



QUALITY STANDARD FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Youth engagement is about empowering young people as valuable partners in child and youth mental health.

As such, they are empowered to address issues and make decisions that affect them personally or that they believe to be important. Evidence shows that when young people have a voice and active role in treatment planning and service delivery, there are better outcomes and greater satisfaction with care, and services are more cost-effective. A central goal of youth engagement is positive youth development. Through engagement, young people experience positive changes, develop better critical thinking skills, teamwork and leadership skills.

Quality standards are essential to a system that is accountable and constantly improving.

Quality standards complement accreditation standards and clinical practice guidelines from professional bodies. This quality standard focuses on system-level youth engagement. That is, engagement focused on improvements affecting networks, care pathways, resources and structures impacting multiple organizations and care settings, in addition to improvements within individual organizations. For more information on quality standards for child and youth mental health, contact cymhstandards@cheo.on.ca.

This quality standard is comprised of nine quality statements.

Together, these quality statements (listed on reverse) serve to formalize youth engagement practices and expectations, ensuring consistent, quality youth engagement across the province of Ontario. The statements are like principles, describing what high quality looks like, based on evidence. None of these statements stands alone. These statements intersect and work together to form high quality youth engagement. Those implementing the standard will need to pay active attention to all areas to ensure strong and sustainable youth engagement practices.

Access the full quality standard for youth engagement.

Background and rationale and best practices are elaborated for each quality statement in the youth engagement quality standard. The document also explains what each quality statement means for young people, for agencies and for system decision-makers. Visit cymh.ca/ye to obtain a copy of the complete quality standard.



Ontario Centre of Excellence
for Child & Youth Mental Health

Centre d'excellence de l'Ontario en santé
mentale des enfants et des adolescents

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT QUALITY STATEMENTS

ACCESSIBILITY

Youth and partners work together to identify and address barriers to participation in youth engagement practices.

AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Youth and partners share genuine, trusting and collaborative relationships in which youth expertise and experience is respected and valued.

CO-DEVELOPMENT

Youth jointly develop all projects, services and processes that impact or interest them.

COMMITMENT

All partners are committed to youth engagement and those in system leadership roles are accountable for embedding this commitment in system planning and improvement efforts.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Empowering youth as valuable partners in child and youth mental health to address and make decisions that affect them personally and/or that they believe to be important

SAFER SPACES

Youth and partners co-create and regularly check-in to establish and maintain an environment in which everyone feels comfortable, embraced and able to speak freely.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between all partners is timely, clear, respectful and accessible.

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Youth and partners jointly research, evaluate and make ongoing quality improvements to youth engagement practices and other relevant projects and processes.

ONGOING LEARNING

Youth and partners understand the principles of youth engagement and seek opportunities to continually increase their knowledge and skills relating to youth engagement practices and other relevant areas.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Youth engagement practices are inclusive; the diversity of engaged youth is valued and representative of the community served.