

New Brunswick Youth Engagement Initiative

Promoting Positive Youth and
Community Development



A Handbook for
Implementation

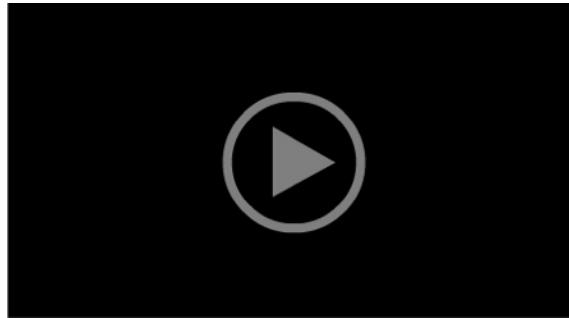


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Introduction



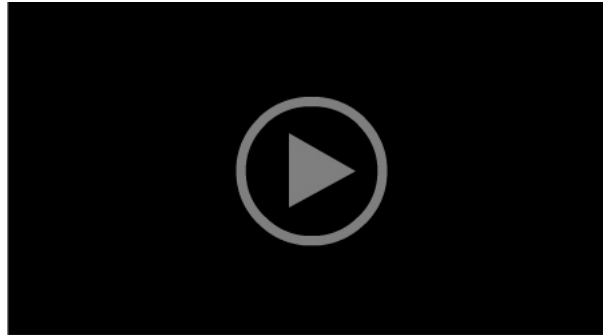
As part of the NB Youth Engagement Initiative sponsored by Health Canada and the New Brunswick Department of Health, we have created an eBook resource to assist youth and adults in working together to promote positive youth development and to reduce risks associated with such areas of concern as problem substance use, bullying behaviours, lack of school connectedness, and criminal activity.



The intent of the NB Youth Engagement Initiative is to promote the physical and psychological wellness of youth through enhancing adult and youth connectedness, drawing on the collective strengths of these relationships, and providing youth with leadership opportunities in the community.

We hope that you enjoy this resource and look forward to receiving feedback from you on how you have used the information in this e-book and how it has been applied to your youth engagement process.

What is Youth Engagement?



According to the Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being, "Youth engagement is the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, with a focus outside of him or herself." The kind of activity in which the youth is engaged can be almost anything - sports, the arts, music, volunteer work, politics, social activism - and it can occur in almost any kind of setting.

Youth Engagement activities are most successful when they draw on the strengths, interests and gifts of youth and include the collaboration of supporting and caring adults from their communities.

Youth Engagement...



- ◆ Empowers youth to collaborate with their peers in the development of their own solutions
- ◆ Provides opportunities for youth to express their thoughts and feelings without judgment
- ◆ Encourages youth to identify and use their strengths in setting and pursuing goals
- ◆ Emphasizes fairness and

- social inclusion in school and community-wide activities
- ◆ Reaches out to youth who do not feel part of the community
- ◆ Focuses on developing positive, collaborative relationships with parents and caring adults from the community

(CAP, 2009)

What is Youth Engagement?

Youth Engagement is about Building Positive Relationships...

Current research supports the importance of positive youth relationships as key protective factors in promoting the psychosocial development of youth, and in reducing risks associated with the development of problem substance use issues.



Relationship factors include:

- ◆ Feeling cared about by family members
- ◆ Having caring adults who are there to help during difficult times or circumstances
- ◆ Feeling connected to or being part of a school community of youth and adults
- ◆ Having friends who demonstrate pro-social values and who are supportive and nonjudgmental

What is Youth Engagement?

Youth Engagement is about using our collective strengths...

Recent better practice research has asserted the importance of moving beyond a singular focus on problems to incorporate an increased emphasis on youth and adult strengths and their potential. When such methods are applied, emerging issues or problems become opportunities for pursuing positive and healthy change.



Using strengths involves:

Recognizing the strengths of youth and community members:

Strengths are often not talked about or focused on when areas of concern such as problem substance use are discussed. Recognition and sharing of strengths contributes to greater ease in communication among youth and adults, and promotes the development of trusting relationships.

Creating opportunities for the use of strengths: It is essential not only to identify the strengths of youth and adults, but also to apply their strengths in activities that contribute to problem substance use prevention and early intervention. Such efforts may entail reaching out to those who are not usually engaged in youth-focused activities, and seeing the potential of their contribution toward bringing about positive changes in their own lives and the lives of others.

Expressing appreciation and encouragement: Sharing words of appreciation and encouragement communicates to others that their presence as part of the team and their contributions are valued and celebrated. Such efforts build self-esteem and confidence in both youth and adults.

Relationships and Mental Fitness

In our relationships, it is essential that we model interactions and relationship-building approaches that are healthy and that contribute to successful Youth Engagement. Self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2007) asserts that healthy relationships among youth and adults contribute to the fulfillment of core psychological wellness needs in people. These psychological wellness needs, or *mental fitness* needs, include:

- ◆ **Relatedness**
- ◆ **Competency**
- ◆ **Autonomy**



When these needs are met within individuals, people experience greater motivation and self-efficacy in pursuing positive and healthy changes in their lives and communities. When these needs are met within our relationships, places such as schools and communities become settings in which psychological wellness is fostered in both the self and others.

Click here to further explore the difference mental fitness can make in the health and wellness of youth.

Relationships and Mental Fitness

What are the Key Mental Fitness Needs?

Relatedness

Refers to our need for connection to and closeness with family, peers and other significant individuals. Fulfillment of this need is met through interaction with others, our membership in groups, and the support and encouragement we receive from others.

- ◆ "I belong; I am part of a group and part of the community."
- ◆ "I feel included, encouraged and supported by others in the community."

Competency

Refers to our need for recognizing and using our personal gifts and strengths in achieving personal goals. Fulfillment of this need provides individuals with a sense of personal achievement and accomplishment.

- ◆ "I have strengths and gifts that are recognized by myself and others in the community."
- ◆ When I use my strengths to meet my goals, I feel a sense of worth and accomplishment."

Autonomy

Refers to our need for personal freedom to make choices or decisions that affect our lives. When this need is satisfied in conjunction with other need areas, freedom and choice are expressed in ways in which respect is demonstrated for self and others.

- ◆ "I am able to make decisions about things that are important to me."
- ◆ "I am hopeful because others support me in being an active participant in making choices."

Relationships and Mental Fitness

Think about it...

Think about a time when you were most passionate, proud and excited about what you were doing.



What mental fitness needs were being met in your relationships with others?



Why were these needs important to you?



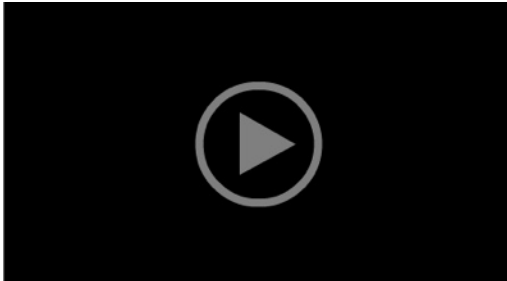
In what ways did these relationships make a positive difference in the way you felt about yourself and others?

**The benefits
are
numerous**

"If students are given responsibility, it is amazing how they will rise to the challenge, especially in a way that makes them feel good about themselves."

- Youth Engagement Adult Participant

The New Brunswick Youth Engagement Initiative



The Department of Health's Addiction and Mental Health Services encourages the meaningful engagement of youth in community-based activities that contribute to the development of protective factors that prevent or reduce problem substance use,

bullying, criminal activity and violence; and promote resiliency and positive mental health among all youth.

In February of 2009, 3-year funding was provided by Health Canada's Drug Strategy Community Initiatives Fund (DSCIF) to launch the New Brunswick Youth Engagement Initiative. The goals of this three-year initiative are primarily to increase recognition of youth as valued partners in promoting positive change; fostering connectedness among youth, their families and the wider community; and encouraging the participation of youth as leaders in setting directions for positive change.

Various provincial government departments, the RCMP, municipal police forces, schools, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community members are working together to mobilize communities through youth engagement. Youth create change by identifying the root causes of problems specific to their own communities. They also suggest strategies to combat their problems through youth-led, adult-supported discussions. These discussions result in community action plans focused on creating healthier and safer environments for all community members.



For questions regarding this initiative, please contact the Youth Engagement Coordinator at 506-444-4442.

Promising Youth Engagement Practices



The following key practices were identified as critical to the successful implementation of the New Brunswick Youth Engagement Initiative. These practices are important considerations as you move through the Steps to Implementation that follow.



1) Promote Awareness about the Benefits of Youth Engagement

Benefits of youth engagement include:

- ◆ Increased sense of connectedness among community youth and adults
- ◆ Enhanced recognition of youth perspectives and strengths
- ◆ More collaborative efforts among families and community stakeholders to promote healthy youth development.

Potential awareness activities might include carrying out special presentations or sessions to explain youth engagement concepts and their benefits, as well as sharing or telling stories of success from previously implemented youth engagement initiatives.



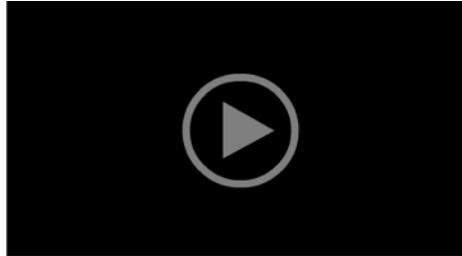
2) Create a Comfortable Environment for Youth and Adults

The establishment of a relaxed, flexible and nurturing environment is critical for promoting positive interactions and relationship development among youth and adults. Such environments are characterized by mutual respect and a commitment to listening to and affirming the perspectives of others.

Promising Youth Engagement Practices



3) Consult Youth on Community and Youth Priorities



To be fully engaged, youth should be provided with opportunities for sharing their perspectives and concerns related to their current school or community settings. Similarly, youth should be invited to be active participants in building solutions to address such areas of priority for them.

4) Listen to Individual Perspectives

Youth should be provided with the opportunity to share their perspectives through individual conversations with others when they are not comfortable expressing their personal ideas or concerns in a group context.

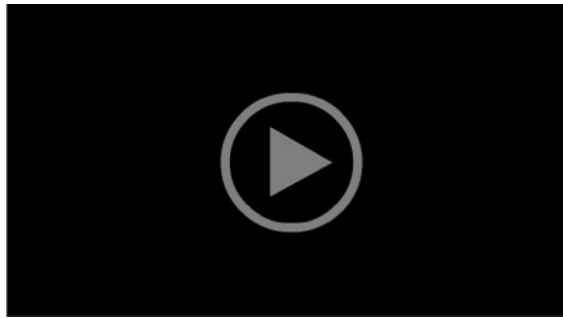
5) Engage and Develop Youth Leadership Potential

Youth should be invited to participate in leadership roles or to serve on planning teams that set directions for local youth engagement initiatives and activities. Youth leadership training events should make use of visual, interactive and hands-on learning activities that challenge youth to reflect on their personal values, choices and decision-making approaches.

Promising Youth Engagement Practices



6) Engage and Involve Caring Community Adults



It is critical for youth to experience the **sustained** support of caring community adults who provide practical guidance and advocacy for them. Effectively supporting youth involves being non-judgmental, having empathy for youths' values and beliefs, and demonstrating an honest and straightforward approach in addressing areas of concern.

7) Ensure Sufficient Community Representation and Support

Support for youth engagement activities should be elicited from a wide range of community stakeholders who are committed to and interested in positive youth development and growth.

Partnerships may include local schools, community businesses, nonprofit and religious organizations and youth-serving agencies. The inclusion of community stakeholders and the development of partnership capacities are essential for creating positive support and momentum for youth engagement, both at the outset of initiatives and over the longterm.



Promising Youth Engagement Practices



8) Design Engagement Activities that Draw on Youth Strengths and Interests

Youth are validated and motivated to participate when their strengths and interests are used in the development and implementation of youth engagement activities. The inclusion of strengths contributes to a more personalized, innovative and positive approach for addressing areas of risk or concern related to youth development.

9) Create Opportunities for Adult-Youth Mentorship

Youth engagement strategies may also include opportunities for adult-youth mentorship programs where youth are linked with adults who understand their needs, and who model and teach life skills related to specialized youth interests or goals. Important considerations in mentoring relationships include creating a comfortable environment for youth and adults, finding common interests, and developing approaches to address areas of difficulty or challenge.

10) Follow-up and Evaluate Youth Engagement Activities

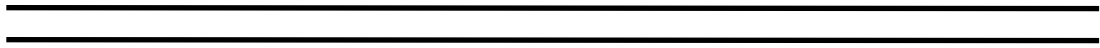
Following the implementation of preliminary youth engagement activities, it is beneficial to follow up with community youth and adults regarding their perspectives on the event. Informal conversations or structured interviews may provide an important source of information for reviewing what went well, what could be changed, and what made a difference for those involved in the activity or initiative.

Promising Youth Engagement Practices



11) Exchange Stories and Lessons Learned with Other Communities

Sharing youth engagement stories and accomplishments with others provides a means for gaining new ideas about how community youth and adults may collaborate together to address areas of common concern or priority. When youth engagement stakeholders come together, new opportunities also emerge for working collaboratively across regions.



Steps to Implementation

The following steps can help to guide your implementation of the New Brunswick Youth Engagement Initiative within your community. Representatives from the Department of Health are available to further discuss, explain or help you with these steps.

Typically, contact with the Department of Health is initiated by a single individual or small group of adults who have heard about the NB Youth Engagement Initiative and who envision a better way to address the needs of youth in their community.

Contact:
Youth Engagement Coordinator
Department of Health
506-444-4442



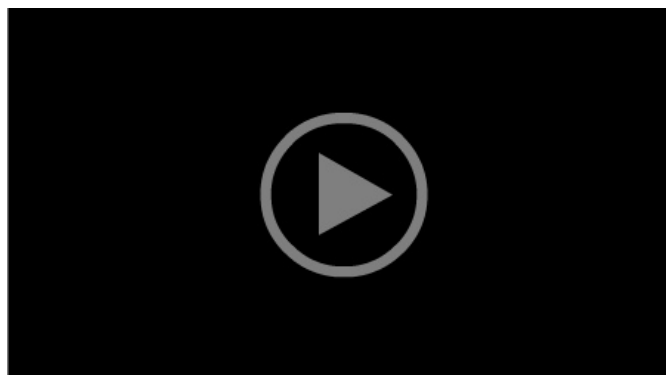
1.

Creating your Community Team

The creation of an initial core Community Team comprised of dedicated community youth and adults is a critical first step when setting out to implement the NB Youth Engagement Initiative in your community.

Steps to Implementation

Before you set up your team, it will be important to evaluate the level of adult and youth interest in youth engagement. To do this, it may be beneficial to hold conversations with others about what youth engagement is and which youth engagement practices are most effective.



In addition to your conversations with community youth and adults, representatives from the Department of Health are available to provide an orientation session on the NB Youth Engagement Initiative to young people and adults from your community.

Orientation sessions or conversations about youth engagement might include such areas of discussion as:

- ◆ What is youth engagement?
- ◆ What role can adults play in supporting youth leadership?
- ◆ Are we ready to commit to moving through the steps of the youth engagement process?
- ◆ What youth, adult, and community strengths do we have that could be helpful in moving forward with a youth engagement initiative in our community or region?
- ◆ What other youth or adults could be involved who are not attending this first discussion meeting?



Steps to Implementation

Adults and youth who are part of initial discussions about the NB Youth Engagement Initiative are encouraged to seek out the support of other individuals who might be interested in hearing more about or becoming involved in the initiative. The dedication of sufficient numbers of community adults is critical for supporting the engagement, participation and leadership in the NB Youth Engagement Initiative as it unfolds (Recommended numbers for this step include 10-15 adults, and 10-15 youth).

Once a commitment to move forward with the NB Youth Engagement Initiative is made, the roles of youth and adults on the team should be discussed. At the close of this step, the Community Team should be solidified and ready to move on to planning and training for the Youth Forum.

Who are Community Team members? Youth, youth leaders, community champions, faith-based representatives, non-government workers, police, social workers, guidance counsellors, probation officers, elected officials, mental health workers, addictions workers, nurses, business owners, family members, teachers and others. Anyone can be a part of your Community Team.

Steps to Implementation

Training your Community Team and Holding the Youth Forum

What is the Youth Forum?

The **Youth Forum** is a daylong event that brings together larger groups of youth (40-60 youth) and provides an opportunity for peer-led and adult-supported discussions on issues relevant to youth in their community. The Youth Forum is intended to provide a safe and supportive environment where youth feel comfortable to openly identify and discuss issues of importance to them. The Community Team is responsible for planning and organizing the Youth Forum.

2.

Carrying out the Training Day

Prior to carrying out the Youth Forum, a full day of facilitation training for the core group of 10-15 youth and 10-15 adults is required, and can be provided in collaboration with the Youth Engagement Representative from the Department of Health. The facilitator training will:

- ◆ Provide youth leaders and adult supporters with the tools necessary to successfully facilitate small group discussions during the Forum.
- ◆ Help youth and adults to plan the specific activities that will be carried out as part of the Youth Forum.

The training day should be carried out one week prior to the Forum Day so that youth and adults are prepared and momentum for the event is maintained.

Facilitator training
materials

Steps to Implementation

Planning for the Youth Forum

The inclusion of several core components on Forum Day will help in identifying youth priorities for the development of a community plan. In preparation for the Forum Day, members of the Community Team should organize and plan these core component activities. The following checklist includes all of these core components along with examples and tips.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Setting the Agenda | Sample Agenda |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Running an Icebreaker | Icebreaker Examples |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identifying Discussion Topics | Discussion Topic Ideas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Generating Discussion | Methods for Generating Discussion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recording Youth Priorities | Tips for Adult Recorders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inviting New Participation | Sample Invitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating the Forum | Sample Evaluation Form |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Synthesizing Youth Responses | Response Synthesis Form |

As you make decisions about how you will carry out your Forum Day, it will be important for Community Team members to understand and communicate to one another what responsibilities they have before, during, and after the Youth Forum Day.

The following checklist may be helpful in the organization and preparation of a successful Youth Forum Day.

Youth Forum
Checklist

Steps to Implementation

First and foremost, participation in the Youth Forum should be FUN! It is very motivating and positive to openly share your ideas and views with others. Sometimes the topics discussed can remind of us of feelings or memories that are uncomfortable or unpleasant. In such instances, it is important to have supportive adults who are trained professionally in understanding and helping others (Emotional Support Team). For the Youth Forum, ensure that counsellors, social workers or psychologists from the school or community are present to help when people need to talk personally.

Carry out the Youth Forum Day

3.

The Youth Forum is an opportunity for youth and adults to come together to discuss youth concerns in a safe and healthy environment. This day is designed to break down barriers, allow free discussion, provide new perspectives and give youth a voice to address important issues and concerns within their community.

At the beginning of the Forum, youth are provided with a brief description of the initiative and the youth leaders and adults on the Community Team will be introduced. Youth are provided with an overview of the day and are informed that they will have the opportunity to become youth leaders and join the Community Team at the conclusion of the day.

A couple of ice-breaker activities are used to start the day and are followed by small group break-out discussion sessions. The Community Team will have planned how the discussion groups are set up, carried out and what topics will be discussed. Small groups can all discuss the same topic or each group can address a different topic. Adults from the Community Team record the results of the small group discussions on flip charts provided for each group.

Steps to Implementation

Following small group discussions, adults from the Community Team will gather all flip chart recordings in order to synthesize feedback after the event.

At the close of the Forum Day all youth are invited to provide their names if they are interested in becoming involved with the NB Youth Engagement Initiative and joining the Community Team.

The purpose of the Youth Forum is to:

- ◆ Provide opportunities for learning
- ◆ Create an opportunity for young people to be heard
- ◆ Involve youth in decision-making processes that will contribute to positive change in the community
- ◆ Give young people the opportunity to be part of the solution
- ◆ Foster better relationships with peers, teachers, police, family, friends and community members
- ◆ Influence and encourage young people to get involved in their community
- ◆ HAVE FUN!!!! There will be fun-filled games and icebreakers throughout the day to allow participants to promote team building and form trusting relationships with their peers

Steps to Implementation

Create, Share and Implement your Community Action Plan (Action Day and Grand Assembly)

4.

Following the Youth Forum Day, the summary of youth responses is presented and discussed during [Action Day](#). The intent of Action Day is to allow the newly formed Community Team to openly discuss the areas of priority that were identified during the Youth Forum, and to begin the process of creating actions to address those areas of priority. In order to maintain the momentum gained during the Youth Forum, it is recommended that the planning day occur within two weeks of the Youth Forum.

Following the Action Day, the [Grand Assembly](#) event should be planned. This event provides youth with the opportunity to share their newly developed Action Plan with the wider community. This event is helpful for obtaining additional adult support for the priority goals and actions of the Community Team.

Promoting this event is critical for ensuring that there is sufficient community awareness and support for youth engagement activities as they unfold.

There are many different ways to go about promoting your Grand Assembly, including:

- ◆ News releases
- ◆ Word of mouth
- ◆ Local newsletters
- ◆ Posters in the school
- ◆ Posters in the community
- ◆ Morning Announcements
- ◆ Radio announcements
- ◆ Notes from school
- ◆ Assemblies at school
- ◆ Delivering invitations
- ◆ Contacting local youth-serving organizations
- ◆ Social networking sites

Steps to Implementation

Evaluate and Identify Lessons Learned

5.

Gathering feedback on the impact of your Youth Engagement Initiative allows Community Team members to evaluate their challenges and successes. Such information is important for learning key lessons that will help youth engagement to be more effective in your community, as well as in other areas in the future. Feedback should be gathered from those who have planned, attended or have participated in your team's youth engagement activities. This means listening to the perspectives of both youth and adults from your community. Some key questions for evaluating and identifying lessons learned might include:

- (1) Did you carry out what you planned? Did it go as planned? What changed?
- (2) What challenges were encountered during the initiative? How were these challenges handled or worked through?
- (3) Were sufficient numbers of youth involved? Were they active participants or leaders? Did they feel supported by other youth and adults from the community?
- (4) Were sufficient adults involved in the initiative? Were they active participants? In what ways did they support youth?
- (5) Were your goals or expectations met? Explain why or why not.
- (6) Did your activities result in any positive changes in the community (e.g. increased communication and collaboration among youth and adults, development of youth leadership, recognition of youth strengths, increased connectedness for youth with the school or wider community)?
- (7) What would you do differently next time? What plans or activities would you want to repeat?

Steps to Implementation

Maintaining Momentum

Part of maintaining momentum for youth engagement involves sharing your successes with others. Meetings, workshops and special events with other youth-focused teams and individuals provide important opportunities for sharing ideas about how to effectively implement and sustain youth engagement activities. Networking with other communities can be facilitated with help from the Department of Health Representative. Community Teams can become involved, exchange ideas, or partner with provincial or national networks on youth engagement.



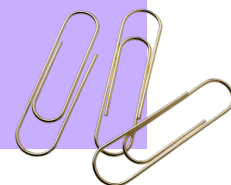
Maintaining communication within your Community Team through regular meetings is a key part of maintaining momentum for youth engagement in your community. Regular meetings provide opportunities for:

- ◆ Maintaining and building collaborative relationships
- ◆ Reflecting on how activities are going
- ◆ Troubleshooting challenges and building solutions
- ◆ Celebrating successes and encouraging others
- ◆ Inviting new youth and adult participants to become involved
- ◆ Developing new goals and actions for youth engagement

Lessons Learned

Valuable implementation lessons have emerged from evaluation of previous projects in the area of youth engagement. Evaluation included deliberations with team members and committee members including both youth and adults.

The following provide some points of “practical wisdom” that have been identified to this point in the project.



Youth Engagement Practical Wisdom

◆ A major benefit of applying a youth engagement process is that community adults and youth are engaged in building solutions to **address key prevention priorities** in the community.

◆ It is critical that **youth have a voice** in setting the priorities and actions to be undertaken as part of the engagement initiative; otherwise, they may not be motivated or open to becoming involved in the initiative. The openness of adults to listen and sustain their involvement with youth during the initial readiness phase is important for communicating to youth that they are of value and believed in by the community.

◆ When community youth and adults see their priorities as part of engagement and mobilization plans, they are more **committed and motivated to work collaboratively** with others in taking action.

◆ The youth engagement framework may also serve as a **catalyst for aligning other youth engagement and mobilization initiatives** being undertaken by diverse regional stakeholders, including key provincial departments.

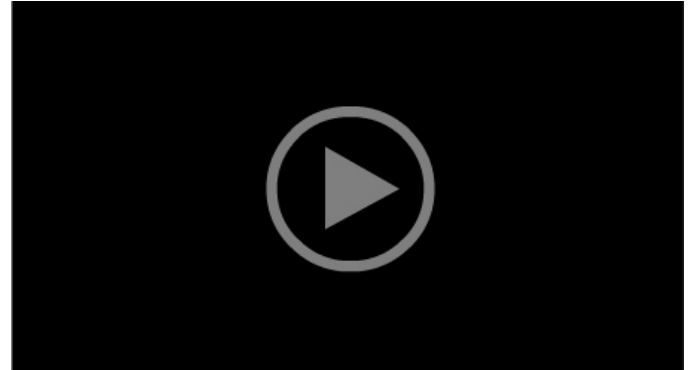
Testimonials



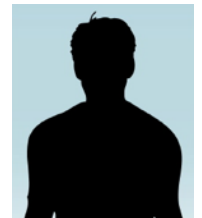
"My experience with the youth engagement initiative was amazing. I believe

that through my involvement I have connected with both youth and adults that I never thought I would. Since the youth engagement initiative started, I have noticed a massive change in our community. People in general seem more open to new ideas and welcoming of others. I can honestly say that I can no longer leave the house without bumping into someone I know through this great program! I love it."

A Youth Participant



"Being involved with the youth engagement initiative has been such a positive experience for me. It is a unique way to connect young people with the community, and vice versa. It has been very rewarding to see everyone working together to make a difference in the lives of others, and to see the young people and community passionate about it!"



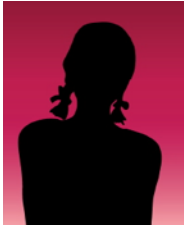
An Adult Participant

"The recent Youth Forum was an eye opening experience for everyone involved. Adults gained a new appreciation for the problems that teens in our community face daily, and youth learned that adults have struggled with some of the same issues as well. This program has fostered an increased openness among the youth and adults, and new relationships have developed. We have also developed positive new relationships with the Department of Health and the RCMP. Their advice and guidance has been greatly appreciated."



An Adult Participant

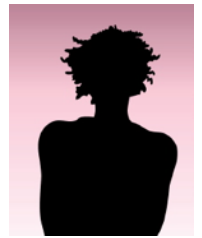
Testimonials



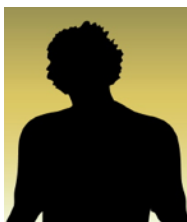
"The Youth Engagement Initiative has impacted youth in our community by showing them what our community can be like if we work together in the act of making it a better place. It has made our community a better place by showing adults, as well as youth, that we have the hope and initiative to make Stanley a better and a fun place to live without the abuse of substances. By the talk of adults that I've heard, we are gaining respect and our group is becoming better known."

A Youth Participant

"We recently had a "Full Moon on the Ward" sliding party. Many people showed up and had a great time. It kept our youth out of trouble for one night at least. We are going to keep holding activities like this and eventually keep everybody out of trouble for good. The Youth Engagement Initiative helped us find resources and things to do in our community. It has impacted our community as a whole because the elders don't worry and youth are occupied."



A Youth Participant



"I am connected with the youth population; we have a Mayor and Council who are interested in helping us get our youth population off its backside and involved. All we need are some new and innovative ideas."

A Youth Participant

"My experiences with the youth engagement initiative have helped me realize that we have to just do it instead of always saying, "I should be doing this" or "It would be nice to have..." I will live for the day and get things done now, not tomorrow."

An Adult Participant

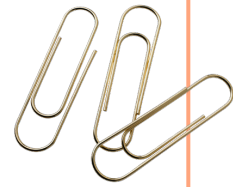


Useful References

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<http://www.engagementcentre.ca/>
- Youth Exploring Solutions: Youth Engagement in New Brunswick.
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- What is Youth Engagement?
http://www.tgmag.ca/aorg/pdf/Whatis_WEB_e.pdf
- New Brunswick Department of Culture, Tourism and Healthy Living
<http://www.gnb.ca/0131/index-e.asp>
- New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey results
<http://www.gnb.ca/0131/StatsRea-e.asp>

Appendices

- ◆ Appendix A - The Impact of Mental Fitness
- ◆ Appendix B - Facilitator Training PowerPoint
- ◆ Appendix C - Sample Agenda
- ◆ Appendix D - Icebreakers and Warm-Ups
- ◆ Appendix E - Discussion Topics
- ◆ Appendix F - Methods for Generating Discussion
- ◆ Appendix G - Small Group Note Taking Tips
- ◆ Appendix H - Inviting New Participation
- ◆ Appendix I - Evaluation Form
- ◆ Appendix J - Synthesizing Youth Priorities
- ◆ Appendix K - Forum Checklist



The Impact of Mental Fitness

New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey

Preliminary analyses of the 2006 and 2007 surveillance outcomes of approximately 40 000 New Brunswick students revealed various noteworthy relationships between mental fitness levels (psychological need fulfillment) and reported student attitudes and behaviours. Some of the outcomes are as follows:

- ◆ At moderate and high levels of mental fitness, increases in mental fitness were associated with increases in reported positive affect (unpleasant vs. pleasant affect) among students.
- ◆ Increases in mental fitness were also associated with increases in reported pro-social attitudes and decreases in oppositional behaviours.
- ◆ Reduction in the probability of smoking in the past 30 days for both male and female students was associated with increases in mental fitness.
- ◆ Lower levels of mental fitness were associated with higher levels of susceptibility to smoking for both male and female students.
- ◆ The probability of engaging in competitive physical activity increased as mental fitness increased from low to high levels.
- ◆ While not as large, increases in mental fitness were also associated with increases in participation in non-competitive physical activity.

Although the preceding findings of the 2006 and 2007 student wellness surveillance cannot be used to infer causality, they do support the existence of potential relationships between psychological well-being (need fulfillment) and other health lifestyle behaviours and attitudes of students. More on the New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey can be found on the Department of Culture, Tourism and Healthy Living website or at <http://www.gnb.ca/0131/StatsRea-e.asp>

Youth Engagement Initiative:

Facilitator Training

Learning objectives

By the end of the session you will:

- ▶ know the format for conducting a youth forum
- ▶ know the purpose of a youth forum
- ▶ know the facilitator's role in a youth forum
- ▶ know the mentor's role in a youth forum
- ▶ know the role of the support/crisis team
- ▶ learn how to facilitate group discussions
- ▶ practice facilitating group discussions
- ▶ Be provided with some tools, reminders and ideas about communicating and problem solving with others



The Purpose of the Youth Forum

The purpose of the youth forum is to:

- ▶ Provide opportunities for learning
 - ▶ Create an opportunity for young people to be heard
 - ▶ Involve youth in decision-making processes that will contribute to positive change in the community
 - ▶ Give young people the opportunity to be part of the solution
 - ▶ Foster better relationships with peers, teachers, police, family, friends and community members
 - ▶ Influence and encourage young people to get involved in their community
 - ▶ **HAVE FUN!!** There will be fun-filled games and icebreakers throughout the day to allow participants to promote team building and form trusting relationships with their peers
-



What is a facilitator?

- ▶ The facilitator is the person/persons who works with and leads a group of people (known as the participants) to help meet the goals of the event.
 - ▶ The facilitator also helps exchange information with the participants during the discussion.
 - ▶ Motivating and encouraging others is also a key role of the facilitator.
-



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Listening

- ▶ **Non verbal** cues are as important as verbal cues. (smiling, nodding, eye contact, leaning forward when people are talking)
- ▶ Be open and attentive with each participant during the discussion.
- ▶ Keep good **eye contact** with each person in your group
- ▶ Make sure you are attentive during the discussion and pay attention when people are talking.
- ▶ Regular verbal acknowledgment. Example “mmhm”
- ▶ Rephrase the participants statements so that everyone can understand. Example “If I understand correctly, you are saying...”
- ▶ Don't think about the next point of discussion (question) until the group has had a chance to discuss the previous one.



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Asking Questions

- ▶ The facilitator is the person/persons who asks the group questions for discussion.
- ▶ A question should be clear, simple, short and affirmative.
- ▶ There are two different types of questions: closed ended questions and open ended questions.
- ▶ Closed ended questions can be answered in a one word answer (yes, no) ex: Do you like school? Closed ended answers are concise, brief and quick.
- ▶ Open ended questions need more explanation. Ex: Tell me about your school. These type of questions are used when you want someone's opinion or idea.
- ▶ In a good group discussion there should be a mixture of both close ended and open ended questions.



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Defining and Explaining

- ▶ Part of the facilitator's role is to define the vocabulary that is used, the objective and how the group will function. (talking circles)
 - ▶ Explain what the purpose of the activity is to the group
 - ▶ Make sure each participant understands the questions and other's responses.
 - ▶ Identify who is not participating (disruptive behavior, ignoring the participants etc). The adults in your group will help with this.
-



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Steering the Group

- ▶ It is important that the group discussion stays on topic and keeps its focus
 - ▶ Remind the group about the objective or goals for the day
 - ▶ Keep everyone "present" during the discussion (no daydreaming)
 - ▶ Make sure each participant has a chance to participate and to share their opinion, ex: "We can hear what Mary has to say first and then we can go back to you John".
-



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Time Keeper

- ▶ The facilitator also needs to keep track of the time and make sure that the group respects the given time for an activity.
 - ▶ You can start by letting the group know how long you have for the activity. “we have 1 hour to discuss the topic of bullying in our community”
 - ▶ Provide reminders and updates to the group “attention everyone, we have 30 minutes left”, “its 10:30 and we have until 10:45”.
 - ▶ Note: you can ask an adult in your group to assist with keeping the time for you.
-



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Grant the right to speak and to encourage exchanges

- ▶ Make sure that everyone in the group has a chance to speak and that everyone’s opinion is valued. You can even name those who haven’t had an opportunity to speak.
 - ▶ Example 1 “ It is Mark’s turn to speak and then after that Marcie’s turn”.
 - ▶ Example 2 “Does anyone else want to share their opinion?”
 - ▶ Keep the conversation going and allow participants to respectfully comment on the conversations
 - ▶ Example 1 “Would anyone like to comment on Jon’s response?”
 - ▶ Example 2 “Would someone like to tell me what they think about.....?”
-



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Stimulate a second thought

- ▶ The facilitator must try to encourage the 'silent participant' to voice their opinion and/or participate in the conversation.
 - ▶ Give the participants a few moments to reflect on the question before asking for their response.
 - ▶ Ask the participants to give their answer a few times before moving on to the next question.
 - ▶ Do a round table (talking circle)
 - ▶ Ask for their feedback one at a time saying their names.
-



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Suggest ways for the group to function

- ▶ The facilitator can make suggestions to move the discussion, to keep time and objectives. It is important to suggest not impose.
 - ▶ "We could do 'this, this or this.'"
 - ▶ "Given that we're a little short on time, I suggest we..."
 - ▶ "We have this and this and this to do, what would you like to start with?"
-



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Giving out challenges

- ▶ It is a good technique to stimulate discussion or to find new ideas or solutions
 - ▶ “I’ll be the ‘devil’s advocate”
 - ▶ “I challenge you to find 10 ideas in 6 minutes”
 - ▶ “I challenge you to think about your community in a different way”



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Keeping the mood light and reducing tension

- ▶ It is important to work hard, but you need to have fun during the activity
 - ▶ Find an occasion for constructive humor but remember to be respectful
 - ▶ Take breaks when needed
- Remember: Tension might arise, this is normal. At this time, the facilitator must allow the participants to express what they are feeling.
- ▶ Remind participants of “I statements” and to respect others
 - ▶ Bring out common points, “We are all feeling a bit of tension right now”
 - ▶ “How do YOU feel at this moment?”
 - ▶ “What could we do to make our work easier?”



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Making connections

- ▶ Connections and links between comments, participants and personal experiences add to the participants 'comprehension and participation.
 - ▶ “Look! your opinion is similar to John’s opinion...what do you think?”
 - ▶ “Lets take Joe’s example from a while ago...”
 - ▶ “And, Mary, is this similar to what you were saying?”



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Summarizing as you go

- ▶ It is really important to look back at what the group has done and what still needs to be accomplished. After 4 or 5 comments the facilitator summarizes the participants comments.
 - ▶ “We talked about this...”
 - ▶ “We saw that...”
 - ▶ “To summarize, the main theme was.....”
 - ▶ “People seem to agree on...”
 - ▶ “There were differences of opinion on”



Responsibilities of a facilitator

Facilitating in pairs

- ▶ A lot of time workshops and small group discussions are facilitated by 2 people. It is important to meet before forum day to prepare.
 - ▶ Discuss who will lead which questions and parts of the small groups
 - ▶ Take the time to talk about your strengths and weaknesses. Know what each of you bring to the table.
 - ▶ Carefully look at the agenda for forum day
 - ▶ While you're practicing, consider the use of non-verbal cues to communicate with your partner. Non-verbal cues might be used to suggest that one person isn't talking loud enough or that the time limit is almost over.
-
- ▶

Rules of the Circle

The significance of the Circle has come to symbolize inclusiveness, unity, collaboration, focus and wholeness.

- ▶ The circle starts and ends with the facilitator.
 - ▶ A talking piece is often used to focus the conversation in the circle and allows for everyone to have an opportunity to speak.
 - ▶ The talking piece can be ANY object identified by the facilitator.
 - ▶ Only the person holding the talking piece talks, all the rest listen
 - ▶ The talking piece can be passed around in a clockwise direction to stimulate discussion when necessary
 - ▶ A person talks until they are finished, being respectful of time
 - ▶ A person may pass the talking piece without speaking, if they so wish
-
- ▶

Let's Practice!

▶ ROLE PLAY

- ▶ Get into groups between 5-10 people
- ▶ Allow each youth in the group to facilitate one question from the list of forum questions
- ▶ Take turns and have a discussion based on the questions, giving each youth a chance to facilitate for a few minutes.



Sample Agenda

Here is an example of an agenda for you to consider as you begin discussions on how you would like to see your Youth Forum unfold. Identified times will certainly be dependent on the location of the Youth Forum and time required to get there, the start time of the school day, etc.



Agenda

8:30-8:45	Brief introduction of the Community Team
8:45-9:00	Ice Breaker(s)
9:00-9:30	Introduction to the concept of “youth engagement” and the NB Youth Engagement Initiative
9:30-10:15	Small group discussion session #1
10:15-10:30	Nutrition Break
10:30-10:45	Ice Breaker
10:45-11:30	Small group discussion session #2
11:30-12:00	Large group sharing / Morning debrief
12:00-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:15	Cross the Line activity
1:15-1:45	Large group debrief and discussion on Cross the Line
1:45-2:15	Small group discussion session #3 What is already in place in the community? Community strengths to address issues raised in small group/large group discussions
2:15-2:30	Nutrition Break
2:30-end of day	Ice Breaker/large group wrap up discussion/evaluation

IceBreakers

Warm-ups and energizers get the group talking, thinking and moving for more enthusiastic and relaxed participation. They can be used to open people up for your initial discussions, facilitate group introductions or to revive people when energy is low. The most successful icebreakers involve the whole group and get people laughing, excited and learning a few things about one another.

In order to get the most out of your icebreakers, make sure you limit the time that is spent on them. When icebreakers run on too long they can have the opposite effect of what was intended. Always ensure that any division into smaller groups is planned out and done quickly and clearly, and that the icebreaker is described plainly so that everyone understands what to do. Remember: less time spent on explanations is more time spent breaking the ice!

The following list provides some examples of icebreakers and warm-ups that your team might use to jumpstart the youth forum.



1) Big Wind Blows

For a group of 20-50

Organize one large circle of chairs, with just enough chairs for all of the participants. Remove one of the chairs so that one participant is in the middle of the circle. The participant in the middle, without a chair, calls out:

"Big wind blows on anyone _____"

The person in the centre fills the blank with something that is true about themselves and likely multiple other people in the room. For example: "big wind blows on anyone wearing a red shirt". Everyone wearing a red shirt has to vacate their chair and find another one. One person will be left in the middle (as there should only be enough chairs for the whole group minus one) and must call out the next "big wind blows"

Other examples that are not physical characteristics might include "big wind blows on anyone who was born outside of New Brunswick" or "big wind blows on anyone who plays the guitar".

Encourage people to be creative!

2) The Human Knot

For a group of 20 or more

Organize **even-numbered** groups of 6-12 participants each. Have each group stand in a tight circle very close together and facing one another. All participants place their right arm into the circle and grab someone else's right arm across the circle from them (not directly next to themselves). Then have everyone do the same with their left arm. Groups then attempt to "solve" the human knot. People must go over and under one another's arms in order to turn the knot into a circle.

Groups need to work together as a team to "solve" the knot. This is a great team building exercise and gets people to know each other. Time how long it takes the groups to finish. If one group finishes before the others, get them to try again to see if they can beat their original time.

It is good to demonstrate with one group first to minimize confusion. It is also possible (although rare) that a knot is unsolvable or will result in two circles when solved.

3) Three Questions Game

For a group of up to 25

Give everyone in the group an index card. Have everyone write down 3 questions that they would like to ask others in the group. Encourage creative and thought-provoking questions, rather than demographic questions about age and birth date. For example "Where is the most interesting place you have ever traveled" or "What is one thing you would like to change about the world".

Give students time to mingle and speak to one another, and ask three different people one of their questions.

Get participants to stand and introduce themselves one by one, and then have individuals from the group who asked that person questions tell what they know about this person.

4) Machine Game

For a group of 25-40

Divide your group into smaller groups of 4-5 participants each. Groups are instructed to create a machine with their group members. Each member of the group must contribute to the machine in some way. Give the groups 5 minutes to develop their machine, and then have each group present to the whole group and have others guess what machine they are. Some examples include television, radio, ceiling fan or washing machine.

5) Toilet Paper Game

For a group of up to 25

Have participants sit in a circle. Pass a roll of toilet paper around the group and ask each participant to take as many squares as they need, without any further explanation. Do not tell participants what they will be doing with the toilet paper.

Once everyone has taken a few squares, explain that each person is to introduce him or herself, and then tell the group one thing about themselves for each square of toilet paper that they took. For example, someone who took 2 squares must give their name and then two other pieces of information, such as where they were born or what they like to do with their free time. Someone who took 10 squares must give their name and then ten pieces of information.

6) Paper Airplane Game

For a group of up to 25

Everyone is given a piece of paper and writes on it their name and two things about themselves. Then they fold the piece of paper into a paper airplane. Everyone throws his or her paper airplane, then picks up someone else's and throw it. After a minute or so of throwing paper airplanes, each participant picks up one airplane and opens it. In a large circle, each participant introduces the person whose airplane they have by reading off the two things about them.

7) Furthest Flight

For a group of 30-40

Divide into small groups of 3-4. Each group is given a sheet of paper. As a team, they need to construct the best paper airplane that they can in 4-5 minutes. Each team gives their airplane a name. Once completed, each team will introduce their team name and members, explain why they think their airplane is best, then compete to see which airplane can fly the furthest. The top three advance to a "finals" round. Give a small prize to the winners.

8) Two Truths and a Lie

For a small group or a large group divided into smaller subgroups
Divide into smaller groups of around 10 participants. Have each group of participants sit in a circle. Each person prepares 3 statements about themselves on a sheet of paper or index card; they should include two things that are true and one that is a lie, without revealing on the card which are true and which one is the lie. Exchange cards with someone else or give them to the facilitator. Read each card aloud to the group and have participants guess which of the three statements is the lie.

9) People Bingo

For a group of 30 or more
Before the forum, facilitators create a bingo sheet of characteristics that will likely be true of some of the people at the conference. These can include things like "has travelled to France" "has 3 or more siblings" "can speak 2 languages" "has a last name with more than nine letters" etc. Each participant goes around mingling with others and trying to find people that fit the characteristics of one of the squares on their bingo sheet. When they find someone who fits one of the squares (for example: meeting someone who can speak 2 languages) they write that person's name on the relevant square of their bingo sheet. Facilitators can specify that they are looking for a certain kind of bingo result (for example, first to get a diagonal line or a full sheet). The winner can receive a small prize or just be recognized as the winner.

10) Three Things in Common

For a group from 15-30
Divide into smaller groups of three or four. Each group has five minutes to find 3 things that all of them have in common. The things in common cannot be about your appearance, but instead have to be preferences or things about the participants' lives. Encourage creativity and thinking outside of the box!
Each group reports back to the larger groups about what they have in common with one another.

11) Creative Nametags

For a group of 25 or more

As each person comes in to the forum room, give them a nametag and a pen/pencil and have them write their name on the tag as a drawing that describes something important about him or herself. Stress that participants don't need to be good at drawing. For networking, have individuals go around the room and try to guess what others' drawings indicate about them.

12) Rock Paper Scissors Contest

For groups of 50+

Explain to the group that you're going to be hosting the rock paper scissors world championship! Have each person take on someone else in a rock paper scissors match (best of three). At the end of each round, the loser sits down, and the winner looks for someone else to take on. The last 10 people will face off in the championship in front of the group.

This game goes very quickly, so those who lost early don't have to sit out for too long.

13) Who am I?

For a group of 25-30

Prior to the workshop, think of a variety of famous names that all of the participants will be familiar with. Make sticky nametags that each have one of these famous names, enough for all of the participants.

As participants enter they will be given one of the nametags, placed on their back so that they do not know what the nametag says. They will have to go around the room asking other participants Yes/No questions about the name on their back. Once they have figured theirs out, they remove the nametag and place it on the front of their clothing.

Example Discussion Topics

A draft list of 17 topics was developed with consideration of current feedback from NB youth as well as summaries from reports of youth feedback (both provincially and nationally).

This list of topics below may be helpful to you in planning and directing your group discussions on youth forum day.



Topics

- ◆ **Relationships** – Who do you talk to? Where do you go for help?
- ◆ **Tobacco, drugs and alcohol**
- ◆ **Bullying**
- ◆ **Self image / body image** – societal pressures
- ◆ **Finding balance** – school, work, life
- ◆ **Living an active, healthy life**
- ◆ **Family**
- ◆ **School**
- ◆ **Feeling disconnected and disengaged**
- ◆ **Your environment**
- ◆ **Technology** – What is its impact?
- ◆ **After school activities**
- ◆ **Encouraging healthy lifestyles** – What works, what doesn't?
- ◆ **Sexual identity / orientation / homophobia**
- ◆ **Access to youth-friendly programs, services & facilities**

Methods for Generating Small Group Discussion

There are several ways that to promote small group discussion among students attending the youth forum. The important thing to remember regardless of the method chosen is that the discussions are reflective of priority areas previously identified by youth during the Youth Facilitation session. Some examples of methods to encourage discussion include:

- ◆ Showing a video that tackles a specific priority topic
- ◆ Showing a video that tackles multiple issues that are of interest to youth
- ◆ Using a current news article/story that has drawn attention to a particular issue of importance to youth (ie. bullying)
- ◆ Using a piece of art that can be used as a symbol to generate discussion
- ◆ Reading a story or short passage created by youth
- ◆ Using a themed icebreaker to lead into a relevant discussion
- ◆ Allowing participants time to go off individually or in pairs to think about a question or issue then bring their responses back to the group for discussion
- ◆ Describing a challenge or definition before leading naturally into the discussion question.



Note Taking in Small Groups

For the Youth Forum Day, adult facilitators from the Community Team will be responsible for recording discussion themes from the group sharing sessions. It is important to ensure that each group of youth is assigned an adult facilitator who is going to be a recorder for the discussion. Each adult facilitator should have a flip chart and a copy of the discussion areas or questions. The following provides some guidelines for facilitators who will assume the role of Recorder for the Youth Forum:

▶ At the beginning of the small or large group sharing session, explain that you will be taking notes that will assist in setting priorities for youth engagement following the Youth Forum Day.

▶ Listen for and record key words and statements as the discussion unfolds.

▶ Organize written comments underneath each of the questions or selected discussion themes

▶ Wait until each youth finishes sharing their sentence or thought before you begin recording key ideas or statements

▶ At appropriate points ask individual youth to comment on what you have written and whether or not it reflects what they were trying to communicate. Make changes to your notes based on feedback from youth.

▶ Once discussion has finished on a particular discussion area or question, read aloud for the small or large group your summary list. Ask youth if they have anything else they would like to add or change about what you have written.

▶ In collaboration with other recorders, gather up all the flip chart paper and notes. Two or three adults should then be designated as responsible for typing up and summarizing the areas of discussion that emerged as a result of the Youth Forum.

An Invitation to Make a Difference in your Community through Youth Engagement



As a youth, you are invited to:

- Help identify issues important to youth in your community
- Help build positive relationships among youth and adults in your community
- Develop leadership skills that you can apply in your school and community
- Plan and undertake actions that will engage youth from your community in working together to enhance quality of life for youth and adults

As an adult, you are invited to:

- Help others in the community recognize the strengths of youth
- Help build positive relationships among youth and adults in your community
- Support youth in their development of life-long leadership skills
- Plan and undertake actions that will engage youth from your community in working together to enhance quality of life for youth and adults

For more information about the New Brunswick Youth Engagement Initiative in your community, please write your name and contact information in the form below. A representative from our community team will contact you and tell you how you can become involved with our plans and actions for Youth Engagement.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Youth Engagement Initiative Forum Evaluation

Were you satisfied with the forum?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Not at all

Somewhat

Very much

Explain

Did the forum increase positive conversations between youth and adults?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Not at all

Somewhat

Very much

Explain

Did the forum increase positive working relationships between youth and adults?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Not at all

Somewhat

Very much

Explain

What changes would you make to today's activities?

What did you enjoy the most about today's activities?

Describe one thing you have learned during the forum:

Synthesis of Youth Discussion Priorities

Synthesis Form of Youth Discussion Priorities		
Youth Discussion Themes	Frequency	Priority Level
Eg: Bullying; Intimidation	Eg: 3 groups discussed this theme	Eg: H (Community youth team members identified this as an important concern in the school and community settings)



- Youth Discussion Themes:** For this section, record the major discussion themes that emerged from each small group at the Youth Forum. Themes that are similar or related should be grouped together or combined.
- Frequency:** For this section, indicate the number of small groups that identified each youth discussion theme. For example, if bullying was an area of concern identified by three small groups, then indicate this by putting the number “3” in this section.
- Priority Level:** For this section, the community team should review each of the youth discussion themes and their frequency, and identify each one as either a high priority (H); a moderate priority (M); or low priority (L). Feedback from youth on the community team is essential for establishing the level of priority for each youth discussion theme.

Forum Day Checklist

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Location determined	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date has been established	
<input type="checkbox"/>	4-5 TV/DVD players (depending on number of youth participants)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	4-5 Breakout rooms (depending on the number of youth participants)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lunch and breaks for approximately 40-70 people (including adults)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tape/Pens/Pencils/Sticky-notes/Scissors	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flip-charts (consistent with number of small discussion groups) and markers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation to and from the site has been determined	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name tags	
<input type="checkbox"/>	T-shirts for youth leaders and adult mentors	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Time and location for follow up / debrief sessions has been determined	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PA system (if required)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sufficient number of chairs	
<input type="checkbox"/>	“Talking pieces” (consistent with number of small discussion groups)	

