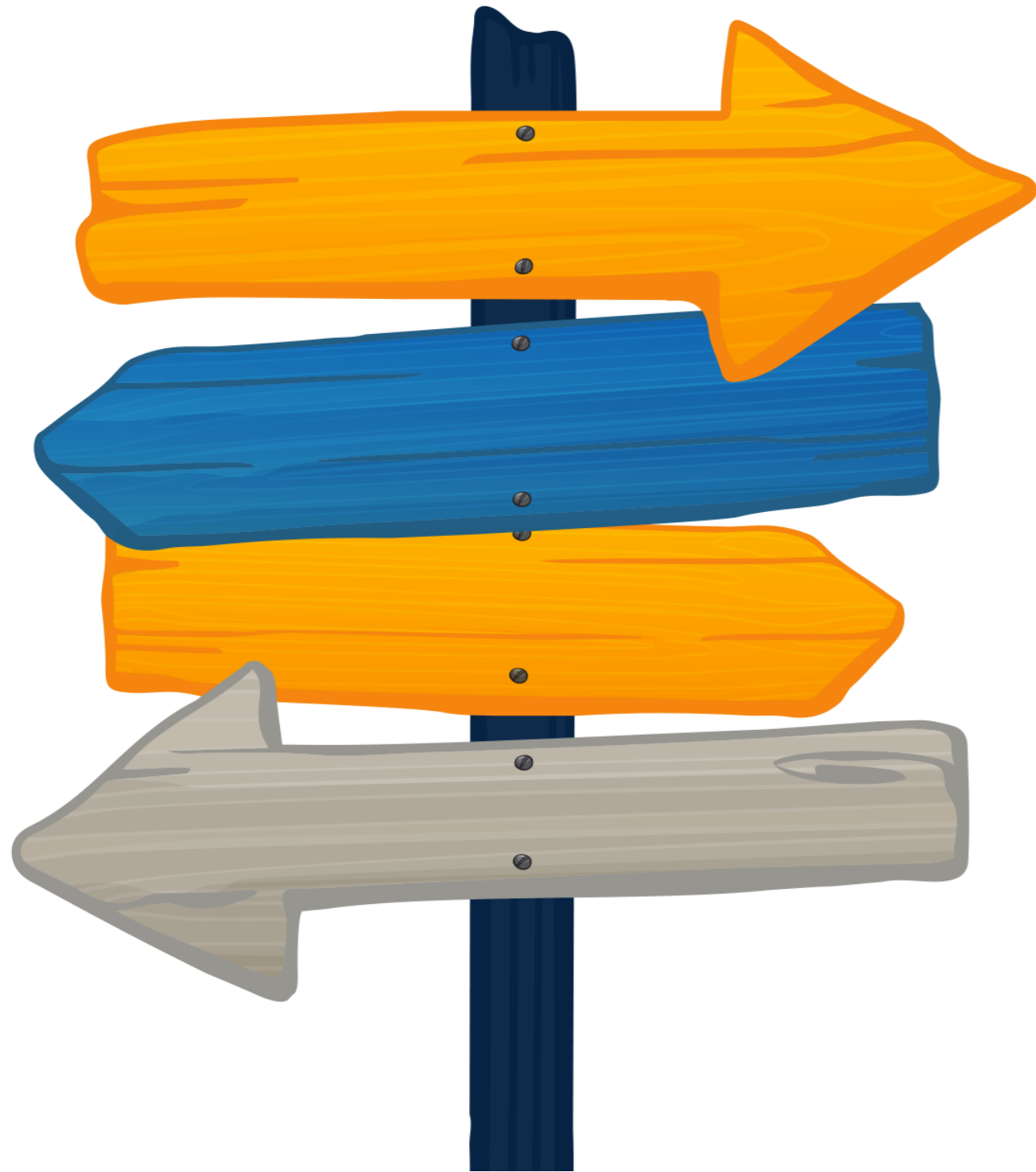


ADJUSTING THE SPOTLIGHT: Recentering Neglected BIPOC Youth Voices

Children's Mental Health Ontario and The New Mentality's Youth Action Committee





CROSSROADS

Re-imagining better mental health care for kids and families

2021 CMHO Virtual Conference

November 22 to December 3

Sponsored by



Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth
Mental Health and Addictions

Institut du savoir sur la santé mentale et les
dépendances chez les enfants et les jeunes

Land Acknowledgement

Children's Mental Health Ontario and The New Mentality's office is located in Toronto, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haundenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat peoples. Specifically, we recognize the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations and acknowledge their people, ancestors and spirits as stewards of this specific region.

Land Acknowledgement

Ontario is a region that is rich in history and modern traditions of many First Nations and the Métis. From the Anishinaabe to the Attawandaron, the Haudenosaunee, and the Métis - these lands surrounding the Great Lakes are steeped in Indigenous history. As we gather today on these treaty lands we have the responsibility to honour and respect the four directions, land, waters, plants, animals, ancestors that walked before us, and all the wonderful elements of creation that exist.



Land Acknowledgement



Land Acknowledgement



Land Acknowledgement



Land Acknowledgement

If you know what land you are joining us from today, please drop it in the chat!

If you would like to learn more about your land and to think more about personal reconciliation practices, please visit native-land.ca



Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions

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The Creation Process

- Writing this paper is something that we could only accomplish with the work of all of our collective voices, compiling the stories and the lived experiences of youth that came before us.
- The YAC is in and of itself diverse, and not only because we represent the BIPOC community, but we are diverse in ideas, experiences and personalities.
- While statistics and numbers give weight to the problem, lived experience was important to include in this work to convey emotion.
- The findings outlined in this paper are not new. We know this has been happening, we know it is happening now, and we know it will continue to happen unless we do something about it.

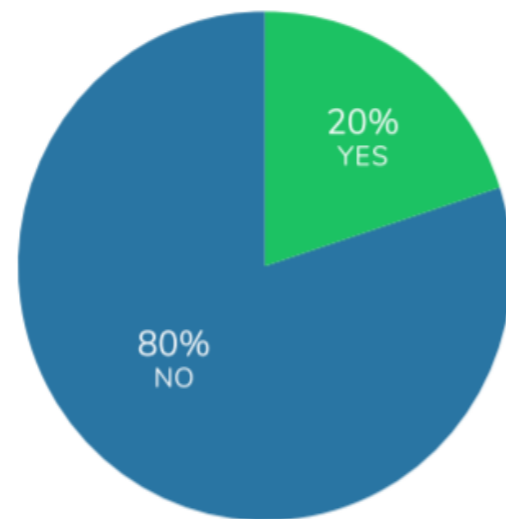
“This is not a moment; it is a movement.”



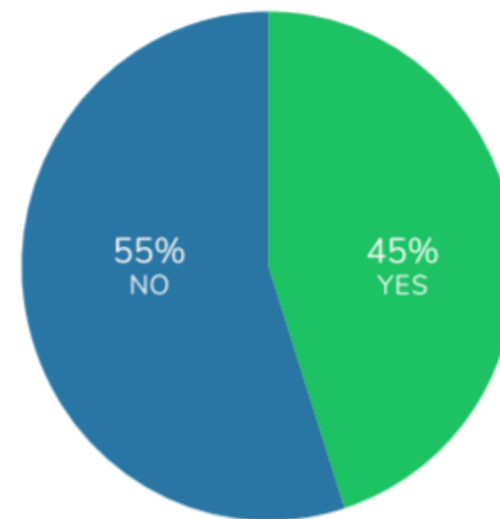
Finding #1: BIPOC youth face barriers from racism, discrimination, cultural insensitivity and cultural stigma that prevent access to mental health services and create negative experiences upon usage.

- BIPOC youth experience racism and discrimination due to their unique and intersecting identities.
- White service providers lack an understanding about intergenerational trauma due to a lack of lived experience.
- The implication of culturally incompetent care is that youth will seek informal support when in crisis.

Percentage of BIPOC Youth Accessing Mental Health Services in Any Capacity During the Pandemic – When Completing the YAC Survey



General Population of Youth Accessing Mental Health Services Pre-Pandemic Results



Finding #2: The existence of economic disparities amongst BIPOC communities and inadequate access to financial resources poses barriers when accessing services and when attempting to continue with necessary care.

- There are significant economic disparities amongst racialized communities.
- While there are publicly funded child and youth mental health services, youth may lack access to resources such as transportation or technology that would enable them to access mental health services.
- The disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on financial stability for BIPOC communities further exacerbates existing inequities.

“There are financial barriers, like parents can't take time off of work to take you to appointments.”

Youth, 17, Scarborough

“You can have services but how do you even access services without proper social services to help you get them. For example, transportation and access to technology.”

Youth, 18, Scarborough



Finding #3: Social exclusion within schools, communities and institutions can lead to serious mental health effects for BIPOC youth and prevent adequate access or usage of mental healthcare.

- Negative social influences and racially targeted bullying within schools affects the mental health of BIPOC youth and poses significant barriers.
- Social exclusion prompts BIPOC youth to access informal support in times of crisis.

“Bullying is an issue at schools and racialized youth are an easier target in the north.”

Youth, 19, Kapuskasing

“Police presence in schools is common.”

Youth, 19, Kapuskasing

“Bullying is deeper in the GTA, it comes in many different forms, and peers may also make fun of names.”

Youth, 18, Burlington

“Bullying is not discussed as much but these discussions need to happen.”

Youth, 19, Kapuskasing



Recommendation #1: Offer more relevant anti-racist and anti-oppressive training to staff working in the child development and youth mental health sector, with mandated follow-ups and continuous, to create culturally sensitive environments and increase cultural competency.

Short-Term Goals

- Provide monthly resources about anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices to encourage self-reflection.
- Determine the level of progress service providers have undertaken with anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice.

Long-Term Goals

- Host annual provincial youth conferences.
- Establish a permanent provincial youth committee of BIPOC.
- Mandate anti-racist training follow-ups with service providers every 6 to 12 months.
- Mandate the development of anti-racist training through routine check-ins with youth
- The provincial government must allocate funding for these trainings.



Recommendation #2: Hire more diverse service providers and allow youth to make requests for specific service providers.

Short-Term Goals

- Allow youth to request specific service providers with similar lived experience and/or those that reflect their identity.
- Make racialized communities aware of the careers and opportunities available within the mental health system.
- Hiring providers who already have a background in anti-racist training.

Long-Term Goals

- Hire more diverse service providers within the mental health system.
- Efforts should be made to hire service providers proportionate to the BIPOC communities within specific regions.

“BIPOC youth are not a to-do list. We are much more than that.”

Youth, 18, Burlington



Recommendation #3: Provide effective anti-racist education and anti-oppressive practices within schools.

Short-Term Goals

- Ensure students' pronouns are included on attendance sheets along with education surrounding the importance of pronoun.

Long-Term Goals

- When discussing bullying, include the impact of racially targeted bullying, microaggressions and macroaggressions on youth.
- Educate school staff on anti-racist and anti-oppressive prac

“Wish that BIPOC could teach people more [about] themselves instead of being acknowledged – and being forced to acknowledge those teaching about it. Especially in a system lacking people of colour.”

Youth, 19, Kapuskasing



Recommendation #4: Implement more types of mental health services.

Short-Term Goals

- Creating an existing list of accessible services that do not require extensive travel arrangements or expensive technology to receive care.
- Mental health services should be transparent about their privacy and confidentiality policies. This will allow youth to know the amount their families will be involved in their care and treatment.

Long-Term Goals

- Implement more services that are both virtual and in-person
- Allocate provincial funding to provide accessibility solutions.

“Difficult to think of an answer on how to fix this. Difficult to teach someone not to be uncomfortable about race and if they’ve never been exposed to BIPOC communities – they can start by asking but overall it is difficult for them to understand without lived experience.”
Youth, 18, Scarborough



Recommendation #5: Ensure effective navigation and discovery of mental health services.

Short-Term Goals

- Ensure that advertisements and media displaying mental health services include diverse individuals.
- Outreach to BIPOC families within the community to try and break negative preconceived notions about accessing services.

Long-Term Goals

- Establish a provincial navigation hub that helps BIPOC youth find mental health services relevant to their needs.
- Implement an alumni mentorship program, where youth who have previously accessed mental health services in their community or transitioned from child to adult services, can guide youth who are trying to do the same.



Recommendation #6: Mandate race-based data collection.

Long-Term Goals

- Mandate race-based data collection within every mental health agency and require provincial reports to be conducted upon the data.
- Race-based data collection should be in collaboration with, and managed by, BIPOC communities.



Q&A



THANK YOU!

- Hodan Mohamud, Chair
- Madison Suh
- Alisha Sharma
- Eric Hendrick
- Gregory Doucet
- Diya Mohan
- Lewis Han
- Erin Park
- Murphy-Issac Boyse
- Nneoma Grace Achioso
- Aditya Thakur
- Gin Phillips

