



November 17, 2023

# Supporting youth mental health and substance use health in Ontario

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Knowledge Institute  
Institut du savoir







# Agenda

1. **Who we are**
2. **What we do**
3. **How we support the sector**
4. **Project examples**
5. **Additional resources**



# Who we are

## Mission

We drive high-quality, evidence-based child and youth mental health and addictions services for Ontario's children, young people and families.

## Vision

The best mental health and well-being for every child, young person and family.

## Values

Accountable • Authentic • Collaborative • Inclusive • Innovative • Passionate • Strategic

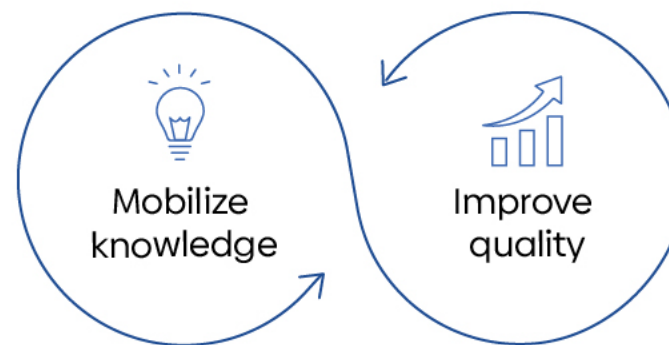




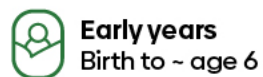
# Strategic directions 2022–2024

**Our mission:** We drive high-quality, evidence-based child and youth mental health and addictions services for Ontario's children, young people and families.

**Our values:** Accountable • Authentic • Collaborative  
• Inclusive • Innovative • Passionate • Strategic



## Age ranges



**Early years**  
Birth to ~ age 6



**Middle years**  
~ ages 7-11



**Teen years**  
~ ages 12-18



**Transition years**  
~ ages 19-25

## Focus areas



Complex needs  
and intensive services



Integrated  
care pathways



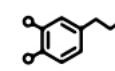
Equity, diversity  
and inclusion



Engagement



Virtual care



Substance use  
and addictions

# What we do



Best evidence + right time + right way



Partnerships and collaboration



Meaningful youth and family engagement



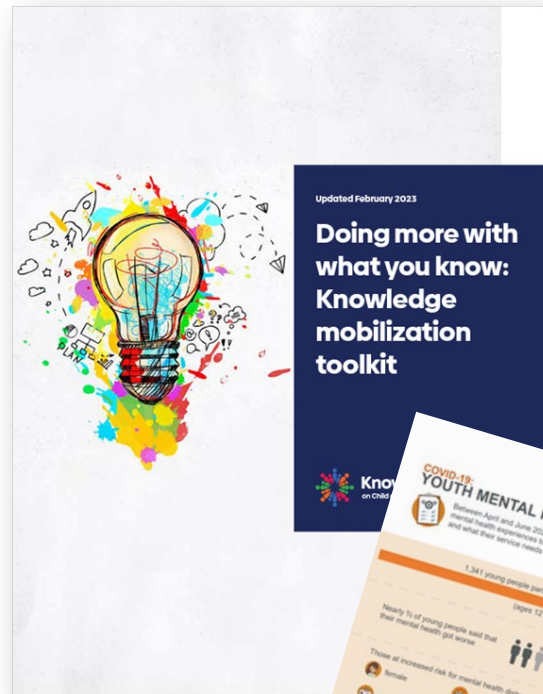
To bring about evidence-based change

# How we support the sector

- **Resource Hub**
- **Rapid response service**
- **Development of quality standards**
- **Coaching and supports**
  - engagement, implementation, quality improvement
- **Innovation and grants**



# Resource hub



Updated February 2023

## Doing more with what you know: Knowledge mobilization toolkit

Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions



**QUALITY GUIDELINE**

for virtual walk-in child and youth mental health services in Ontario

## Leading in a hybrid workspace: Moving our teams from surviving to thriving

Over the past couple of years, our sector has not only transitioned to a hybrid service delivery model, but also a hybrid workspace. This webinar consisted of a panel discussion with sector leaders and other subject matter experts, as well as a facilitated question and answer period focusing strategies, best practices and recommendations for adapting leadership styles in a hybrid landscape.



## Eco-anxiety

### What is eco-anxiety?

When you are faced with uncertain situations, you may feel some anxiety. Anxiety is a whirlwind of emotions that might include worry, guilt, stress, fear, and anger. The global crisis of climate change can affect your life to the extent that it causes distress and interrupts your daily activities. These feelings of anxiety about climate change are commonly called "eco-anxiety."

It's important to acknowledge the environmental racism and systemic vulnerability that specific groups experience from climate change. For example, there are direct environmental and cultural effects on First Nations peoples that impact their mental health and well-being.

Read on to learn more about feelings related to climate change and some evidence-backed suggestions on how to cope.

"Climate change is the defining issue of our time!"  
The United Nations

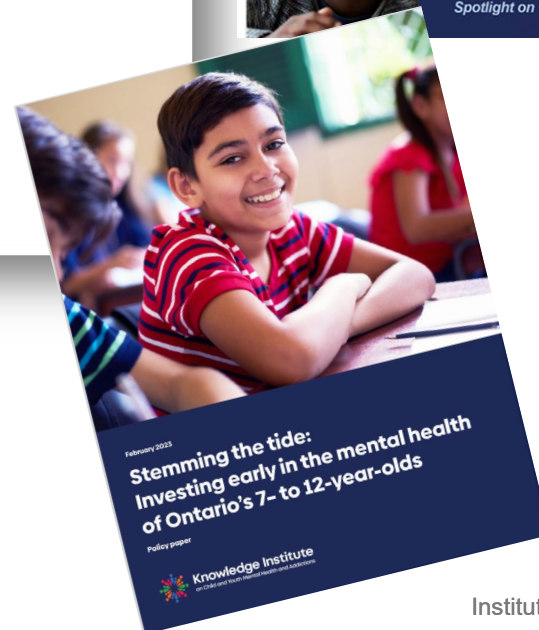
### Did you know

Did you know that in 2021, 46% of Canadians said they were worried about climate change, with

Figure 1: The health risks of climate change: present and future\*

### Examples of climate change's effects on health

- heat-related illness
- respiratory illnesses



## Youth engagement traffic light

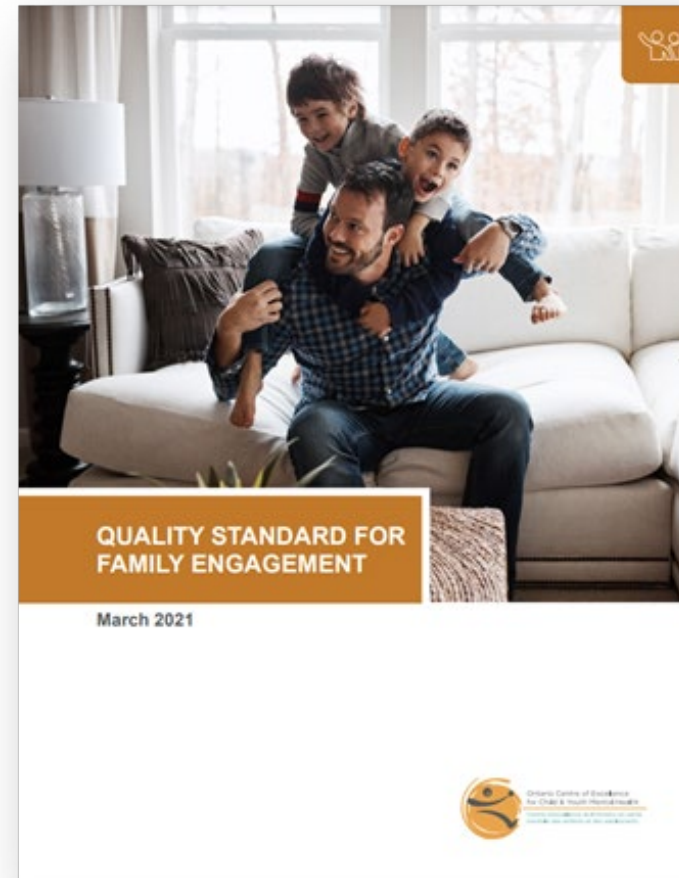
This resource will help guide conversations between adults and young people who are planning for organizational, community and system-level youth engagement.

ENGAGEMENT TYPE	WHAT THIS MEANS	EXAMPLE	POSSIBLE EFFECTS
STOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Manipulation:</b> Young people are directed by adults, without genuine opportunities to provide input.</li> <li><b>Deceit:</b> A young person is invited to the table, but given little to no purpose, influence or decision-making power.</li> <li><b>Tokenism:</b> A young person is included for the sake of saying youth are included—especially those with diverse identities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A young person is given a script to speak on behalf of an organization but has little to no understanding of the issue at hand.</li> <li>A young person is asked to join a team of adults, but not given space or tools to contribute meaningfully. The adults may occasionally ask for the youth's ideas but do all the actual planning and implementation themselves.</li> <li>A young person with a diverse identity (e.g. a queer youth or indigenous youth) is asked to sit on an advisory committee and is expected, by default, to speak for all young people that share their identity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>DISEMPOWERING AND NEGATIVE</b></p> <p>Young people may feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>anxious</li> <li>uninformed</li> <li>betrayed</li> <li>disrespected</li> <li>frustrated</li> <li>unheard</li> <li>purposeless</li> </ul>
PROCEED WITH CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Informed:</b> Young people are kept aware of programs, services or policy changes without contributing to the process.</li> <li><b>Consulted:</b> Young people have roles, provide input and are told how their input impacts adult decision-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people receive information about changes via newsletters, presentations or emails.</li> <li>Adult staff write a document and send to young people to review and make suggestions for changes. Adults provide feedback on how and why young people's suggestions were or weren't used.</li> </ul>	<p><b>POSITIVE OR NEUTRAL</b></p> <p>Depending on how they're engaged, young people may feel heard and valued, or only selectively heard and under-valued.</p>
GO!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Co-development &amp; partnership:</b> Young people jointly develop all projects, services and processes that impact or interest them. They have the opportunity to lead adults, share in decision-making and work as equal partners with adults. Young people and adults have authentic relationships (openness, trust, collaborative) in which youth expertise and experience is respected and valued.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults support young people to co-facilitate meetings or events or to co-create a safe, inclusive and accessible space.</li> <li>Multiple young people sit on a board, providing advice, direction and input on strategic plans, policies and programs alongside adults.</li> </ul>	<p><b>POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, BETTER SERVICES &amp; OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Young people may experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased abilities</li> <li>sense of purpose</li> <li>confidence</li> <li>motivation to contribute meaningfully</li> </ul>

Resource co-developed by members of the Centre's youth advisory council, inspired by Roger Hart's model of children's participation.



# An example: Quality standards





# Our standard development process

- Informed by best available evidence, clinical expertise and lived and living experience of young people and family members
- Accompanied by implementation resources
- Supported by a special process for engaging young people and families



**Knowledge Institute**  
on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions

## Standard development process - Brief

### Background

The Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions (the Knowledge Institute) has invested in the development of provincial quality standards<sup>1</sup> for the child and youth mental health and addictions sector. Throughout 2018 and 2019, we developed two quality standards ([Quality Standard for Youth Engagement](#) and [Quality Standard for Family Engagement](#)) and in 2020, a quality guideline ([Quality Guideline for Virtual Walk-In Services](#)). Since then, we have been leading the development of a suite of resources and providing coaching to help agencies implement these standards.

In 2021, our Strategic Advisory Council, the Lead Agency Consortium and representatives from Ontario Health and the Ministry of Health unanimously agreed that the Knowledge Institute should continue to lead the development of quality standards to inform the delivery of care in our sector.

We will leverage our unique strengths in research, performance measurement, evaluation, engagement, quality improvement and implementation science to develop standards specific to the sector. These standards will be supported by strong, comprehensive implementation processes and resources.

### Process formation

The Knowledge Institute created our standard development process<sup>2</sup> based on a rigorous review of the standard development processes of other organizations, as well as our own approach to developing our initial standards and guideline. Our process will continue to be refined as future standards are developed over time.



<sup>1</sup> A quality standard is a resource for supporting high-quality care. It consists of concise, measurable, and realistic statements that describe what the highest quality of care looks like, based on the best available evidence (Health Quality Ontario, 2017).  
<sup>2</sup> A Standard Development Process (SDP) is the transparent and systematic process for developing quality standards (Bennett et al., 2014).



# Another example: Supporting post-secondary students (Good2Talk.ca)



## Building hope in post-secondary students

This resource provides an overview of research evidence on hope and its implications for supporting the mental health of post-secondary students. The information and guidance in this resource is intended for service providers who support post-secondary students.

### What is hope?

Hope is an abstract concept that has been defined in many ways by different groups of people.

### How researchers view hope

In the 1950s and 1960s, researchers conceptualized hope as “the perception that one’s goals can be attained”.<sup>1</sup> However, Charles Snyder felt this definition did not fully capture the concept of hope. He developed his own theory in which hope is made up of two cognitive processes: pathways thinking and agency thinking.<sup>2</sup>

- Pathways thinking refers to our capacity to develop and envision specific routes to achieve our goals. This type of thinking involves planning.
- Agency thinking refers to our capacity to use the pathways we identified. It is our ability to sustain the motivation to move along the pathway toward our goal.

A concrete example may be helpful in understanding these abstract concepts. Picture a car travelling from a starting point to a final destination. The starting point is our idea of our goal. The final destination is achieving our goal and hope is the car that we will take to get there. We use roads to travel from our starting point to our goal. This is pathways thinking. Gasoline, which is agency thinking, is needed to move our car from one location to another. We need both gasoline and roads for our car to reach its final destination.<sup>2</sup> If we can envision the steps to take but lack motivation, we will not reach our goal. Likewise, we will not reach our goal if we are motivated but can’t envision a set of actions to take.



Snyder’s theory is the most used model of hope in psychology research.<sup>3</sup> However, some researchers have criticized Snyder’s theory of hope because it overlooks social, environmental and contextual factors that shape hope.<sup>4</sup>

Building hope in post-secondary students | May 2023

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The United Nations\*

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Read on to learn more about feelings related to climate change and some evidence-backed suggestions on how to cope.

### Did you know

Did you know that in 2021, 46% of Canadians said they were worried about climate change, with 28% saying they were very worried?<sup>1,2</sup> If the state of our climate is making you feel anxious, hopeless, or angry in a way that impacts your daily life, know that you’re not alone.

Figure 1: The health risks of climate change, present and future.<sup>3</sup>

### Examples of climate change’s effects on health



Note: This graphic is an adaptation inspired from an image on the World Health Organization’s website. An overview of climate-sensitive health risks, their exposure pathways and vulnerability factors. Climate change impacts health both directly and indirectly, and is strongly mediated by environmental, social and public health determinants. World Health Organization, 2023. License: CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 IGO



## Depression in post-secondary students

Depression – also known as major depressive disorder – is more complex than just feeling sad. It is normal for young people to feel sad sometimes. When these feelings last for more than a couple of weeks and are accompanied by a loss of interest in activities that were previously enjoyed, a young person might be experiencing depression.

### What are other types of depression?

Dysthymia, or persistent depressive disorder, is a chronic form of depression. To be diagnosed with dysthymia, a young person typically has experienced a depressed mood for most days within a period of at least two years.<sup>1</sup>

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder involves feelings of depression, anxiety, irritability or mood swings that begin a week before menstruation and improve a couple of days after menstruation starts. The symptoms can interfere with work, school, relationships or social activities.<sup>2</sup>

Seasonal affective disorder is when depressive symptoms follow a seasonal pattern – typically worsening in the fall or winter and improving in the spring.<sup>1,2</sup> This condition is more prevalent in people who live farther from the equator. Researchers think that seasonal affective disorder is related to decreased sunlight in the winter months.<sup>2</sup>



Depression in post-secondary students

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# Additional Resources

[Resource Hub](#)

[Youth Engagement Standards](#)

[Family Engagement Standards](#)

[Knowledge Mobilization Toolkit](#)

[Implementing Evidence-informed Practice Toolkit](#) (update in progress)

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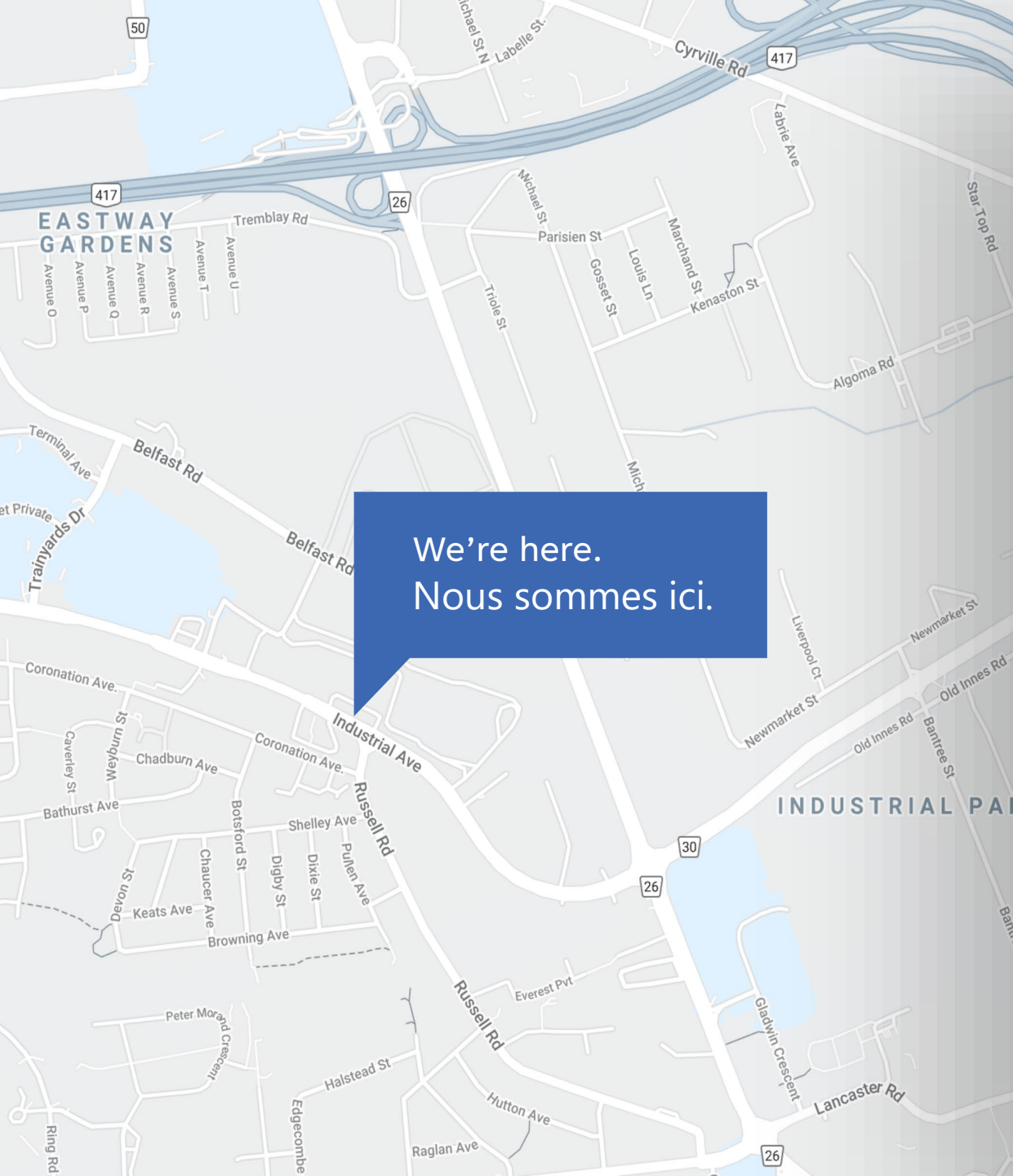
# Questions?

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We're here.  
Nous sommes ici.



Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth  
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