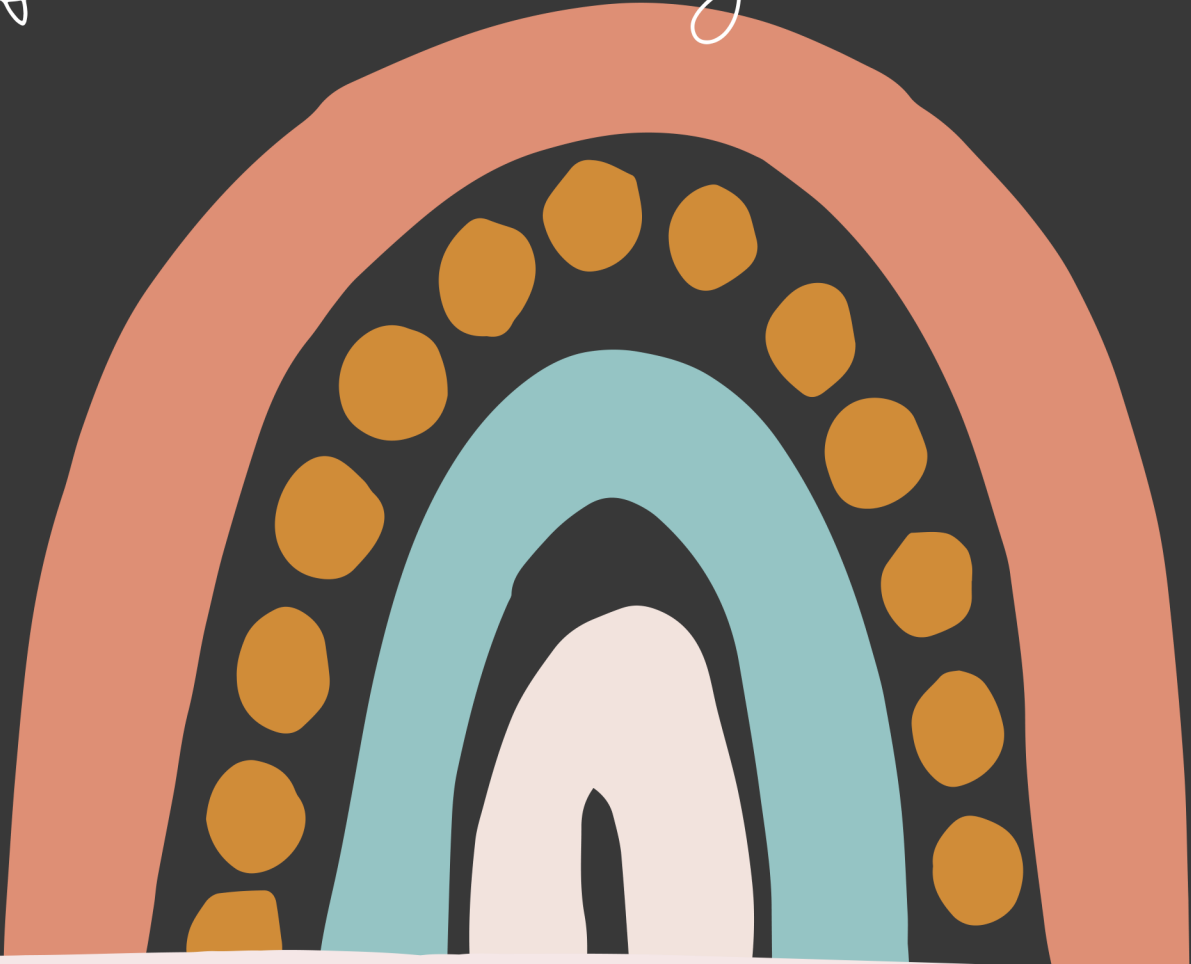


OPPORTUNITIES *for change*



YOUTH *Wellbeing*

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT
OF THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION
HELD MAY 18, 2023



FUNDED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
COMMUNITIES, CULTURE, TOURISM AND HERITAGE
YARMOUTH HOSPITAL FOUNDATION
TRICOUNTY COUNTY REGIONAL CENTRE
FOR EDUCATION
COMMUNITY DONATIONS

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Opportunities for Change; Youth Wellbeing Comprehensive Report (2023) Yarmouth, NS

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youth wellbeing

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'SNAP'SHOT overview



The Youth Wellbeing conversation came from a shared need to explore what the community could do to create opportunities that build resiliency and increase the protective factors that can buffer the development of more complex issues. The planning team sought to understand the experiences of youth and identify what needs attention and what can be done together to contribute to positive changes so youth feel they belong and have opportunities to thrive.

The day was designed to help participants explore solutions across 8 domains impacting belonging and contributing to wellbeing: Purpose, Safety & Security, Relationships, Mental Wellness, Learning & Growing, Healthy Living, Community, Places & Spaces.

Participants were also asked how they could mobilize across sectors and domains for system change, identifying opportunities for collective impact.



RELATIONSHIPS

Supportive connections with others can reduce loneliness and increase resiliency. More opportunities to develop positive and trusting relationships between young people and adults were the main themes in this domain. Having a youth-based organization dedicated to the development of young people from a variety of backgrounds, circumstances and experiences and creating safe spaces for youth to gather and hang out would help achieve this.

PURPOSE



Creating opportunities to participate helps youth find a sense of purpose. Themes related to purpose include: Providing mentorship and supporting youth leadership development, volunteer opportunities across a variety of hobbies and interest, bringing back a youth serving organization that focuses on youth development and fosters a sense of social responsibility, engaging youth in the political process.



SAFETY & SECURITY

Children are secure when their basic needs are met, and they have the freedom to play and are included in society. Safe spaces, free from discrimination and judgement, were an important theme in this domain. This included more spaces to feel welcomed, supported and engaged and a need for a youth centered community hub with trusted adults and free youth drop-in recreation opportunities.

MENTAL WELLNESS



Mental wellness comes from feeling connected to others and supported to meet life's challenges. Youth need drop-in options to connect with trusted adults with no registration or intake process. Including mental health and addiction services at school and in community; safe spaces to talk about issues like emotions, anxiety, social media, consent, gender identity, dealing with traumatic experiences, and sexual health. The current Mental Health intake process is a barrier for youth to access services.

LEARNING & GROWING



Learning begins from birth, in families, in communities and in cultures. It happens inside and outside of school. Themes related to learning and growing include: providing more hands on learning opportunities, developing linkages to the employment sector to learn and try different jobs, opportunities to explore career options and helping youth make community connections.



HEALTHY LIVING

Children's health is shaped by the conditions and resources in their communities that influence health. Youth need more diverse and regular opportunities to engage in recreation, movement, programming and leisure that are free or low-cost. Fully funded lunch programs and access to information and education related to sexual health were also identified as requiring attention.

COMMUNITY



Fostering community connectedness has long lasting effects on health and wellbeing. Themes in this domain include: asset mapping, improving communication of available programs and services, help for youth with system and service navigation, safe places to play and hang out, improved transportation links between municipalities, and improved partnerships to reduce silos.



PLACES & SPACES

Youth need places in community where they can gather, connect with others and with nature, and feel they belong. Themes in this domain focused on youth-centered spaces that are safe and inclusive to all and offer a diversity of activities and opportunities for growth. Redesigning spaces with youth in mind, creating a community hub or youth center, and exploring ways to partner were highlighted.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Collective impact brings people together in a structured way to achieve social change. Solutions seen as having a collective impact included regularly and effectively engaging youth; applying the lens that recreation is a public good; creating a youth hub and bringing back a youth serving organization; establishing youth advisory councils; forming a youth table to improve collaboration, developing and implementing an action strategy; monitoring and evaluating wellbeing; reducing fees and barriers to participation; addressing transportation links.

PRIORITY Themes

227 votes cast

TOP 3 PRIORITIES

Mental Wellness
A Community Hub
A Youth Voice

- *Reduce barriers to mental wellness.*
- *Create a community hub or youth center; bring back a youth serving organization; improve partnerships.*
- *Engage and include youth in decision making.*
- *Fund recreation and community programs adequately, reducing participation costs.*
- *Help youth build skills and develop a sense of purpose.*
- *Increase access to sexual health resources and supports.*
- *Provide more opportunities to make connections and build strong relationships with adults.*
- *Improve communication so people know what is available in our community.*
- *Inclusion for all.*
- *A Youth Table.*
- *Focus on healthy living and connecting with others.*
- *More hands on learning experiences.*
- *Improve transportation links.*



BACKGROUND

and design

BACKGROUND

YOUTH IN YARMOUTH

Service providers across a variety of tables have consistently identified various concerns related to youth wellbeing in our community. Late in 2022, it became more and more obvious that these concerns were increasing in frequency and severity and that, without an existing youth planning table to explore more broadly the conditions that help youth thrive, a collaborative community response was needed.

At the same time, Mental Health Services was also focusing their attention on concerns within the Western Zone, specifically Yarmouth County. Including recognizing that the county has one of the highest suicide rates in Nova Scotia. In response, Canadian Mental Health Association of NS and Injury Free NS were partnering to have community conversations for caregivers and those with lived experience, the education system and community partners to help inform what programs and supports are needed and what system approaches could be improved.

A shared need to explore what the community could do to create opportunities that build resiliency and increase the protective factors that can buffer the development of more complex issues related to wellbeing was identified and became the focus of our collective efforts; bringing to life the youth wellbeing community conversation.

As such, the Youth in Yarmouth Planning Team was called together with the shared purpose of engaging community to have a meaningful conversation about the experience of youth living in our community; what's working, what needs attention and what can be done together to contribute to positive changes so youth feel they belong and can thrive.

DESIGN

Approximately 75 adults from youth serving organizations and 50 youth from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, cultures, and schools in Yarmouth County were invited to participate and share their opinions on what needs attention in our community to create meaningful change for youth wellbeing.

The planning team designed the day along existing frameworks and best practice research indicating that an important part of positive wellbeing is that one feels loved and supported through caring and respectful relationships. One way to conceptualize these feelings into a single notion is through the concept of belonging.¹

This research indicates that those with a strong sense of belonging tend to be more engaged in their community, to have positive social networks, and to build important relationships with others, all contributing to reduced feelings of loneliness and social isolation. When describing belonging, UNICEF Canada notes the importance of feeling supported by those with whom we have meaningful interactions. This includes family, friends, companions, teachers, mentors and other members of our communities.^{1,2}

The structure of the Youth Wellbeing Day in Yarmouth took these findings into consideration and designed a process to help community identify solutions and provide their feedback across 8 domains impacting belonging and contributing to wellbeing;

PURPOSE ~ SAFETY & SECURITY ~ RELATIONSHIPS
MENTAL WELLNESS ~ LEARNING & GROWING
HEALTHY LIVING ~ COMMUNITY ~ PLACES & SPACES

Participants were also asked how they could mobilize across sectors and domains for system change related to youth wellbeing, identifying opportunities for collective impact.

This report is a summary of the information collected throughout this process.



Factors Impacting Belonging^{1, 2, 3} and contributing to wellbeing



Factors Impacting Belonging^{1,2,3}

what it means for youth and in community

DOMAINS	YOUTH	ADULTS IN COMMUNITY
<p>LEARNING AND GROWING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am curious about new things and seek out hobbies and activities that help me grow and learn. • I am excited about the opportunities my school and community provide. • I make plans and manage my time to complete my responsibilities. • I can see myself moving from adolescence to adulthood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We offer new opportunities, hobbies and activities that help youth grow and learn. • We provide youth engagement activities that promote growth, curiosity, identity, and development. • We provide youth with the skills and resources needed to take on responsibility. • We offer opportunities to gain the transition skills and the support youth need to move from adolescence to adulthood.
<p>MENTAL WELLNESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel good about who I am and confident in myself. • Most of the time I deal with my stress and emotions in a healthy way. • I ask for and receive help from those who care about me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are there for youth and are willing to listen to their needs. • We offer avenues for youth to use healthy ways to manage stress and to develop coping skills.
<p>RELATIONSHIPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have someone I can ask for help when I need it. • I have trusting connections with peers, family, and caring adults. • I can communicate my needs. • I can manage the influence of peer pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have spaces where youth can build relationships with trusting adults. • Adults are available to provide help and guidance in our centers, programs and facilities.
<p>SAFETY AND SECURITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know when my safety is at risk. • I make good/safe choices. • I have places to be myself where I feel safe. • I have a sense of control over what is happening in my life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We make youth feel safe and supported by caring adults. • We have spaces, facilities, and places where youth have stability and access to the necessities of life like food, water, shelter. • We protect youth from emotional and physical harm.
<p>PLACES AND SPACES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel relaxed and comfortable in the places and spaces where I spend my time. • I feel like there are spaces created with me in mind. • I have parks and outdoor spaces I can easily go to. • There are a variety of places I like to hang out and gather. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We plan our community so that youth feel like they belong. • We make sure youth have spaces and places to hang out and gather. • We build public places where kids can play; outdoors and indoor.

DOMAINS	YOUTH	ADULTS IN COMMUNITY
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am hopeful about my future and have many life goals. • I consistently feel like my life is meaningful and I have a sense of purpose. • I have activities where I can participate and contribute. • I feel connected to something bigger than myself (friends, community, wider world). • I understand that my actions and interactions impact my community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We foster opportunities for youth to develop a sense of purpose. • We offer mentorship, life skills and employment to youth. • We offer activities where youth can participate and contribute. • We offer ways for youth to feel connected to something greater. • We understand that our actions and interactions impact the lives of youth.
COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a place where I feel like I belong. • I feel welcome and connected with my community. • I belong to a group or community like me. • It's easy for me to find what I need in my community. • I have connections to people, culture, and places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We offer accessible resources that are relevant to overall wellbeing. • We promote a sense of belonging for youth across our programs, services, and operating spaces. • We value and include youth as contributing, welcomed members of the community.
HEALTHY LIVING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have options to participate in healthy activities and behaviors. • I consistently engage in healthy behaviors (no drugs or alcohol, I get enough sleep). • I can make healthy choices. • I have healthy options so it's easier not to choose unhealthy ones (e.g., too much screen time, drinking) • I have options to be physically active. • I have easy and affordable access to physical activity. • My community promotes active and healthy living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We ensure youth can participate in active living. • We have removed barriers to allow youth to be active in a variety of spaces and ways. • Youth have easy and affordable access to physical activity. • Youth can access the information and supports they need to engage in healthy behaviors. • We ensure our community promotes a healthy lifestyle.

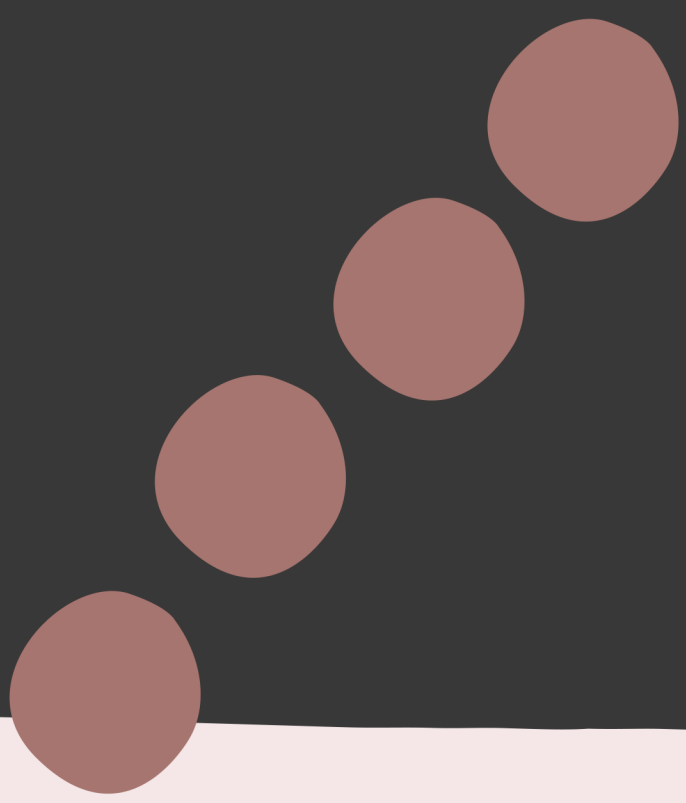
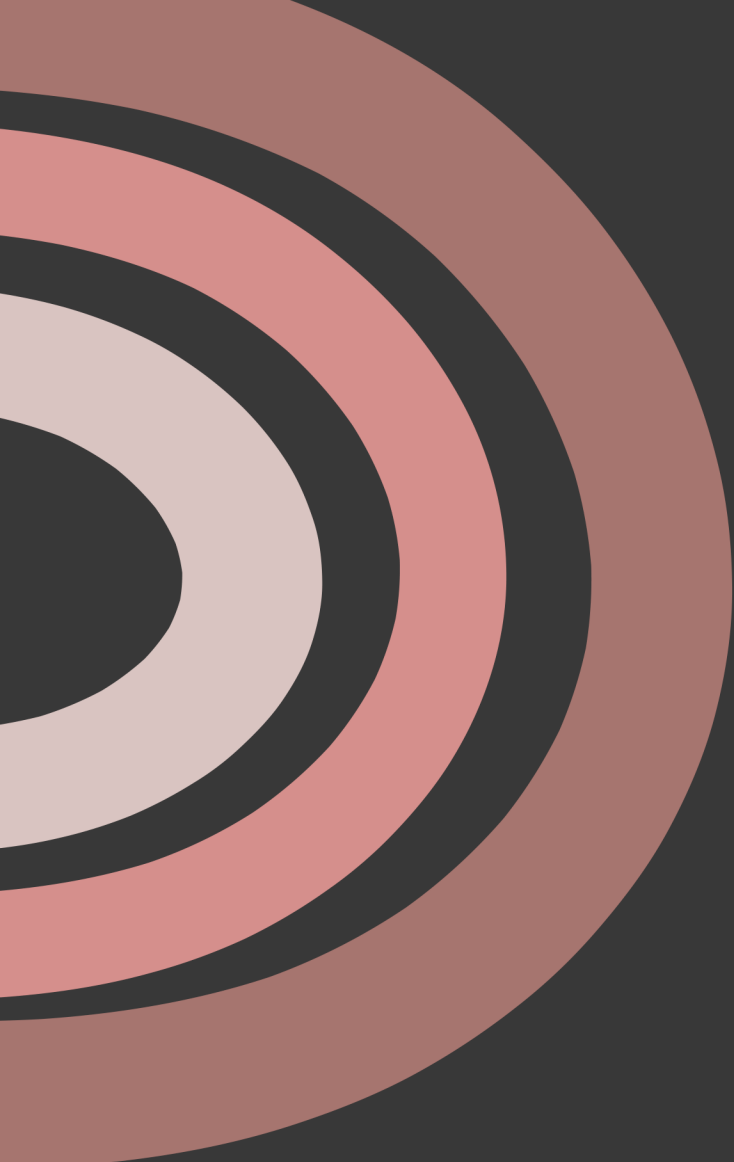
PRE-CONFERENCE SURVEY – Results are listed in each of the domain subsections³

Prior to arriving, youth participants were asked to rate how their community was supporting them on each of the 8 domains.

1. IN CRISIS – I don't feel there are any opportunities for me to gain skills in this domain.
2. JUST SURVIVING – Most of the time I do not feel my community is there to support me in this domain.
3. DOING OK – Sometimes my community offers opportunities for me to succeed in this domain.
4. DOING GOOD – Most of the time I can get the support I need to be successful in this domain.
5. DOING GREAT! – My community has everything I need to help me achieve wellbeing in this domain.

Adults participants were asked to rate how their organization is supporting youth on each of the 8 domains.

1. VERY POOR – We do not provide any opportunities for youth to gain skills in this domain.
2. POOR – Most of the time we are not there to support youth in this domain.
3. ACCEPTABLE – Sometimes we offer opportunities for youth to succeed in this domain.
4. GOOD – Most of the time we give youth the support they need to be successful in this domain.
5. VERY GOOD! – We almost always offer youth everything they need to achieve wellbeing in this domain.



'FOOTPRINTS'
what was said

YOUTH FOCUSED CONVERSATION (GRAPHIC HARVEST)



... a sense of **BELONGING** in YARMOUTH...
 MAY 18, 2023, YARMOUTH FIRE HALL

KESPOOWUIT ("LAND'S END")

What does it feel like to be a youth in Yarmouth County?



YOUTH WORK! MOST ENJOY THEIR OCCUPATIONS

YOUTH ADVISE: EACH OTHER



"LIVING IN YARMOUTH BE LIKE..."

- "PUMPKIN FIRE" KINDA FUN
- BEING CREATIVE ABOUT FINDING THINGS TO DO
- FREEZING
- PREDICTABLE
- "IT'S OKAY"
- DEPRESSING STATISTICS
- LOTS OF PRESSURE TO GET OUT
- FOOD INSECURITY
- TEEN PREGNANCY - A LOT OF IT
- TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY
- "THE BONDS ARE GOOD"
- DRUGS
- LACKS DIVERSITY
- KINDNESS
- ACCEPTING / OPEN-MINDED



An Ideal Community looks like...

Diversity!

OF PEOPLE, FOOD, SPACES

SAFETY & INCLUSION

BETTER ANIMAL SHELTERS

A BETTER HOSPITAL

BETTER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

"MORE BUSES" - BETTER TRANSPORTATION

BETTER HEALTH / ENVIRONMENT

HEALTHY OCEAN / ENVIRONMENT

"LESS JUDGY PEOPLE"

MORE THINGS TO DO!

"A BIGGER MALL"

A COMMUNITY POOL WE CAN ACTUALLY SWIM IN

FERRIS WHEEL, AN AMUSEMENT PARK

MORE ART & ART SPACES

BETTER EDUCATION: ON RUGS, ALCOHOL, & SEX



For me to feel like I belong in Yarmouth, the most important things needing attention are...

FOOD INSECURITY/OPTIONS

IMPROVING RECREATIONAL OPTIONS

ARTS & CULTURE SUPPORT

HEALTH & WELLNESS

ADDRESSING POVERTY

REPRESENTATION / DIVERSITY

EDUCATION

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

LIBRARIES

TOURISM

"SOLIDARITY"



"WE HAVE EXORBITANT AMOUNTS OF POVERTY IN OUR COMMUNITY."

"OUR HOSPITALS DON'T PROVIDE HEALTH CARE, THEY PROVIDE SICK CARE."

HOMELINESS - 17%

FOOD INSECURITY - 21%

WITHOUT MEANS - 40%

30% OF STUDENTS DON'T FEEL A SENSE OF BELONGING

89% OF YOUTH MORE LIKELY TO REPORT POOR MENTAL HEALTH

25% UNSAFE AT HOME } BUILDING

14% UNSAFE AT SCHOOL } BULLYING

"Share... Listen... Learn... Be present..."

JOINT REFLECTIONS (GRAPHIC HARVEST)



... a sense of **BELONGING** in YARMOUTH...
 MAY 18, 2023, YARMOUTH FIRE HALL

KESPOOWUIT ("LAND'S END")

TWO BARS TO USTEL...

WHAT **RESONATED?** ♡

KIDS HAVE TO BE "RESOURCEFUL" HERE
 "I FELT LISTENED TO" AS A YOUTH
 "I'M STILL A YOUTH AT HEART - AND I CAN HELP."

"(THE YOUTH) NEED THINGS" - AND WE NEED TO INVEST IN ALL OF THEM

\$\$\$ MONEY \$\$\$

ADULTS NEED TO GET INVOLVED - ESPECIALLY PUBLIC WORKERS - EDUCATE THE ADULTS -

"EDUCATION IS EVERYTHING"

Let's consult our youth!



WHAT **SURPRISED?** 🌸

SHEER VOLUME OF PEOPLE WHO TURNED UP TODAY
 "I HAVE MY OWN VOICE, I FELT HEARD."

WHAT **CHALLENGED?** 🌿

"ACTUALLY IMPLEMENTING CHANGE" AND NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT IT

WHAT DO WE NEED TO **FOCUS ON?** 🎯

- YOUTH SPACES, VOICES, CONCERNS
- FUNDING WHAT WORKS
- RECREATION PROGRAMS & SPACES
- COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS
- A HUB FOR SERVICE INFORMATION
- ADDRESS EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION
- **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**
- PROMOTING SERVICES
- EDUCATION
- SAFE SPACES
- HEALING BETWEEN YOUTH & ADULTS
- NEURODIVERGENCE & MENTAL HEALTH
- AFFORDABLE PROGRAMS & SPACES

"Share... Listen... Learn... & present..."

ACROSS THE EIGHT DOMAINS (GRAPHIC HARVEST)



... a sense of **BELONGING** in YARMOUTH...
 MAY 18, 2023, YARMOUTH FIRE HALL

KESPOOWUIT ("LAND'S END")

- PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES
- SERVICES & DRG. SPACES
- POWERS & RULES
- COLLECTIVE IMPACT



PLACES & SPACES
 OUTDOOR EVENTS & ACTIVITIES, COOKING, TEA-TRAY ZONES, DRIVE-IN THEATRE, MUSIC, PARTS EDUCATION, REEL, PROPRIN PLACES TO HANG OUT, SPORTS/ACTIVITY CENTRES, EXPANDED HANDBOOKS CENTRE, MAKE IT AFFORDABLE, BIGGER SUPPORTING AREA, MENTAL HEALTH SPACES, HUSBANDS & DAUGHTERS, ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES (SCHOOL, HEADON TREAT YOUR MUM, BETTER JUSTICE SYSTEM NOT JUST SPORTS FUNDING, COMMUNIZATION, HOUSING, ACADEMIC TRANSACTIONS, GET OUTSIDE



PURPOSE
 CAREER, PWT, FINDING, INTERESTS, MENTAL APPROACH YOUTH, RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, COMMUNITY LEARNING ALL YOUTH HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO SUPPORT, COUNSELLING, RESOURCES, MS WORKERS, VOLUNTEERING KEEP IT AFFORDABLE, ADDRESS BARRIERS TO ACCESS, YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN DESIGN TABLES, LEADERSHIP PWT, SEE SPACES ORGANIZE OPPORTUNITIES & SERVICES WHERE VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED, RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, FREE PROPRIN OF'S, SCHOOL, STREET, TREE HERITAGE/SHIP TRANSLATION/LANGUAGE LEARNING SERVICES,



COMMUNITY
 SUMMER PROGRAMS, EVENTS CALENDAR, LAND-BASED LEARNING, SUBSTANCE ABUSE & REPAIR SERVICES, EXPANDED STUDIOS PLUS FOCUS GROUPS, ASSET MAPPING, RECREATION SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE, A CENTRAL HUB OFF-ICE SPACES, SERVICES HUB/INTEGRATING NEIGHBOURS, EQUITY & INCLUSION, DATA-SPRINGER, ADDRESS BARRIERS TO ACCESS BUILD ON WHAT'S WORKING, NEXT STEPS, ASK "SO WHAT?", MAPPING COMMUNITY SKILLSSETS, SPACE IN BELONGING,



HEALTHY LIVING
 HOPE TEEN TAKE-OVER (GIVE/HOME), OPEN GYM SPACES, ANY ZONES, SPACES TO HANG OUT, YOUTH, NOT JUST NIGHTS, COACHES' ENCOURAGEMENTS ENCOURAGEMENT, PUBLIC SPACES, ZEN ROOM, GAME NIGHTS, SEX ED, TEEN HEALTH CENTRE, SCHOOL COUNSELLORS, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, GARDENS YOUTH VOICES, VALUED, TEEN/TA HANDBOOK, REPAIRS, HUNTERS ACCESS TO COUNSELLING, SEX ED HANDBOOK, REPAIRS, HUNTERS TRANS INCLUSION, YOUTH ADVOCACY, SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE, BEING PART OF A TEAM, CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, INDIVIDUALS



SAFETY & SECURITY
 BETTER COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS, MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT HOPE STREET LIGHTS, BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SPACES, DIVERSE REPRESENTATION & INCLUSION, YOUTH CENTRES, AFTER-SCHOOL, DROP-IN COMMITMENT TO YOUTH ENGAGEMENT, BETTER ACCESS, YOUTH-INTERVIEW, TIMELY FEEDBACKS, GOVT ACCOUNTABILITY CLIENT-BASED HUB, YOUTH SELF-IDENTITY NEEDS, YOUTH HAVE ANSWERS



RELATIONSHIPS
 PLACES TO MEET, DROP-IN CENTRE, TEAM SPORTS, YOUTH-ADULT BONDING, TEEN STREET HERMITAGES, HOPE PLACES LIKE LIVING HOUSE, SUPPORT FOR BROTHERS, BOSTI-RELATIONSHIP SUPPORT SPACES FOR YOUTH IN CRISIS, SAFE SPACES (OPEN OR HIDDEN) 'WANT BE A DRUGS' HEALTHY BOUNDARIES, FIRST CONSIDERED/PROPRIATE PROXIMITY & SERVICES, TEEN SUPPORTS, ADDRESS SPACES IN ACCESS CODES HOPE ABOUT SUPPORT, STRONGER FEEL HOPE'S, TRUST BETWEEN YOUTH & ADULTS, HEALTHY VS. TOXIC, HAVE UNDERSTANDING OF YOUTH, CULTURAL AWARENESS & AFFECTION

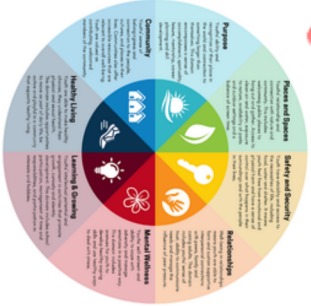


MENTAL WELLNESS
 WHAT'S AVAILABLE? RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS, SPONSOR AWARENESS BI-LINGUAL, MENTAL EDUCATION, MENTAL PROGRAMS, GENTLE AFFIRMING CARE APPLICATIONS, SERVICES/REPAIRS, TEEN/TA COUNSELORS WHAT'S AVAILABLE? PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, BETTER RECREATIONAL OPTIONS, SAFE SPACES, COUNSELLING, ACCESS TO THERAPY FOR YOUTH & ADULTS REPAIR & REORGANIZED SERVICE PARTS, SMALLER GROUPS (BY CLASS), CENTER & QUALITY RESPECTED, OPENITY, TEEN/TA HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, MENTAL HEALTHY HOPE MENTORING, COMMUNIZATION NEEDED, PRIVACY RESPECTED FREE AWARENESS, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, ADDRESS STIGMA & RESOLVE



LEARNING & GROWING
 IMPROVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & DECISION-MAKING, ACCESS TO WORKSHOPS, FUNDING, COUNSELLING, INFO HUB FOR SERVICES, FOOD PROGRAMS BEING ROUND TABLE BETWEEN AGENS, PROMOTE SERVICES, MULTI-PURPOSE YOUTH SPACES, GREEN SPACES, GARDEN SPACES ADDRESSING, ACCESSIBILITY, BUSINESS EDUCATIONAL, LAND-BASED LEARNING, O-1 FOR ALL "OH SAY WE LISTEN - BUT NOT REALLY", YOUTH INPUT ON A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKBOOK,

8 FACTORS IMPACTING BELONGING:
 What is **NEEDED?**



"... be open to new ideas... tackle problems, not people... success depends on participation..."



LEARNING & GROWING

Youths' intellectual potential and engagement in activities that promote growth, curiosity and identity development. This domain includes school participation, management of time and responsibilities, and participation in interests and hobbies.



LEARNING & GROWING



Are youth learning? Children and youth have the right to learn in many different supportive and respectful environments. Learning begins from birth, in families, in communities and in cultures. It happens inside and outside of school. It is shaped by healthy and secure family relationships, material conditions, and opportunities for high-quality programming. Children develop proficiencies in a diverse range of competencies when education is provided equitably and safely and respects their individual passions and abilities. Equally important are environments that foster opportunities for youth to set their own goals and pursue them. Children need opportunities to wander and wonder and to recover from mistakes and challenges.* ^{2,3,5}

*Adapted from UNNICEF Canada | Child and Youth Wellbeing | 2019 Baseline Digest Report

HOW ARE WE PROMOTING BELONGING?

- *By offering programs based on skill building (cooking, boating, social connections, coping skills)*
- *Jr Leaders Training*
- *Creating opportunities to try new things; be innovative, creative, build confidence and self-esteem, provide mentorship*
- *Helping youth to connect to resources*
- *Building relationships in and out of classroom settings*

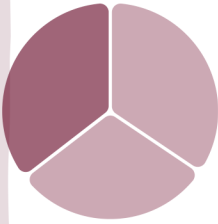
WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOUTH THRIVE?

- *Teach youth to teach!*
- *Be appropriately honest (own up to mistakes, be genuine, & real)*
- *Include youth in decision making*
- *Bring back experiential learning and arts*
- *Encourage and support youth to engage in community*

WHAT IF WE dream BIG

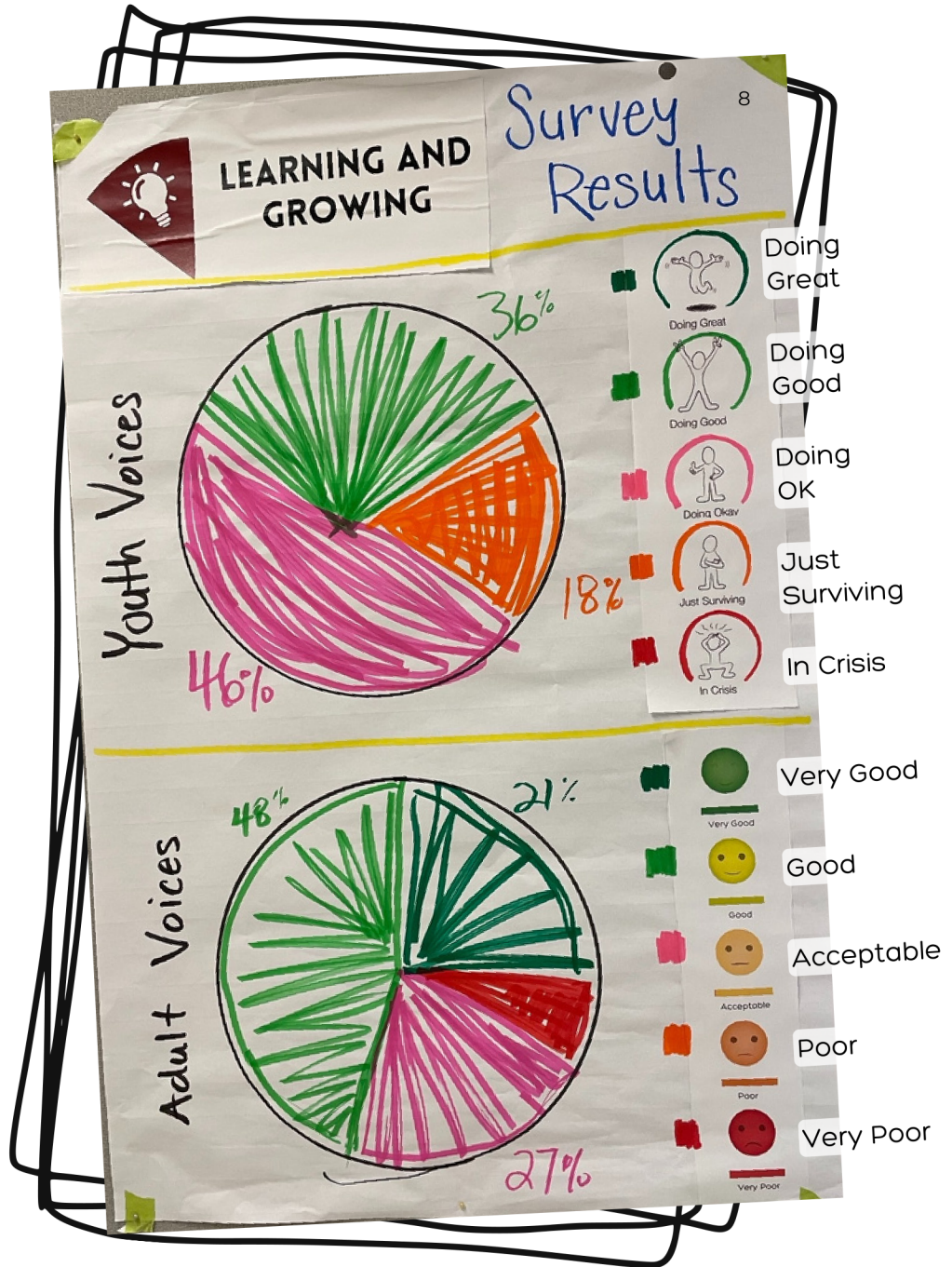
- *More hands on learning opportunities and direct paths to skilled trades*
- *Free school lunches*
- *Free post-secondary*
- *Funding to support long term goals and offer diverse learning opportunities across school and community settings*
- *Better funded education centers*





The education journey is difficult for many young people.

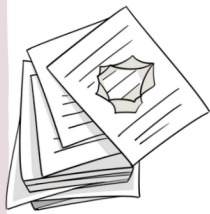
Approximately one third of students in the tri-counties find it hard to pay attention in class, cannot connect what they are learning to what happens in their life, or find the workload too much to handle. ^{2,6}



WHAT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, POLICY CHANGES, OR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY?



LEARNING & GROWING



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

SERVICES & ORG SPACES



- *More guidance counseling* (or navigator) to explore career options, help youth find their desired path and select courses (more direction provided earlier). Students feel they have limited knowledge of what there is to do after they graduate.
- *Link guidance counseling to employment sector* to learn and try different jobs and explore career options. Create community-based learning and growing opportunities across various sectors to gain on the job working experience.
- *Create a community engagement guidebook* with direct youth input. Increase opportunities in community for youth to volunteer and lead others. Leadership and coaching or refereeing courses offered at school.
- *More hands on learning* including job shadowing, teaching life skills, and building youth capacity and creativity.
- *Education is life for youth* – programs and services should be designed with this in mind and meet diverse learning needs.
- *Increase opportunities to engage youth* and consult them in decision making (try different hobbies, workshops and non-competitive sports)
- *Education on sexuality and identity* for kids needs improvement
- *Less "structured" education* for those that learn differently or express their knowledge uniquely.
- *Better promotion and access to existing services*; centralized access to information, breakdown silos between organizations, increase collaboration.

- *Create spaces that are inclusive and accepting* of people with disabilities and 2SLGBTQIA+
- *Schools cut services* because of the mess it creates and the demand it puts on the school. *More funding, supports and/or partnerships* are needed to ensure that doesn't happen.
- *Address lack of books and equipment* in schools, including materials in multiple languages.
- *More recreational spaces designed for youth* including multi-purpose spaces offered at no cost.
- *Spaces in schools that can be used when youth need a break* from classes; support for anxiety, validate feelings, zen rooms, empathy.
- *Teachers and community should celebrate student success* more often.
- *Schools should engage and partner more with community organizations.*
- *Provide more information on learning and growing opportunities* in the community. Help youth make connections to community (navigator role), generate an inventory of individuals or organizations who could mentor youth or have skills to share. Connect this to the learning curriculum.
- *Universal school food program* so all kids are fed, without stigma.



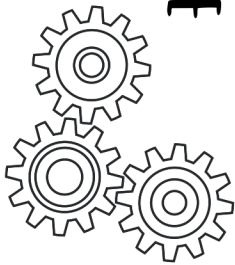
LEARNING & GROWING



POLICIES AND RULES

- Rules are based on adult's perspective - *engage youth!*
- *Engage youth in education system*; stop top-down approach in education system and address the need for different learning styles.
- *Hands on learning and career exploration (try-a-job)*. More than just 'going to work for a day'. Collaborative efforts between private, public and education sectors to gain exposure to different jobs, increase knowledge of what exists, and start planning with students early in their high school years.
- *Land-based and outdoor learning opportunities* for all interested students (survival skills, forestry, co-op/O2 experiences, etc.)
- *Examine policies designed to keep youth out* (no loitering, graffiti in parks). Instead create opportunities to hang out in safe places and be creative.
- *Implement policies and practices that support students struggling with mental health issues* (For example, promote positive body image and self-esteem, teach stress management skills, encourage outdoor classes, promote emotional literacy and relationship building, foster a sense of belonging and community connection, provide students easy access to drop-in mental health support at school, reduce barriers to access including referral and intake processes, train school staff on how to identify and help students who may be struggling with mental health issues, make time for movement.)
- *Adopt policies that protect youth spaces like school environments from advertising harms* including alcohol, cannabis, vaping, and food industries.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT



- *Increase youth voice* and opportunities for youth to make decisions.
- *Adults should encourage kids to follow their passion* and provide opportunities for skill building.
- *Address the impact of technology on sleep* and increase education and awareness.
- *Protect our environment.*
- *Crime is a source of fear* for many youth; sex / human trafficking is a real issue in our community.
- *Coordinate efforts across sectors* to provide meaningful opportunities for youth to gain on the job work experiences.

“

There are great ideas in the room but I am afraid that it will be lip service in the end. Implement them!

Youth Participant

”



PURPOSE

Youths' ability and recognition of their place in the world and connection to something larger than themselves. This domain encompasses a sense of accomplishment, spirituality, leisure, mentorship, career planning and skill development.





PURPOSE



Are youth participating? Children and youth have the right to have their voices heard and respected. As they develop they should have every opportunity to participate in decisions affecting them. Participating includes being actively engaged, according to their capacity, in family affairs, in community organizations, at school, in social movements and in civic and political life. Creating real opportunities to participate helps develop their capacity to express themselves and their identity, exercise their rights responsibly, and develop a sense of agency and belonging. To participate young people need access to information; avenues to express themselves and be heard; fewer barriers to being fully included in society and to access services; and freedom to express their identity and culture and to choose their relationships.* 2,3,5

*Adapted from UNNICEF Canada | Child and Youth Wellbeing | 2019 Baseline Digest Report

HOW ARE WE PROMOTING BELONGING?

- Equity, diversity and inclusion as a focus in our work.
- Provide training and education opportunities for those who want to develop resources.
- Youth Health Centers recently announced for schools will allow youth to engage in their own environment and be supported from a wellbeing perspective.
- Building active transportation trails and bike lanes.
- Adopting healthy eating policies.
- Promoting and supporting youth led and youth leadership roles in programming.
- Youth outreach that included goal setting, identifying barriers and action planning.
- Foster Care redesign focusing on community connections and extended family.
- Laing House is offering sense of belonging in mental health experience, peer support and life skills.
- Increasing adult capacity for belonging, safety, and trauma informed practices.
- Disability support program introduced \$115/month, inclusion benefit for all participants. It can be used for community inclusion at the person's own discretion.
- Adolescent outreach – identifying strength, skills, offering groups, connecting youth to community partners and meeting youth where they are at.

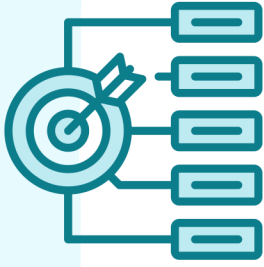
WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOUTH THRIVE?

- Provide welcoming spaces for youth to gather.
- Find ways to fund "free" initiatives.
- Engage and include youth. Also advocate to engage youth and to hear youth voices.
- Provide information on what's already available.
- Connect local government with civil studies at high school (field trips, co-op programs, etc.)
- Participate in Co-op programs.
- Offer space and opportunities for mentorship.
- Teach youth to teach and express themselves.
- Offer programs, classes, opportunities and supplies.
- Let youth know they don't have to have it all figured out.

WHAT IF WE

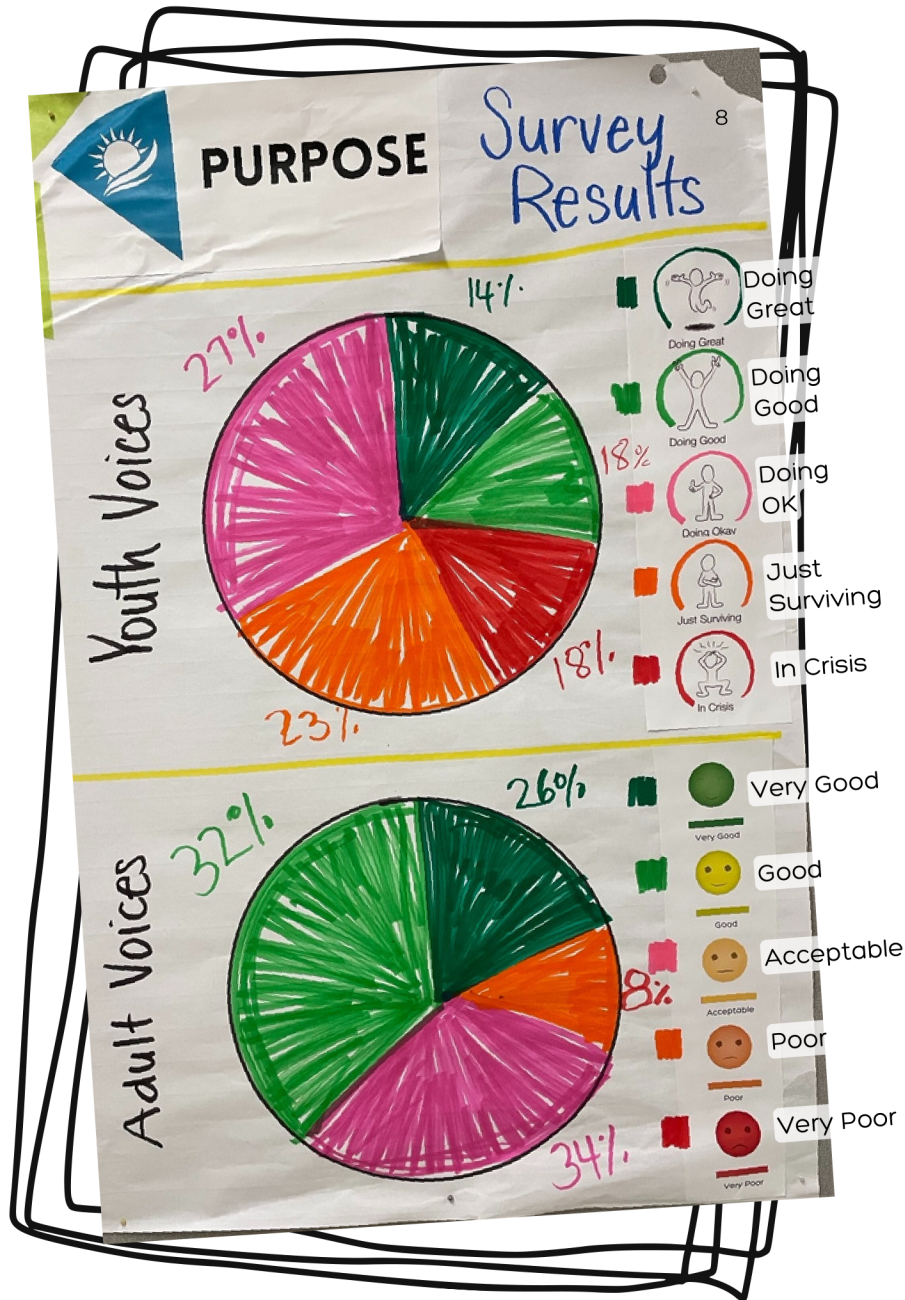
dream
BIG

- Mentorship opportunities for capacity building – across many interests and focus areas.
- Youth Health Centers for all schools, including elementary.
- Engaged and involved Youth in community planning.
- Youth seat mandate at municipal tables.



The lack of data on young people's participation makes it challenging to answer the question "Are youth participating?".

Fostering participation helps build confidence and opens pathways and opportunities for success. It is clear from these conversations that youth need the adults in our community to help connect them to experiences that give them purpose. When asked, 75% or tri-county youth feel it is important to them that their life has meaning or purpose. 2,4



WHAT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, POLICY CHANGES, OR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY?



PROGRAMS &
ACTIVITIES

SERVICES &
ORG SPACES

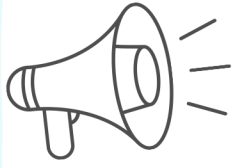


- **Establish programming that expands career development opportunities.** Establish partnerships with Nova Scotia Works, education and youth. Explore funding streams. Connect youth to career exploration opportunities and mentorship. Increase internship opportunities.
- **Establish student and youth councils** (in school and community); engage youth in decision making and in the civic and political lives of their community.
- Organizations should seek to **build and support leadership skills and volunteer opportunities for youth** to teach and lead others across a variety of hobbies and interest, not just sports. Create opportunities for youth and adults to interact and build trust.
- **Address funding;** money shouldn't limit access to programs and opportunities for skill building. Provide recreational activities that don't always costs in order to be involved.
- **Consider communication methods** to promote activities and inform youth of available opportunities.
- **Improve access to sports and activities** at all ages and all skill levels.

-
- **Nova Scotia Works needs to be connected with schools** to speak about the programs they offer for free.
 - **Youth connection to spaces within Yarmouth** – murals, plants, parks; update these with youth input so they feel a sense of connection to these spaces.
 - **Create space for youth to be creative** – allowing space for graffiti and finding ways to value youth art.
 - **Provide volunteer opportunities, hands on learning opportunities and learning without technology** to boost confidence, build skills and invest in community.
 - **Opportunities to connect with the outdoors** (gardening, planting, camping).
 - **Communication plan** to advertise and post available opportunities, target specific locations and create a central information hub (involve the business community) and provide incentives for participation.
 - **Community based succession planning;** build up young leaders in the community. Identify talents and interests, provide coaching, mentorship and opportunities for skill building.
 - **Be engaged** – Use your voice to bring about change to student spaces in school and youth spaces in community.

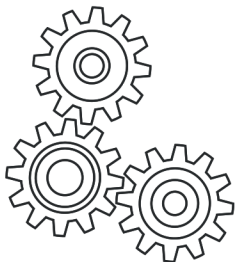


PURPOSE



POLICIES AND RULES

COLLECTIVE IMPACT



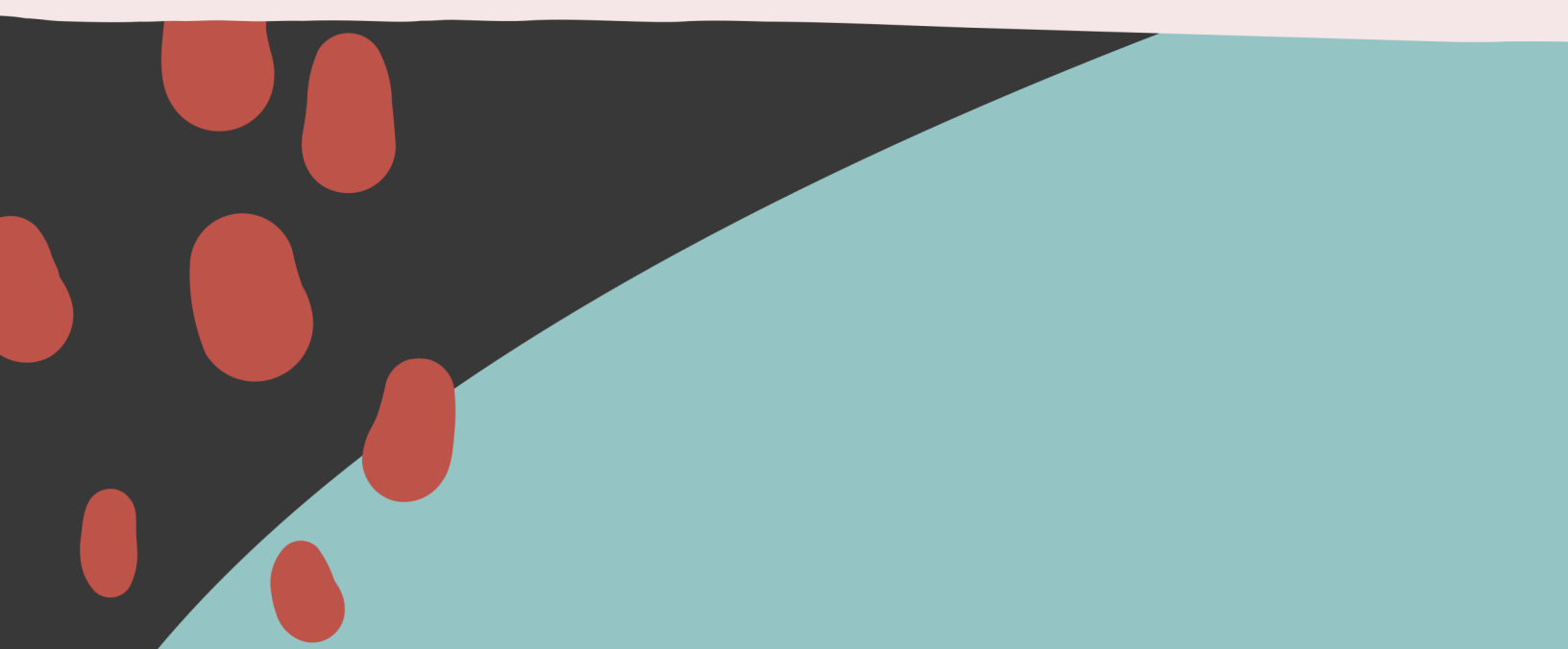
- Organizations and community should focus on how they can create a sense of purpose for youth within the programming offered – how are they supporting youth to connect with community and find purpose? What barriers can be removed?
- Ensure the rules and policies for public spaces create safe places for youth; offer and encourage alternatives to technology, but don't force it.
- Youth involvement in committees is so important!
- Youth engagement in the political process.
- When designing programming, include ways to build skills and leadership opportunities.
- Ensure whatever is available is available for all.
- Reduce the need to prove you need support.
- Consider diversity in goals and skills; everyone's purpose varies. Some go day by day, some focus on the bigger picture.
- Advisory committee has a policy that youth are included- has it been achieved?

- Work collectively to identify and fill the missing link from losing the YMCA as a youth serving organization in our community: YMCA's are dedicated to the growth of all persons in spirit, mind, and body, and to their sense of responsibility to each other and the global community. They deliver projects and services that focus on youth development through a wide variety of activities. They focus on youth development and fostering a sense of social responsibility. What group or organization is taking the lead on doing this work in our community? Can we reengage with the YMCA as an organization to do this work? Are there other organizations that can take it on?
- Reduce financial barriers – free drop in opportunities for workshops, recreation, equipment and gear.
- Encourage school spirit/pride/excitement.
- Purpose isn't just what you want to do as a career- more to life than just working; help youth find balance and be inspired to discover new things.
- Youth to youth mentorship.
- Establish connections, they are VERY IMPORTANT to helping youth feel safe.
- Give youth the freedom to choose their own path. Ask youth questions and support them to achieve their goals; what is important to you? what matters? Everyone's purpose will be unique to them.
- Volunteer coordinator – to organize opportunities and match youth, keep updated contacts, make connections, support placements and expand capacity building of youth and community to support each other.



MENTAL WELLNESS

Youths' self-esteem and ability to cope with adversity and manage emotions in a positive way. This domain includes avenues for youth to develop healthy coping skills and use healthy ways to deal with stress.





MENTAL WELLNESS'S



Are youth happy and respected? Mental wellness comes from feeling balanced, connected to others and ready to meet life's challenges. How you feel can affect your ability to carry out everyday activities, your relationships, and your overall mental health. How you react to your experiences and feelings can change over time. Emotional wellness is the ability to successfully handle life's stresses and adapt to change and difficult times. When youth feel valued and respected, achieve balance across different dimensions of wellbeing, have goals and a sense of purpose, and are coping with stress and managing the demands of life - we can trust they are doing well. Youth report feeling happiest when they're satisfied with their lives and relationships, although nobody is happy all the time. Life satisfaction is considered a strong indicator of overall wellbeing.* 2,3,5

*Adapted from UNNICEF Canada | Child and Youth Wellbeing | 2019 Baseline Digest Report

HOW ARE WE PROMOTING BELONGING?

- Safe spaces for youth to hang out
- Mentorship and leadership opportunities
- Empathy
- Aidaen's Place; safe space, support, confidentiality, hobbies, exercise, provisions as well as Jr. volunteers, outreach, and inclusion
- Outdoor activities – bike trails, nature, walking
- The implementation of Youth Health Centers in Schools will help address belonging and wellness
- Being responsive to the needs of clients and supporting them
- Laing House provides emotional intelligence workshops
- SchoolsPlus, Yreach, School Counsellors, Gay-Strait Alliance, Health Promoting Schools work to create supportive and healthy environments
- Recreation has an inclusive policy and offers training for all staff to help ensure safe spaces for mental health
- Supportive counselling, transportation to mental health, advocacy
- Referrals to service providers

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOUTH THRIVE?

- Limit screen time
- Engage youth in the development of programs
- Use electronic devices and social media responsibly to engage youth
- Advocate for more youth mental health services and supports
- Provide opportunities for productive struggle
- Be trauma informed

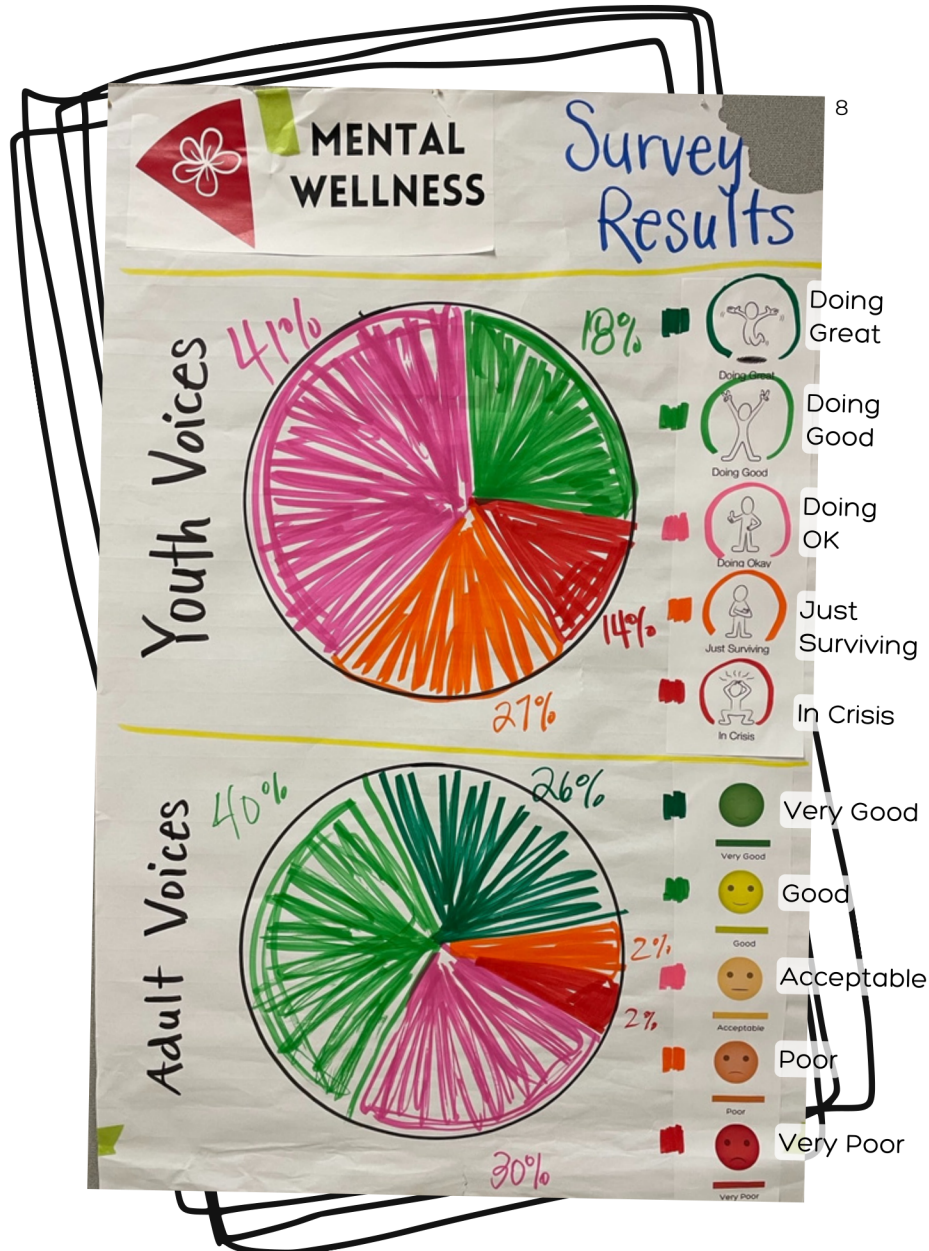
WHAT IF WE

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- Youth Wellness Drop in Hub – 24/7 accessibility to support
- Access to mental health services and resources in community settings
- Youth get the help they need when they need it!



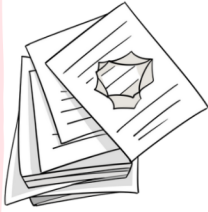
Young people 15-24 years are more likely to experience mental illness than any other age group. When compared to the provincial average, Youth in the tri-counties are 89% less likely to report good mental health and 20% less likely to report being satisfied with life. One third of youth attending school report they do not feel they belong. Almost 40% feel low or depressed once a week or more.^{2,5,6,7}



WHAT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, POLICY CHANGES, OR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY?



MENTAL WELLNESS



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

- *A process to connect regularly* whereby youth and adults can have meaningful conversations to explore what needs attention.
- *Communication strategy to build awareness* about youth-serving organizations and the programs they offer. More information on available services for youth with mental health challenges is also needed.
- *Groups at schools and in community* that focus intentionally on developing coping skills, helping youth discover who they are and how to boost confidence, improving mental wellness and managing stress.
- *Safe spaces, at school and in community, to talk about issues;* emotions, anxiety, social media, consent, support for queer community, dealing with traumatic experiences, sexual health.
- *More activities that do not have a sport focus;* community gardens and programming for at-risk youth to participate in.
- *Addiction is a huge problem* in Yarmouth County – having more for youth to do would help prevent addiction.
- *Develop a connection with service providers, schools and youth.* Regular drop-ins to share what they do, build relationships and support youth. Open house opportunities at school with required “service fairs” organized to showcase available services. Smaller sessions organized by class, so all students can attend and stigma is reduced.
- *Establish mental health programs* for kids embedded in the community, open to everyone (no intake). Also make sure you put them in all areas of Yarmouth County – not just the usual areas. Implement navigators, who are known and trusted by youth, who could help connect youth to services.
- *More avenues and space for youths’ voices to be heard.*
- *Youth need drop-in options* to connect with others and participate in programming. With no registration or intake process.





MENTAL WELLNESS

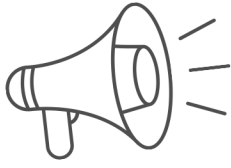
SERVICES & ORG SPACES



- *More options to access services in the community, across Yarmouth County.*
- *Services are generally concentrated in the Town of Yarmouth, more transportation options are needed to connect communities outside of the town boundary.*
- *More information and better communication on available services for youth with mental health challenges is needed.*
- *Funding – to create more youth-serving organizations and to staff them appropriately to address all aspects of youth wellbeing.*
- *Youth need strategies in community to support mental wellness, but they also need help getting timely access to mental health services and diagnosis.*
- *Where intake is necessary (e.g., mental health counselling) – address the intake process. “It’s horrendous!” 90 minutes on the phone is too intimidating and is not user friendly, especially for youth. The existing process is an access barrier for many youth, even with adult assistance.*
- *Addiction is a huge problem in Yarmouth County – more services and supports are necessary to help prevent addiction and to offer youth centered treatment options.*
- *Develop peer-to-peer supports with appropriate adult oversight. Youth go to their peer group instead of adults for help. If the peer group is supportive, it can be helpful.*
- *Community strategies to reduce stigma and help the community understand the implications of mental illness are needed. Offer assistance and education on how to talk about mental health and support those living with mental health challenges.*
- *More privacy and trust building is needed to help youth access health services, especially in regard to gender identity. Kids worry they can’t trust counsellors as they have an obligation to report. This creates unsafe environments.*
- *Bring back support workers, mental health and addiction counsellors within the school with sufficient time to build trusting relationships with youth and actually see them (without intake or judgment) when they are having a bad day. There is a need for a team of counsellors with an open-door process.*
- *Youth not enrolled in public school systems should also have access to mental health services and counselling in community.*
- *Services and supports need to be responsive to how students feel in the moment, and how things are now – not 2 or 5 years ago.*
- *Better outreach services for struggling students, checking on them on an ongoing basis.*

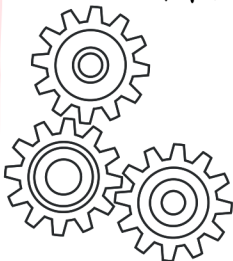


MENTAL WELLNESS



POLICIES AND RULES

COLLECTIVE IMPACT



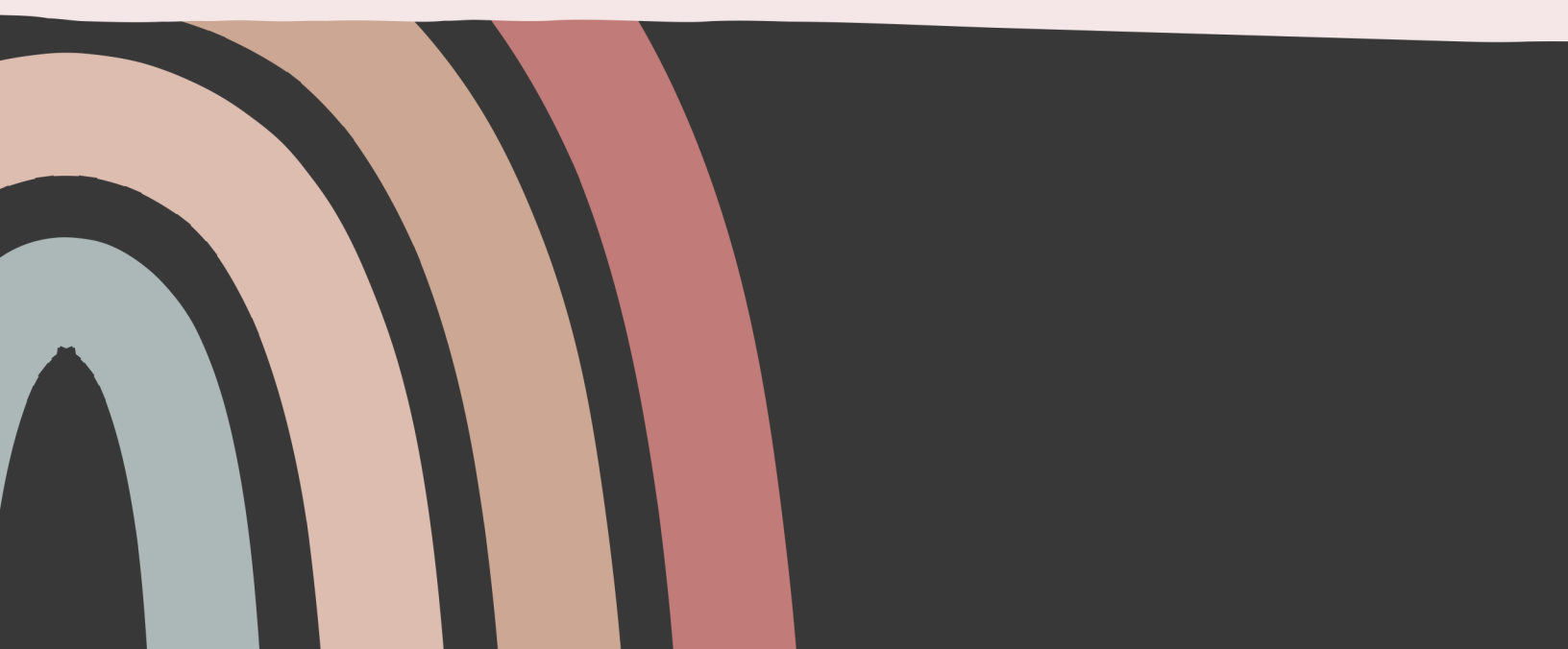
- *Address the mental health intake process – it is too long and cumbersome. Create a walk-in referral system or youth-centered intake process.*
- *Enforcement against bullying and more follow-through actions and discipline including a review of consequences vs solutions for bad behaviours.*
- *Encourage evidence-based communication on suicide, addictions and postvention within community and at school.*
- *To improve access, follow through on proposal to bring mental health services into community, instead of at the hospital; it would be less stigmatizing.*
- *A better process for attending to youth who are suicidal and taken to hospital is needed. With better follow-up and access to clinicians.*
- *The education system asks kids what they need, but they do not act on it. "There's no money or time for us, they only put money towards sports".*
- *Training for school staff and teachers on supporting students with mental health, coping skills, stress management, sensory issues. Consistent messaging and standardized approaches.*
- *Continue to encourage creating fewer boundaries – there is a stigma if you live in the south end.*
- *Open-door policies that reduce barriers to accessing supports and services.*

-
- *More supports required for in-school mental health and addiction services and opportunities to work collaboratively with other community organizations.*
 - *More focus on raising awareness against drug use, stigma and how physical exercise can improve mental wellbeing,*
 - *Funding to support youth initiatives and to offer programming; meeting youth where they're at in school and community.*
 - *Cut the red tape on the provision of services to rural areas.*
 - *Engage youth – regularly! Encourage diversity.*
 - *Offer support for workers who take care of youth.*
 - *Navigating social media and online safety and the impact on mental wellbeing.*
 - *Families need to be supported – include parent and caregiver supports in service planning and delivery.*
 - *The education system needs to shift to meet kids where they're at. Guidance should not only be about academics.*
 - *Bring back mental health and addiction counsellors and support workers in the school; with drop-in options and open door policies. No intake!*



HEALTHY LIVING

Youth are able to make healthy choices, they understand their physical and sexual health. This domain includes opportunities to move as part of daily life, be active and playful in a community that supports healthy living.





HEALTHY LIVING



Are youth healthy? The health of children and youth is a balance of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual conditions. Children's health is shaped from birth and, as they grow, by their own choices, but most importantly by the conditions and resources in their communities that influence health. Youth need reliable information to make healthy choices, access to appropriate health care, opportunities to participate in health care decisions and to grow up in communities that support healthy living. Play and leisure are also essential to development and influence every aspect of wellbeing. Free time and free space for self-directed play and leisure are necessary for health, safety and learning, developing independence, social skills and decision-making. Organized social and cultural activities help youth explore their interest and identities and to express themselves. Opportunities for leisure must be accessible to all, and should include affordable, appealing and welcoming places and programs for all ages.* 2,3,5

*Adapted from UNNICEF Canada | Child and Youth Wellbeing | 2019 Baseline Digest Report

HOW ARE WE PROMOTING BELONGING?

- Food programs; universal breakfast programs, 100 Meals Program, school food and nutrition policy, targeted lunch programs
- Creating movement opportunities that are not sports
- Tri-County Women's Centre offers sexual health presentations within the school and community and a health clinic.
- Recreation facilities and programs that encourage activity, movement and involvement
- Aidaen's Place provides dinner every night
- Offering programs like guided meditation, yoga, Just Move It.
- Policy changes for LGBTQ youth in care (DCS)
- No cost or little cost program options
- Support for the development of active transportation routes
- Nourish Your Roots program

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOUTH THRIVE?

- Ask questions with intention
- Lobby government to fund universal lunch programs
- Offering unique experiences
- Evening and weekend programs and activities – free of cost
- Increase our understanding of wellbeing concepts and components of healthy living
- Advocate for Recreation as a public good

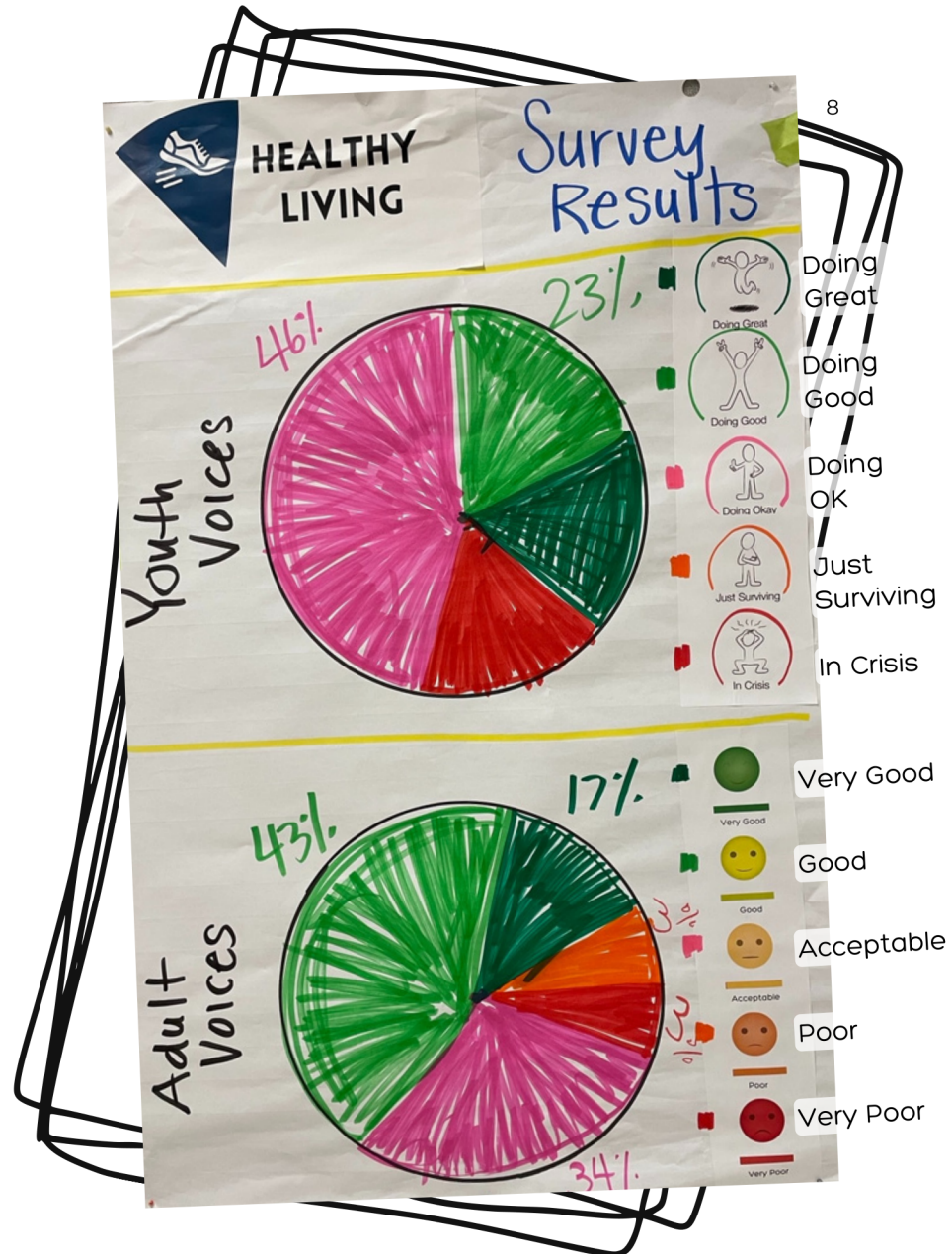
WHAT IF WE

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B I G

- Get YMCA (or other youth serving organization) back in the community
- Recreation as a public good, fully funded and accessible to all (free).
- Free lunches at school for everyone
- Play spaces 10 minutes from your home
- Transportation



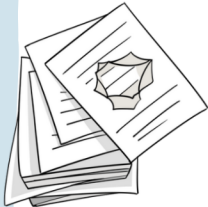
An active lifestyle can help balance mood, enhance learning and improve self-confidence. Compared to the provincial average, 81% of youth in the tri-counties are more likely to say their community never has much to do. Nearly 40% report they could not afford to pay for an activity they like to do in their free time and that the cost of recreational and cultural programs prevent them from participating. Only 28% of children age 5-17 years are meeting the national physical activity guidelines. ^{2,6,7}



WHAT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, POLICY CHANGES, OR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY?



HEALTHY LIVING



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

SERVICES & ORG SPACES



- *Encouragement and support from adults to get motivated to move more; add more movement to classrooms, outdoor classrooms, .*
- *More education pertaining to sexual health including understanding healthy relationships; identifying and talking about feelings; romantic relationships, dating, and intimacy; decision making and consent; body image; diverse identities; gender; personal space and boundaries; online safety and pornography.*
- *Diverse opportunities to engage in community; youth are turning to negative stress relief (drinking and drugs) because they don't feel welcome or like they don't belong.*
- *Access to healthy foods; food is costly, encourage healthy choices at school and in community, too many fast food options.*
- *Wellness breaks for self-care; anger management resources and strategies. Wellness programs.*
- *More Teen Takeover at the Mariners Centre, at least once a week rather than once a month.*
- *A free indoor space to hangout. Youth feel "there is nowhere to go without prying eyes watching, assuming we are up to no good".*
- *More recreational programs outside of school for youths without skills to engage in. Free, try-it, non-competitive sports like drop in basketball, powerlifting, nature hikes, and resources to teach youth who want to learn. It is challenging to pick up a sport to try as a teen if you haven't done it before.*
- *Free and regular access to gyms. Currently very expensive.*
- *Fun activities that are educational and give youth a sense of purpose e.g. fundraising, garbage pickup, community gardens.*
- *Places to ATV/Dirt Bike in Argyle*
- *A space like the old YMCA that focuses on youth. The new Mariner's on Main doesn't offer what the YMCA did for youth.*

-
- *Where is the space for queer youth to be active? Others are uncomfortable with the change room situation, we don't belong on a boys' team or a girls' team (sometimes it's perception, sometimes it's based on rules)*
 - *Coaches and adults that are supportive and encouraging, build capacity and see the value of each individual. In sports, but also drama, music, clubs, etc.*
 - *Engage youth – Mariners Centre and recreation need another way to get youth feedback other than email – youth don't email! (or Facebook)*
 - *No physical activity in school after grade 10. The chance to be active and connect with peers is lost.*
 - *Drumlin Heights was referred to as the "land of no opportunity"; the Teen Health Centre is not used and is always closed. There's no one in the school to talk to.*

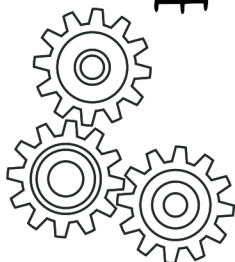


HEALTHY LIVING



POLICIES AND RULES

COLLECTIVE IMPACT



- *Access to Sexual Health Nurses and comprehensive Sexual Health Education; youth feel like they have to rely on friends or the internet to find answers to the "real questions".*
- *More funding and accountability for the Healthy Food Policy in schools.*
- *Fully funded lunch programs.*
- *Safe spaces in schools staffed with people you can talk to, without an appointment. When you are in crisis, you don't have an appointment.*
- *Male support and queer support in schools is lacking.*
- *No policies on queer participation in non-co-ed sports or activities.*
- *Are teachers required to be trauma informed? Teachers also need to be knowledgeable on the signs of abuse and suicide and need access to services for referral.*
- *Argyle Rec will consider adding a youth voice from Drumlin to their team (already have other youth voices); or they may look at creating a whole youth council to advise.*
- *Inclusive health practices - thinking more about people with disabilities. Awareness of individual situations and family dynamics.*
- *Free and low cost access to recreation, programming and leisure.*
- *Address policies that limit children ages 10-15 from participating - lane swim, open gym, programming, etc.*

- *Recreation seen as a public good - rework annual budgets to include more subsidized access (at free or no cost) to community. Determine which items are revenue generating, cost recovery or subsidized.*
- *Recreation facilities as community partners, not just a business. E.g., offer remnant space at no cost to community partners (as operational costs are fixed whether in use or not). Seek ways to partner with community to increase opportunities for recreation. Creation of NFP.*
- *Reduce costs for youth. If it can't be free, offer hourly rate vs day pass at Mariners Centre.*
- *Municipal transportation system is needed'*
- *A school based resource fair so all students know what is available.*
- *Partnerships needed between schools, community organizations, recreation departments and recreation facilities to increase access and focus on youth specific capacity and confidence building.*
- *Grade 9 is too late for sex ed. Need to look at comprehensive sexual education, starting earlier.*
- *Communication tools and process to reach youth. Currently Snapchat, Tic Toc, or text message. Some school do not have community announcement.*
- *Awareness and conversations related to food and eating disorders is needed. Shame around people not eating healthy; not everyone has access to healthy foods.*

RELATIONSHIPS

Well-being in relationships means youth are able to form and sustain supportive interpersonal connections with peers, family and caring adults. This domain includes youths' sense of trust, ability to communicate needs and manage the influence of peer pressure.





RELATIONSHIPS



Are youth connected? Being connected to others means feeling loved and supported and having mutually caring and respectful relationships. Feeling supported by and connected to family, friends, teachers, people in the community contributes to a sense of belonging and wellbeing, including health, learning and protection. Supportive connections with others - even just a few - can reduce loneliness and increase resiliency. Fostering healthy family relationships from birth, reducing the separation of children from their families and cultures, and restoring relationships that are damaged by trauma, stress, poverty and other factors are all critical to belonging. Belonging also means building relationships with young people who are disengaged, disenfranchised and furthest from protective and supportive environments, including eliminating youth homelessness and providing positive pathways for youth in contact with the justice and foster care system.* ^{2,3,5}

*Adapted from UNNICEF Canada | Child and Youth Wellbeing | 2019 Baseline Digest Report

HOW ARE WE PROMOTING BELONGING?

- Relationship building across the generations through the arts
- Empowering youth through advocacy
- Offering support groups, peer support
- Being a person they can trust, building trust relationships
- Supportive staff showing interest in youth and helping them build skills (free classes, outreach activities, new experiences, making friends)
- Involving and engaging youth
- Creating safe spaces in school and community to meet children, youth and families
- Early years programming focuses on building parental capacities and developing healthy attachment relationships
- Providing holistic employment programming intentionally developed to address the barriers and inequities for marginalized youth
- Creating and sustaining GSAs in all schools
- Teaching about healthy relationships
- Youth voice at the government level; youth advisory councils

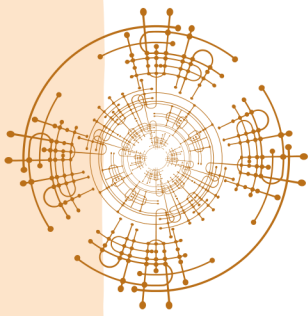
WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOUTH THRIVE?

- Support those who provide care – parents, guardian, loved ones
- Be youth-centered and trauma informed
- Create safe spaces for youth to participate in community and build trusting relationships
- Connect youth with service providers and help them navigate systems

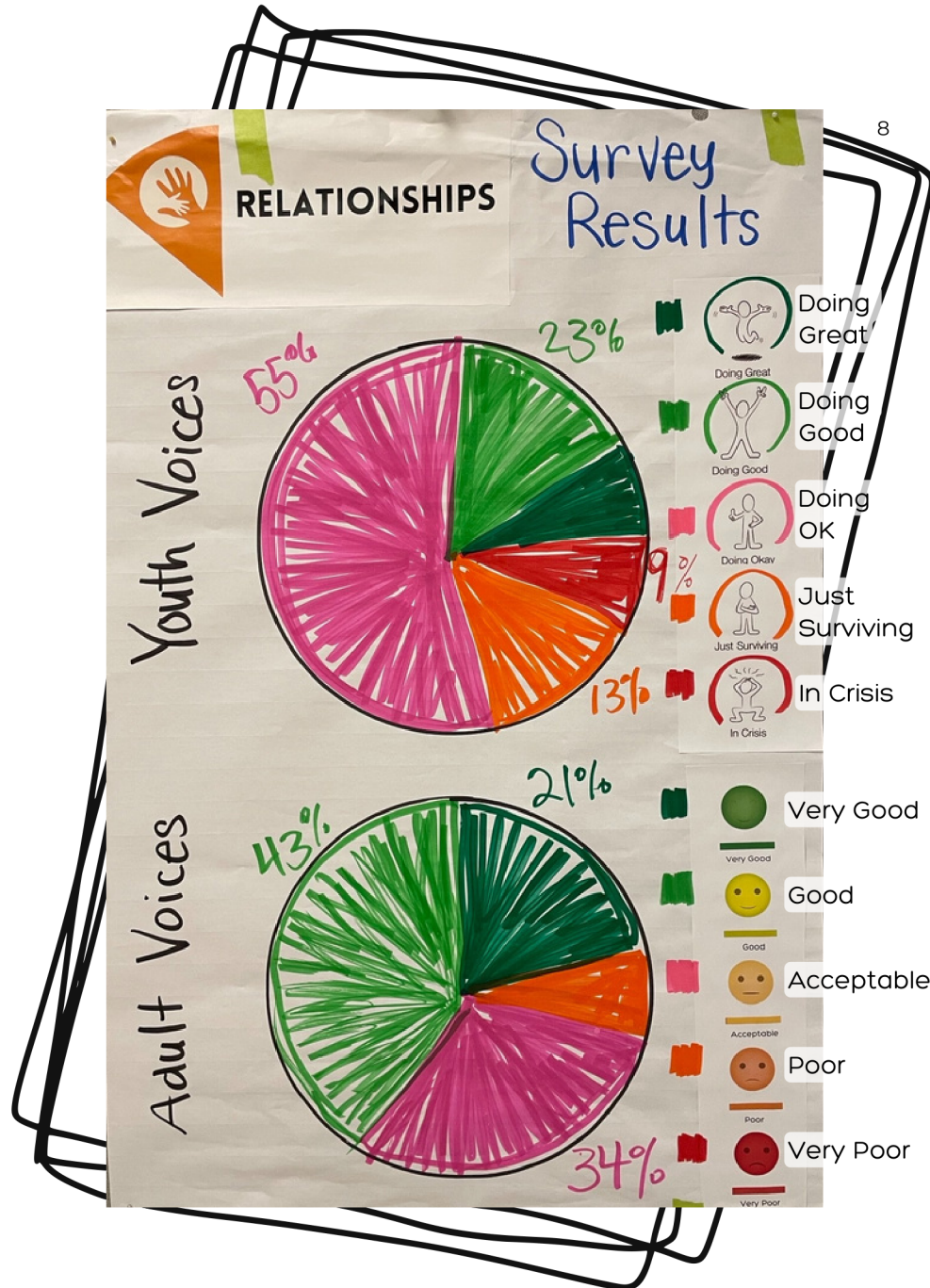
WHAT IF WE

dream
BIG

- No more poverty or discrimination
- Access to caring adults who keep youth needs in mind
- Connections to community where all youth can find a place where they feel they belong
- Adults in the community have the capacity and support they need to be responsive and effective caregivers
- Community hub of service providers in an accessible, safe and welcoming community environment
- Mental Health First Aid and Trauma informed approach training for all youth workers



Feeling supported by and connected to family, friends, teachers and people in the community contributes to a sense of belonging. Of tri-county youth surveyed, 60% say they get the emotional help and support they need from their family. About 80% indicated they have at least one adult they can go to for help. Almost, 30% say their connections to community are weak. ^{2,6}



WHAT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, POLICY CHANGES, OR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY?



RELATIONSHIPS



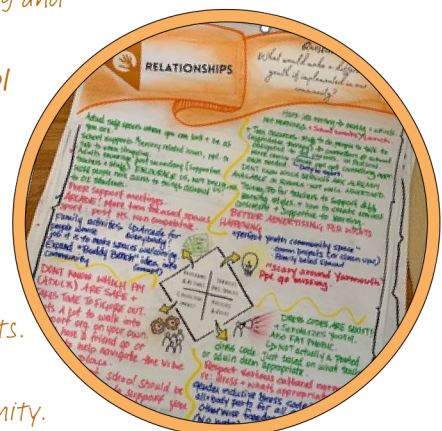
PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

SERVICES & ORG SPACES



- Opportunities for youth and adults to build connections (trusting relationships) through skill development
- Youth based community organization that is dedicated to the development of young people from a variety of backgrounds, circumstances and experiences.
- People whose job it is to make spaces welcoming and build trusting relationships with youth.
- Spaces in community where you can look and be as you are without judgement.
- Support in schools for sensory related issues.
- People to talk to when you're struggling that are supportive and encouraging.
- Peer support meetings.
- Expand the idea of a buddy bench into community.
- Places where youth can hang out and be safe. It's scary in Yarmouth - people go missing.

- More opportunities to develop positive and trusting relationships with adults in our community.
- Community projects for youth to feel connected and productive.
- Support for dealing with (and leaving) toxic relationships and setting healthy boundaries.
- Organizations need to look at creating comfortable spaces for youth instead of making them feel like they are not welcomed.
- Access to supports into the evening and on weekends.
- Concerns that counsellors at school are obligated to report to parents; impacts trust.
- Training and professional development for teachers to support different learning styles and create supportive environments.
- Better advertising for what is happening and available in community.
- More spaces for youth in crisis.



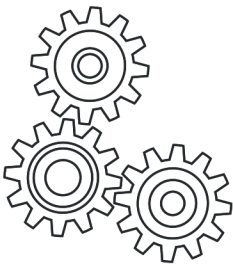


RELATIONSHIPS



POLICIES
AND RULES

COLLECTIVE
IMPACT

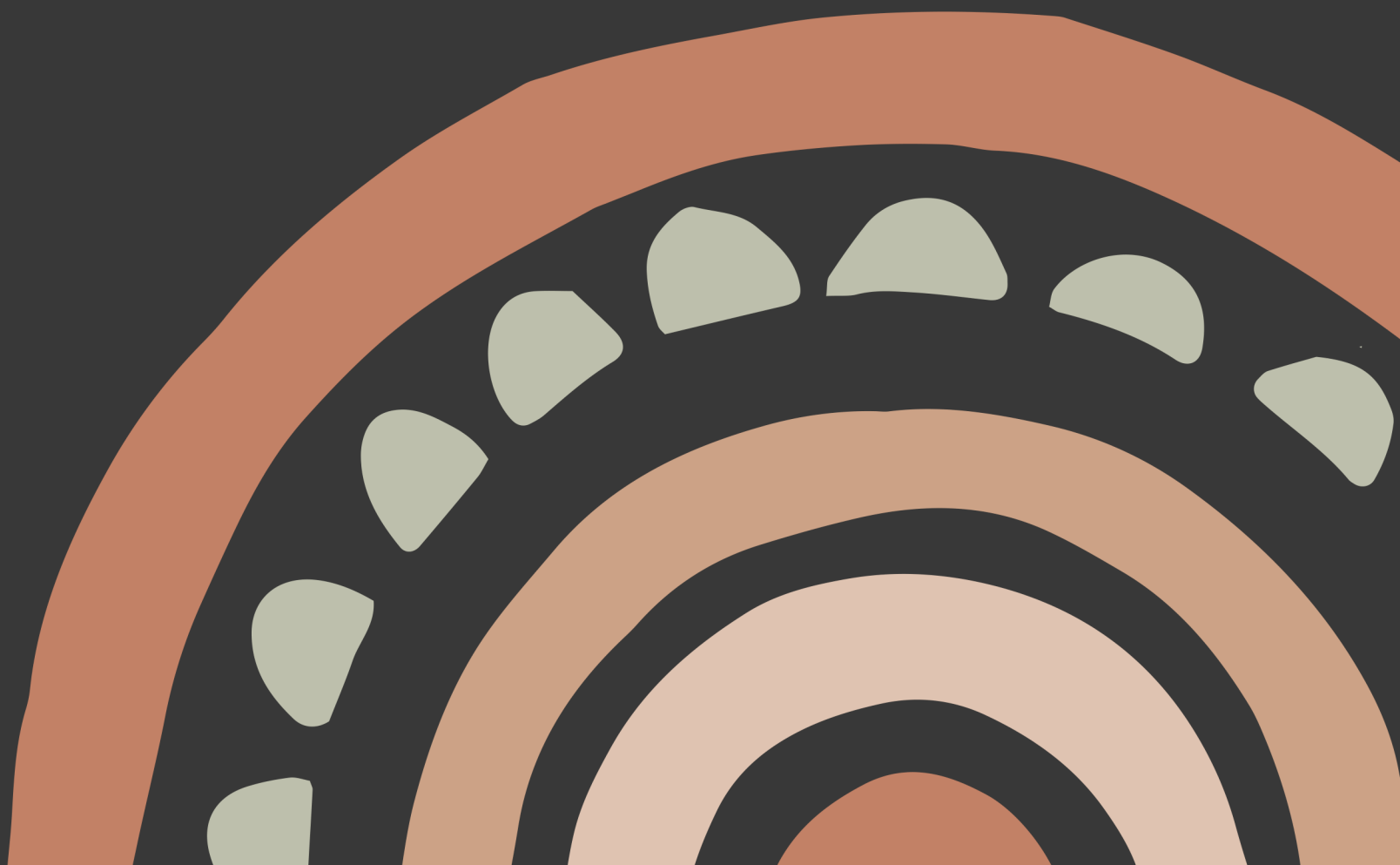


- *Dress code policies need to be examined; they're often sexist, fat phobic. Not always clear or properly posted, just based on what teachers and administration deem appropriate. Should be gender inclusive and have youth input.*
- *Respect various cultural norms*
- *Adults applying their values to youth, more consideration of youth voices and views.*
- *Create safe evening spaces for youth to gather or allowing youth to gather in existing spaces that do not currently accommodate them (having to leave spaces at 9:00 due to alcohol).*
- *Mariners center youth nights are only 7:00 to 9:00 pm; not regular or frequent enough and do not include Saturdays.*
- *Things are too expensive – more focus on increasing access for everyone.*
- *Policy changes for children and youth in foster care to ensure they remain within their community.*

-
- *Put in the time to build relationships with youth; youth should have control over the youth narrative. Have conversations, engage youth. Not always adult leading the way, deciding and "doing for" youth.*
 - *It takes time to figure out which adults are safe and can be trusted. Consistency and regular schedules youth can count on help with this.*
 - *It takes a lot to walk into a support organization on your own, increasing connections to trusted adults or peers can help. Need someone to help navigate new places.*
 - *Adults need to trust youth more and youth need more adult support. Strong role models.*
 - *New students at school should be assigned a student peer to support them and help with transitions.*
 - *Common space (in school and community) where people can socialize and meet one another.*
 - *Smaller communities feel friendlier. Create communities within communities.*
 - *Opportunities to learn about healthy relationships (peer to peer); healthy vs toxic.*
 - *Less standards for sports and recreation (competitive and non-competitive streams).*

'SAFETY & 'SECURITY

Youth have stability and access to the necessities of life, including food, water and shelter. It means youth feel free from emotional and physical harm and have a sense of control over what happens in their surroundings and with the people in their lives.





'SAFETY & SECURITY'



Are youth safe and secure? Material security - having enough family income and resources to support good child development and provide opportunities to participate normally in society - is fundamental to wellbeing. Children are secure when their parents have access to decent employment; when they live in safe and affordable housing; have enough for nutritious food; can meet their basic needs; and enable them to feel included in society and among peers. Material security supports health, learning, freedom to play and the opportunity to dream. Children and youth also need to be safe and protected in their homes, at school and in their communities, online and offline. They should not be exposed to bullying, discrimination, exploitation, serious crime or at risk of harm (physically, socially, emotionally or psychologically). Having safe environments, healthy relationships and people they can trust and can rely upon, as well as opportunities to develop their own skills to manage risks, are all important ways to help protect young people. * 2,3,5

*Adapted from UNNICEF Canada | Child and Youth Wellbeing | 2019 Baseline Digest Report

HOW ARE WE PROMOTING BELONGING?

- Policies against violence (physical, emotional)
- Secured building (community policing officer)
- Signage (identifying a safe space)
- Relatable experiences
- Confidentiality policy
- Non-institutional settings for programming
- Destigmatize / provide accessibility to basic needs (free store)
- Individualized Safety Plans and support to implement them if necessary (at school, home and in community)
- Regularly assess risks (i.e. suicide risk)
- Involve Circle of Support
- Free Cooking Groups (food plus the skills)
- Skill building (coping, dealing with stress)
- Trauma focused therapy
- Appropriate boundary setting
- Client centered care
- Culturally responsive policy development
- Creation of GSA's in all schools
- Awareness around online safety

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOUTH THRIVE?

- Create safe spaces
- Involve youth in development in policies, allow them to be a part of the process (implementation, monitoring and evaluation)
- Meet students where they are at
- Use a community collaborative approach
- Facilitate conversations to help those who have caused harm to be held accountable

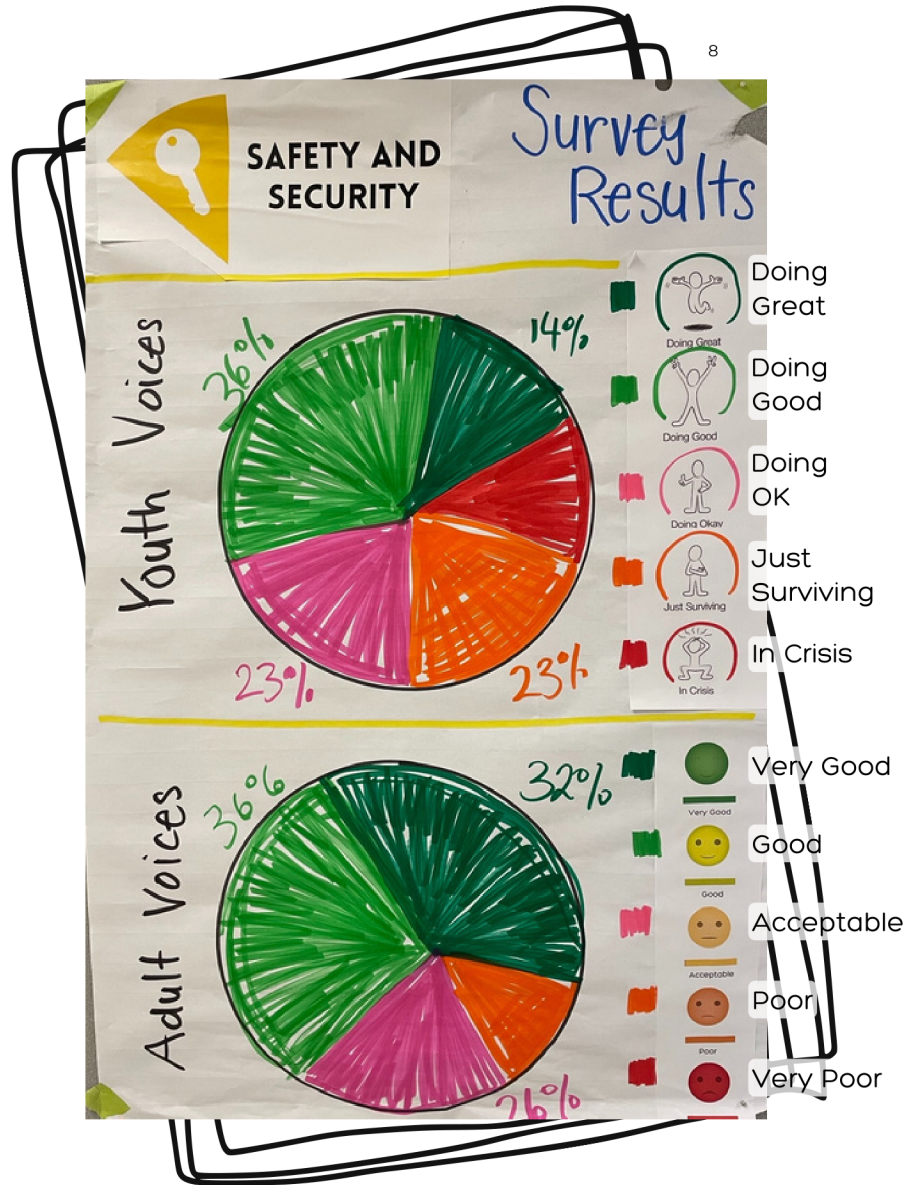
WHAT IF WE dream BIG

- Ability to access funding and reduce barriers
- Everyone acts from a place of caring and acceptance
- Proactive involvement with RCMP and Youth engagement
- Affordable housing
- Free recreational activities for everyone
- Consistent & sustainable food supports (not band-aid fixes)
- Eliminate poverty



Are youth safe and secure? Some groups of children carry a much larger burden of violence, including Indigenous children, children of diverse gender identities and children of racialized ethnic minorities.

The Canadian Index of Child and Youth Wellbeing reports that one in four young people has experienced violence at home. Nova Scotia also has the highest rate of human trafficking incidents in Canada. Of tri-county youth surveyed, 23% feel unsafe at school and 27% have experienced racism, homophobia or transphobia. Approximately 31% of children (0-17 years) in Yarmouth County live in poverty; 17% report having experienced homelessness (temporarily living with family or friends, or in a car because they had nowhere else to live). Research clearly indicates that what is not spent today to lift children out of poverty will be spent in the future, on poor health and life expectancy gaps, remedial education, violence, income assistance and substance use. ^{2,3,4,5,6}



WHAT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, POLICY CHANGES, OR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY?



SAFETY & SECURITY



PROGRAMS &
ACTIVITIES

SERVICES &
ORG SPACES



- *Commitment to youth engagement and consultation; adults who are willing to listen.*
- *A Youth center that looks like a rec center with designated youth staff and outreach workers. Staff trained to address youth needs and engage them.*
- *Bystander (intervention) training for youth to gain confidence and skills to feel safe to intervene when necessary; Self-defense classes.*
- *Training for teachers to understand what "bullying" looks like, feels like and how to address it.*
- *More opportunities for youth and adults to interact and build trust; having access to adults that youth can openly talk to.*
- *Better communication.*
- *Bring back opportunities for youth to take risks and develop resiliency.*
- *After school drop-ins that are free.*

- *Make spaces feel and look welcoming and safe for youth; support staff that encourages and engages youth to be there - Feeling "allowed" to be in community spaces!*
- *More places in community (like SHYFT, Aidean's Place) to support youth outside of school or when school is over. Safe spaces in schools, with sufficient staffing, for kids in crisis or just needing to talk.*
- *RCMP "more Marios" with protected time to build relationships and partnerships with youth and community.*
- *Let youth define their safety and security for themselves*
- *Support youth so they do not feel like they have to "suffer in silence" with bullying.*
- *Places where we feel safe to just unwind and relax.*
- *Spaces that have queer friendly signage.*
- *More streetlights, feel safer in town around people.*
- *School bathrooms are the only options to take a break but either teachers get mad or it's unsafe (intimidation, vaping, drugs).*
- *Bring back chill space in schools; school is hard, scary, and overwhelming - very few teachers understand.*
- *Knowing more members of my community would make me feel safer.*



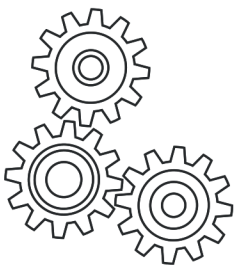
SAFETY & SECURITY



POLICIES
AND RULES

- *Accountability by government and improved responsiveness by leaders*
- *Consistent policy on cell phones*
- *Policy on bullying and support to implement it. Easy to access help for kids who are in crisis.*
- *Review (and reduce) policies in community spaces that limit access due to age or income – find ways to remove these barriers. More flexibility.*
- *Universal school food programs for breakfast and lunch.*
- *Spaces free from substance harms; alcohol, tobacco, vaping. Free from advertising.*
- *Teachers and adults should not pressure kids to “talk” about what is going on. It can be hard to verbalize and the pressure to explain can make things worse.*
- *Having empathy and validating youths’ feelings. Being quiet doesn’t mean being ok.*
- *Right to abortion information and access.*

COLLECTIVE
IMPACT




- *Youth HUB – client-centered; one stop shopping to help youth access what they need and connect better with community.*
- *Mariners on Main back to drop-in rec center, with a youth focus.*
- *Students, staff and community partners approach recreation centers together to create partnerships that meet youth needs and help them build core skills.*
- *Give youth a healthy sense of control over their lives.*
- *Ensure all students are connected to at least one adult who is their safe person*
- *Create opportunities to build trust – help youth learn how to express disagreement with adults “in power” and work collaboratively to find solutions. Listen and follow through on what is promised.*
- *Policies need to be implemented consistently for students in crisis.*
- *Funding – for recreation programs, school counsellor and programming, teacher supports, addiction services*
- *More activities and support for youth means less crimes and drugs.*
- *Need more safe spaces, it’s scary around Yarmouth. People go missing.*



PLACES AND SPACES

Youths' relationship and connection with nature and community. This includes welcoming public places to hang out and gather. Access to clean air and water, exposure to nature, availability of parks and outdoor settings and a balance of screen time.





PLACES AND SPACES



Do youth have places and spaces? A relationship and connection with nature as well as living in a sustainable environment are critical aspects of child and youth wellbeing. The sustained quality of the air, water and land, and the protection of the climate and ecosystems, are fundamental to children's survival, health and development. Children and youth need access to parks, trails and other green or open spaces in which they are welcome. They also need places in community where they can gather, connect with others, access supports and resources and belong. They need to move freely around their environments for leisure, school, work, cultural activities and other pursuits. A sense of place supports a sense of belonging. * 2,3,5

*Adapted from UNNICEF Canada | Child and Youth Wellbeing | 2019 Baseline Digest Report

HOW ARE WE PROMOTING BELONGING?

- *Active Transportation – rails to trails system, bike lanes and sidewalks*
- *Playgrounds and outdoor play spaces in most communities*
- *Skate Park, playgrounds, supervised beaches and lakes*
- *Milo boat club; boating and swimming*
- *Youth day camps and summer programs*
- *Mariners Centre and Mariner's on Main*
- *Downtown has bike racks and seating*
- *Drop in basketball most weekdays, outdoor courts at schools*
- *Memberships available for low income and youth*
- *Free Teen night 2x a month*
- *Providing group programming for 12-18 year olds with a focus on healthy eating, body image*
- *Accessing outdoor spaces together*
- *Laing House drop in for youth 18-29 with lived mental health experience*
- *Recreation – weekly youth programs, employment opportunities, subsidized programs, free equipment loans.*
- *The Zen room in schools*
- *GSA's in schools*

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOUTH THRIVE?

- *Examine who gets access to community spaces*
- *Create more opportunities that are youth focused*
- *Engage youth to explore ideas, create paradigm shifts*
- *Make existing spaces safe (supervision, support staff, youth leaders)*
- *Connect with nature more; quiet spaces*
- *Active campaigns that educate against homophobia and transphobia*
- *Invest in youth, take interest in them*

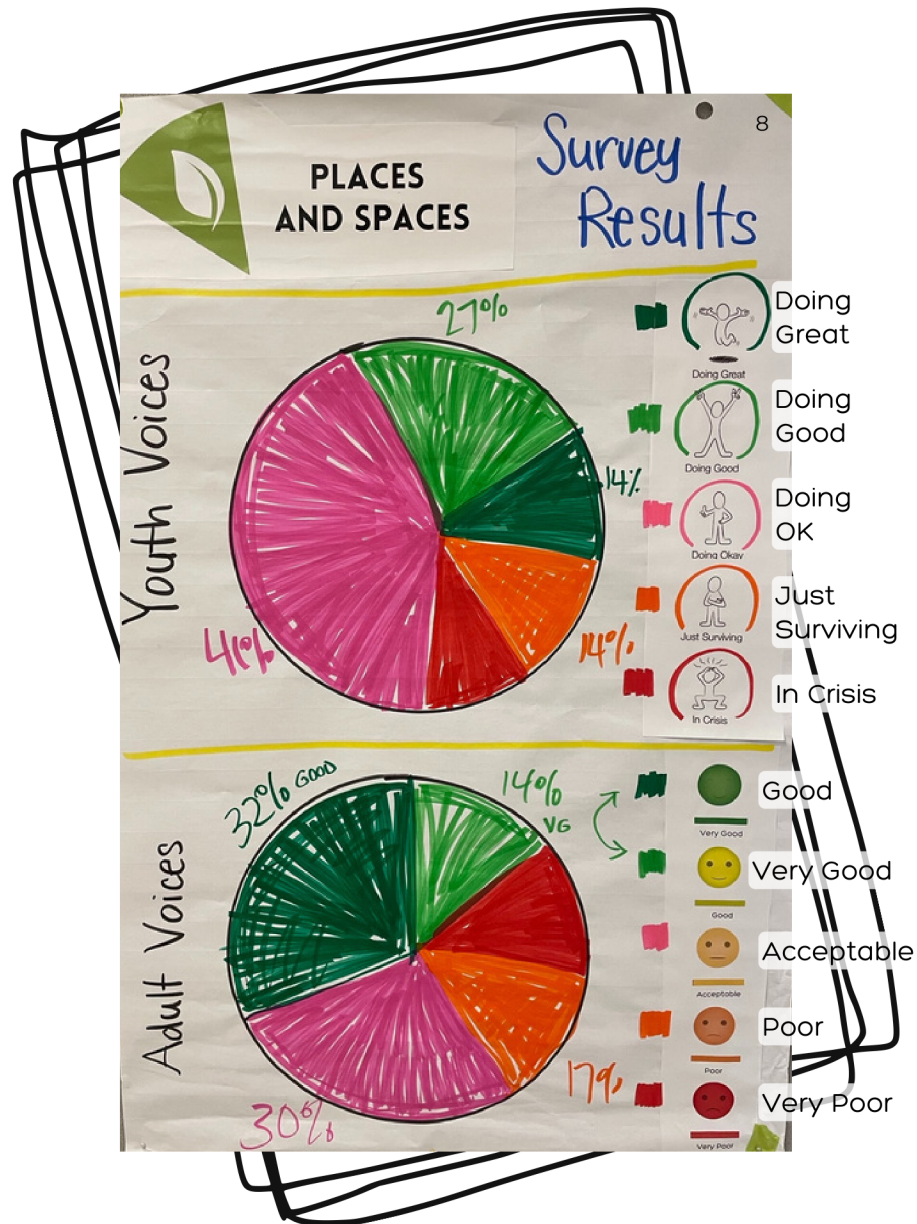
WHAT IF WE

dream
B I G

- *More outdoor classrooms*
- *Youth Hub; safe spaces and places focused on supporting and engaging youth*
- *Youth dedicated organization (e.g., YMCA) that partners with existing programs and services to focus on youth wellbeing and filling identified community gaps.*



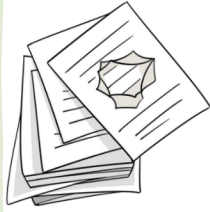
Do youth in our community have places and spaces designed for them where they feel they belong as well as opportunities to connect with the natural environment? Having a space where youth can go to spend time with their friends is the main thing young people say would make their lives better. Most tri-county youth, 70%, feel there are plenty of opportunities in their neighbourhoods to enjoy nature. Only 30% of youth indicate that the quality of recreation and cultural facilities is high. Compared to the provincial average, youth in Yarmouth, are 67% more likely to report having few opportunities to satisfy their needs and 20% less likely to report feeling that their community has excellent services.^{2,4,7}



WHAT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, POLICY CHANGES, OR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY?



PLACES AND SPACES



PROGRAMS &
ACTIVITIES

SERVICES &
ORG SPACES



- *Hub space – using the old YMCA – potential space opportunity for a youth focused space (explore bringing back youth-based organization). Include diverse, age-appropriate, activity options; not just sports (cooking, arts, theater, band or music lessons, board games, crafts, gaming, computer programming, tech free zones, yoga, fitness, daily and weekly drop-in activities). Youth friendly staff to go to and ask questions.*
- *Drop-in sports access and outside use of trails*
- *Bring back trades in grade 9*
- *Outdoor learning facility, in the wood with hands on experiences.*
- *More teen focused spaces – an arcade!*
- *Places to meet, have events, hang out, relax and feel safe and welcoming.*
- *Spaces in schools to take breaks and recharge; support staff that encourages and engages youth to be there.*
- *Feeling “allowed” to be in community spaces.*

-
- *Create youth spaces in the community to hang out and gather. Facilities designed with them in mind, arcades, and social spaces. Consider diversity of youth specific spaces. Churches sometimes offer youth groups and youth spaces in communities, but are seen as potentially discriminatory towards some groups.*
 - *Mariner’s Centre expansion as an opportunity for conversation – a space for all sports, not losing the opportunities that exist at mariners on main? Consideration for basketball, badminton, volleyball, batting cages, indoor field or dome?*
 - *Explore options to turn the “YMCA” into a youth center or community hub along with the expansion project. Bring in a youth serving organization. Redesign the space with youth in mind; kitchen, sofas, free gathering space, quiet place to study with tutors and peer to peer help, homework club, drive-in theater. Explore ways to partner with community organizations.*
 - *The way spaces look and are designed, matter.*
 - *Cultural norms, policies and signage set the tone of spaces – are they welcoming, safe, is discrimination unacceptable?*
 - *Sports need to meet the needs of local athletes, rather than always having to travel.*
 - *Daycare facilities are needed.*
 - *Spaces and places at school for destressing, relaxing, and gathering. Sensory room.*

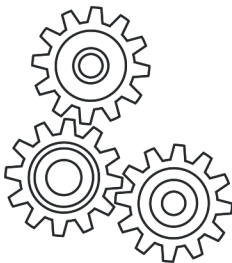


PLACES AND SPACES



POLICIES AND RULES

COLLECTIVE IMPACT



- **Diversity and inclusion** – needs to be more intentional. Explore with groups and clubs what diversity and inclusion looks like (in real terms) from exploring the impact of splitting up teams to keep “select friend groups” together to anti-racism and anti-discrimination messaging on how spaces are used or designed. Policies that ensure practices are actually equitable and safe. Less homophobia and transphobia.
- **Develop policies that protect students’ right to privacy and to have choices.**
- **Hiring policies so youth can work.** Lots of people don’t want to hire youth. Opportunities to link youth to employment.
- **Policies in public places that reduce harms related to alcohol, smoking, and vaping** including their advertising and promotion.
- **Reduce class sizes.** 30 is too big!
- **Better access to health care for youth 18 and under.** Especially psychiatry.
- **Improve justice system and wait times.**
- **Affordable housing.**

- **Communication strategy** – getting the word out there on what is happening and available. Texting is better than email or Facebook. Explore ways to engaging youth and getting them to sign up for group text from recreation dept. (recognizing this means youth have to initiate the process).
- **Asset mapping** – determine what is available. Have a large scale dissemination plan to keep adults, service providers and youth informed and up to date. One place to get information on what is available based on interest, age, or other criteria.
- **Fix the counsellor to student ration in schools** – currently 1:500.
- **Address housing needs for youth.**
- **Connect youth to the working world.**





COMMUNITY

Youths' sense of belongingness and connection to the people, cultures, and places in their lives. Communities also offer accessible resources that are relevant to overall well-being. Youth are valued as contributing, welcomed members of the community.



COMMUNITY



Are youth connected to community? Youth feel grounded when they are connected to their community and see that they are part of a larger vision. This strengthens their resilience, builds self-confidence, and helps them develop as leaders. Community participation helps youth become empathetic citizens, learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and promotes positive civic action. Young people who are valued as active contributors in their community are more likely to remain in, or return to their local area; sustaining the community and contributing to its long-term success. Young people are residents and citizens too and should be engaged and included as such. Fostering community connectedness has long lasting effects on health and well-being. Youth who feel connected to their community are significantly less likely to experience mental health challenges, engage in risky sexual behavior, experience violence, or use substances into adulthood.* 2,3,5

*Adapted from UNNICEF Canada | Child and Youth Wellbeing | 2019 Baseline Digest Report

HOW ARE WE PROMOTING BELONGING?

- *Building and supporting recreation facilities*
- *Youth events, programming and jobs. Options for internships and Co-op/O2 Students*
- *Residential options for those with special needs; supporting those with special needs to participate and find meaning in community*
- *Linking school GSAs with community supports for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth*
- *Providing employment and life skills programming that is healthy, positive and inclusive*
- *Advocacy for culturally responsive support and partnerships to support youth and families, and access to transport*
- *Facilitating links between school-home-community and coordinating comprehensive service plans to bring partners together*
- *Offering programming beyond the school day (after hours, weekends, march break and summer)*
- *Laing house - youth led programming (peer support, member driven programs)*
- *Subsidized memberships and youth access to recreation facilities*

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOUTH THRIVE?

- *Offer new community members access to recreation and community*
- *Create more safe public spaces with supportive adults available*
- *Provide diversity training*
- *Be present, mindful and listen*
- *Be client and youth centered*
- *Support those who provide care*

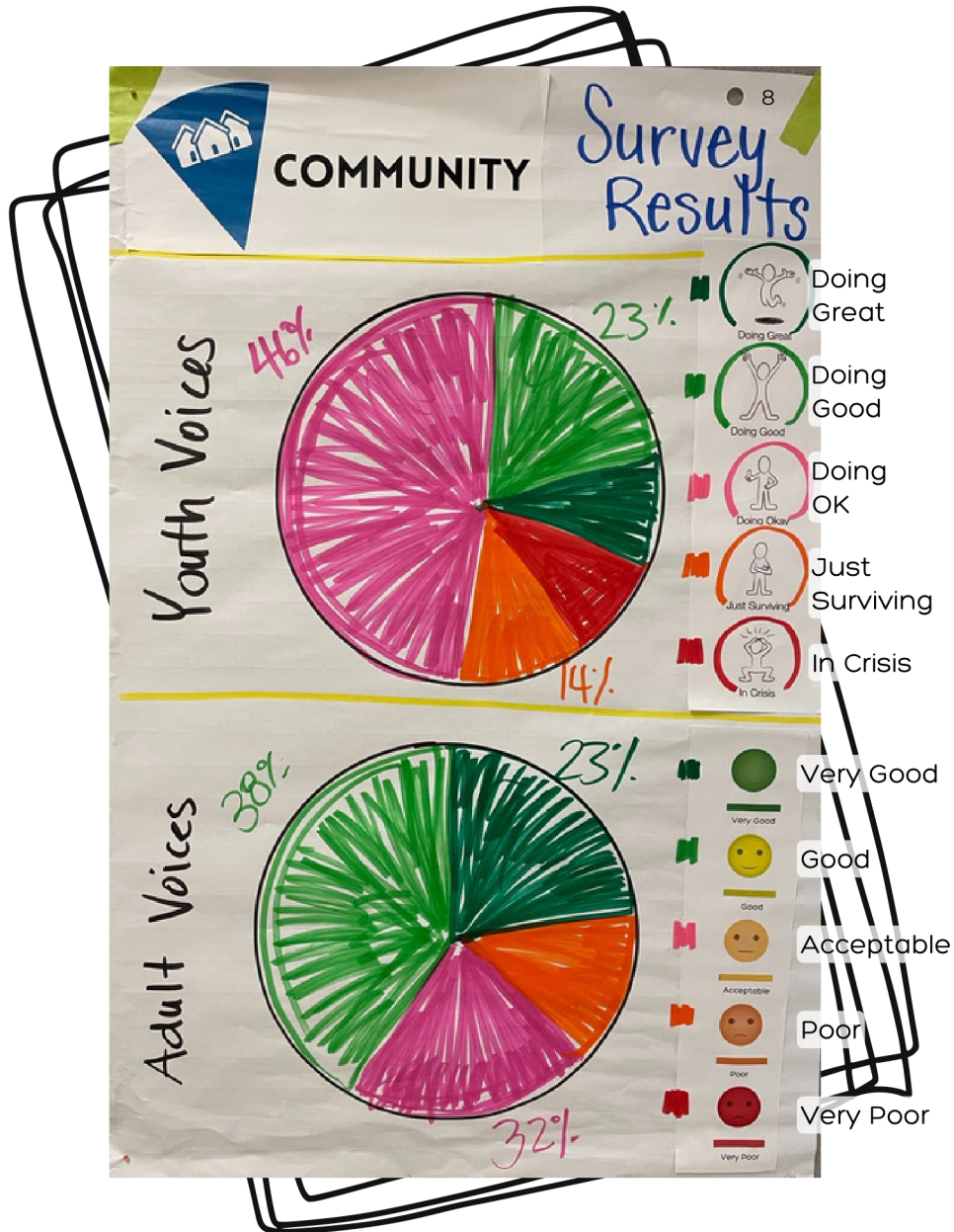
WHAT IF WE

dream
BIG

- *No silos*
- *Enough services and supports for all*
- *Free space to hang out and connect*
- *Youth Centre, such as in all schools*
- *Teenage after school programs*
- *Transition support from one service to the next with collaboration between services*
- *Transportation and bus service for youth to access extra-curricular activities.*



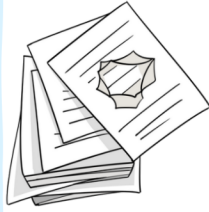
Are youth connected to community? When youth are connected to community they can find what they need to help them thrive; they feel welcomed and are active and valued contributors. A third (30%) of youth in the tri-counties report feeling left out or lonely, 25% feel isolated from community and 44% do not feel they are part of a group of people who share their attitudes and beliefs. About 35% have indicated some involvement in civic engagement activities, like joining an an online discussion or writing a letter about a local issue or participating in a local event for charity. ^{2, 6, 7}



WHAT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES, POLICY CHANGES, OR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY?



COMMUNITY



PROGRAMS &
ACTIVITIES

SERVICES &
ORG SPACES



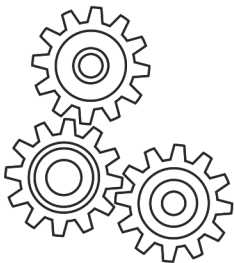
- *Improve access to programs and activities all year* (free gym, music and arts programs, work experience programs, cultural and music festivals, relationship support, summer programs for 12 and up, forest survival camps, etc).
- *Communication via text messaging preferred*; secondary advertising over Facebook, snap chat, Instagram. Seek out youth directly (hang outs, school).
- *Event calendar coming via website*; consider a printed community calendar via schools, mailed out.
- *Low or no cost programming and activities*, cost of participation a barrier (more than just registration; clothing, transportation, equipment).
- *Asset mapping resource with lists of contacts.*
- *Hold focus groups with specific targets and develop action plans.*
- *Need safe places to play and hang out.*
- *Volunteering opportunities.*
- *Language and equity for newcomers*
- *More focus on actually creating a welcoming community.*
- *Incentives for teachers to do extra-curricular activities*

-
- *A community hub for gathering, socialization and making connection.* Opportunities for community to gather. Spaces where generation connections can be made.
 - *Pool halls or safe nighttime spaces for youth.*
 - *Services after school while students have free time and are often waiting around.*
 - *Create spaces with youth in mind.*
 - *Transportation to places, services and activities.*
 - *Creating opportunities for groups*; targeting and engaging specific groups.
 - *Cultural awareness and diversity days.* More diverse opportunities.
 - *Gaps in services and opportunities for 12 to 16 year olds*; smoking cessation and addiction services only for 16+. Difficult intake process for mental health (1-800#).
 - *Lack of knowledge of services and confusion around what is offered.* Navigation systems to connect people to services. Bulletin boards announcement in schools.
 - *Be open to youth and really listen to their input.*
 - *How to courses, to gain skills and connect with others.*



AND RULES
POLICIES

COLLECTIVE
IMPACT



- Reexamine how community spaces are used; retool underused facilities in community (e.g., recreation facilities, childcare centers, college campuses, schools) for public wellness and recreation.
- Too many robots speaking for us – no personal touch.
- Zero tolerance for any form of discrimination.
- Address the mental health intake process so it's more user friendly.
- Equity and inclusion in policies (signs on trails, different languages).
- Access to information and awareness of what is happening in community.
- Welcoming newcomers; language translation.
- Transportation links.

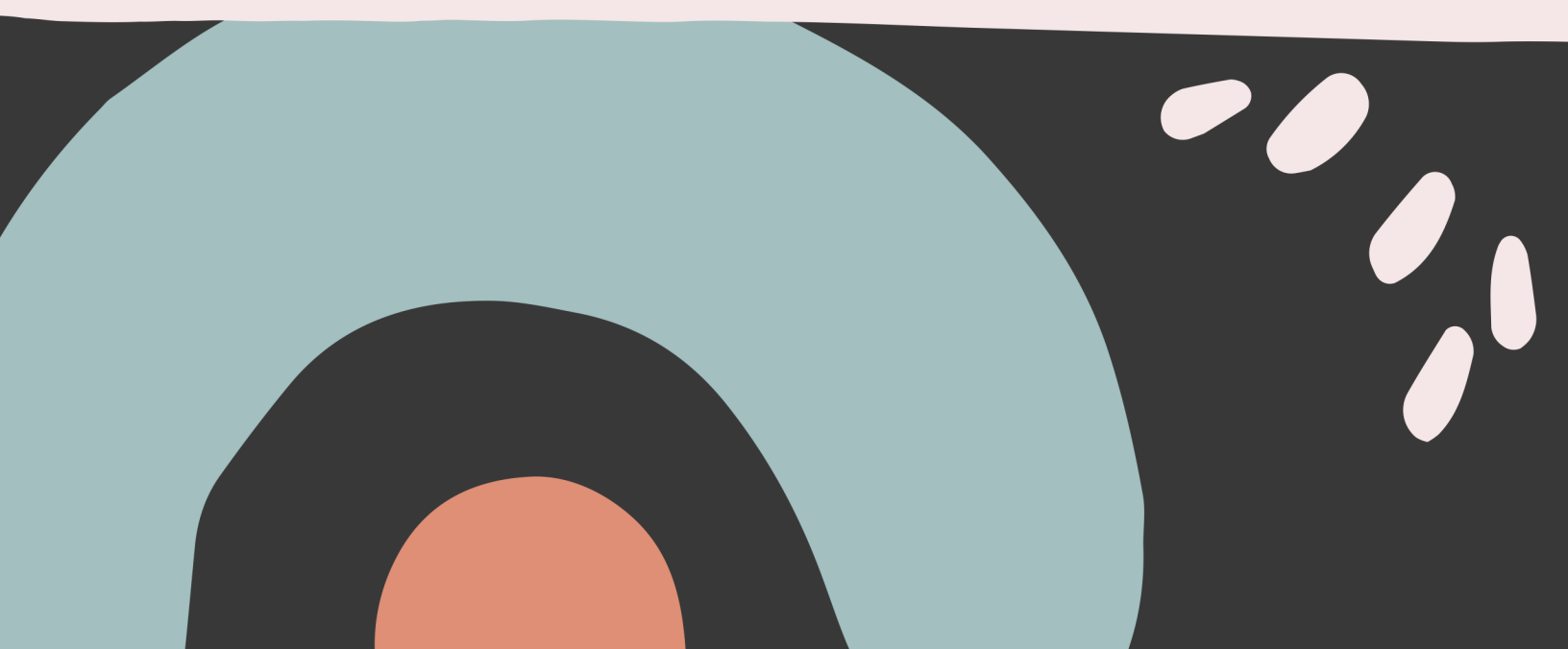


- Youth and community hub; creating spaces with youth in mind. Community wide calendar with opportunities in places that youth will see.
- Expand work opportunities and programs like 02; set everyone up for success.
- Regional advisory committee (RAC) with youth participation.
- Access to recreation facilities as a public good.
- Avoid working in silos.
- Promote existing services and programs.
- Less judgement more conversation.
- Easier access to support.
- Believing youth, taking their input and doing something with it.
- Building mutual respect between youth and adult through community.
- Address poverty.
- Identify and build on what we are already doing well.
- Empowering youth through volunteering.
- Focus on creating a sense of belonging.



COLLECTIVE IMPACT

thinking about the big picture





WHAT IS COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Collective impact brings people together in a structured way to achieve social change. How can we mobilize collaboration across sectors and domains for system change related to youth wellbeing across Yarmouth County?

thinking about the big picture

BE YOUTH CENTERED

- *Be Youth Centered; ensure children and youth are at the center of services, programs and decision – not the system!*
- *Include and engage youth effectively. Pay them for their time, input and efforts.*
- *Celebrate the good things*
- *Seek out youth from diverse and varied experiences, identities and backgrounds*

A SHARED VISION

- *Establish a Youth Table or Youth Action Team; improve partner collaboration, create a shared vision for youth wellbeing, develop an action plan and an implementation strategy. Monitor and evaluate wellbeing. Host regular meetings.*
- *Communicate, connect and coordinate community around youth issues. Engage youth! And offer a variety of ways to contribute.*
- *Develop a communication plan to share information on who offers what services, activities and programs.*
- *Explore opportunities for a Navigator or Coordinator to assist community in achieving these goals.*
- *Backbone organization to lead and organize around youth-centered actions.*
- *Make connections to local and current youth data and community actions.*

COMMUNITY HUB

- *Create youth spaces and explore opportunities to bring back youth serving organizations to Yarmouth (e.g., YMCA, United Way, Unicef).*
- *Maintaining the youth oriented space at Mariner's on Main is important to the community. Leaders should invest in supporting youth infrastructure and seek to partner with youth organizations that can support a youth-focused mandate.*
- *Discussions to create a youth hub at Mariner's on Main should be happening in conjunction with the mariner's center expansion. Teen spaces in Yarmouth have been neglected. Consider multi-generational use of this space (seniors' space during school hours, youth space after school and into the evening).*
- *Libraries are also a potential resource and space for youth that should be explored. Consider ways to create more youth friendly spaces across the county.*

FUNDING

- *Stable funding to support youth organizations and ensure they are sufficiently resourced.*
- *Recreation as a publicly funded service.*
- *Dedicated role or backbone organization focused on youth wellbeing.*



COLLECTIVE IMPACT

thinking about the big picture

MUNICIPAL

- *Make a commitment to recreation as a public good and prioritize decision using that lens (vs being a business). including increased understanding that these costs are off set elsewhere in the system when youth are disenfranchised.*
- *Attend to operating models for recreational facilities: Use of remnant space, increase community partnerships, facilitate creating a NFP. Adapt underused facilities for public wellness and recreation as an ongoing means to strengthen communities and fill gaps.*
- *Play an active role in reducing barriers to bring the YMCA (or other youth serving organization) back to Yarmouth. See the value of investing in youth early.*
- *Planning and zoning with youth in mind*
- *increase voice of recreation on planning advisory committee*
- *Establish youth advisory council in each municipality, consider making this a paid position. Ensure diversity in representation.*
- *Developments that integrate recreation, green spaces and parks (e.g. Truro and Bridgewater)*

TRANSPORTATION

- *Youth need transportation links between Yarmouth County communities.*
- *What role can school buses have in connecting youth to recreation programing, facilities or after-school opportunities.*

DATA & MEASUREMENTS

- *Advocate to ensure youth data is shared with community so responsive actions can be taken to support youth across multiple sectors. Reduce silos. (e.g., Student survey data, Early Development Instrument data).*
- *Youth table to monitor and evaluate data; establish accountability, provide regular updates, define opportunities for collaboration and monitoring of wellbeing actions.*
- *Annual survey of youth on the 8 domains. Partner with schools and other organizations.*
- *Having school level data will help folks know where to direct resources and how to meet needs in a responsive and effective way . Each school community is unique in what needs attention.*
- *Advocate for regular monitoring of youth outcomes (e.g., EDI, MDI, Wellbeing Toolkit, UNICEF Index of Child and Youth Wellbeing, school data measures)*





NEXT STEPS

priorities and considerations



SETTING PRIORITIES

Following the world café conversations, where participants discussed what would make a difference if implemented in our community, each person was **asked to identify their top 3 priorities for immediate attention**. Their ideas, as a dotmocracy exercise, created our wellbeing tree seen in the adjacent picture. The identified priorities are themed below.



227 votes cast
TOP 3 PRIORITIES
Mental Wellness
Community Hub
A Youth Voice

36

MENTAL WELLNESS

Addressing barriers to mental wellness was mentioned 36 times and included access to drop in services, reducing stigma, providing peer support, fixing the intake process, youth access to addiction and counseling services, trauma informed care, postvention supports for suicide, mental wellness activities and sufficient funding for community mental health initiatives.

32

COMMUNITY HUB

Creating safe spaces for youth was named 32 times as an immediate priority. This included bringing back a youth serving organization, converting the Mariners on Main (MoM) into a youth center or community hub. As well as creating safe and inclusive spaces where youth could hang out, socialize, build a sense of community and be supported.

24

A YOUTH VOICE

Engaging and including youth in decision making was named 24 times. Youth voices matter and youth would like the opportunity to be heard by adult leaders in our community. Youth directed planning, opportunities for leadership, a youth council, a seat at advisory tables and more events like this one were all mentioned.

20

FUNDING

Free access to recreational programming and sustained funding for youth based initiatives in the community. Funding for universal breakfast and lunch programs to reduce food insecurity was also identified.



SETTING PRIORITIES



18

A SENSE OF PURPOSE

Providing more opportunities for skill development, mentorship and career planning in order to build a sense of purpose was identified 18 times as a priority.

18

SEXUAL HEALTH

Improved access to sexual health information and resources including sex ed, healthy relationships, consent and boundaries as well as supports for sexual assault, contraception, STI's, pregnancy and abortion.

14

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

Awareness of available services and programs, asset mapping and supports to help youth navigate complex systems and improve access to services was identified 14 times as a priority.

14

INCLUSION

Including and valuing the contributions of persons with disabilities or learning differences in meaningful ways. Reducing hate, intolerance and inequities. More cultural appreciation.

12

HEALTHY LIVING

More non-competitive recreational opportunities and a focus on healthy living for youth of varying abilities; including opportunities to connect more with nature.

12

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Many indicated a need to focus on building genuine and caring relationships between youth and adults in their communities; for support, encouragement and connection.

12

LEARNING

More opportunities for hands on learning, including learning from elders and outdoor indigenous teachings. Greater course and activity opportunities, especially at smaller schools. More resources for schools to meet a variety of needs.

10

YOUTH TABLE

A coordinated focus on meeting the needs of youth in our community to reduce silos and increase collaboration. Opportunities to engage and involve youth, monitor and evaluate wellbeing, and move priorities along .

5

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation links across Yarmouth County communities both to access services and resources but also to participate in recreational and cultural activities.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Being around others who believe that there is greater power in our collective actions than in our individual ones is an important step in resolving any issue. Communities are fundamental to our sense of wellbeing and provide us with our basic needs: friendship, companionship, shared work, safety, belonging and a sense of purpose.



It's everyone's responsibility to contribute to the wellbeing of the community – and each of us can do something within our means. While no one organization or sector is solely responsible to address any one domain, together, our collective actions can improve the health and wellbeing of our community. Certainly the amount of information collected and presented within each of these domains can feel overwhelming. We cannot accomplish everything at once, but we can set goals and get started on moving change forward; one step at a time.

"Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together" - Van Gogh

The Youth in Yarmouth Planning Team invites all sectors to consider the feedback gained and what they can intentionally do to contribute to youth wellbeing in our community; making changes one step at a time to improve the conditions by which children and youth learn, live, grow and play within organizations and across the community. The following content summarizes the discussion across domains by sector, for consideration. Many of the solutions and ideas identified have implications across multiple sectors and domains simultaneously.

Opportunities already taking shape:

Headstrong Youth Summit

The Agenda Gap

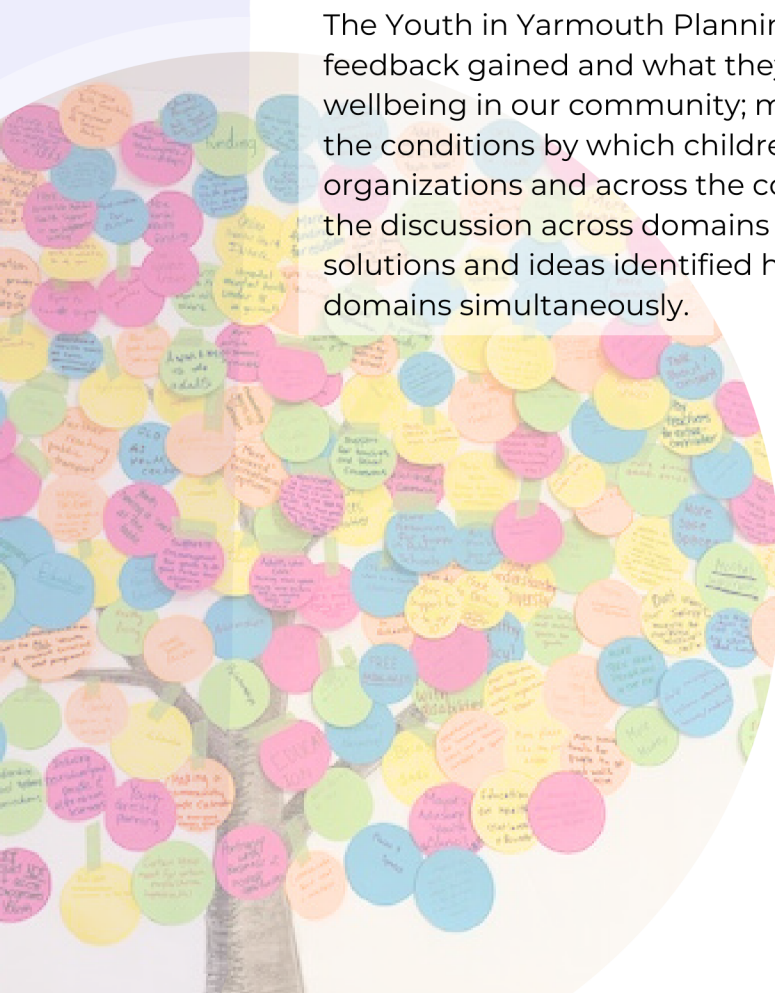
Trail Development Conference

Youth Health Centers

West Nova Youth Council

Service Fairs & Connections

Integrated Youth Services Funding



FOR CONSIDERATION



FACILITIES

Recreational facilities, libraries, community halls, and college or university campuses

Themes related to facilities focused on reducing barriers to access, creating youth friendly spaces, improving community partnerships and collaborative efforts, and more youth centered programming and opportunities.

- **Consider ways to remove or reduce barriers that limit access due to age or income.** Offer opportunities for free or low-cost access to recreation, programming and leisure. Reduce costs for youth; if it can't be free, offer pay what you can, low cost or lower hourly rates vs day passes. Address policies that limit youth aged 10-15 years from participating. Reduce the requirement to prove you need financial support.
- **Facilities should consider re-examining how their community spaces are used to ensure youth have safe and welcoming places to hang out, free of charge.** Youth express wanting safe evening spaces to gather that are designed with them in mind. Retool underused facilities in community (e.g., recreation facilities, childcare centers, libraries, community halls, college campuses, schools) for public wellness and recreation. Consider ways to ensure there are people within facilities whose job it is to make spaces welcoming and to build trusting relationships with youth. Create spaces free from substance harms; drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping.
- **Improve community partnerships and collaborative efforts** between schools, community organizations, recreation departments and facilities to increase access and focus on youth. Prioritize youth needs and help them build core skills. Consider recreational facilities as a public good and use that lens in operating models and fee structures. Offer remnant space at no to low cost to community serving partners. Seek to deliver programming collaboratively with community organizations to increase access to recreation and leisure activities. Leverage trusting relationships these organizations have with youth. Consider a not-for-profit arm for grants and to run programs.
- **Mariner's Centre expansion seen as an opportunity** to consider the use and purpose of the Mariner's on Main (MoM) space as a potential youth and intergenerational community hub (seniors during school day, youth space after school). Consider the role of that space to bring back a youth serving organization that focuses on youth development and fosters a sense of social responsibility, purpose and skill building. Community leaders should consider exploring this option alongside the expansion, not afterwards.
- **Youth would like regular and more frequent programming opportunities** during the evening and on weekends that are designed with them in mind (e.g., "teen take over" every week). Include diverse, playful, creative and non-competitive activity options and offer these in a variety of spaces (libraries, outdoors, after school, parks, facilities).

FOR CONSIDERATION



DECISION MAKERS

Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governments, councilors and decision makers

Themes related to governments and decision makers included engaging youth advisory councils; applying the lens that recreation is a public good; leadership around public policy that supports families and youth; and investing in community initiatives that support youth development.

- **Consider opportunities to engage youth in decision making and establish youth advisory councils.** Explore ways to include youth in planning and zoning decisions and find ways to help youth contribute to the design or enhancements of public spaces (murals, parks, buildings).
- **Approach recreation as a public good.** Take a balanced approach in the operating models and assess which items are revenue generating, cost recovery or subsidized. See recreation as essential to health, social and cultural life, and economic development. By making these investments, communities can create more livable and vibrant places for people to live, work, and play. Changing how recreation is prioritized and investing in youth early helps off set costs elsewhere in the system when youth are disenfranchised. Rework annual budgets to include more subsidized access (at low or no cost).
- Municipal governments should **consider supporting, advocating for and/or implementing public policy that supports families and youth including;** increasing affordable housing, implementing a basic income, funding universal school food programs, addressing transportation gaps, funding recreation as a public good, and reducing harms related to alcohol advertising and promotion.
- Community leaders and local governments should **consider providing leadership, funding and support towards re-establishing a youth serving organization** (e.g., YMCA, UNICEF, United Way, etc.) that is dedicated to the development of young people from a variety of backgrounds, circumstances and experiences. Explore options to turn Mariner's on Main (MoM) into a youth center or community hub along with the Mariner's Centre expansion project.

FOR CONSIDERATION



COMMUNITY

Service providers, community organizations and the not-for-profit sector

Themes relating to community include helping youth make connections to available services, supporting sexual health, providing safe spaces to connect with trusted adults and peers, and the formation of a child and youth action table to increase collaboration and joint planning on critical issues.

- **Consider ways to work collaboratively to help youth and those serving youth to know what is available for support across the community.** This could include the integration of a youth navigator, generating and maintaining an asset map, a communication strategy to build awareness about youth-serving organizations and the programs they offer, and connecting better with students both in school and no longer attending school.
- **Explore ways to provide more opportunities to support sexual development and health;** including understanding healthy relationships, identifying and talking about feelings, dating, intimacy, decision making and consent; body image, diverse identities, gender, personal space and boundaries, toxic relationships, online safety and pornography.
- **Youth want more opportunities to connect with adults, build trusting relationships, find mentorship and support both in and out of school.** Advocate for a youth-based community organization that is dedicated to the development of young people from a variety of backgrounds, circumstances and experiences. Help create safe spaces in community, including a youth hub, to hang out, gather, make connections and feel safe to unwind and relax. Consider the role of a volunteer coordinator to support skill or career based learning.
- **Work collaboratively to form a child and youth action table** to proactively identify common priorities, monitor wellbeing, action plan, engage youth, make connections to local and current data and coordinate efforts around addressing issues impacting children and youth. Use a collective impact approach to orient work towards results and change.

FOR CONSIDERATION



EDUCATION

TCRCE, CSAP, school environments, parent advisory councils, and wellbeing committees

Themes relevant the school community include improving access to guidance counselling and career exploration; opportunities for more hands-on learning, leadership development and volunteering; common spaces for destressing, relaxing and gathering; enhancing supports for mental wellness and health education; sharing student survey data with community so gaps can be addressed and improving policies related to wellness.

- Students indicate a desire for **more opportunities to explore career options and to learn about and try a variety of jobs.** The current student to guidance counsellor ratio was reported as being low, impacting access. Consider developing partnerships with the business sector and NS Works to expand career exploration.
- Students would also like **more hands-on-learning opportunities that include mentorship, leadership skill building and volunteering.** Developing partnerships and creating an inventory of individuals, businesses or organizations that could mentor youth or have skills to share may help facilitate more capacity building opportunities.
- **Creating safe common spaces at school where students can socialize, gather and destress.** This was identified as important to supporting wellbeing. Bathrooms are often seen as the only option when a student needs a break, but they are seen as unsafe (intimidation, vaping, drugs). Consider ways to ensure safe spaces are staffed with people youth can talk to, without an appointment, about the issues they are dealing with.
- **Strengthen and adopt policies that protect youth wellbeing.** Eliminate advertising alcohol, cannabis, vaping, and food industries; support food and nutrition policies including fundraising; ensure bullying is addressed.
- **Partner with community to support transition from school** to after school activity options. Consider a late-bus option to support participation.
- **Enhancing access to supports for mental wellness and health education, at school,** was frequently mentioned across many domains. Youth would like access to trusted adults they can talk to on a variety of issues, without an appointment or long intake process. Youth desire support groups at schools that focus intentionally on developing coping skills, helping youth discover who they are and how to boost confidence, improving mental wellness and managing stress. Developing partnerships with community service providers, arranging consistent drop-in support and service fairs were seen as options that would facilitate connections between service providers, school staff and students. Bringing back support workers, mental health and addiction counsellors and sexual health nurses, within the school, with sufficient time to build trusting relationships with youth was also named as a priority.
- **More education pertaining to sexual health** including understanding healthy relationships; identifying and talking about feelings; dating, and intimacy; decision making and consent; body image; diverse identities; gender; personal space and boundaries; online safety and pornography is also needed.
- **Share results from school and student surveys with community** to help service providers know where to direct resources and how to support the school community in meeting the needs of youth in a responsive and effective way. Advocate for regular monitoring of youth outcomes. (e.g., EDI, MDI, Wellbeing Toolkit, UNICEF Index of Child and Youth Wellbeing, school data measures & surveys).

FOR CONSIDERATION



HEALTH

Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Health Services, NS Health, and Community Health Boards

Themes relevant to the health sector include addressing the intake process for mental health and addiction services; community outreach of health services; support to help communities reduce the stigma of mental illness and deliver evidence-based support services; facilitating the implementation of healthy public policy; and supporting the creation of a youth table to monitor and understand the evolving needs of children and youth.

- **Consider applying a youth-centered lens to the current intake process** for access to mental health and addiction services. The existing process was identified across several domains as a barrier for youth when attempting to access services, even with adult assistance and support. Youth also identified needing more drop-in options to connect with service providers and participate in programming, with no registration or intake at all.
- To improve access, **consider ways to prioritize delivering mental health and addiction services that are embedded in the community** and open to everyone, rather than in the hospital. Community outreach is less stigmatizing for youth and offers better access to students but also helps support youth not enrolled in school who may be struggling. Explore options to address service gaps including attending to youth at risk of suicide, smoking cessation and addiction supports and treatment for youth aged 12-16 years.
- **Explore ways to strengthen the capacity of services providers to support mental wellness**, reduce the stigma of mental illness and deliver evidence-based support services in community, including peer to peer supports. Offer assistance and education on how to talk about mental and sexual health and how to support those living with mental health challenges. Provide evidence-based communication on suicide, addiction and postvention, and strategies to support mental wellness within community and at school.
- **Help communities strengthen and adopt policies that protect youth wellbeing and applies an equity lens** including improving housing and living conditions, implementing a basic income, funding universal school food programs, healthy food and nutrition policies, addressing transportation gaps, providing recreation as a public good, reducing harms related to alcohol and tobacco, advertising, marketing and fundraising.
- **Work collaboratively to form a child and youth action table** to proactively identify common priorities, monitor wellbeing, action plan, engage youth, make connections to local and current data and coordinate efforts around addressing issues impacting children and youth. Use a collective impact approach to orient work towards results and change.

FOR CONSIDERATION



RECREATION

Recreation Departments, after-school programs, arts and cultural programs

Themes related to recreation and leisure focused on expanding opportunities for youth to engage in hobbies and interests unrelated to sports, enhancing communication, improving after school access to sport and recreation, and increasing community partnerships to support capacity, resiliency and skill building of youth.

- **Consider expanding programming opportunities to engage youth in more diverse, playful, creative and non-competitive activity and hobby options.** Youth indicate wanting more opportunities to connect with the outdoors (e.g., gardening, planting, camping) and explore a variety of activities (e.g., cooking, arts, theater, music, board games, crafts, gaming, computer programming, yoga, general fitness).
- **Enhancing communication and access to information on what is happening** in the community related to age, interests and activity was also identified as a priority. This could include developing a central communication hub, a youth-friendly advertising strategy (youth do not use email or Facebook) and options to search for relevant opportunities or target specific locations. Establishing communication via text messaging was indicated as the best way of connecting with youth (secondary options include Snapchat, Instagram).
- **Explore opportunities to increase free access to sport and recreation programming after-school**, while students have free time and are often waiting around, for youth of varying skill levels. This could include free try-it programs, non-competitive sports, drop-in basketball, nature hikes, and resources to teach youth new skills and help them take healthy risks. Targeting and engaging specific groups, meeting youth where they're at, and creating opportunities around their needs would help encourage participation uptake.
- **Consider ways to strengthening partnerships** between schools, community organizations, recreational facilities and recreation departments. Deliver collaborative programming that supports capacity, resiliency and skill building of youth. Work to create a seamless transition from school to after school activity options. Consider a late-bus pilot to support participation. Advocate for recreation to be seen as a public good; essential to health, social and cultural life, and economic development.

FOR CONSIDERATION



BUSINESS

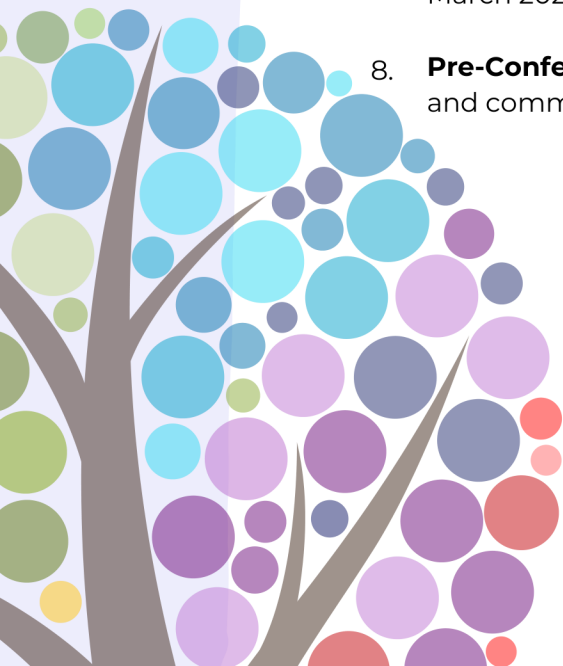
Business community, volunteer and employment programs, trades, and the corporate sector

Themes related to the business community include increasing opportunities for community-based learning and exploration, connecting youth to the working world and leading community-based succession planning.

- **Work collaboratively with education to increase opportunities for community-based learning and exploration to help youth gain exposure to different jobs**, increase knowledge of what exists, and support career exploration. Increase opportunities for youth and adults to build connections through skill development, mentorship and volunteering. Consider the role of a volunteer coordinator to organize opportunities and match youth, keep updated contacts, make connections, support placements and expand capacity building of youth and community to support each other.
- **Help connect youth to the working world** by strengthening partnerships between Nova Scotia Works, the business community, education and youth to establish programming that expands career development opportunities. Explore funding streams to help connect youth to career exploration, mentorship and internship placements across a variety of jobs and trades.
- **Pursue opportunities to lead community-based succession planning**; build up young leaders in the community, identify and develop future talent, challenge youth with real world situations, provide mentorship and coaching to solve and analyze problems and make decisions.

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on behalf of the planning team

THANK YOU

*To the youth and adult participants for
sharing their ideas and solutions.*

*To the youth facilitators and table hosts for
engaging youth and capturing content.*