



Striking a Balance: Tips and Tricks for Effective Youth Engagement

Many campuses have innovative mental health services and programs in place for their students, but sometimes struggle with student engagement. Some challenges involve building awareness of these services and ensuring that they meet evolving student needs. Here are some of jack.org's best practices in outreach and engagement, including lessons learned from their national youth capacity building programs.

What is youth engagement?

Youth engagement is NOT a one-time activity. It's an intentional, longterm, and resource-intensive process. It's a commitment to equal collaboration toward a common goal, and to providing sustained opportunities for youth development and growth. Youth engagement has tremendous benefits. Not only will the young people you work with gain knowledge, skills, and inclusion into spaces where they are normally left out, but your work will become considerably more sustainable, reactive, relatable, and effective.

Who is youth engagement for?

Internal Stakeholders:

- Young People
- Adult Allies
- Those who work on issues that affect young people

External Stakeholders:

- Donors

Future Stakeholders:

- Everyone!

Youth engagement implications:

- Building capacity empowers young people
- Building capacity allows for scalability
- This capacity is responsive to youth-identified barriers



The jack.org approach: 5 Steps for Youth Engagement

Step 1

Reflection and Preparation

- Have a youth engagement mission statement (common goal)
- Role clarity and governance (linked to common goal and youth engagement goal)
- Budget and commitment
- Establish systems for accountability

Step 2

Transfer Knowledge

- Scope out content
- Focus on process
- Experiment with different methods + provide options
- Ask questions of young people
 - o Engage in a “listening session”

Step 3

Develop Skills

- Consult with experts
- Focus on process
- Experiment with different forms and provide options
- Give opportunities to practice and for feedback

Step 4

Provide a Platform

- Provide young team members with a platform to actually act upon
- Provide youth leaders with an arena where they can use their learnings to tackle an important issue, plan a meaningful initiative, or otherwise make an impact

Step 5

Close the Loop

- Measure goal against outcomes
- Measure against youth engagement expectations (Remember those systems of accountability?)
- Report on progress



Watch the Webinar

To learn more about supporting international students, be sure to watch the webinar recording at: <https://campusmentalhealth.ca/webinars/engagement/>

Credits for this collaborative webinar and content go to our speakers: Pratik Nair and Sarah Mughal at Jack.org