

Youth Net/Réseau Ado : Mental Health Promotion Through Youth Engagement



CHEO



Youth Net/Réseau Ado A Long Journey Together Ian Manion & Simon Davidson



Canadian Youth Mental Health and Illness Survey (CYMHIS)

**Cross-Canada telephone survey
(June 1993)**

**Sponsored by the Canadian Psychiatric
Association for Mental Illness Awareness
Week (October 1993)**

n = 800 youth (mainstream)
age = 15.49 (13-18 years)

Davidson & Manion, 1996

CYMHIS Summary

- Significant levels of distress
 - stress, depression, suicidal thoughts & behaviours (19% had thoughts of suicide, 5% had attempted)
- More females than males reported difficulties
- More difficulties for older youth
- Many barriers to seeking help
 - 63% embarrassment, fear, peer pressure, stigma
- Many youth reported keeping issues to themselves
 - if they spoke with anyone it was most likely to be with peers
- Dissatisfaction with existing mental health system

Stigma

63% of youth indicated that embarrassment, fear, peer pressure, and/or stigma are the major barriers to young people seeking help for mental health problems.

Others would not recognize if they had a problem (**19%**) or would not know where to get help (**12%**).

Davidson & Manion, 1996

Engaging Youth

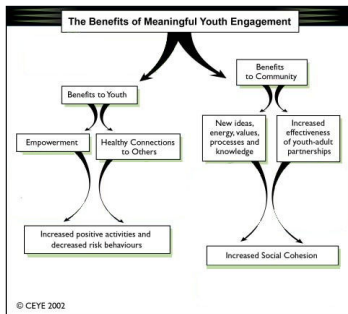
"It is our responsibility to work with youth to find ways to maintain, enhance and improve their health (including mental health). Not only do our approaches have to move with the times and the changing society, but also with the attitudes and perceived needs of and by our youth."

The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile (1994)

Youth Engagement Promotes Health and Decreases Risk

Armstrong & Manion (2007)

Engaging Youth



Engaged youth not only bring their energy and creativity to bear on an issue, but also experience health benefits from being engaged.

Key Features of Effective Community-Based Health Promotion Programs for Youth

- Community capacity building and mobilization
- Strong youth stakeholder participation in the design
- Imbed suicide prevention into broader health promotion efforts
- Appreciation that not all youth are the same
- Implementation and evaluation
- Maintenance of program fidelity
- Rigorous process and outcome evaluation



Youth Net / Réseau Ado: Goal

- A bilingual by youth for youth mental health promotion program
- Part of the Mental Health Patient Service Unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO).
- YN/RA offers alternative support services for youth.
- We strive to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health & mental illness through prevention/intervention activities education, research and advocacy

Youth Net/Réseau Ado: Objectives

Objectives

- Increase awareness / promote communication
- Decrease stigma
- Early identification of youth
- Link with safety net of professionals
- Adapt services
- Empower youth

Combining macro (universal) and
micro (targeted) interventions

Facilitators

Characteristics

- ✓ 20-30 years of age
- ✓ All walks of life
- ✓ Personal characteristics and life experience rather than education

Job Description

- Always work in pairs
- Part-time employment
- New skills, training and work experience
- Motivating environment
- Connections to future employment/education
- 2-day group facilitation training workshop
- Suicide prevention / Intervention Training

Programs and Services

- Focus groups
- Support groups
- Youth initiatives
- Community & scientific presentations
- Research
- Volunteer opportunities
- Co-op placements
- Partnership

Youth Net / Réseau Ado: Focus Groups

- Youth 13 - 20 years old
- Where ever youth are: Schools, Community Centres, Drop-ins, Youth groups
- Co Facilitated by Youth 20 - 30 years old
- With 8 to 12 participants per group
- 1.5 hour discussion, loosely structured
- On-call clinical back-up for facilitators

Youth Net / Réseau Ado Screening

- mental health
- mental illness
- stress
- depression
- suicidal thoughts and suicidal behaviours
- coping
- disclosure
- service utilization
 - access
 - utility
- youth friendliness

All of the above is undertaken after informed consent obtained

Support Groups

- **Grew out of focus groups, but**
 - longer term (12 sessions)
 - greater depth (2-hour length)
 - 8-12 youth
 - Youth have in common: dealing with depression or other life situations/problems
- **Community Collaboration**

Support Groups

- Depression group
- General group
- The VENT
- Girls Talk
- Guys Talk



Youth Initiatives

Pens & Paints



Free Ride

Resource List



Take a Hike

Youth Faxes



Yoga for Youth

Pens and Paints

▪ **Objectives**

- A 12 week initiative where youth learn to use creative expression as a healthy way of coping with stress in a safe, supportive, youth-friendly environment.
- Provides services and materials for free.
- Assures the program meets the needs of the targeted youth.

Take a Hike

▪ **Objectives**

- An 8 week summer initiative where youth are offered healthy ways of coping with stress through physical activity in nature.
- Raises youth participation and community involvement.
- Assures the program meets the needs of the targeted youth.

Free Ride

▪ Objectives

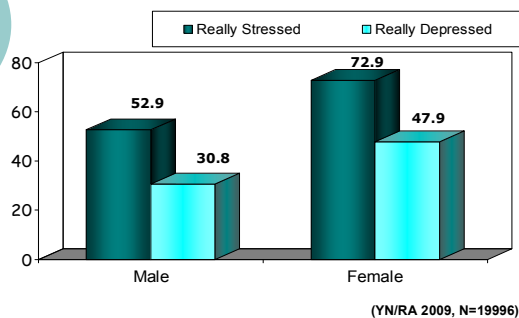
- A 5-week winter initiative where youth learn how physical activity can help them cope with stress through snowboarding.
- Raises youth participation and community involvement.
- Assures the program meets the needs of the targeted youth.

Our Research - Ottawa only

September 1995 – June 2009
N= 19,996 (1817 groups)

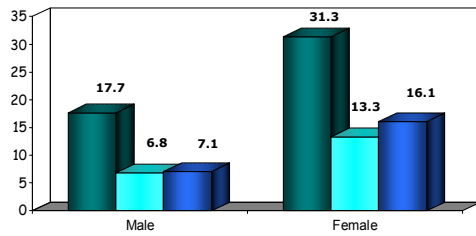
- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ age (12-20 years) | Mean = 15.8 years |
| ▪ female (54%) | male (46%) |
| ▪ anglophone (60%) | francophone (40%) |
| ▪ mainstream (72%) | non-mainstream (28%) |

Significant Levels of Stress and Depressed Feelings by Gender



Suicidal Ideation and Behaviour by Gender

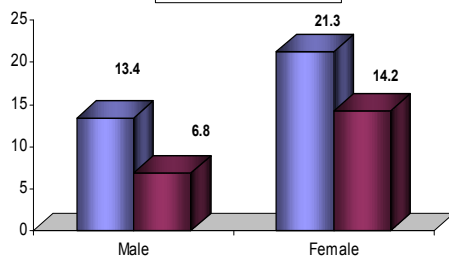
■ Past Suicidal Thoughts ■ Current Suicidal Thoughts ■ Past Suicide Attempts



(YN/RA 2009, N=19996)

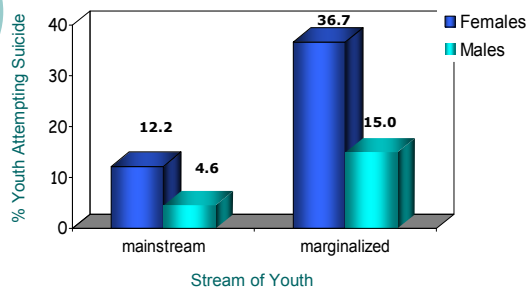
Current Youth Suicidal Ideation by Urban/Rural Dwelling

■ Rural ■ Urban



Armstrong & Manion, 2007; N = 829; Age range = 13-19

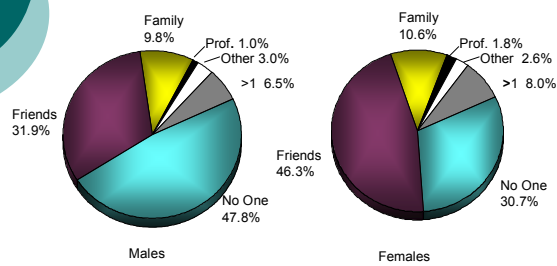
Suicide Attempts By Gender for Mainstream and Marginalized Youth

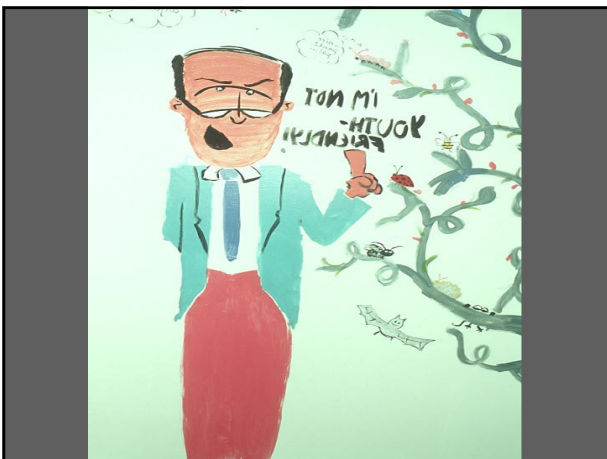


In spite of the elevated rates of suicidal ideation and attempts, many never disclosed these thoughts or feelings:

mainstream	37.8%	non-mainstream	34.9%
younger	39.3%	older	35.1%
males	45.3%	females	32.3%

Who do youth talk to about mental health concerns (by gender)?





What Makes Someone Youth Friendly? (1997-99) N=3185

Active listener	35.4%
Understanding	32.6%
Positive personality traits	28.4%
Not judgmental	17.4%
Helpful	14.5%
Cool / like youth	12.2%
Keeps it confidential	11.4%
Youth aware	8.9%
Competent	5.7%
Like a friend	4.8%
Not condescending	4.5%
Honest / direct	3.5%

Issues Raised by Youth (Focus Groups 1997-2002)

Parents	81.1%
Coping	80.3%
Stress	77.3%
Drugs & Alcohol	68.9%
Peers	65.3%
Money	55.9%
Suicide	39.2%
Depression	35.4%
Violence	34.5%
Prejudice	31.4%
Self-Esteem	26.9%
Eating Disorders	20.6%

What do you do when you are stressed out? (1997-2002) N=6957

Distraction (play games, TV, read, other)	30.2%
Physical symptoms (sleep disturbance, appetite, other)	21.6%
Exercise	20.9%
Music (play / listen)	19.5%
Talk to friends / others	18.4%
Relaxation	13.5%
Verbal / physical aggression	13.1%
Smoke cigarettes	11.1%
Escape	10.8%
Drugs / alcohol	10.6%
Emotional reaction (non-aggressive)	10.3%
Problem solving / time management	5.0%
Cognitive strategies	4.7%
Rumination	2.8%

Research Generating Research

- Ongoing descriptive research
- Program evaluation
- Participatory action research
- RCT
- Undergraduate & graduate research
- National research committee
- International research
 - UK, Germany

A feeling of shared ownership
greatly enhances the probability
that research/evaluation findings
will be used

Engaging Youth in Research

- Research questions and project conceptualization
- Research design and methods
- Research implementation and data collection
- Research analysis and interpretation
- Knowledge translation and mobilization
- Research training

Community Partnership



"if these were kids in my neighbourhood I would tell them to go and play somewhere else"

Systemic Change

- At CHEO
- Beyond CHEO
 - NLSCY
 - Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement
 - Mental Health Reform (Kirby)
 - Youth Engagement at the Centre of Excellence
- Practice
 - Satellites
 - Army of YN trained professionals
 - International model

Youth Net Satellites

- Delta, Whistler BC
- Halton, Hamilton, Peel, Grey Bruce, Ottawa, ON
- Montréal, Montérégie, QC
- Yellowknife
- Newcastle, England

Key Concepts for Any Satellite

- Youth Involvement
 - Youth are creative and resourceful
 - By youth for youth capacity building
- Support Network (Safety Net)
 - Clinical back-up models can differ across communities
- Community buy-in
 - Partner with other programs, don't compete

Challenges to Site Development

- Clinical back-up – no money, no time, on call; professional connection, info re: requirements
- Communicating the model; stories, repetition
- Recruiting community members; contacted people worked with previously
- Recruiting youth – easy part; posters, job bank, launch event, presentation
- Funding...

What youth have to say

- "Youth Net has given me the opportunity to be physically active, as well as meeting new people and learning a new sport. My overall quality of life has been improved since I've joined this program"
- "YN/RA is a stabilizing force. It opens a whole new world for mental health and it renewed my faith in the system"
- "YN/RA is for youth by youth and that is what makes Youth Net Youth Net"
- Many have described YN/RA as a paradox "an alternative youth friendly mental health program anchored in a hospital"



The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO
Le Centre d'excellence provincial au CHEO en santé mentale des enfants et ados

What is the Centre?

Bringing people and knowledge together to promote the best mental health and well-being for every child and youth

Knowledge

Capacity

Partnerships



Full continuum of effective and accessible mental health services for children and youth

Bringing people and knowledge together to promote the best mental health and well-being for every child and youth
Rassembler les gens et le savoir afin de promouvoir la meilleure santé mentale et le bien-être pour chaque enfant et chaque adolescent

. ... A small group of thoughtful people could **change the world**.

Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

...

Margaret Mead



Questions/Comments?

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The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and
Youth Mental Health: www.onthepoint.ca
