: Introduce the youth to evaluation, explaining what it is and why it is relevant to them.

Step 2: Work with the youth to develop an evaluation plan. Identify what to evaluate, the indicators that will tell them that have been successful, and the data collection strategies and tools that will provide information about the indicators.

Step 3: Collect, analyze, and make meaning of the data.

Step 4: Identify lessons learned and key recommendations.

How to engage youth in celebration

Celebration is about recognizing and valuing young people’s work, successes, and learning. There are many ways to do this:

- Certificates and letters of recommendation;
- Credit for volunteer hours;
- A special treat when the group achieves a milestone;
- Facilitated opportunities to appreciate and acknowledge each other;
- Ensuring that the youth are the spokespeople for the project;
- A launch event or other opportunities to display their work.

“ *Among project completion – celebrations includes*

- *Pizza parties*
- *Mini putt activity*
- *Cooking class activity*

- *Halton Public Health*



Key Message:

- Reflection, evaluation and celebration contribute to project sustainability.
- It is best to engage in reflection, evaluation, and celebration throughout the youth engagement process.

Questions to consider - Reflection

What strategies can you use to incorporate reflection into your ongoing work with the youth? (Phases 1-5)

Questions to consider – Evaluation

- How will you introduce evaluation to the youth?
- How will the youth be involved in the evaluation of the overall project? (Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data and making recommendations.)
- What knowledge, skills, and understanding will the youth need to participate in project evaluation?
- What might the youth need or want to evaluate in their project?
- What tools and resources will the youth need to evaluate their projects?
- How can you or your community partners support the youth in evaluating their project?
- What are the results of the evaluation?
- Who will the youth share their evaluation results with?

Questions to consider – Celebration

- How can you incorporate celebration into your work with the youth?
- What aspects of the youth’s involvement could you celebrate?
- How can your community partners support project celebration?
- What celebration strategies will the youth really respond to?

Activities to support this phase

(see Section 4 for activity templates)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Snowstorm Reflection and Brainstorm ○ Sticky Note Brainstorm ○ Thumb Consensus ○ Evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pre-Project Letter to Oneself ○ Four Corners ○ Experience Map ○ Head / Heart / Hands Reflection |
|--|--|

Additional reading and resources

Guide to Project Evaluation: A Participatory Approach

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/resources-ressources/guide/evaluation-eng.php

Participatory Evaluation with Young People, and
Facilitator's Guide for Participatory Evaluation with Young People

www.ssw.umich.edu/public/currentProjects/youthAndCommunity/resourcesPublications.html

Child and youth participation resource guide: Involvement in research,
analysis, planning, implementation, evaluation

www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/resourceguide_research.html

Section 4 - The Toolbox

- Activities for Project Management
- Activities for Sports and Play
- Visual Arts Activities

Youth engagement activities

All of the activities that follow require a **debrief** to make the experience truly meaningful. A debrief is a reflective discussion that follows an activity or event. It is an opportunity to step back and thoughtfully examine an experience, one's reactions and thoughts, make links with what one already knows, and question one's assumptions.

Reflection can be done throughout the youth engagement process and can happen individually or in groups. Please see Section 2 for more information on the **debrief** of activities.

The activities in this section are arranged according the following three themes:

- **Activities for Managing YE Projects** – Preparing for youth engagement and managing youth engagement projects requires organization and review of adult readiness.
*****Templates 1 and 2; Activities 1-2*****
- **Activities for Working with Youth on Projects** - Project management skills such as project planning, work planning, and evaluation help young people move their idea into reality. This skill set often needs to be made explicit and intentionally developed.
*** **Activities 3-7 and 21-26** ***
- **Activities for Arts-Informed Approaches** - Arts and culture-informed approaches provide youth with tools to create a common identity, explore important issues and social injustices, communicate their visions for change, and get heard by their peers, parents, teachers, and other community members. These approaches also help to attract new members and sustain the energy of existing members; some youth will come for the arts and may find themselves increasingly interested in the issues. - Visual arts activities are relatively easy-to-use tools for education, discussion, and social change: All that is needed is some creativity, paper, and markers, paints, or crayons! These activities can be used for training, issue exploration, or as part of the young people's action projects. They can be used on their own or as a warm up for drama-based, digital media, and social media activities.
*** **Activities 10-15** ***
- **Activities for Dialogical Methods** - Dialogical methodologies are based on the idea that conversations help people better understand themselves, their communities, and the issues that affect their lives, and can spark personal and social change (Bojer et al., 2006).
*** **Activities 16-20** ***

Template 2: Youth Recruitment Worksheet

Recruiting youth volunteers for your youth group can be a challenge. First determine who you want to recruit, how they will contribute to the Youth Engagement Project in your school/community and how you will reach them. Then use your creativity and enthusiasm to gain their commitment.

1. **Who do you want to recruit for the Youth Group?** (You may want to refer to your planning template.)

Grade Level: <input type="checkbox"/> # of Grade 6's <input type="checkbox"/> # of Grade 7's <input type="checkbox"/> # of Grade 8's	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> # of girls <input type="checkbox"/> # of boys	Skill set: <input type="checkbox"/> leadership <input type="checkbox"/> communication <input type="checkbox"/> interpersonal <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
--	---	---

2. **What will the youth do?**

Activities: <input type="checkbox"/> have fun <input type="checkbox"/> plan, promote and deliver health promotion project for their peers <input type="checkbox"/> use art (visual, musical, theatrical) to share an important message with their peers <input type="checkbox"/> host an event to promote a healthy school / community <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
--

Skill building: <input type="checkbox"/> teamwork <input type="checkbox"/> communication <input type="checkbox"/> dance	<input type="checkbox"/> leadership <input type="checkbox"/> problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> photography	<input type="checkbox"/> confidence <input type="checkbox"/> poetry <input type="checkbox"/> _____
---	---	--

3. **How will you reach the youth you want for the Youth Group?**

The Recruiter: _____ will be the youth recruiter at the school / community site (name/position)
--

The Message:

Use the space provided below to write an exciting advertisement that will motivate youth to join the Youth Engagement Youth Group. Make every attempt to appeal to your target youth by understanding their likes and interest.

Ensure your message includes the following:

- What are you recruiting youth for? (name and/or purpose of the group)
- What will the youth be doing? (skills, tasks, activities, goals)
- What's in it for them? (How will they benefit? – leadership skills, etc.)
- What is the required time commitment? (x hrs/month, meetings at lunch)
- How do they express their interest and to whom?

Delivery of the recruitment message:

Method of delivery:

- Face-to-face (classroom, assembly, meeting)
- Audio (PA system broadcast to the school)
- Visual (Poster advertisement on bulletin board)
- Referral (leader-to-youth or youth-to-youth)

Timing:

Month of: _____

AM or **PM**



Activity 1: Self-Assessment Rubric for Adult Allies and Organizations Who Want to Work with Young People

Purpose: Professionals and organizations can enhance their capacity in youth engagement by regularly reflecting on their current practice and identifying areas for ongoing learning and development. The *Self-Assessment Rubric for Adult Allies and Organizations Who Want to Work with Young People* is an ideal tool when preparing for a new youth engagement program/season. (See next page for a template)

Phase: 1

Time required: 90 minutes

Materials: Rubric, pen/pencil

Instructions:

- **Step 1** – Reflect on current and ideal practices: Respond to the questions provided for each of the key components affecting youth engagement practice to help you assess what is working well, what can be built upon or strengthened, and where there are areas for improvement.
- **Step 2** – Identify actions to close the gap between current and ideal practices. Consider what would need to happen to move from the current to the ideal situation, and which actions are feasible to take on now and which may have to wait.
- **Step 3** – Commit to regular reflection. Use the rubric periodically, to track the staff's and organization's progress in integrating and moving toward increasing levels of youth engagement.

Considerations: The rubric can be used by one person, a staff team, or an entire organization as well as by adults only or in a mixed group of adults and youth. The discussions will be richer with a diversity of people and perspectives.

Table 10: Self-Assessment Rubric for Adult Allies and Organizations Who Want to Work with Young People

	Questions to Consider	Where I Am/We Are Now	Where I/We Would Like to Be	Steps to Get There
Philosophy of Young People	<p>How do I/we see young people?</p> <p>Do I/we focus on risks and deficits?</p> <p>Do I/we focus on assets, strengths, and resiliency?</p>			
Program Model	<p>What are the main roles that young people have in our programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are they clients, peer leaders, advisors/consultants, or partners? <p>What is the main focus of our program model?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are we focused on helping youth who are having trouble, providing education and information, building leadership skills, or working with youth to design, implement, and evaluate initiatives? 			

	Questions to Consider	Where I Am/We Are Now	Where I/We Would Like to Be	Steps to Get There
Youth Participation Model	<p>How are young people involved in making decisions about programs and services, and the organization as a whole?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are they assigned roles and delegated tasks? 			
Youth Participation Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are they asked to advise adult staff on various initiatives? ○ Do they work with adults to take an existing initiative from idea to reality? ○ Do they initiate and direct their own ideas – asking for adult help when they need it? ○ Do adults and youth work in partnership? 			

	Questions to Consider	Where I Am/We Are Now	Where I/We Would Like to Be	Steps to Get There
<p>Youth-Adult Relationships</p>	<p>Are there opportunities for adults and youth to work together on projects?</p> <p>What is the typical relationship like between adults and youth?</p> <p>How are decisions made? Who has the final say?</p> <p>Are you (and other staff) comfortable not knowing what the final product will be?</p> <p>Are you (and other staff) able to trust the process?</p> <p>How are the talents of both adults and youth recognized and harnessed?</p>			

	Questions to Consider	Where I Am/We Are Now	Where I/We Would Like to Be	Steps to Get There
Institutional Support	<p>To what extent does your organization support youth engagement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there one or more champions for youth engagement in senior management or on the Board? ○ Are there formal strategies, policies and/or guidelines to support and guide youth engagement? ○ Do program planning requirements account for the flexibility necessary for effective youth engagement? ○ What roles are assigned to youth? ○ Are there training opportunities for adults and young people? ○ Is there money for participation incentives? ○ Is working with youth included in staff job descriptions? ○ Is there a plan in place to ensure the sustainability of youth engagement? For example, on-going recruitment, training and mentoring; documenting lessons learned and feedback from youth; etc. 			

	Questions to Consider	Where I Am/We Are Now	Where I/We Would Like to Be	Steps to Get There
Youth-Friendly Culture	<p><i>How youth-friendly is your program and/or organization?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are young people's unique needs identified and accommodated (e.g., convenient times, transportation support, etc)? ○ Do young people feel safe to provide honest feedback and to speak frankly about their realities? ○ Are meetings short and action-oriented? ○ Are fun, interaction, and learning encouraged? ○ Are young people's self-determination and autonomy respected? ○ Are unmet expectations and behaviour problems dealt with in a respectful way that encourages learning? ○ How supportive, inclusive and welcoming is your organization to young people? 			

CEYE, 2007; FHI, 2004; Pereira, 2007; Delgado & Staples, 2008; Delgado & Zhou, 2008



Activity 2: Youth Engagement Project Planning Template for Adult Allies and Organizations

Purpose: This template is intended to support adult allies and organizations in thinking through the design of their youth engagement project. Key questions from each of the five phases of the youth engagement process will help guide the adult allies and organizations in both preparing to work with the youth and actually doing it. *(See template on next page)*

Phase: 1

Time required: 90 minutes

Materials: Template, pen/pencil

Instructions:

- **Step 1** – Reflect on and discuss each question on the template.
- **Step 2** – Respond to the questions for each of the five phases of youth engagement. You may not have all the answers during this planning phase. Respond to the questions that you are sure about and revisit the other questions as the project progresses.

Considerations: The process for completing the template depends on how your organization operates. It is recommended that a group of project stakeholders work together to complete the template. Having more people involved in the process will allow for more perspectives and richer dialogue, which can be important when exploring the foundations of a project.

Table 11: Youth Engagement Project Planning Template for Adult Allies & Organizations

Phase 1: Get Ready for Youth Engagement	
Key Questions	Your Notes
<p><u>Internal Environment</u> What does your organization need to do to get ready to work with youth?</p> <p><u>External Environment</u> What are some of the existing protective factors for youth in your community or project?</p> <p>What are some of the protective factors that are missing or need to be strengthened?</p> <p>What are some of the factors that will facilitate youth engagement in your community?</p> <p>What are the some of the potential barriers or challenges?</p>	
Key Questions	Your Notes
<p><u>Project Partners</u> Which individuals and organizations do you need to engage in this project? Why?</p> <p>How do you want to involve these potential partners? What are the roles and expectations?</p>	

<p>What kind of relationship(s) do these people, groups, and organizations already have with youth? How often do they see youth? How safe will youth feel speaking openly with them about their issues including substances and other risk-taking behaviours?</p> <p>What do the project partners need to build their readiness to work with the youth?</p> <p>How will these partnerships be sustained?</p>	
<p>Key Questions</p>	<p>Your Notes</p>
<p><u>Working with the Youth</u> Who among the partners is best positioned to work directly with the youth? Why?</p> <p>What does the person working directly with youth need to build their readiness to work with youth?</p> <p>In what capacity will the youth be involved in the program?</p> <p>What level of decision-making will the youth have?</p>	

<p>Which aspects of the project will the youth define? Which aspects are pre-determined (e.g., funding requirements, available expertise)?</p>	
--	--

Key Questions	Your Notes
<p><u>Logistics</u> What is the timeframe for the project and its phases? How often will the youth meet as a group?</p> <p>Where and when will you meet with the youth?</p> <p>To what extent is the meeting space youth- friendly?</p> <p>What steps need to be taken to ensure that the meeting space is (more) youth-friendly?</p> <p><u>Evaluation</u> Who will be responsible for tracking results?</p> <p>Who will be responsible for reporting to the funder?</p> <p>How will the youth be involved in the evaluation of the overall project?</p>	

Phase 2: Build the Team and their Capacity	
Key Questions	Your Notes
<p><u>Recruitment</u> Which youth does the project need to reach to be successful?</p> <p>What strategies will need to be put in place to reach marginalized or disengaged youth? To keep them engaged?</p> <p>How can the Partners assist in recruiting youth?</p>	
Key Questions	Your Notes
<p><u>Building Capacity among the Youth</u> What do the youth need to know, do, or feel to be effective in this project?</p> <p>What knowledge, skills, and understanding will the youth need to develop?</p>	

<p>What other resources exist in the community to support the implementation of the youths' project(s)?</p>	
<p>Phase 5: Reflect, Evaluate, Celebrate</p>	
<p>Key Questions</p>	<p>Your Notes</p>
<p><u>Reflect</u> At what points in the process do you want to engage the youth in reflection?</p> <p>What are some activities you can use to encourage reflection?</p> <p>How can you use reflection to support the youth to build the skills, knowledge, understanding, and experiences identified in Phase 2?</p> <p><u>Evaluate</u> How will you introduce evaluation to the youth?</p> <p>What might the youth need or want to evaluate in their project(s)?</p> <p>How can you support them to track the results and process of their project(s)?</p> <p><u>Celebrate</u> How can you incorporate celebration into your project?</p>	



Activity 3: Group Guidelines

Purpose: To establish agreed-upon values and group norms with the youth group to facilitate ongoing, high-functioning group work. Group guidelines identify characteristics and actions that help groups work well together and outline the youths' expectations of each other.

Phase: 2

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Flip chart paper, scrap paper, pen/pencil, markers

Instructions: Working individually, in partners, and then as a group ask the youth to:

- **Step 1** - Think about a time when they were part of a team or group that worked well together.
- **Step 2** - Share their experiences with a partner and identify the characteristics of the groups that made them work so well. (Encourage them to make notes.)
- **Step 3** - Share their ideas with the larger group while you document the ideas on a large flip chart paper that all the youth can see. When sharing their ideas, ask each individual for only one "new" idea – if another person has voiced an idea that they share, the youth should cross it off their list. Once everyone has had the opportunity to contribute to the brainstorm, invite them to share another idea or "pass" until all the ideas have been exhausted. Collect as many ideas as the youth can generate without passing judgment.
- **Step 4** - Review the list of ideas as a group and consider which ideas the youth would like for their group guidelines. Invite the youth to combine, delete and/or add ideas to the list.
- **Step 5** - Ask the youth to each show a sign that they agree to accept and abide by the group guidelines once the list is complete. (The sign could be that they stand or raise their hand if they accept the guidelines or they could initial the guidelines.) Advise the youth that by accepting the guidelines they are also accepting the responsibility of upholding the

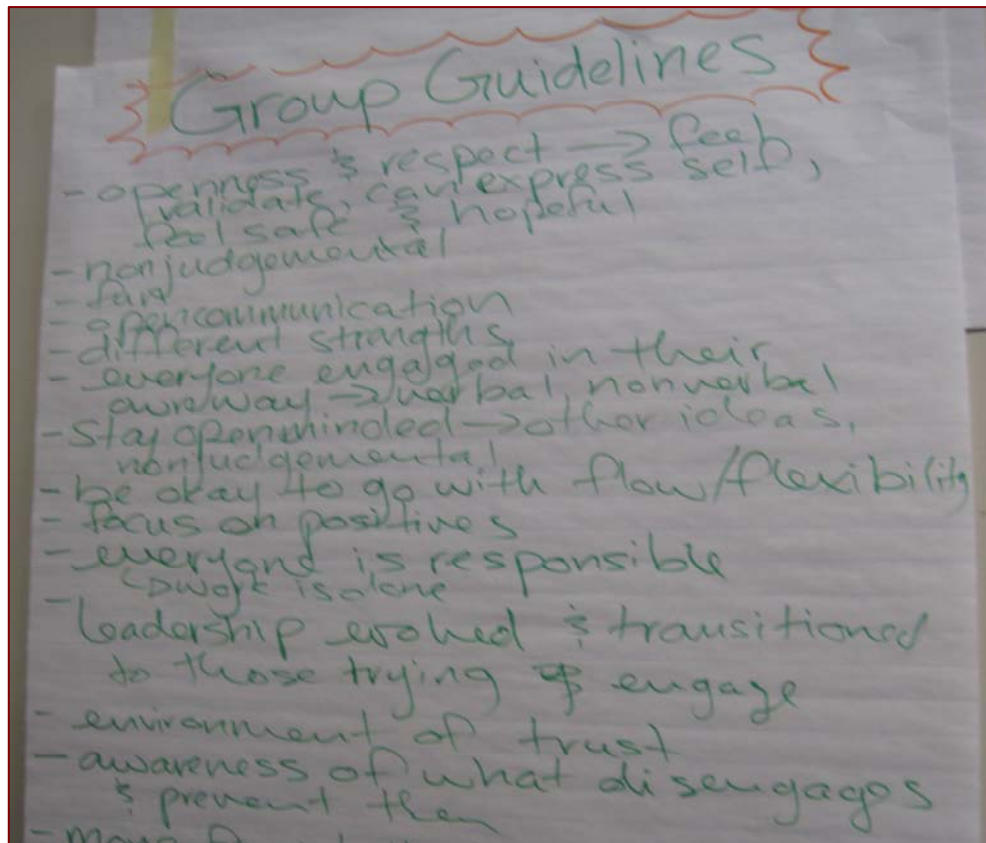
guidelines – meaning that ensuring compliance is a collective responsibility. This way you do not have to police the group.

- o **Step 6** - Post the group guidelines in a visible area as a reminder of what the group has committed to.

Considerations: It is good practice to review and revise the group guidelines periodically, particularly with new membership. If there is non-compliance, first ask the youth group to determine whether one or several guidelines need to be changed, and second, ask the youth group to determine appropriate consequences for non-compliance.

- “
- *Openness and respect → feel validated, can express self, feel safe, and helpful*
 - *Non-judgmental*
 - *Different strengths*
 - *Stay open-minded → other ideas*
 - *Be okay to go with the flow → flexibility*
 - *Everyone is responsible*
- ”

- *Halton's Experience*





Activity 4: Snowstorm Reflection and Brainstorm

Purpose: To reflect on a topic or issue, to individually brainstorm actions to address this topic or issue, and to share these ideas anonymously.

Phase: 2, 3, 4, 5

Time: 15-25 minutes

Materials: Pen/pencil and paper or the sample/template provided on the following page

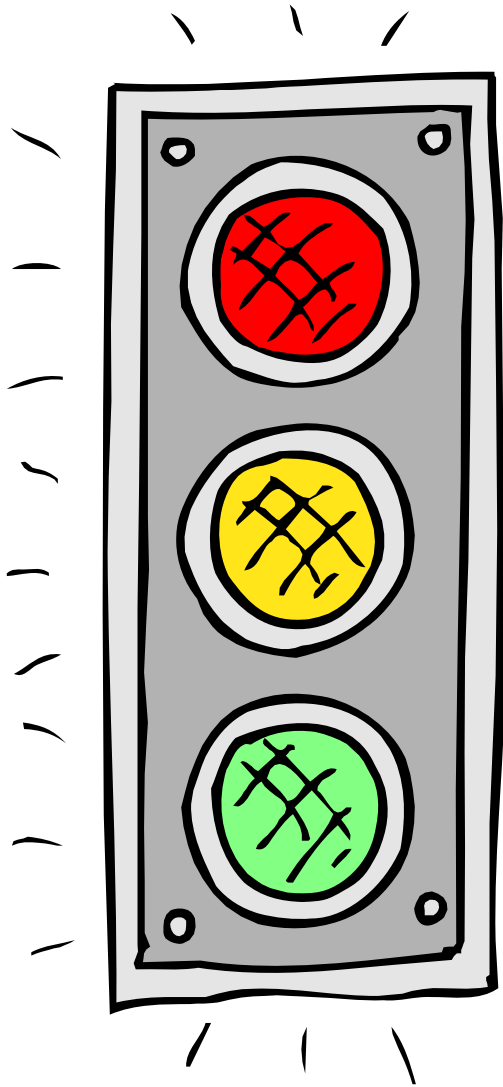
Instructions: Working individually, ask the youth to:

- **Step 1** – Reflect on the identified topic or issue and write down action steps (using the attached template or blank paper) that they can personally take to address the topic or issue. Request that they refrain from writing their names on the paper to allow for anonymity and inform them that their response will be shared.
- **Step 2** – Once completed, crumble up the paper into a “snowball” and toss it into the centre of the room.
- **Step 3** – Pick one “snowball” and unravel it. Share the ideas/responses on the paper.

Considerations: To ensure privacy provide the instruction “not to write their names on the paper” prior to handing out the paper or handout. Consider having the adult ally collect and share the ideas/responses as the youth may be able to identify each other’s handwriting.

Sample Handout: Snowstorm

In an effort to address the topic or issue of _____
I will:



STOP

CONTINUE

START



Activity 5: Sticky Note Brainstorm

Purpose: To generate a wide range of ideas.

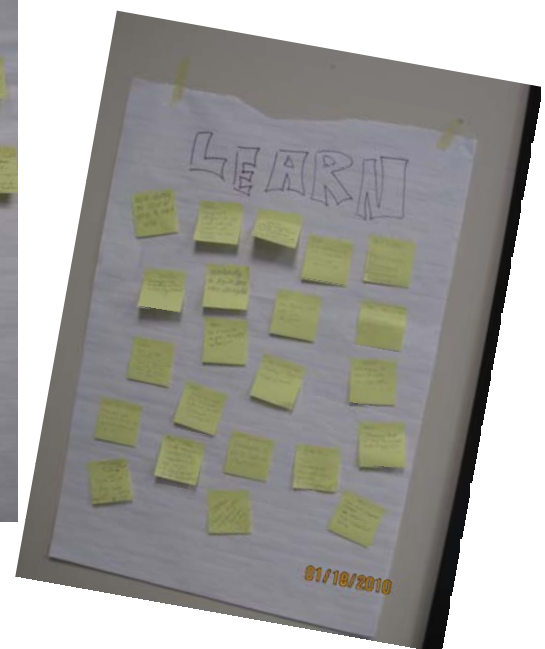
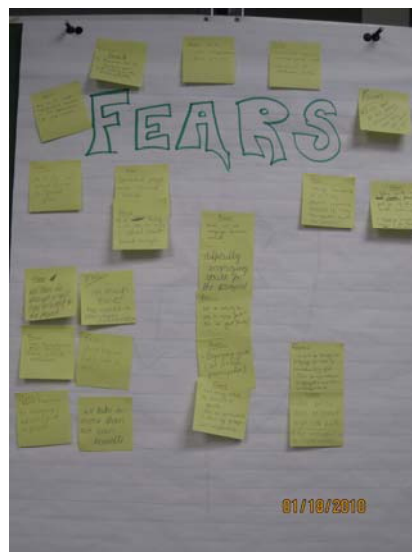
Phase: 2, 3, 4, 5

Time: 15-25 minutes

Materials: Post-it notes, pen/pencil/marker

Instructions: Working first individually and then as a group, invite the youth to:

- **Step 1** - Brainstorm ideas on a given topic and write down one idea per post-it note until they run out of ideas
- **Step 2** - Randomly post their ideas on a wall
- **Step 3** - Work together to group the post-it notes into similar themes and to label the theme
- **Step 4** - Discuss the results of the brainstorm





Activity 6: Dot Democracy

Purpose: To streamline the group decision-making process by providing a quick visual of the group's interest in a range of ideas.

Phase: 3

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: Stickers or coloured markers

Instructions: Invite the youth to:

- **Step 1** - Participate in a group brainstorming session.
- **Step 2** - Identify the idea or ideas that they are most interested in by placing a sticker or a dot (using the coloured markers) beside the idea. Provide all the youth with the same number of stickers/dot marks that they can place on the ideas that interest them.
- **Step 3** - Count the number of stickers/dot marks beside each idea. The idea that has the most dots is the idea that the group will pursue further.

Considerations: You may want to provide the youth with the option of placing multiple stickers/dot marks on one idea that they are really interested in pursuing. (i.e., If the youth are provided with 5 stickers you may provide them with the option of placing a maximum of 2 stickers on any one idea.)



Activity 7: Thumb Consensus

Purpose: To help a group make consensus decisions.

Phase: 2, 3, 4, 5

Time: 2 minutes for each phase

Materials: individual's thumbs

Instructions: Working individually, invite the youth to:

- **Step 1** - Provide their assessment of a proposed idea by giving a:
 - "Thumbs up" means that they fully support of the idea
 - "Thumbs down" means that they cannot support the idea
 - "Thumbs to the side" means that they can live with the idea
- **Step 2** - Provide ideas on what would need to happen if a "thumbs down" is given in order for them to support the idea, and/or what alternative ideas they might have.



Activity 8: Risky Business Tag²

Purpose: To explore the qualities and resources in the community that help young people be healthy and those that challenge their health.

Phase: 2, 3, 4

Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Materials: Open field or gym, a group of 15 or more youth

Instructions:

- **Step 1: Opening questions**
 - Have the youth sit or stand in a circle.
 - Ask the youth:
 - What are some reasons that young people use alcohol or drugs?
 - What are some reasons that young people choose not to use some alcohol or drugs?
- **Step 2: Game instructions**
 - Explain that you are going to play a game of tag to explore some of the things that help young people make healthier decisions about alcohol and drugs.
 - Ask the youth what they know about the game of tag.
 - Explain that:
 - In a game of tag there is someone who is “it” and tries to catch other people.
 - A tagged players freezes when the “it” person touches them.
 - In this game of tag, the person who is “it” represents alcohol and drugs.
 - In this game of tag, there is also someone who can release tagged players. This person represents protective factors. To attract the attention of the protective factors person, you will need to shout out things that help young people make healthier decisions about alcohol and drugs. This could be something about the young person, their family, their school, their community, etc.

² *Inspired by the games in Right to Play, 2007.*

- Ask for two volunteers. Assign one volunteer to be “alcohol and drugs” and the other to be “protective factors”.
- **Step 3: Play the game**
 - Do a practice run of the game to be sure that everyone understood the instructions.
 - Play the game for 5 to 10 minutes. Encourage the youth to shout out protective factors so they can be released.
 - Keep a list (written or mental) of the protective factors you hear the youth shout out. You can raise these in the debrief to stimulate discussion.
- **Step 4: Debrief the game**
 - Call the youth back to the circle.
 - Follow the debrief process as outlined in Section 2
 - Focus your debrief questions on the protective factors that the youth identified. Encourage the youth to think about protective factors at multiple levels (i.e., the young person, their family, their school, their community, etc.) and to explore why these factors help young people to make healthy decisions.



Activity 9: Tower

Purpose: To explore the qualities and strategies teams can use to solve problems and work well together.

Phase: 2

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: For each group, 8 empty drink cans, two elastics, six arm-lengths of string

Instructions:

- **Step 1: Opening questions**
 - Have the youth sit or stand in a circle.
 - Ask the youth: What are some qualities that help teams work well together?
- **Step 2: Game instructions**
 - Explain that you are going to do an activity to explore how groups work together to solve problems.
 - Explain that:
 - The aim of activity is to build a tower of cans.
 - They will have five minutes to complete this task.
 - They CANNOT touch the cans with their hands.
 - They can use the elastics and string to build their tower.
 - Option: This is a silent activity. They cannot use words or sounds to communicate.
 - Divide the group into small groups of 5 to 6 youth.
- **Step 3: Do the activity**
 - Observe the groups working together. Keep a list (written or mental) of things you notice about group dynamics and problem solving strategies. You can raise these in the debrief to stimulate discussion.
- **Step 4: Debrief the game**
 - Call the youth back to the circle.
 - Follow the debrief process in Section 2.
 - Encourage the youth to explore group dynamics issues such as how they made decisions, what communication strategies worked and

which did not, and how the work was shared among the group members.



Activity 10: Problem Tree

Purpose: To identify and explore the layers of causes and consequences of an issue in a visual way.

Phase: 3

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Flip chart paper, colourful markers, tape

Instructions: Working individually or in small groups, invite the youth to:

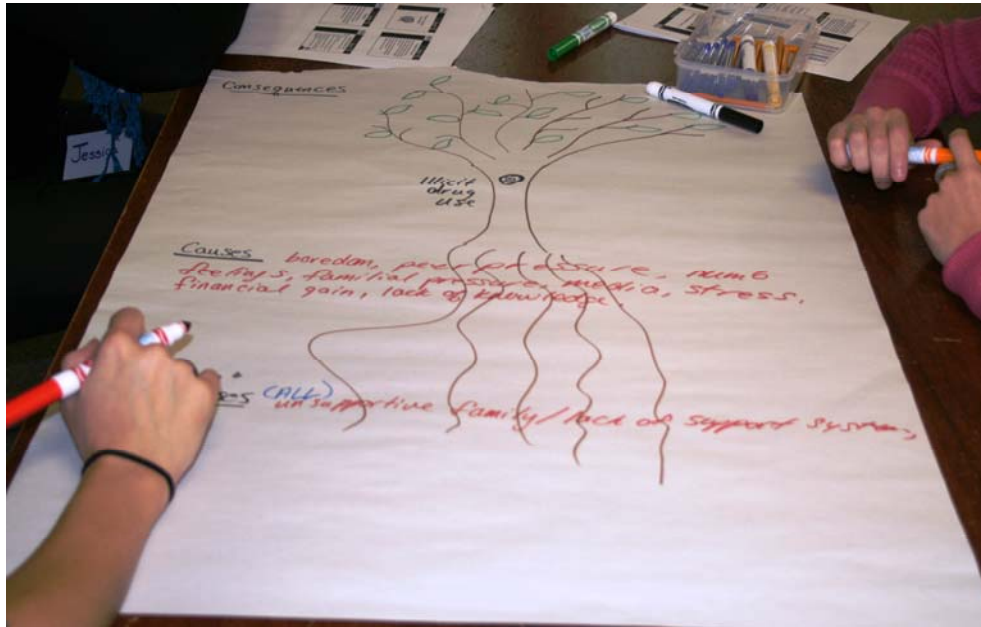
- **Step 1** - Draw a tree including the roots, trunk, branches, and leaves, and write the main issue on the trunk.
- **Step 2** - Brainstorm and record the causes of the issue on the roots. For each identified cause ask “but why” at least twice to identify deeper root causes of the issue and write down these causes lower down in the roots.
- **Step 3** - Brainstorm and record the consequences of the issue in the branches and leaves.
- **Step 4** - Explore the connections between and among the various causes and consequences. Arrows and other symbols can be used to illustrate relationships.
- **Step 5** - In the large group, engage the youth in a discussion about the causes and consequences they identified. Explore commonalities and differences.

Modifications:

- Consider posting the pictures and hosting a “gallery tour” before the group discussion. This is often a fun way of sharing and it helps to ensure that the discussion does not become repetitive.
- Rather than drawing a “problem tree” invite the youth to draw an “asset tree.” On the trunk of the tree the youth could write an idea like “healthy youth” and then brainstorm the causes and consequence of the idea.

Additional steps:

- o **Step 1** - Working either individually, in small groups, or as a large group, invite the youth to select a cause or consequence to target for change. Brainstorm strategies that could contribute to that change.
- o **Step 2** - Identify and select strategies that would create a positive change in the identified cause or consequence. Strategies will likely range from concrete actions like creating prevention posters to structural strategies like advocating for a safe space for youth to hang out after school.





Activity 11: Challenges and Allies Map

Purpose: To identify risk and protective factors in one's life

The challenges and allies map engages students in identifying risk factors and protective factors – including key supports and coping mechanisms – in their lives.

Phase: 2, 3

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: paper, pen/pencil

Instructions:

- **Step 1** - Create the map. Working individually, invite the youth to:
 - Draw a shape or symbol in the middle of the page that represents them – their self-portrait.
 - Think about the things in their lives that they do not like, that makes them feel unhappy, or that stresses them out; this might be related to their family, peers, school, or community. For each of these things, ask the youth to think about how big it is and the distance of the stressor to them. Invite the youth to draw these stressors or a symbol representing the stressor using the size of their drawings to indicate how big the stressor is (large, medium, or small) and the distance from their self-portrait to indicate how present the stressor is in their lives and thoughts.
 - Think about things in their lives that they like, or that make them feel happy, welcomed, or supported; again, this might be related to their family, peers, school, or community. Invite the youth to add these supports or a symbol representing the supports to their drawing using the size of their drawings to indicate how big the support is (large, medium, or small) and the distance from their self-portrait to indicate how present the support is in their lives and thoughts.
- **Step 2** - Share with a partner: Ask the youth to share their map with a partner. Remind them to respect their own and their partner's boundaries and that it is okay not to share everything.

- **Step 3** - Group discussion: In the large group, engage the youth in a discussion about the commonalities within their stressors and supports. Write the key themes for both the stressors and supports on a flipchart.



Activity 12: Image Theatre

Purpose: To provide a space for young people to explore social issues, process their own realities and emotions, and practice solutions to life's challenges.

Like other forms of drama-based activities, image theatre – also known as tableaux – provides a space for young people to explore social issues, process their own realities and emotions, and practice solutions to life's challenges (Diamond, 2000). Image theatre invites youth to use their bodies to create pictures of their own experiences, questions, uncertainties, and fears in the form of “fictional” characters and scenarios. These images can be taken apart for investigation and exploration. Solutions can then be generated that put the images back together in a way that creates a happier, safer, more supportive world. See Box 10 at the end of this activity for things to consider when using drama-based activities.

Phase: 3, 4

Time: 1.5 – 2 hours

Materials: None

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Set the stage for the workshop** by letting the youth know that:
 - Theatre is something that everyone can do and is a way to explore and discover solutions to life's challenges.
 - You (i.e., the facilitator) are not there to teach them anything as they are experts in their own lives.
 - There are many different ways to participate in the workshop (e.g., by giving ideas, observing, acting, discussion).
 - They have the right to pass if they do not feel comfortable with an activity.
- **Step 2 – Warm up activities.** These get the youth to step outside of their comfort zone, introduce them to drama, and build their confidence as “actors”, and get them having fun and feeling silly, expecting the unexpected. These activities also encourage the youth to start exploring the powerful symbolism within drama-based activities. Below are some examples of possible warm-up activities.

Box 9: Warm-Up Activities**Warm Up 1 - Hypnosis****Time:** 6 minutes**Instructions:**

- Everyone pairs into groups of two, and chooses who will be Partner A and Partner B.
- Partner A starts as the hypnotizer. Partner A will move their hand in the air. Partner B places their face parallel to Partner A's hands and follows their hand to the best of their ability. This exercise is meant to give each Partner a good stretch, and it is important to encourage Partner A to use different levels of motion and make their Partner work a little bit. It is also important to state that people are responsible for their own physical limitations and not to do anything that may result in personal injury.
- Partner A now follows Partner B's hand
- Depending upon time, you can follow this exercise with a discussion about leading and following. Questions such as: Who felt most comfortable following? Why? Who felt most comfortable leading? Why?

Warm Up 2 - Sculpting Partners**Time:** 15 minutes

- Invite the youth to find a Partner and some space in the room. Partner A will be the sculptor and Partner B will be the "intelligent clay".
- The sculptor can put the clay into any shape (within reason) and the clay will stay in that position. The shape includes all of the clay – its limbs, facial expressions, etc. The sculptor can make the shape by using their own body to show their Partner or - with permission - can gently move their Partner's arms and feet until they have the right position. The clay is intelligent: it tries to understand the shape and the thoughts and feelings associated with the shape it is put into.
- Have all the Partner As bring their sculptor into the middle of the room to create a gallery. Encourage Partner As to walk around the gallery and look at the sculptures.
- Repeat the activity with Partner B as the sculptor and Partner A as the intelligent clay.

○ **Step 3 - Set Up the Image**

- Divide the youth into small groups (approximately 4 to 5 people per group). Invite one person in each group to assume the role of sculptor with everyone else being intelligent clay. The sculptor's role is to design a reality image of the theme that was either selected by the group or assigned by the facilitator. The sculptor can continue to move and reshape the image until they are happy with the frozen image. Remind the youth to remember what their final image looked like as they will show them to the rest of the group. Invite the sculptor to give the image a name.
- Remind the youth about the rules for being both the sculptor and clay (see Warm-Up Activities).

- **Step 4 - Explore the Reality Image**
 - Invite the youth to come back to the large group. Make an imaginary line across the room that separates it into the stage and the audience.
 - One-by-one, the groups share their image with the larger group. The facilitator invites the audience to share what they see in the image, the emotions and thoughts of different parts of the image, what happened just before the image, etc.
 - Ask for a group to volunteer to explore their image in more depth.
 - The facilitator can then animate the image. (See Box 12 for tips to animating images.)
 - Invite the audience members to come stand with any of the characters/shapes if they have ever been that character/shape (Diamond, 2000).
 - If there is time, invite the audience to add themselves to the images or to change the original image to include the additions if something is missing. Repeat the above options to explore these additions.

- **Step 5 - Move to the Idealized Image**
 - Invite the youth in the original image to create a new image to represent an idealized version of the social issue; this should be done without speaking. Ask the group: "What would X look like an ideal world?" This new image is called the *idealized image*.
 - Invite groups to come up with a title for the image. The discussion that this exercise generates is more important than actually deciding on one title.
 - Ask audience members to replace the people on stage, copying their position exactly, so that the group can also see what the image looks like.
 - Invite the new audience members to talk about what they see in the image.
 - Ask the new audience members to re-take their place and the original image actors to position themselves once more.
 - Then ask the group to position themselves in the reality image and on a beat of five - which the facilitator claps out – to transition into the idealized image.
 - Ask audience members if they have any input about what they just saw.

- **Step 6 – Wrap up the image theatre with a reflective discussion**

Explore what the youth saw in the two images; what holds the *reality image* in place; and, what would need to happen or be put in place for the idealized image to become reality.

- **Step 7 – Close the workshop** Give the youth an opportunity to express any lingering thoughts and to integrate the ideas, knowledge, and skills of the workshop.

Considerations (when using drama-based activities):

- **Role of the facilitator:** The facilitator's role is not to tell the youth how to act or what they should think, but rather to use activities and discussion to create a space where youth can explore issues in order to better understand themselves and the world around them (Diamond, 2000). One of the best things the facilitator can do is ask questions that encourage the youth to further explore the issues.
- **This is not a test and there are no (or very few) rules:** Rather than being about finding the "right answers", drama-based activities are about opening space to discuss issues, thoughts, and feelings, and solutions. Some youth may look to the facilitator for rules; an important rule in drama-based activities is that "anything that is not expressly forbidden is allowed" (Boal in Diamond, 2000).
- **Promote self-care:** Workshop participants should be invited to participate at the level they are comfortable. This means that it needs to be okay for youth to pass on any exercise in which they feel uncomfortable; to choose the role they are most comfortable with – actors, observers, commentators - and to choose how much to share or engage in conversations. This flexibility increases the likelihood of more students being actively involved.
- **Access to referrals and supports:** Drama-based activities can create an opening for young people in distress to disclose difficult issues in their lives. Be prepared to link distressed young people to appropriate support services in their schools and communities.
- **Customize the activities to your group:** Understand your group and tailor the activities to them.

**Tip!**

Questions to provoke dialogue are critical to the success of drama-based activities. Questions such as these should be used to encourage discussion during the warm-up and main activities:

- **What do you see in this image?**
- **What does this remind you of in your own life?**
- **What kind of feelings does this exercise /image bring up?**
- **If you had three wishes, what would you change about this image?**



Activity 13: Scavenger Hunt

Purpose: The scavenger hunt can be used as a fun way to engage youth in exploring a social issue.

Phase: 3, 4

Time: 1 to 3 hours (NB: This will depend on how many photographs the youth have to collect, how many youth are in the group, etc.)

Materials: List of photos to collect, computer, and projection screen (if available)

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Provide a list of photos to collect.** Provide a list of issue-based photographs – e.g., “a shot of somewhere in the community that young people feel welcome” – that the youth must capture. This step can be done individually or in small groups. It can be given as “homework” or done during one of the group sessions.
- **Step 2 – Group Show and Tell discussion.** Invite the youth to share their photos (if time permits and there is sufficient technology, consider having the youth create a digital slideshow of their shots). Facilitate a discussion to identify key issues, similarities, and differences, etc.

Considerations:

- Privacy and consent
- Misrepresentation



Activity 14: Fotonovela

Purpose: To tell a story of a non-fiction or fiction issue that can be used for health education and advocacy

Phase: 3, 4

Time: Several weeks

Materials: Camera, computer software, or craft supplies to create the storyboard

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Planning.** Define the audience and the change that the youth want to create. Gather information about the audience, and create a key message.
- **Step 2 – Story and storyboarding.** Create the storyline, characters, dialogue, and settings. Encourage the youth to use settings that are familiar to their audience and to keep the dialogue short and simple. Determine the photos needed for each frame of the story, describing the setting, characters, and what is happening.
- **Step 3 – Photo shoot.** Take the photos.
- **Step 4 – Editing.** Select the photos that will be used in each frame and place them in order. Add bubbles with dialogue and thoughts.
- **Step 5 – Focus test and revise.** Show a draft of the fotonovela to the members of the audience and get their feedback. Make revisions as needed.

Considerations:

- Privacy and Consent
- Misrepresentation



Tip!

Encourage the youth to think about how they can use the outcome of digital media projects to create change. Digital media is easily reproduced and distributed, making it a wonderful tool for outreach, advocacy, awareness raising, and even fundraising. Video, photos, and audio can be shared through websites and blogs, film festivals and community film screenings, photo exhibits, and booklets.



Activity 15: PhotoVoice

Purpose: To use photos and stories to help people explore social and health issues and create change.

Phase: 3, 4

Time: Several weeks

Materials: None

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Take photos.** Invite the youth to take photos that represent their views on a particular theme like “youth and substances”, “what I like best about my school”, or “things I’d like to change”.
- **Step 2 – Select photos to discuss and analyze.** Each young person selects two to four of their photos to focus on. These should be photos that they are comfortable sharing with the group and other people in the community.
- **Step 3 – Write the story of the photo.** Working individually, the youth write a narrative for each photo. The narrative should explain what is happening, why they took the photo, and what it means to them. Encourage the youth to use their critical awareness skills.
- **Step 4 – Group show and tell discussion.** Invite the youth to share their photos and narratives with the group. A well-facilitated group discussion helps individual youth to push their analysis further and the group to see how the issues raised by individuals impact a broader group of people.

Considerations:

- Privacy and Consent
- Misrepresentation



Activity 16: Brokered Dialogue

Purpose: To help people and groups overcome communication gaps and bridge differences in perspectives.

Phase: 3, 4

Time: Several weeks

Materials: Video camera, video editing software

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Grouping.** Divide the youth into 2 groups - Group A and Group B (use an inclusive way of dividing, such as drawing numbers)
- **Step 2 – Create a video clip of an interview with one or more people from Group A.** Work with the youth to determine a theme and key questions for the interviews. Film the interview and create a short clip.
- **Step 3 – Share the video clip with one or more people from Group B.** Film the members of Group B watching the clip, their reactions and the discussion that follows. Create a video clip that includes both interviews.
- **Step 4 – Share the extended video clip separately with the interviewees from Group A and B:** Film the members of both groups watching the clip, their reactions and the discussion that follows. Create a video clip that includes both interviews. This process can continue as long as needed and the dialogue on the video clip will continue to grow.
- **Step 5 – Edit the final video.**
- **Step 6 - Showcase their video to catalyze social change.**

Considerations:

- Privacy and Consent
- Misrepresentation



Activity 17: Short Documentary

Purpose: To document reality and provide an opinion and a message to promote change.

Phase: 3, 4

Time required: Several weeks

Materials: Video camera, video editing software

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Planning.** Identify a theme and a key message for the documentary. Develop a storyboard that summarizes what and where you will film.
- **Step 2 – Video shoot.** Capture the video footage needed.
- **Step 3 – Editing.** Assemble the footage together into a coherent story. Music, narratives, and other elements can be added at this stage.
- **Step 4 - Focus test and revise.** Show a draft of the short documentary to the members of the target audience and get their feedback. Make revisions as needed.

Considerations:

- Privacy and Consent
- Misrepresentation



Activity 18: Appreciative Inquiry

Purpose: To identify existing protective factors and strategies to further enhance social environments.

Phase: 3, 4

Time: Flexible. 90 minutes to several weeks, depending on your need and design.

Materials: Flip charts and markers.

Instructions: Appreciative Inquiry (AI) moves through five stages:

- **Stage 1 - Define the focus of the inquiry.** Establish an intention for the dialogue. The intention should be framed as an affirmative statement not a problem statement, such as “creating a school which values all students”.
- **Stage 2 – Discovery.** Identify, appreciate, and value the best of what is. Look for unique attributes, strengths, passions, and the elements that people value and want to keep – even if other things change - and identify possibilities for the future. Invite participants to interview and share stories with a partner. Then work in small groups to identify patterns and themes.
- **Stage 3 – Dream.** Work together to build a vision for the future by exploring “what might be”. Focus on the positive elements that people have already identified.
- **Stage 4 – Design.** Generate solutions, principles, strategies, policies and practices to move from “what might be” to “what should be”. This step is about ideal thinking.
- **Stage 5 – Destiny.** Create “what will be” by developing the plan to move the design ideas into reality.



Activity 19: Open Space Technology

Purpose: To engage others in meaningful conversations and solution finding regarding a central theme or question.

Phase: 3, 4

Time: Flexible. 90 minutes to 2 days.

Materials: Pre-created agenda grid, blank paper, markers.

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Put out the invitation.** This step happens before the actual event. Identify the central theme or question, and invite potential participants.
- **Step 2 – Prepare the room.** This step happens before the participants arrive at the event. You will need a room that has enough room for a) all the participants to sit together in a circle, and b) participants to gather in break-out groups (these can also happen in separate rooms if you have space). The room will also need an empty wall on which the agenda can be created. Prepare the agenda grid in advance by listing the session times on the vertical axis and locations on the horizontal axis.
- **Step 3 – Open the space.** The event begins in a large circle with blank paper and markers in the middle. The facilitator(s) opens the space by:
 - Welcoming everyone;
 - Reminding them of the central theme or question; and
 - Explaining the four principles and one law of Open Space Technology (see Box 11).
- **Step 4 – Create the agenda.** Invite participants to propose topics or discussions that they would like to host by going to the middle of the circle, announcing their topic, writing their topic on a piece of paper, and posting it on the pre-created blank agenda.
- **Step 5 – Hold the sessions.** This step may last only 45 minutes or may span over two days, depending on how much time you have available. Invite participants to attend the sessions that interest them. Ask each

group to take notes on: the theme of the session, the names of the participants, and what was discussed. These notes can be collected and compiled into a “book of proceedings” so that everyone knows what themes were important to the participants and what was discussed.

- **Step 6 – Close the circle.** Return to the large circle. Invite participants to share one-by-one a short reflection on their experience.

Considerations:

Box 10: The Four Principles and One Law of Open Space Technology

- ***Whoever comes are the right people:*** This principle is based on the idea that the people who show up are the people who care about the question or theme, and that people who care are the ones who create change.
- ***Whenever it starts is the right time:*** This principle recognizes that creativity and inspiration do not run on a clock.
- ***Whatever happens is the only thing that could have:*** This principle invites people to let go of their expectations around the process and outcomes, and to let things unfold naturally.
- ***When it's over, it's over:*** This principle recognizes that the issue is more important than the schedule and highlights the importance of adjusting the schedule when issues require less or more time.
- ***The law of two feet:*** This law encourages participants to take responsibility for their learning, contributing, and comfort. Participants are encouraged to move between groups (or even do something else) to ensure that they feel engaged and valued. Connected to this law are the ideas of “bumblebees” – the people who embrace this law and move frequently between groups cross-pollinating conversations – and “butterflies” – people who may not participate in any conversations but who do things that remind people to take care of themselves or end up having valuable conversations with people walking by.



Activity 20: World Café

Purpose: To connect people around “questions that matter”, encourage inquiry and the sharing of knowledge, and discover new possibilities and solutions.

Phase: 3, 4

Time: Flexible. 90 minutes to 1 day

Materials: Paper and crayons/pencil crayons/markers

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Put out the invitation:** This step happens before the actual event. Identify the central theme or question, and invite potential participants.
- **Step 2 – Prepare the room:** This step happens before the participants arrive at the event. Set up the room to look like a café, with small tables scattered throughout the room. Consider using tablecloths and flowers. Put paper and crayons/pencil crayons/markers on the tables.
- **Step 3 – Introduce participants to the World Café. Explain:**
 - Everyone should find a table to join. Each table will engage in a conversation around the central theme or question. Each table will have a “host” that stays with the table.
 - The Café will include several conversational rounds. At the end of each round, participants are encouraged to move to another table but not necessarily together.
 - A “host” will remain at the table to share the essence of the conversation with the new participants. The group can help the host with this task, by identifying the core themes and discoveries from their conversation. It is a good idea to designate the hosts in advance if you want to ensure that conversations are carefully recorded. Alternatively, hosts can be appointed by the group.
 - The idea of this movement is to create connection in the dialogue, build on the collective wisdom and insights of the group, and support the emergence of collective intelligence.
 - The Café Etiquette (see Box 12) is intended to support the group with their conversations.

- **Step 4 – Hold the conversation rounds.**
- **Step 5 - Close the Café.** Invite participants to share one-by-one a short reflection on their experience.

Considerations:**Box 11: Café Etiquette**

- **Focus on what matters**
- **Contribute your thinking and experience**
- **Speak from the heart**
- **Listen to understand**
- **Link and connect ideas**
- **Listen together for deeper themes, insights, and questions**
- **Play, doodle and draw**

“

We used World Café to explore the issue of substance abuse (chosen by the youth group as their issue). The questions with the rounds were based on the steps of the process and to guide the project. Teacher “adult allies” facilitated each round.

The youth enjoyed the café setup (tablecloths, vases with flowers) and freely doodled on the flipchart paper to express their ideas. They enjoyed seeing the completed sheets after all of the rounds were completed.

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- Halton's Experience



Activity 21: Backwards Planning

Purpose: Backwards planning is a useful technique for breaking down the process of creating a workplan, including identifying resources, roles and responsibilities, and timelines.

Phase: 4

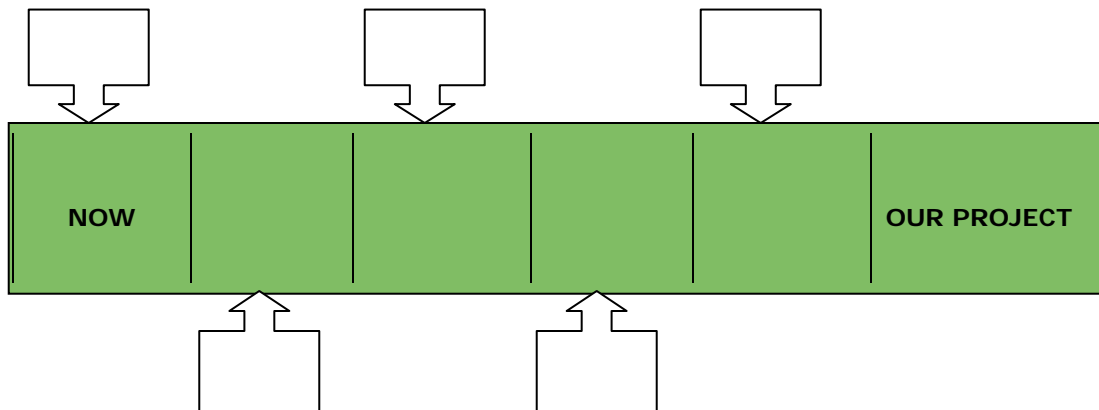
Time: Varies by the complexity of the project and familiarity of the group with the planning process. Minimum of 90 minutes to set up the work plan.

Materials: Flip chart paper, markers, and tape

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Draw the timeline.** Write “now” on the left-hand side of the timeline and “our project” on the right-hand side of the timeline. (See Figure 7).

Figure 7: Example Backwards Planning Timeline



- **Step 2 - Brainstorm what the completed “project” will look like.** Explore questions such as: Who will be there? What will happen? What kind of support will be needed for the project to be successful? List key points under “our project” on the timeline.
- **Step 3 - Identify the components or parts of the project.** For example, an event might include key message, logistics (such as location and catering), performers or speakers, guests, equipment, and

promotion. A media arts project might include: choosing a theme or key message; storyboarding; documenting; editing; and community screenings.

- **Step 4 – Delegate responsibilities.** Identify which youth or groups of youth will be responsible for which components. Consider having the youth create fun names for their roles or task group.
- **Step 5 – Identify the milestones, tasks, and deadlines.** Have the youth(s) responsible for each component:
 - Identify and mark on the timeline the key milestones and when they need to be completed. Milestones are important events or checkpoints that indicate that the project is on track; for example, printing a poster or flyer is an example of a milestone when promoting an event.
 - Identify and mark on the timeline the tasks that need to be completed to reach each milestone and by when. Tasks are the smaller actions and activities that need to be completed to reach a milestone. In the case of the poster, this could include writing the text, coming up with the design, getting feedback on the poster, finding a printer, etc.
 - Identify possible obstacles and strategies for avoiding and/or overcoming them.
 - Identify whose support they need and how to gain this support.
- **Step 6 – Review the timeline together.** It is a good idea to review the whole project plan as a group to ensure that it is as thorough, accurate, and doable as possible. Support the youth to adjust the scale of their project to the time, resources, and local context.
- **Step 7 – Create a project workplan.** Transfer the information on the timeline into the project workplan template (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Project Workplan Template

Milestone	Task	Point Person	Deadline	Resources	Potential Obstacles	Solutions

- **Step 8 – Monitor progress.** Use the project workplan to support the youth to monitor the implementation of their project. A large version of the timeline and workplan can help the group to see the progress they are making, to identify and resolve problems, and make any necessary adjustments.



Activity 22: Evaluation

Purpose: Evaluation helps young people see how their actions have (or have not) created change, what contributed to their successes, and what they can learn from challenges.

Phase: 3, 4, 5

Time: Varies by the complexity of the project and familiarity of the group with the evaluation process.

Materials: Flip chart paper with pre-drawn evaluation matrix, markers, and tape

Instructions:

- **Step 1 - Introduce the youth to evaluation.** Explain what it is and why it is relevant to them. Provide examples of evaluation they are familiar with, such as grades for assignments and tests and conversations about what they like and don't like about their school, a community centre, etc.
- **Step 2 – Identify the change the youth want to create.** Explain that these are called goals or objectives. List the goals and objectives in the evaluation matrix.
- **Step 3 – Explore how the youth will know they have created this change.** Explain that these are called indicators. List the indicators in the evaluation matrix (See Figure 9).
- **Step 4 – Identify the information the youth will need to measure their success.** Explain that these are called measures. List the measure in the evaluation matrix.
- **Step 5 – Identify ways that the youth can collect this information.** Explain that these are called data collection tools. List the data collection tools in the evaluation matrix.

Figure 9: Evaluation Matrix

What change(s) do you hope to effect? (goals and objectives)	How will you know you've been successful? (indicators)	What information can you use to measure your success? (measures)	What tools can you use to collect this information? (data collection tools)



Activity 23: Pre-Project Letter to Oneself

Purpose: To reflect on their personal growth and change in perspective over the life of their project.

Phase: 2, 5

Time: Minimum of 15 minutes

Materials: Paper, pens, and envelopes

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Invite youth to write a letter to themselves.** The letter should be about their own hopes and fears, the skills they want to learn, what they think about issues in their community, their school and/or community, and social change.
- **Step 2 – Collect the letters.** Have them seal the envelopes and address it to themselves.
- **Step 3 – Return the letters at the end of the project.** Ask the youth to read their letter and then initiate a group discussion about what the youth learned, how their perspectives have (or have not) changed, etc.

Consideration: You may want to provide the youth with a letter template for them to simply fill in the blanks.



Activity 24: Four Corners

Purpose: To provide the youth with an opportunity to reflect on the sessions and offer their thoughts and feelings.

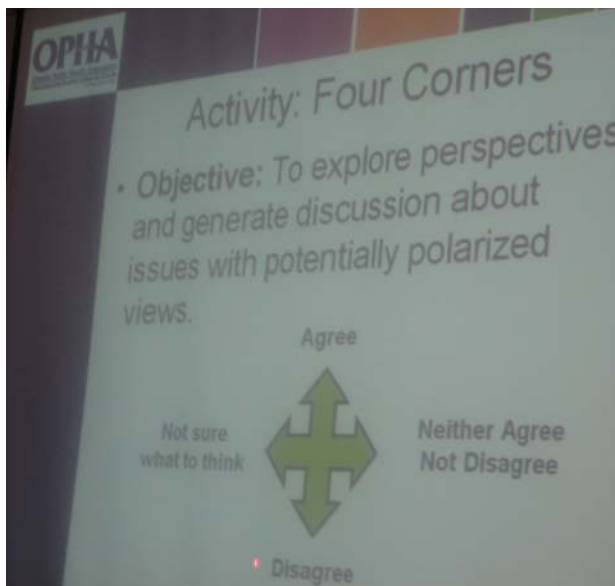
Phase: 2, 3, 4, 5

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: Four signs that say “I appreciated...”, “I felt uncomfortable when...”, “I still have something to say...”, and “Pass”

Instructions:

- **Step 1 - Post one sign in each corner of the room.**
- **Step 2 - Ask the youth to go to the corner of the room that most resonates with how they are feeling about the session.** Make sure they know that they can pass by standing in the corner with the “Pass” sign.
- **Step 3 – Group Discussion.** Start at one corner and go around to each corner inviting the youth to share their thoughts based on the sign they have selected.



“

Corners activity to explore issues of concern: peer pressure, dating, adult support.

”

- *Windsor's Experience*



Activity 25: Experience Map

Purpose: To reflect on the key events that occurred over the life of the project, categorize the events as positive or negative, and discuss the reactions, feelings, and thoughts associated with each event.

Phase: 5

Time: Minimum 30 minutes

Materials: Paper and markers

Instructions:

- **Step 1 – Create a timeline with key events from the project.** This activity can be done individually or collectively. If doing this activity individually, youth are invited to draw a timeline across the middle of their page and to plot the key events in the project along a timeline; events that were positive are placed above the timeline and those that are negative below the timeline. If doing this activity collectively, draw an imaginary timeline across the room and invite the youth to place objects along the timeline that represent key events.
- **Step 2 – Group discussion.** If the youth created their maps individually, have the youth share their maps with the larger group and use this as the starting point for a group discussion. If doing this activity collectively, walk through the timeline as a group and invite group members to discuss their reactions, feelings, and thoughts about each key event.

Considerations: Dig deeper in the discussion by asking the youth what they learned and what action could be taken to improve the event. Consider capturing notes of the discussion to refine the next project plan.



Activity 26: Head / Heart / Hands Reflection

Purpose: To reflect on a training or the overall experience of the youth group, to identify what was learned and how that learning will be applied in the future.

Phase: 5

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: pen/pencil and the template provided on following page

Instructions: Working individually, ask the youth to:

- **Step 1** – Reflect on a recently delivered training experience or the overall experience of the youth group and write down (using the attached sample template) what knowledge, values and beliefs, and skills they learned and what next steps they will take to apply this new learning.
- **Step 2** – Place the completed template in an envelope, seal it and write their names and their mailing address on the outer envelope. Hand the envelope to the adult ally.

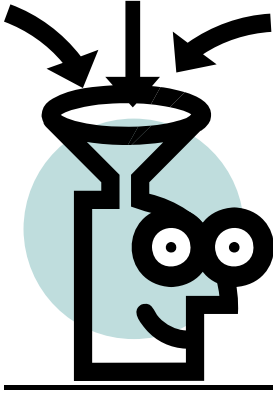
The adult ally will:

- **Step 3** – Return the envelope to each youth in person or via mail 6 weeks to 3 months later. The youth can then reflect on their responses.

Considerations: If the youth group will be reconvening after some time apart (e.g. summer break) the adult ally can return the envelopes to the youth in person. The youth can then read their letter and a discussion can follow. If the youth group will not be reconvening, the adult ally can mail the envelope to the youth. The youth may have forgotten about the reflection and will likely be surprised to receive the mail.

Head / Heart / Hands Reflections

In each of three boxes below, write down one thing that you learned today or over the course of our time together that you wish to apply over the next few months.



Head

The knowledge that I learned that I wish to apply is:

Heart

The values or beliefs that I learned that I wish to apply are:



Hands

The skill that I learned that I wish to apply is:

In the box below, write down some next steps that you will take to apply the new knowledge, values or beliefs, and skills.

Feet

I will take the following steps so that I can apply my new knowledge, values or beliefs, and skills:

1.

2.

3.



Glossary

Adult ally is an adult who supports youth empowerment and leadership (CEYE, 2009).

“Causes of the causes” is a term coined by Dr. Michael Marmot, the head of the World Health Organization’s Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. The term is intended to draw attention upstream from commonly understood individual-level risk factors (i.e., the causes) towards the broader population-based determinants of health (i.e., the causes of the causes).

Critical awareness is the understanding of how peoples’ life circumstances, beliefs, choices, and actions are shaped by historical, social, cultural, economic, and political factors (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Johnson & Freedman, 2005).

Critical health literacy refers to peoples’ ability to gain access to, critically analyze, and understand information as well as to take personal and social action to promote and maintain good health (Nutbeam, 2006).

Critical thinking means approaching the world, one’s life, and one’s own thinking from a question-posing stance (Johnson and Freedman, 2005). This question-posing and active inquiry enhances critical consciousness, problem-solving, and thinking skills.

Determinants of health are factors that influence health behaviours and health outcomes among individuals and groups at a population-level. These include personal factors like biology, genetics, and personal habits, as well as socio-economic factors like income, food security, housing, education and literacy, and social environments (PHAC, 2008).

Health inequities are differences in health status experienced by individuals or groups that are unfair or unjust because they result from social factors such as poverty and access to education (PHAC, 2008).

Protective factors – also known as developmental assets - are the positive conditions and personal and social resources that support health and well-being, reduce the potential for high-risk behaviours, and promote resiliency among youth. There are three categories of protective factors: individual strengths, supportive environments, and a solid foundation (Ryder, 2006). Similar to risk factors, protective factors tend to cluster together. There tends to be an inverse relationship with risk factors, such that by enhancing the protective factors in a young person’s environment, there is also a reduction in the number of risk factors (Search Institute, 2009).

Resiliency is the ability of individuals and systems to cope with significant adversity or stress in ways that are not only effective but tend to result in an increased ability to constructively respond to future adversity (Resiliency Canada, n.d.). This includes the decision not to use substances or engage in risk-taking behaviour, despite risk factors.

Risk factors:

1. **Social and economic exclusion** “happens when people don’t have – or can’t get – the education, jobs, decent housing, health care and other things they need to live comfortably, to take part in society and to feel that they are valued and respected members of their community” (PHAC, 2005).
2. **Substance misuse** refers to the harmful use of any substance, such as alcohol, a street drug, an over-the-counter drug, or a prescribed drug. The Ontario Public Health Standards uses *substance misuse* to:

“Clearly articulate the need to address the prevention of the adverse health outcomes associated with substance use, the illegal use of alcohol and other substances (e.g., preventing alcohol from being served to minors and preventing illegal drug use), and delaying the age of initial use of alcohol and other substances. Prevention efforts would include the implementation of harm reduction strategies (i.e., any program or policy designed to help reduce substance-related harm with requiring the cessation of substance use)”.

Youth engagement is about young people being actively involved in addressing issues that affect them personally and/or that they believe are important (Pereira, 2007).

About the Author and Contributors

Jessica Bleur, MEd, MA, has over 12 years of experience using theatre as a tool to engage youth on topics such as healthy relationships, sexual health, violence and suicide prevention, substance abuse, and the social determinants of health. This work has taken her to numerous Canadian and American cities, Northern Ireland, Argentina, Switzerland, and South Korea. Jessica has taught theatre for change techniques to NGO employees, social workers and therapists, researchers, and conflict resolution workers. Jessica currently works as a drama therapist at a post-traumatic stress trauma centre in New Haven, CT.

Lia De Pauw, MHSc, is a vocal supporter of youth engagement as a health promotion strategy. She has worked with thought-leaders to support youth participation and voice in HIV responses, including Vancouver Coastal Health, Plan International, the Global Youth Coalition on AIDS, and the World AIDS Campaign. Lia has designed and authored educational resources used nationally and internationally. She uses arts-informed approaches, dialogical methodologies, and social media to support young people to understand and take action on the broad social, economic, political, and historic factors that influence their lives and health. Lia is a principal consultant with Spark Public Health Group Inc., located in Toronto, Ontario.

Michelle Langlois is an online social media expert. Since 2003, she has created, planned, maintained, and animated online communities through listservs, interactive websites, and Web 2.0 tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, discussion forums, etc.). Michelle has been invited to speak about media democracy, using online social media to engage and mobilize people for change, and the way people use online social media to share news when traditional media is absent, at Media Democracy Day in 2007 and 2008 in Toronto and for TVO's online series, GetInvolved.ca. Michelle currently is part of the editorial staff for the most popular alternative multimedia news website in Canada, www.rabble.ca.

Natalyn Tremblay, BA, has worked in arts-based community development and community-created digital media for five years. Natalyn has been creating socio-political video, music, and performance art works as an independent artist for over 10 years; her work has been shown across Canada and internationally. Natalyn is co-director of The People Project, an organization producing innovative arts and leadership opportunities for queer and marginalized youth in Toronto.

About the OPHA Youth Engagement Project Team

Jennifer Lodge is employed with the Ontario Public Health Association as the Program Coordinator for the Injury Prevention Initiative and the Youth Engagement Project. She coordinates all activities with the project's pilot sites, provides coaching and consultation services, and coordinates deliverables related to resource development and program evaluation. She co-facilitated the regional workshops and is responsible for presenting the OPHA Youth Engagement Project at a variety of workshops and conferences. Jennifer is a graduate of the University of Toronto with an Honours Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Philosophy along with a Workplace Wellness and Health Promotion Post-Graduate Certificate from Centennial College.

Benjamin Rempel is the Manager of Alcohol Policy, Injury Prevention, and Youth Engagement at the Ontario Public Health Association. Ben oversees all Youth Engagement project activities including program planning, reporting, and budgeting, and is the liaison with funders of the program. Ben is a graduate of Laurentian University with an Honours degree in Health Promotion, and is currently pursuing a Masters in Public Health through the University of Waterloo.

Evanna Li is employed with the Ontario Public Health Association as the Administrative Coordinator for the Injury Prevention Initiative and the Youth Engagement Project. Evanna coordinates all logistics related to the provincial workshops and has worked on the development of the OPHA Youth Engagement Project resources and presentations through, graphic design, layout editing, and presentation development. Evanna has a Bachelor of Arts in Health Studies from the University of Toronto and is currently completing a Masters of International Public Health through Queensland University, Australia.

Dorothy Birtalan is the Chief Information (IT) Officer for the Ontario Public Health Association. In Dorothy's more than 25 years of business experience, she has worked in a variety of industries, including financial services and manufacturing. Her responsibilities have included development and maintenance of websites, as well as instructional design and training, equity research and analysis, and publishing. At OPHA, in addition to network administration, Dorothy consults with OPHA's Programs and Projects on various aspects of web development and information publishing. Dorothy has an Honours Bachelor of Science (Computer Science Specialist) degree from the University of Toronto.

Tina Wadham acted as the Project Coordinator for the Youth Engagement Project until November 2010. She coordinated all activities with the project's pilot sites including regular trainings, coaching, and consultation services

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Connie Uetrecht acted as the Executive Director of the Ontario Public Health Association until December 2010. Connie provided strategic direction and decision-making to all aspects of the Youth Engagement Project. She is an experienced public health professional with a combination of strategic priority-setting and demonstrated skill in managing an interdisciplinary team of public health professionals working in the areas of information analysis, healthy public policy development, needs assessment, program planning and evaluation. Connie has a Master's Degree in Nutrition from the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine and the University of Minnesota.

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