

# Student-Led Mental Health Promotion Initiatives

## Facilitators

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## Key Learnings

### Setting up the conditions for student engagement:

- When working with students, The Students Commission highlighted their Four Pillars: Respect, Listen, Understand, and Communicate which set up an environment for engagement. They can be found here: (link to the four pillars PDF)
- Gives and Gets: Understanding that each stakeholder has something to give and the importance of setting up a “get”: knowledge, experience, compensation that the stakeholder wants out of working together.
- Ensure you allow the students to own the space. Putting their work on the walls and allowing them to doodle, fidget, etc as needed allows the students to feel like the space is theirs.
- The Students Commission shared the Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit to get campuses thinking about how their initiatives engage students and other stakeholders. The Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit tool can be found here: <http://tools.engagementsurvey.ca/tools03.php>

### Understanding Mental Health

- The Centre for Excellence in Children and Youth Mental health highlighted the need to develop a clear definition of mental health to better understand what your program will/has addressed.
- Two definitions were presented to highlight a strengths-based approach to mental health promotion with students:
  - o “The capacity to feel, think and act in ways that enhance one’s ability to enjoy life and deal with challenges.”
  - o “A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.”
- The Social Determinants of Health model was covered, and highlighted the different factors that affect someone’s wellbeing.
- Risk and Protective Factors: Audience members discussed some of the risks (conflict, violence, insecure attachment, etc.) and protective factors (secure attachment, stable family, sense of belonging and positive school climate) that can affect a student’s mental well-being. It was emphasized that a risk does not equal causality. Many factors are implicated in causing someone to be mentally unwell, not all are known.



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## Mapping Initiating and Sustaining Factors

- When planning a program, it’s important to consider initiating factors, sustaining factors and impacts to ensure your program creates the changes your campus needs.
- The Students Commission shared a tool called the Youth Engagement Survey Map that helps campuses determine the initiating factors, sustaining factors and perceived impact of a program.

## Defining Outcomes, Indicators and Impacts

- Defining the potential outcomes, indicators and impacts of a program helps define the scope of the program by defining end goals you hope to accomplish
- Evaluation can be done in several ways: Qualitative, Quantitative, Arts-based and Focus Groups based. If you are interested in learning more about these methods please visit <http://tools.engagementsurvey.ca/tools00.php> and/or contact The Students Commission at [info@studentscommission.ca](mailto:info@studentscommission.ca) or 416-597-8297
- In Campus Based projects, mobilizing evaluation learning can increase the sustainability of your program in several ways:
  - Raise awareness of the great work of your project
  - Considering key questions (what the key messages? What is the purpose? Who is involved in sharing this information, who is this information being shared with? How and when will you deliver this information) to better understand how to mobilize the knowledge around your campus project.

