



*By Youth, for Youth: Principles,
Tools, and Strategies for Engaging
Young People in Implementation*

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Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts; CYCC)

About Wisdom2Action

- ▶ **Wisdom2Action is:**
 - ▶ national
 - ▶ a network
 - ▶ focused on [knowledge mobilization](#) (KMb)
 - ▶ funded by the Government of Canada through the [Network of Centres of Excellence Knowledge Mobilization Initiative \(NCE-KM\)](#).

- ▶ [More about us](#)

About Wisdom2Action

- ▶ We provide:
 - ▶ KMb mentorship to organisations,
 - ▶ host Wisdom to Action events (W2A) on a variety of topics,
 - ▶ connect people (workers, organisations, researchers) across Canada,
 - ▶ [Kmb and evaluation toolkit](#)

About Wisdom2Action

- ▶ We support the mental health and wellbeing of vulnerable and at-risk children and youth through direct actions with researchers, community based organizations, educators, policy makers, and others.
- ▶ CYCC Network is made up of 3 Regional Hubs: Ontario, Quebec, and Nunavut.
- ▶ Liaise with leading KMb organizations in the child and youth sector.

About the Youth Advisory Committee

- ▶ **Our Youth Advisory Committee:**
 - ▶ has an essential advisory role to the network
 - ▶ supports mentored organizations
 - ▶ advises KMb activities
 - ▶ occupies 2 seats on the Board (Co-Chairs of the CYCC)
 - ▶ has young people (18-35 years old) from all over Canada, including Alberta, Quebec, and Nunavut
 - ▶ plans W2A events and other awesome things!

Why do we do youth engagement?

- ▶ Widespread benefits, including:
 - ▶ Benefits to youth
 - ▶ Benefits for adults
 - ▶ Benefits for agencies/organisations
 - ▶ Benefits for communities

Why do we do youth engagement?

Implementing evidence-informed practices for children and youth means... continuously gathering, sharing and using evidence:

- ▶ from research literature
- ▶ from practitioners' experience
- ▶ from families
- ▶ and most importantly, from children and youth themselves.

Why do we do youth engagement?

Youth-serving organizations who do not meaningfully engage children and youth in the implementation process risk establishing programs and services that young people will not use or will not benefit from.

How do we do youth engagement?

- ▶ Variety of ways to engage young people
- ▶ Engagement that works best is one where everyone - including adults and professionals - feel like like they have gained from the experience.
- ▶ Video from MindYourMind:
 - ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2poVBPqBAU>

How do we do youth engagement?

▶ How was the YAC built?

- ▶ Instigated by a young person - Jimmy Ung - who was on the Board
- ▶ We have input on the direction of the Network
- ▶ 2 members of the YAC sit on the Board
- ▶ Youth recruitment:
 - ▶ Initially done through partner orgs, ex. MindYourMind
 - ▶ Then through Research Hubs, ex. CLIPP (Centre de Liason pour l'intervention et la Prévention Psychosociale)
 - ▶ Has young people (18-35 years old) from all over Canada, including Alberta, Quebec, and Nunavut

How do we do youth engagement?

- ▶ **Our Youth Advisory Committee:**
 - ▶ Has an essential advisory role to CYCC network
 - ▶ Supports mentored organizations
 - ▶ Advises and creates KMb activities (ex. Knowledge synthesis reports)
 - ▶ Bi-monthly phone meetings
 - ▶ Annual in-person meetings
 - ▶ Plans W2A events and other awesome things!

How to do youth engagement?

- ▶ Be culturally and geographically relevant → adapt your activities to the context.
- ▶ Co-construct expectations, mandates and all other activities instead of imposing.
- ▶ Learn and respect boundaries.
- ▶ Understand personal differences in communication, energy levels, availability. Different learning styles.

How to do youth engagement?

- ▶ PAY THEM FOR THEIR TIME (positive and negative reinforcement + assuring primary needs are covered)
- ▶ Have no wellness requirement for participation.
- ▶ Be transparent about your budget, time availabilities, staffing, expectations, etc → better to be open, honest and accessible.
- ▶ Prioritize the health (physical, mental, emotional, social) of your participants, especially when working with marginalized and/or traumatized groups.

How to do youth engagement?

- ▶ Genuinely care about youth engagement → don't just pay lip service.
- ▶ Not a linear process.
- ▶ Evaluate your activities with youth.
- ▶ Provide food (taking care of primary needs).
- ▶ Provide transportation (bus tickets, Uber or cab fare, pick-up and drop-off).

How to do youth engagement?

- ▶ Get a diversity of youth, without tokenizing (different ethnicities, cultures, citizenship status, gender expressions, ages, wealths).
- ▶ Prioritize indigenous voices → set a minimum requirement, not a quota.
- ▶ Have diversity throughout your organization, not just on the youth counsel.
- ▶ Schedule activities in the afternoon and evening (different circadian rhythms).

How to do youth engagement?

- ▶ Let your youth say no to you → don't impose or force activities on participants and don't "fire" youth because their opinions aren't in the direction you prefer.
- ▶ Take criticisms as constructive, ways to improve and learn.
- ▶ Don't try to impose your opinion or influence those of participants
- ▶ Cut them some slack. Be flexible and prioritize their wellbeing over your research goals

Case Studies In Youth Engagement

- ▶ Now will share some experiences with youth engagement that worked well!