Engaging Youth in Mental Health Promotion: Mental Health and Addictions Champions

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Acknowledgements:
RNAO Team

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  – Program Manager
• Kyle Dieleman, BA
  – Project Coordinator
• Irmajean Bajnok, RN, MScN, PhD
  – Director
Learner Objectives

The learner will be able to:

• Identify strengths and challenges of inter-sectoral collaboration (i.e. public health, social services, education and youth) to support youth mental health

• Discuss effective youth engagement principles and strategies in mental health promotion and stigma reduction
RNAO is the professional association of Registered Nurses in Ontario, Canada

The strong, credible voice leading the nursing profession to influence and promote healthy public policy, and clinical excellence

The Best Practice Guidelines Program is a flagship program of RNAO

Speaking out for nursing. Speaking out for health.
Best Practice Guidelines
Program Mandate

To develop, implement, evaluate, disseminate and support the uptake of clinical and healthy work environment best practice guidelines.

Funded by the Government of Ontario
The process of developing, implementing and evaluating best practice guidelines.
42 Clinical & 10 Healthy Work Environment Best Practice Guidelines
RNAO Mental Health & Addiction Initiative Goal

To **build capacity** amongst nurses and other health care professionals to **implement and sustain** mental health & addictions best practices in daily nursing practice.
RNAO MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS INITIATIVE

GOAL
To enhance evidence-based care and services related to mental health and addictions across all settings

OBJECTIVE
To increase capacity among nurses and other health-care professionals to implement and sustain evidence-based mental health and addictions best practices in all settings and advocate for organizational, policy and systems change

ACTIVITIES
- E-Learns
- Webinars
- Institutes
- Speakers Bureaus
- Educator's Resource Champions
- Online Toolkit

KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS UPTAKE
- Disseminate BPGs
- Development

ATTITUdINAL & PRACTICE CHANGE
- Facilitate Uptake of BPGs

ENHANCED CAPACITY & OUTCOMES
- Build Capacity

KNOWLEDGE UTILIZATION
- Support Policy & Systems Level Change

EVALUATION
- Implement and sustain use of BPGs in clinical and policy decision making

Partnerships & Supporting Stakeholders

RNAO
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers autorisés de l'Ontario
YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS CHAMPIONS PROJECT
Project Goals

• The Youth Mental Health and Addictions Project aims to improve the health & well-being of children and youth thorough a focus on: mental health promotion, acceptance of mental illness, reduction of related stigma and substance misuse prevention

• By preparing youth peer leaders in champion roles, knowledge & awareness of mental health and substance misuse issues will be enhanced and the resiliency of children/youth will be improved through capacity building and youth engagement
Project Objectives

• Enable a cohort of Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions to use creative peer to peer strategies to reduce the stigma of mental health and promote greater acceptance of mental illness as a part of the health and illness continuum

• Raise awareness among Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions related to strategies to prevent substance use and misuse
Project Objectives

- Provide Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions with strategies to assist peers with substance abuse prevention
- Provide Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions with strategies to assist peers to begin to address substance abuse issues through raising awareness of available information and resources/services
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Health Unit/Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Thunder Bay District Health Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>Timiskaming Health Unit, Porcupine Health Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Toronto Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central West</td>
<td>Niagara Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>Grey Bruce Health Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>School Mental Health Assist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Centre for Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, Mind Your Mind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Dare to Dream – Youth Coordinator, Ottawa Public Health – Youth Facilitator</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
YMHA AC Project Structure

Youth

Advisory Committee

Public Health Lead
Youth Lead
School Lead

Local Steering Committee

Project Site
Thunder Bay
District Health Unit

Project Site
Timiskaming
Health Unit

Project Site
Toronto Public
Health

Project Site
Niagara Public
Health

Project Site
Grey Bruce Health
Unit

Project Site
Porcupine Health
Unit

Public Health Lead
Youth Lead
School Lead

Local Steering Committee

Public Health Lead
Youth Lead
School Lead

Local Steering Committee

Public Health Lead
Youth Lead
School Lead

Local Steering Committee

Public Health Lead
Youth Lead
School Lead

Local Steering Committee

Public Health Lead
Youth Lead
School Lead

Local Steering Committee
Selection of Youth Leaders

Recruited to support Public Health Units Youth Mental Health & Addiction Champion Steering Committees in each region

a) Youth Mental Health & Addiction Lead role description created

b) Nomination process for identification/recruitment of youth leaders

c) Recruitment strategy for cohort of Youth Mental Health & Addictions Leaders
Training: Planning and Delivery

Provincial Training for Youth and Public Health Leads including:

a) Curriculum Development (sub-committee)
b) Orientation (Pre-training for Youth and Public Health Leads)
c) Centralized Training (Provincial)
d) Local Champion development (at the school level)
Developing a Logo in Partnership with Youth
Centralized Training
The “NETWORK OF CHAMPIONS” consists of a group of Youth Leaders and Champions from communities across Ontario. Youth Champions together with adults from your school and local public health department are making an effort to raise awareness about mental wellness, help to reduce the stigma related to mental illness, and discouraging the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances. For more information, please talk to your teacher, public health nurse or Youth Champions in your school.

Wellness is important in maintaining good mental health. It is about feeling well, having good supports and having balance in your life. What does wellness mean to you? What positive activities do you do to keep well? Can you think of additional activities you or your friends could start doing to improve your mental wellbeing?

[Space for writing]
“I feel very happy and lucky to have been chosen to be a part of this program”

“I will try to diminish stigma and help people in my school who have mental illness – whether it is just being there for them or requesting a professional”

“I will hopefully be able to inspire and train others to be youth leaders”

“I feel very moved and inspired and I felt an ambition to go out and help everyone or at least everyday remind at least one person that there is always someone who is there for you and will support you”
Local Youth Champion Training

• Working with *Mind Your Mind* to develop an on-line tool to use during champion workshops

• Curriculum was developed in conjunction with youth and public health leads

• Host 2 Champion workshops per partner site for a total of 12 workshops in the 2014 – 2015 fiscal year
Local Youth Champion Training (School Level): Objectives

1. Gain knowledge and understanding about Mental Health, Stress and Wellness through the use of an interactive web-based resource, other resources and reflective activities.
2. Learn about local community resources and support to support mental health and wellbeing.
3. Learn about the YMHAC project and your role as a Youth Champion.
4. Start assessing and planning for local youth engagement initiatives to promote mental health in your community and school.
Network of Champions: Reach Out

How Many Teams?

2 3 4
OK

Network of Champions
REACH OUT
How did the YMHAC Project Effectively Engage Youth: Provincially

- Members of the Provincial Advisory Committee
- Co-created “Network of Champions” name, logo and design and resources
- “Reach Out” Interactive tool/game
- Co-facilitated training of Youth Leads at Provincial Training
How did the YMHAC Project Effectively Engage Youth: Locally at the School Level

- Members of local YMHAC Steering Committees at their schools
- Co-chaired the YMHAC planning meetings at their schools
- Co-facilitated training of Youth Champion Workshops
- Mental health promotion initiatives
“Chill Rooms”
Puppy Rooms
“Worry-Free Wednesdays”
Tree of Life
Health Symposium
“Caught You Caring”
Pink Shirt Day
Guest Speakers
Yoga
School Wide Mental Health Week
Wall Mural
I believe that everyone is equal.

I believe that we should treat people the way we would want to be treated.

I believe that God and Jesus have a bigger plan.

I believe that we should stand up against bullying.

I believe that every one should be treated with kindness.

I believe that stigma is wrong.

I believe that Jesus is the answer.

I believe that God is my creator.

I believe that God is love.
YMHAC Inter-sectoral Collaborations

Who: Public Health, School Mental Health ASSIST Leads, School Boards, Community Partners, Youth, Parents

Key Learnings:

- Learning needs to occur in a collaborative space
- Conflict is a good thing
- Need for similar languages across sectors
- Respecting diversity within each community (i.e. trends within community, school boards, mandates/policies that guide practice)
YMHAC Project Successes

- Increase in inter-sectoral partnership between health, education and community as a direct result of YMHAC
- Shifts in attitudes from mental illness focus to mental health promotion
- Youth have been provided with tools to address issues including mental health and illness, stigma, substance use
- Integration of Champion initiatives into school programming
- Active use of Youth Engagement/Peer Led Models
- Supporting and Expanding Role of PHNs in Mental Health Promotion
- Plans among the partners to integrate such a program into existing structures for long term sustainability
“The people on our committee shifted their understanding away from mental illness toward promotion. At first it was the mental illness framework that was driving the thinking. It’s been nice to see that shift in understanding – from illness to promotion and health.” – Public Health Lead

“We are making a difference in people’s lives. I was struggling with having people to talk to when I was young [and was diagnosed with a mental illness]. Now we are there for them.” - Youth Lead

“One of the greatest impacts so far is certainly our partnerships with our mental health leads and our school boards. We had a bit of a relationship before, but this project provided a platform to catapult that relationship.” – Public Health Lead
YMHAC Project Challenges

- Lack of long-term dedicated resources both provincially and locally
- Lack of consistent standards for mental health promotion work at the health unit level
- Evolving knowledge of best practices in youth mental health promotion
Future of YMHAC

- Expansion of sites to 6 more PHU and 12 more District School Boards across Ontario
- Work with current 6 PHU as mentors to new sites
- Continue to support Provincial Advisory and Local steering committees
- Continue to work with Provincial partners to develop resources to support YMHAC, youth engagement, youth mental health and substance use work
- Develop a process to support youth in implementation of youth based initiatives in local communities