

Youth Involvement

WHAT'S THAT?

At mindyourmind it's like making a smoothie. Add the ingredients you want, determine how much you need, mix with a healthy base & blend!

SO LET'S GET STARTED!



INGREDIENTS:

- What can you offer youth?
- How do they want to be involved?



NOW START BLENDING!

MIX IT ALL TOGETHER

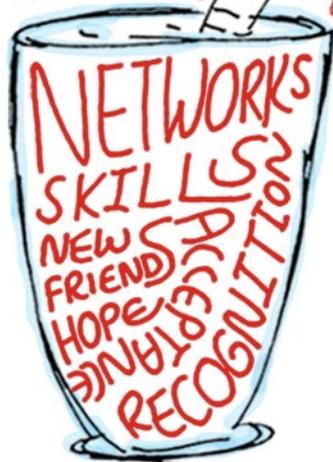
PICK YOUR ROLES!



PICK THE INTENSITY

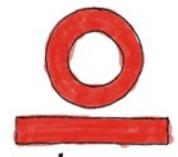
HOW OFTEN DO THEY WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

What worked & what didn't?



DID EVERYONE BENEFIT?
ADJUST & REPEAT.

NOTE THAT THERE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A "PAUSE" BUTTON, OR AN "OPT-OUT" OPTION!



mindyourmind
co-created by youth as a visual representation of how youth are involved at mindyourmind.

What is Youth Involvement at **mindyourmind**?

At **mindyourmind**, we believe youth involvement contributes to wellbeing. Wellness is a dynamic, active process focused on learning and making choices. In one way, smoothies are a simple way to boost wellness and provide nutrients. The following smoothie-making steps describe the process of youth involvement at **mindyourmind**.

Step 1: Pick your Ingredients

If a smoothie is youth engagement and wellness in a glass, then what goes into the recipe should include:

- Flexible, adaptive relationship building
- Striving for clarity around roles and expectations for both youth and staff but leaving ample room for change--This enables partnerships to develop in meaningful and relevant ways
- Relational and person-centred approaches that build on strengths and assets
- Choice is key!
 - ◆ Youth and staff choose roles that align with abilities, needs, goals and opportunities
 - ◆ Young people always lead regarding their choice to talk about personal experience with mental health issues

Step 2: Mix it All Together

Our supportive facilitation approach is rooted in noticing and combining youth assets and strengths. This can involve coaching, mentoring and advocacy methods, underlined by the message that all partners bring expertise to the relationship. The **mindyourmind** team adapts to the fluid nature of youth's lives. We harness technology as a powerful connector. Partners communicate effectively and honestly, and collaborate to improve conditions with a focus on the present and the future. Skills in group facilitation and enabling positive team dynamics are critical.

Step 3: Set the Intensity Level

Young people self-determine the level of their involvement. Having a variety of ways to participate shows acceptance. Hitting the pause button is always okay and goodbyes are as important as welcoming introductions.

Step 4: Adjust and Repeat

Along the way, we listen. We ask questions. Did everyone benefit, learn and grow? Consciously self-aware and reflective teams are able to adjust as needed. We recognize that sometimes, in spite of using the same ingredients, there are different results. Individuals and systems are always unique and ever changing. Throughout, finding fitting ways to recognize a young person's contributions and gains is important.

Both staff and youth feel the positive impact of their work; we all gain skills and build networks. This exchange causes us to feel that the work is nourishing, meaningful, and a source of hope.

mindyourmind, a program of Family Service Thames Valley, is an award winning national non-profit mental health program that works in partnership with youth, emerging adults and the professionals who serve them to co-develop innovative tools and resources. These resources are often designed to reduce the stigma associated with mental illnesses and increase access and use of community support, both professional and peer-based.

mindyourmind inspires youth to reach out, get help and give help.