

# Insights from the Ontario Youth Sector Compass Study

The Youth Research and  
Evaluation Exchange (YouthREX)

x

The York Research Chair in  
Youth and Contexts of Inequity



YORK 

 **YOUTHREX**  
Research &  
Evaluation eXchange

# Agenda for our Conversation

## About YouthREX

### The Ontario Youth Sector Compass Study

- Acknowledgements
- What did we want to know?
- How did we go about answering our questions?
- What did we learn?
- How can we connect these findings to action (practice & policy)?

### Knowledge Exchange Plans

# About YouthREX

# ABOUT YOUTHREX

## OUR VISION

An Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth.

## OUR MISSION

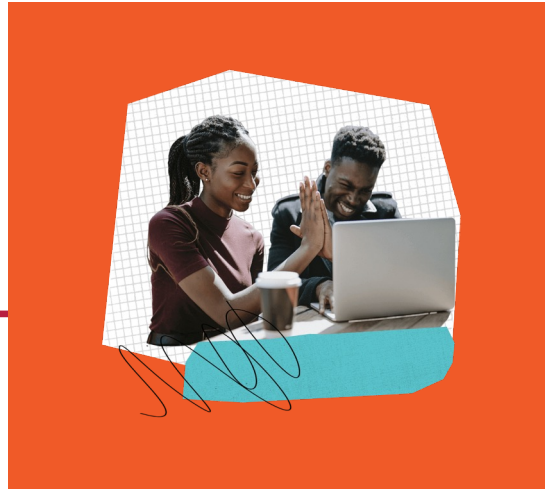
To make research evidence and evaluation accessible and relevant to Ontario's youth sector through knowledge exchange, capacity building, and evaluation leadership.



# PROGRAM OBJECTIVES



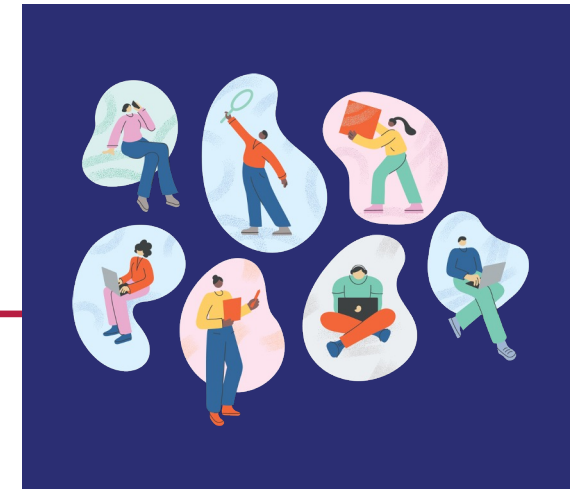
Knowledge  
Exchange



Learn by  
YouthREX



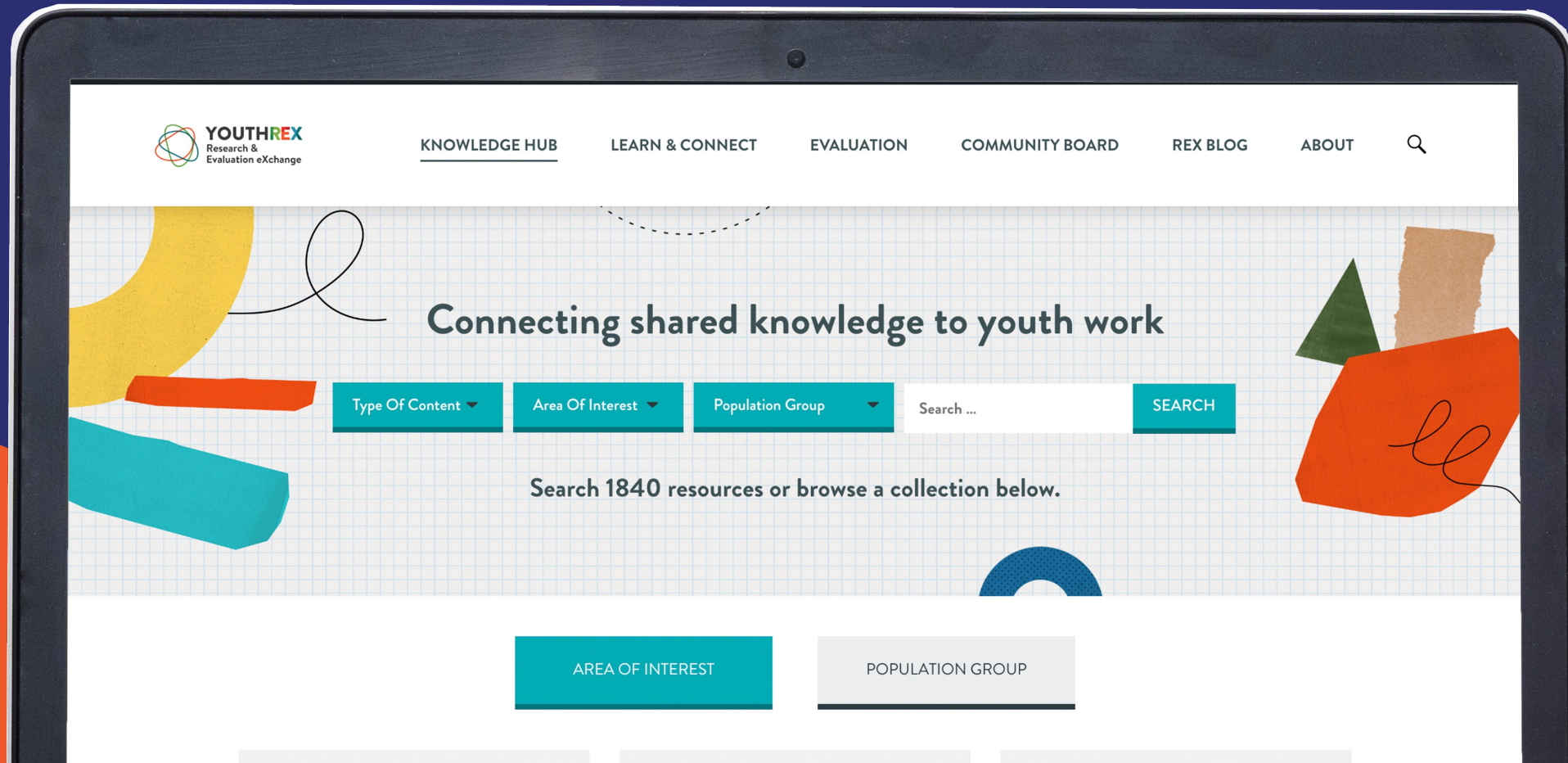
Customized  
Evaluation  
Supports



Community-  
Engaged Research

# Visit our Knowledge Hub!

Browse 1900+ resources to support youth work practice and amplify the voices and experiences of young people.



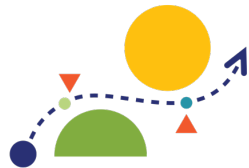
# Customized Evaluation Supports

YouthREX offers a range of customized services to support youth programs. Whether they're looking for data or evidence, starting a new program, or figuring out how to make existing programs better, *we've got programs covered!*



## Knowledge and Data Request

Find out about best practices for youth programs like yours.



## Program Development

Work one-on-one with a Program Associate to create a logic model, a visual tool that maps your program from A – Z.



## Evaluation Consultation

Work one-on-one with a Program Associate on specific evaluation tasks, from selecting the right evaluation tool to analyzing data.

## Apply for **FREE** Evaluation Support!

### How to apply?

Fill out a simple online application, and we'll get back to you within 3 business days.



### Who should apply?

Youth-serving organizations or initiatives in Ontario.

# The Ontario Youth Sector Compass Study

## 1/ Acknowledgements



# Acknowledgements

- The Ontario Youth Sector Compass (OYC) Study is a research project by YouthREX in collaboration with the York Research Chair in Youth and Contexts of Inequity.
- The OYC is a collective effort by many people who contributed ideas and resources, including current and past staff and Research Assistants at YouthREX, some of whom have stayed connected to the project even after they moved to other organizations.
- . We're especially grateful to the youth and youth worker participants who generously shared their perspectives.
- We acknowledge the support provided by the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at York University with data collection – both for the surveys and the one-on-one phone interviews with youth and youth workers.

# The Ontario Youth Sector Compass Study

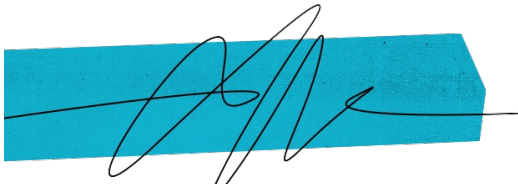
## 2/ What is this study about?


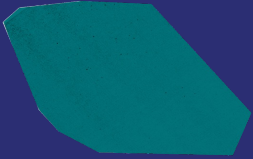
# The Ontario Youth Sector Compass Project (OYC)

- The OYC is focused on understanding what supports young people in Ontario need to thrive.
- What supports youth workers need to work with young people as healthily as possible.
- The OYC takes an equity-based approach in understanding the experiences of youth and youth workers by merging quantitative data from surveys and stories from qualitative interviews to provide rich insights about different groups of youth and youth workers across Ontario.

# Research Objectives

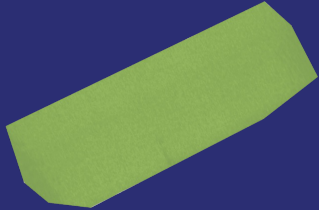
- What issues are youth in Ontario experiencing?
- How have these issues been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic?
- How are Ontario youth involved in education, employment, activities, and communities?
- What do youth want and need to have a “Good Life” in Ontario?
- What does youth work look like in Ontario?
- What are the issues, gaps, and barriers encountered by youth workers?
- How are youth workers responding to the challenges they are experiencing?
- How might we engage and leverage ‘systems’ to better support youth and youth workers?





# The Ontario Youth Sector Compass

## 2/ How did we go about answering our questions?



# Methodology

## Online Survey

- Completed by 3,670 youth and 423 youth workers across Ontario
- The final sample for analyses: 3,343 youth and 356 youth

## One-on-one in-depth interviews

- 81 youth and 73 youth workers

# About the Youth Survey Participants: Region in Ontario

---

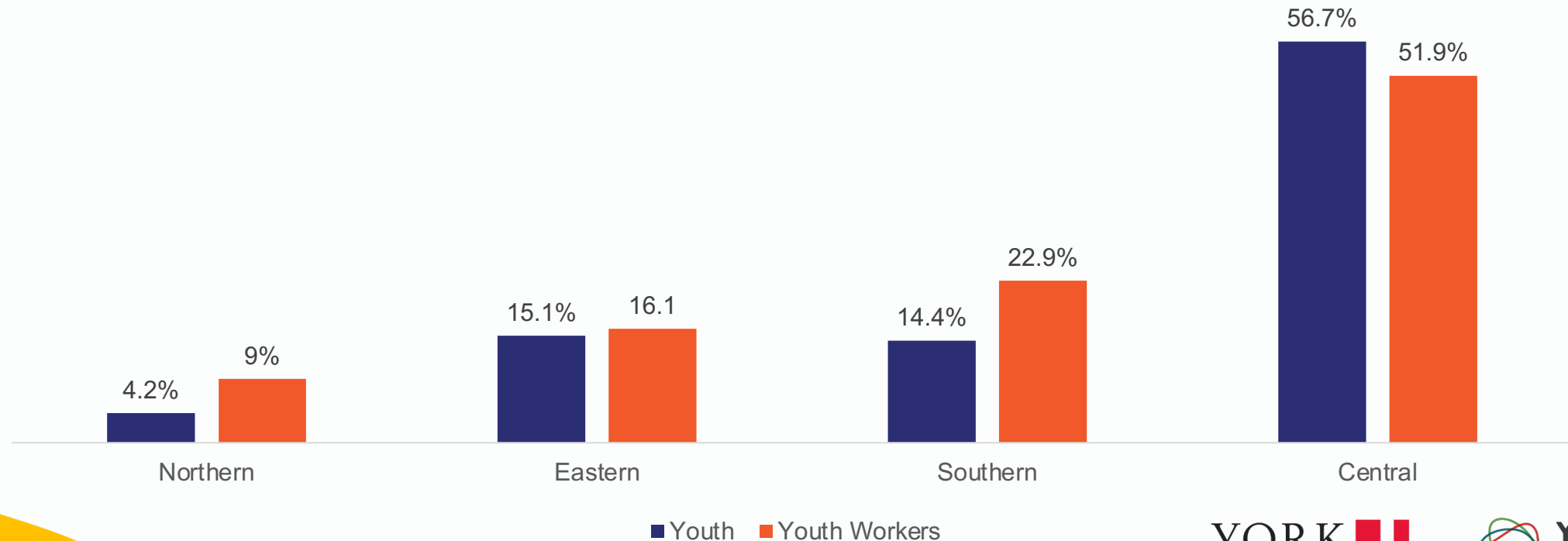
	n (%)
Central Ontario	1897 (56.7)
Eastern Ontario	505 (15.1)
Northeastern Ontario	94 (2.8)
Northwestern Ontario	47 (1.4)
Southwestern Ontario	481 (14.4)
Missing	319 (9.5)
Total	3343 (100)

---



# Survey Participants

Percentage of Youth ( $n = 3024$ ) and Youth Workers ( $n = 310$ ) across Regions of Ontario





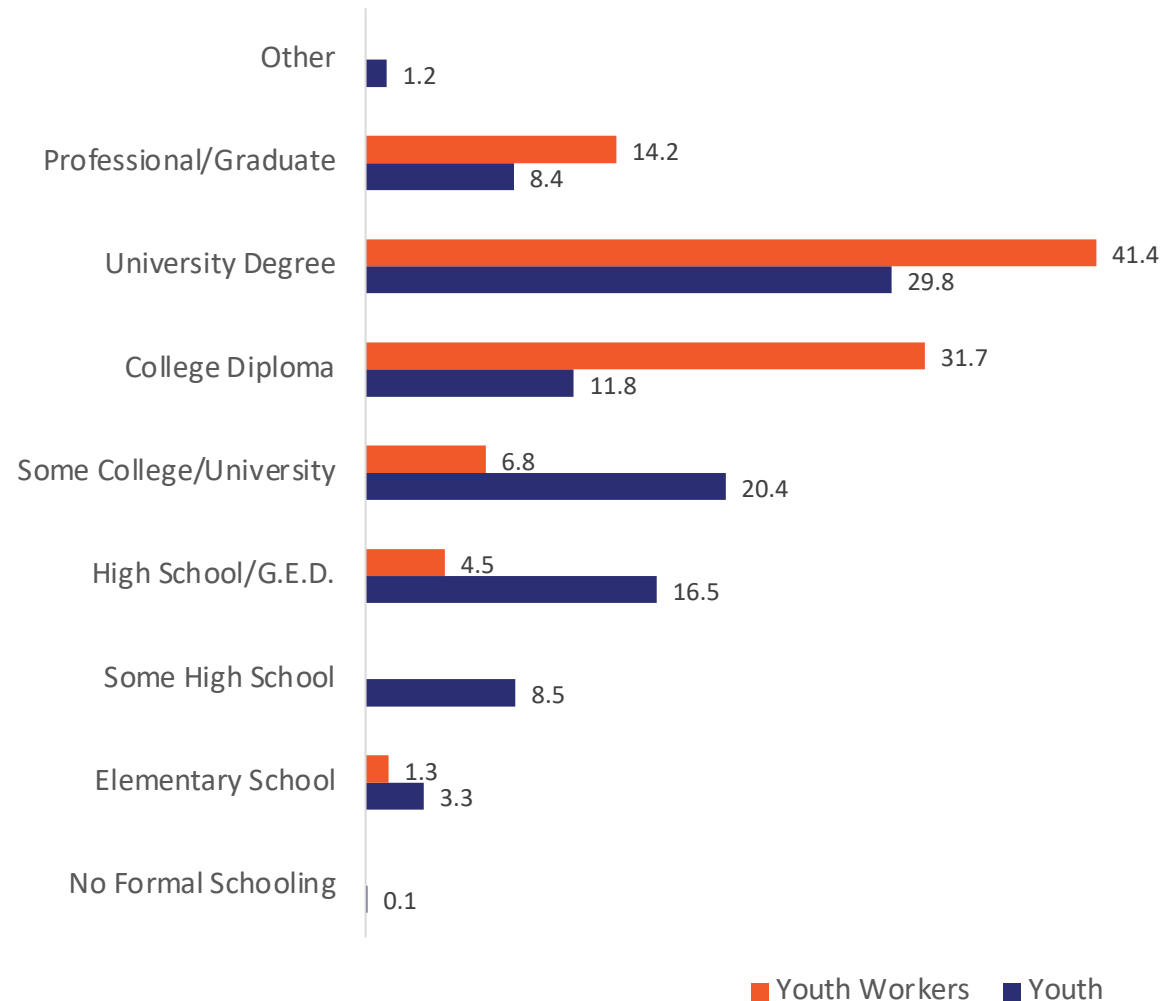
# Survey Participants

## Gender Identity of Youth and Youth Worker Survey Participants

	Youth (n = 2918)	Youth Worker (n = XXX)
Cis	995 (34.1)	94 (30.5)
Gender Non-Binary	149 (5.1)	16 (5.2)
Man/Boy	564 (19.3)	39 (12.7)
Questioning	70 (2.4)	2 (0.6)
Trans	65 (2.2)	4 (1.3)
Two-spirit	8 (0.3)	-
Woman/Girl	1735 (59.5)	216 (70.1)
Preferred not to answer	55 (1.9)	5 (1.6)
Identifies with another gender	10 (0.3)	2 (0.6)
Total	3651 (125.1)	378 (122.7)

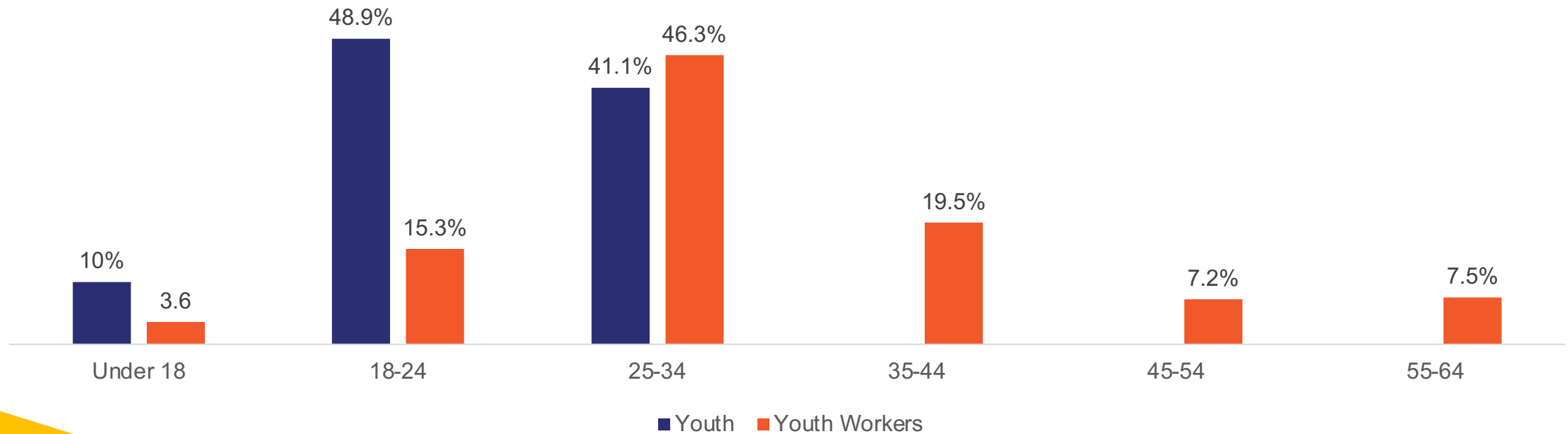
# Survey Participants

Highest Education Levels of Youth (n = 2910) and Youth Worker (n = 309) Survey Participants



# Survey Participants

Percentage of Survey Participants by Age Category  
(Youth:  $n = 2932$ ; Youth Workers:  $n = 305$ )



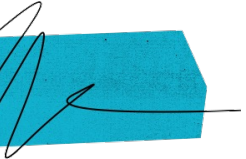
# Youth Survey Participants

How Old Are You?	
Years	n (%)
16 – 20	863 (29.4)
21 – 25	11105 (37.7)
26 – 29	964 (32.9)
Total	2932 (100)
Missing	411
Grand Total	3343

Born in Canada?	n	%
Yes, I was born in Canada	2251	77.3
No, I immigrated to Canada, more than 20 years ago	109	3.7
No, I immigrated to Canada, 10 to 20 years ago	238	8.2
No, I immigrated to Canada, 5 to 9 years ago	120	4.1
No, I immigrated to Canada, 2 to 4 years ago	106	3.6
No, I immigrated to Canada, less than 2 years ago	71	2.4
Total	2913	100.0
Missing	430	
Total	3343	

# Youth Worker Survey Participants (n = 356)

- Worked directly with youth (81.6%)
- Worked with youth 5 years or longer (62.9%)
- Held permanent positions (69.3%)
- Held full-time positions (79.1%)
- Located in urban centres (83.7%)



# The Ontario Youth Sector Compass

## 3/ What did we learn?

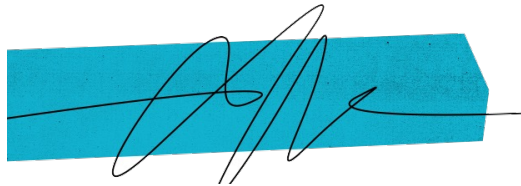
# What Did We Learn?

**#1:** The “Good Life”

**#2:** Youth Program Participation

**#3:** Mental Wellness

**#5:** Life During COVID: Lessons for Life After COVID





# #1: The Good Life

Defining Good Life; Good Life Status;  
Barriers to Good Life; Changes /  
Supports Needed for a Good Life







## We asked youth to tell us:

*“...how Ontario youth define a Good Life and the things that contribute to this. A Good Life might be considered the kind of life you dream of living and would include things you want for yourself as well as things you want to see in the broader community and world”.*



# #1: Defining a 'Good Life'

***A Good is not Just Surviving. A Good Life is Thriving***

## **A Good Life is:**

- Relationships and Community but also Personal Growth, Meaning, Balance
- Economic Wellbeing
- Mental Wellness
- Future. "A Good Life Comes in Time"

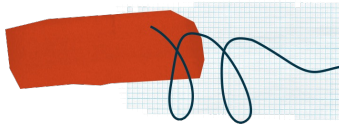




# #1: A Good Life is Relationships and Community

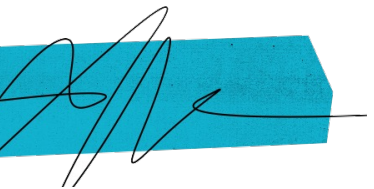
*“I feel like a good life is just one where you’re satisfied, you’re satiated and you’re content you know, with your surroundings. I feel like an important part of that is a **good sense of community**”. Y59*

*“Yeah. When I think of a good life in an Indigenous – well in Anishinabe, which is Ojibway, we have a word for good life, So it’s like – it’s sort of kind of references **like walking the red road, which means like just like connecting to your culture, staying sober and like kind of like owning your truth**. Y39*



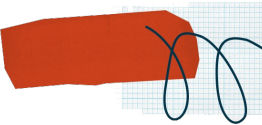
# #1: A Good Life is Relationship, Community

*“I think like, **more, more communal support**, like I know, there’s a lot of folks especially marginalized folks who stand up and advocate for like institutional changes, but I still think that’s something that needs to be championed by a majority of folks and that’s like, not the case. So even though I personally feel like I have what I need in my life right now on all those levels, like physically, mentally, spiritually I’m also aware of the fact that its like a very thin line that’s being held up by and it would be a lot better if I guess those things are supported by a lot more people than it is”. Y32*



# #1: A Good Life is Relationship, Community

*In the broader community it would be seeing **business, well, again thrive and not just survive**. So that – like the small mom and pop shops don't go, don't go out of business. And then suddenly, we're left with just all these massive brand names. Baseless brand names like Amazon, or McDonald's or Starbucks, for example. Y28*



*So a good life to me is being able to have enough financial freedom in order to provide for myself without stress. Seeing my neighbours, and my coworkers have the same as well as **seeing my community, not just surviving and dealing with their issues, but are thriving and actively solving their issues**. Y128*

# #1: A Good Life is Personal Growth

*“A good life means that my siblings and I will have broken generational curses for my family. We would have healed and continue to do so lifelong. My siblings and I would have an authentic, raw, connection and they would visit often - always feeling welcomed and a sense of true belonging. We will have acquired generational wealth. I would own a house, my siblings would as well. We would have security and stability in all aspects of life. We would have genuine supports and connections with people who value us and see the good. **Our time and experiences in foster care would be a sliver of our life story instead of feeling like these really long, ugly chapters. We would switch from surviving in life to thriving together.** We would recognize that this is the life we deserved all along” Y32*



# #1: A Good Life is Economic Wellbeing

*“A good life to me is one where I can have my own place to call home, be able to pay my bills, be able to go out with the people I care about, and to be able to treat myself when I need to.” (Participant 31)*

*“....a “Good Life” starts with a **solid financial foundation**. It means living debt-free and being able to not only cover all my expenses but enjoy luxuries like vacations, massages, a house, and a car. **A life where I am able to have a career because I am passionate and not just because of how much the salary is.** A life where I can afford to take days off and have more control and flexibility with my work hours. I would spend more time with my family and doing things I enjoy than at work in this ideal situation...” (Participant 6)*

# #1: A Good Life is Economic Wellbeing

*A good life means to me is having **no financial stress on basic necessities**, so that's like shelter, food, what else, yeah, so the basic things in life where you can be content with. Y19*

*So like a good amount of food and water on the table. A roof over your head etcetera Y103  
I have a roof over my head, I can **steadily pay my bills**, I'm not in debt, I have food to eat I guess.  
My water is running, my electric is on. Y113*

*Having a good life would mean having your **basic necessities and plus**. So I guess to kind of elaborate on that I would think for me, a good life would mean you know having a stable shelter that you know, mine can't ever be taken away from me kind of. Having food and other like resources that like you know we all need to survive. Y95*

*A good life, I would say, starts with, like, **the basic things that humans need to survive** – so things like shelter, food, things like that. Y28*

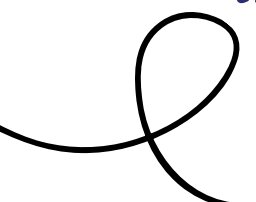


# #1: A Good Life is Mental Wellness

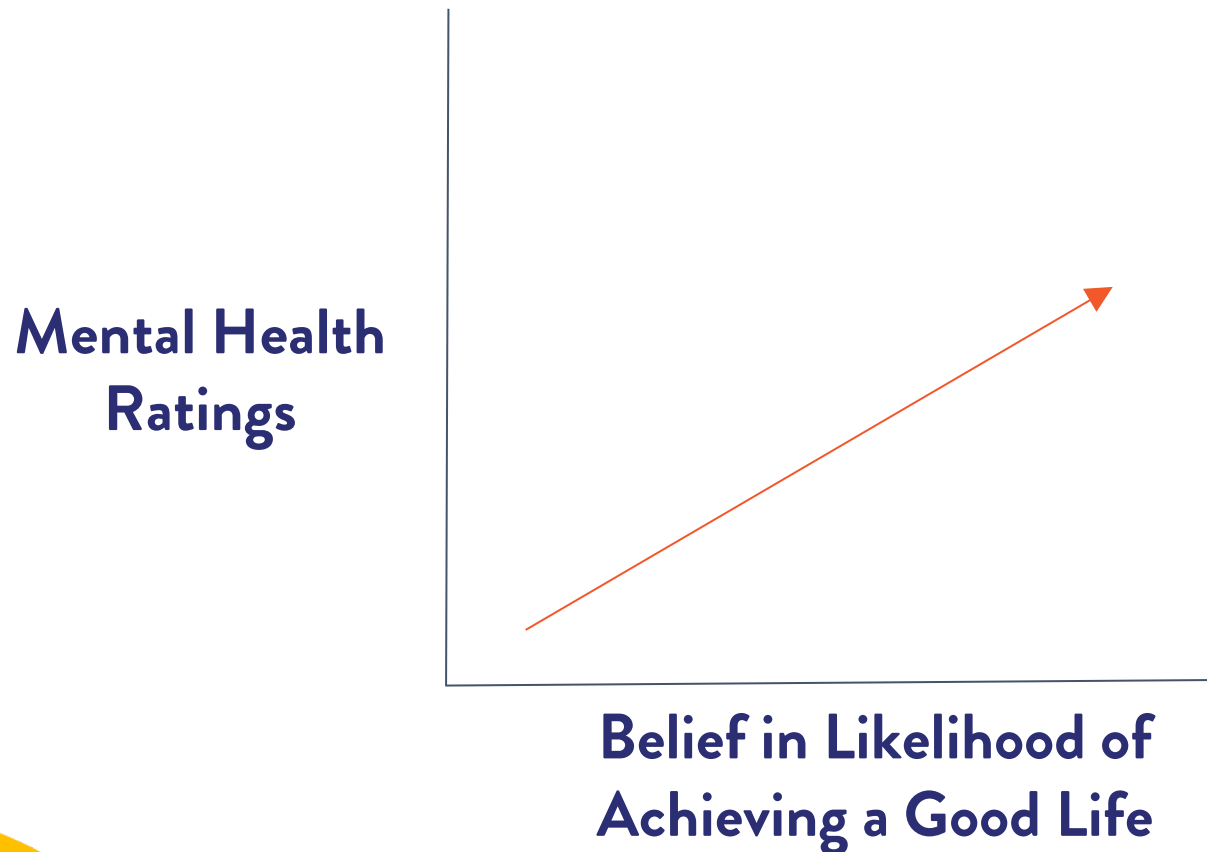
*“Having a Good Life to me means that I am well-rounded and balancing **my mental, emotional and physical health**. Tending to my interpersonal and familial relationships and being at one with myself.” (Participant 18)*

*“Having a good life means a lot to me. Being able to walk freely in the streets without being discriminated against or bullied. Also, **being able to maintain my mental health would mean the world to me.**” (Participant 2)*

*“A happy place. A life where **there isn’t much mental health issues**. A life where the ones u love are important to you as much as you are important to them. A life of comfort and independence. A life full of love.” (Participant 15)*



# #1: Relationship between a Good Life and Mental Health



# #1A: Defining a 'Good Life'

*A Good is not Just Surviving.*

*A Good Life is Thriving*



## #1b: Good Life Status

Are youth currently living a Good Life?

**YES: 33.5%**

(*n* = 1006)

**NO: 42.0%**

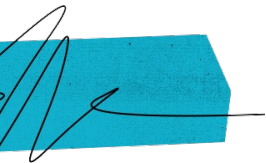
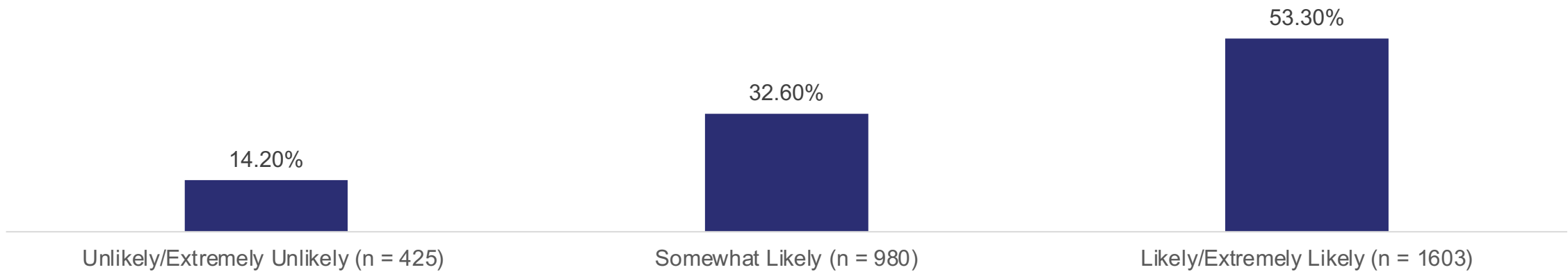
(*n* = 1263)

**UNSURE: 24.5%**

(*n* = 738)

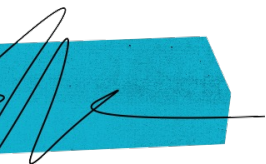
# #1b: Good Life Status

Likelihood of achieving a *Good Life*?



# #1c: Barriers to a Good Life

Main Themes	n	%
1. Structural & socio-economic barriers	1385	54%
2. Mental health as barrier	364	14%
3. Networks, interpersonal relationships & challenges	307	12%
4. Insecurity, self-blame, & barriers to personal growth	259	10%
5. Barriers related to COVID	188	7%



# #1c: Barriers to a Good Life: Structural and Socio-Economic Factors

*“I feel like things were rigged for me from the beginning because I have been paying rent since I left high school. I went from high school to paying rent, to risking it and getting in debt for college and now I’m back to just paying rent. Not having a support system means letting go of dreams I’ve had for basic survival. People with support go places.”* Participant 35



## #Ic: Barriers to a Good Life: Sustainable Climate

*Interviewer: OK. And what are the things that stand in your way to having a good life? Participant: Capitalism. Interviewer: Can you elaborate on that? Participant: This constant desire for more. This competitive rat race that we live in. **We're all on the same burning, dying rock together. And I feel like no one realizes that.** Y89*

*Climate +structural and a wish for a different ethos of life. **Good life is not a "constant desire for more"**. So yeah, and then **global warming, harsher weather conditions** and an increase in things like fruits and vegetables because it's going to be harder to grow them. Y31*



## #Ic: Barriers to a Good Life: Sustainable Climate

*Yes. I don't know if it's just my generation, but we're also really **worried about climate change**. And so thinking about the world as it is now and how going forward, it might be even more difficult to provide the life for our kids that we have right now. Or most – hopefully it's better. I think a lot of people are hesitant to put people out into the world that have to deal with the problems that we're still dealing with today. Y38*

*A good life for me would being work that doesn't harm life, but that enriches it. **So doing work that is good for the collective of all life on Earth, which is good for our climate, which is good for our people, which is ethical, which is fair**. Something which inspires us, something which challenges us and inspires us to do better than how we're doing right now. Especially in regard to what we're doing with our climate, with our soil degradation. Y109*



# #Id: Changes / Supports Need for a Good Life

Major Themes	N	Percent s
Affordability	907	38%
Government & public policy	152	6%
Changes in workday	65	3%
Personal changes	80	3%
Climate change	67	3%
Mental health services	348	14%
Youth programs & services	244	10%
Employment supports & pathways to employment	254	11%
Education	191	8%
Healthcare & coverage	153	6%



# #Id: Changes / Supports: Economic Equity

*“Serious overhaul of the rent and housing market. Rapid affordable housing developments, rapid social and subsidized housing developments, Transition CERB and CRB into UBI (Universal Basic Income) and GLI (Guaranteed Livable Income), more low-barrier grants, bursaries, scholarships, student awards, and low-interest loans, more paid job training programs for youth including older youth in their late 20s and early 30s, universal pharma care, include therapy and counselling as a part of public healthcare, universal vision care and dental care” Y26*



# #Id: Changes / Supports: Economic Equity

*“These ideas might seem ‘radical’ to some, but we will never pull a significant portion of the population out of destitution, desperation, despair, depression, and demoralizing darkness if they are struggling in poverty with a day-by-day, paycheck-to-paycheck, survivalist mindset. Many people feel stuck and trapped in their circumstances due to financial constraints that act as a major barrier to them achieving higher levels of fulfillment and self-actualization. There is a lot of untapped potential/human capital for larger economic growth, including hindered or untapped talent and entrepreneurial potential because people’s dreams have been crushed by trauma, poverty, or both”. Y26*





# #2: Youth Program Participation

Program Participation Before and During  
COVID; Youth Program Interests; Barriers to  
Participation; Challenges and Gaps on Programs



## #2: Youth Program Participation

Pre-pandemic: 36.7%

( $n = 1102$ )

Post-pandemic: 21.7%

( $n = 651$ )



## #2: Program Participation Before and During COVID

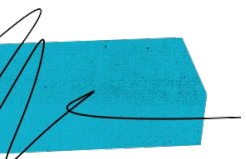
Youth Program Participation	Before Covid	Since Covid
	n (%)	n (%)
Participated in programs	1102 (36.6)	651 (21.7)
Did Not Participate	1912 (63.4)	2350 (78.3)
Total	3014 (100)	3001 (100)

e

## #2: Youth Program Participation

Top three programs youth are interested in that are not available in their communities

- Arts-based programming (n = 766, 32.7%)
- Mental health programs (n = 724, 30.9%)
- Sports programs (n = 714, 30.5%)





## #2: Youth Program Participation

	Before Covid (n=1085)	Since Covid (n=651)
Sports programs	411 (37.9)	137 (21)
Mentorship	275 (25.3)	186 (28.6)
Leadership	358 (33)	184 (28.3)
Arts	266 (24.5)	104 (16)
Tutoring	190 (17.5)	92 (14.1)
STEM-related	142 (13.1)	80 (12.3)
Summer camps	280 (25.8)	42 (6.5)
Social-recreational	245 (22.6)	96 (14.7)
Mental Health	170 (15.7)	120 (18.4)
2SLGBTQ+-specific	102 (9.4)	55 (8.4)
BIPOC-specific	70 (6.5)	49 (7.5)
Drop-in	176 (16.2)	65 (10)
Cultural	112 (10.3)	62 (9.5)
Religious	206 (19)	88 (13.5)



## #2: Barriers to Program Participation for Youth Who Did Not Participate

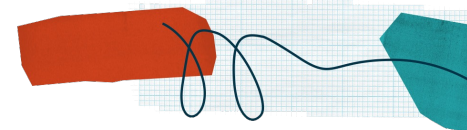
Barriers	Before Covid (N = 1909)	Since Covid (N=2338)
Not Interested	827 (43.3)	974 (41.7)
Programs don't exist	273 (14.3)	71 (3)
Lack of Time (Work)	673 (35.3)	296 (12.7)
Lack of time (school)	224 (11.7)	224 (11.7)
Lack of time (caring responsibilities)	661 (34.6)	661 (34.6)
Financial constraints	360 (18.9)	360 (18.9)
Health concerns	81 (4.2)	81 (4.2)
No one to join with	377 (19.7)	377 (19.7)
Transportation issues	211 (11.1)	211 (11.1)

# #2: Youth Program Interests



Arts	766 (32.7)
Mental Health	724 (30.9)
Sports programs	714 (30.5)
Social-recreational	539 (23)
Mentorship	488 (20.8)
Leadership	445 (19)
STEM-related	422 (18)
Cultural	243 (16.4)
Drop-in	374 (16)
2SLGBTQ+-specific	199 (13.4)
Summer camps	275 (11.7)
BIPOC-specific	149 (10.1)
Tutoring	226 (9.6)
Religious	111 (7.5)





## #2: Challenges and Gaps in Youth Programs

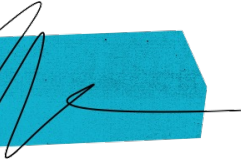
*“... And I even spoke to some people who are working for these organizations, like, how come – why is it like that? And the best answer I got is that when they get funding, because they're non-profits when they get funding for these programs from the government, they have to basically obey certain rules in order to secure the next round of funding. And it seems like the rule is, to get them into any job at any cost as soon as possible, it doesn't matter what they want, what they think, if it's going to benefit them, just get them into the working field and that's that. So when the approach is like that, as you can guess, the amount of care and the amount of sort of customization that goes into designing the career path for the students is almost non-existent”. (Y110-Northeastern Region)*

## #2: Challenges and Gaps in Youth Programs

*“Ultimately, it was helpful but it's very brief to really teach skills to actually utilize in the field. You know, if it's a very brief program, such as four weeks, and if you're doing like six different things, like videography, photography, etc., your actual skills for employability are not that advanced or in-depth. And the actual post-program employment support is very limited. I wasn't able to get any kind of internship or program to actually practice my skills. So it was helpful to some degree. Yes” (Y109, Northeastern Region)*

## #2: What is the 'Point' of a Youth Program?


*"It was OK. I was having panic attacks going there. I wasn't able to go for the warm-up. And even though they had a social worker, I didn't find her, like, overly supportive. Like at one point, I asked her, do you know any resources about self-esteem? And she said, oh, actually, no, I don't know anything about that topic. So, in terms of like real support for my life, I didn't find her supportive. I really like playing around on circus equipment. So it was really fun. I had like a couple of friends I'd talk to there who were nice and the snacks were great. So it was a cool program."*  
(Y109, Male)





# **#3: Mental Wellness**

**Mental Health Status; Access to Mental  
Health Services**



# Top Issue Facing Youth

According to youth workers, the top issue facing youth is...

## Mental Health

Pre-pandemic: 80.0%

(n = 260)

Post-pandemic: 83.6%

(n = 271)







## #3: Mental Wellness Status

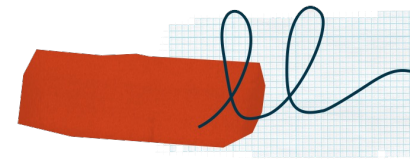
---

Current Mental Health	n (%)
Poor	613 (19.4)
Fair	776 (24.6)
Average	922 (29.2)
Good	700 (22.2)
Excellent	149 (4.7)
Total	3160 (100)

## #3: Access to Mental Health Services

---

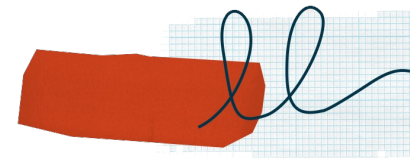
Mental Health Services	Agree	Disagree	Total
Know of mental health services in the community	1762 (55.7%)	1401 (44.3%)	3163 (100%)
Can easily access mental health services	1935 (61.3%)	1220 (38.7%)	3155 (100%)
Feel comfortable reaching out and asking for support	2025 (64.3%)	1124 (35.7%)	3149 (100%)



## #3: Access to Mental Health Services

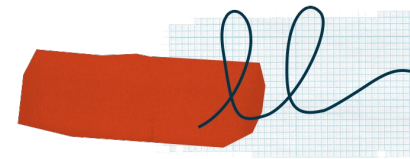
*“In Ontario, mental health services are far and few in between. A person having a mental health crisis may have to wait hours to see a medical professional, and even when they do, their situation may not be taken as seriously as it should be. A lot of key actors in our communities such as teachers, police officers, and guidance counsellors are not adequately trained to support youth dealing with mental health issues”* (Survey Participant)





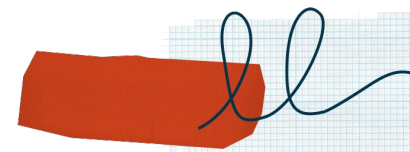
## #3: Access to Mental Health Services

*“Anything stopping me? I would say there’s not a lot of resource; there are not resources. They’ll give you a walk-in centre maybe, the generic, oh, here is the advertising for a walk-in but a lot of the time I find these guys don’t even know what the hell they’re doing when you get there. They don’t really care. They’re not invested, right? It’s just a paycheck they look at things more or less, and I’m not just a paycheck. I’m a human being, right, so that part. I wouldn’t go there just to give them what they want and I’m not getting what I need, you know? I mean, whatever support”.*



## #3: Access to Mental Health Services

*“I mean I'm comfortable, but with a mental health specialist, I did have a therapist up until recently. But therapy is very expensive and I'm young and barely making needs met, so throughout – up until this summer I've never really had to pay for anything other than my phone bill and maybe sometimes food I guess, because my parents covered tuition, covered even expenses and all that stuff. And so you graduate and they're just like you're on your own. And so seeing a therapist before, they covered that versus now .... so I just look to TikTok for mental health advice”.* Youth Interview Participant



## #3: Access to Mental Health Services

*“I think as a black Muslim and a male and turning 20 – because the thing is with mental health, it's a touchy topic for people. It's a taboo. So I don't think I'll go up to any of my people, my whole circle and say I think I need help today”. (Interview Participant)*


# #3: Mental Health and Access to Economic Resources

- There is a relationship between **socioeconomic status and mental health**—i.e., difficulties accessing mental health services or experiencing poor mental health because of stressors related to SES.
- Affordability and cost of living in Ontario, including housing; income and affordability; tuition and student debt, and childcare all negatively impact mental health



# #4: Lessons from Life During COVID for Life After COVID

Don't Pause the Pause: Self-Care. Community-Care; Digital  
Fluency of Youth Workers / Programs = Improved  
Communication with Youth and Families; Awareness about the  
Digital Divide; Expanded resources (volunteers, donations, etc)







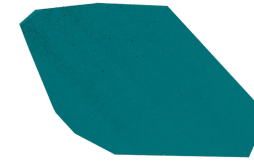
## #4: Life During COVID: Lessons for Life After COVID

*“The pandemic has forced adults into the virtual world a lot more and a lot of kids were already there. So adults learning to meet kids where they’re at, which is what we’re supposed to be doing. I think there are some benefits to that and understanding that it’s more – it might be more accessible to meet kids if you have to have a one-on-one meeting with them within a Zoom space. And also, like, learning to do asynchronous texting more often and understanding that, like, that’s what kids do and they text back and forth, and that we can do that too because we’re not always in the office. I think it promotes new skill learning in that sense. And I just think that that’s not being talked about enough in child and youth work, so I think that there are some benefits to learn about the virtual spaces with kids”.* Youth Worker (#10)

## #4: Life During COVID: Lessons for Life After COVID

*“Yeah. I would say having the – it’s kind of automatic now that we consider having the option of the virtual workshops or virtual feature for people to connect, which is great for young people living in rural areas. And then we’ve also, you know, explored how that connects to technology access and making sure that it’s part of our policies that, you know, if we’re going to engage youth at our expert panel, for example, and they live in a rural area and they don’t have a computer, then that would be part of something that we would provide for them to engage. So I think it’s had us think critically about what supports we’re actually providing for young people to be engaged. So that’s great.” Youth Worker (#90)*

## #4: Life During COVID: Lessons for Life After COVID

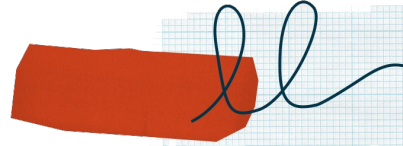


*“Well, another part is – one part of our program, the homework support program, is supported heavily by volunteers from university. And before the pandemic we’ve always had struggle finding volunteers to support that program. Because sometimes it might be out of the way for the volunteers. I think it was – we were really only supported by, like, a local university volunteer group who were able – only able to come to one of our locations twice a week. **But since the pandemic started it was a lot easier for volunteers to volunteer because everything is online.**”* Youth Worker (#08)

## #4: Life During COVID: Lessons for Life After COVID

*“It has made it easier in the sense that I can connect with youth that are further outside of our kind of area that can’t make it in person. So, for example, I’ve been able – I’ve been blessed to actually work with youth that live further up north. I’m currently working with a youth that’s in Sprucedale, which is a youth justice centre up north. And being able to be virtual and, kind of, take advantage of these virtual opportunities such as, you know, Google Meets, or Zoom, or the Justice Video Network, I’m able to kind of connect with youth that need services that aren’t technically available to services up north when there’s – it’s very scarce”.* (Youth Worker)

## #4: Life During COVID: Lessons for Life After COVID



*“Because of COVID and because the new Zoom or Google Meet, I was able to connect with other child and youth workers, or child and youth counsellors within the school board that I wouldn’t be able to connect with. So, I mean I had real running groups, or running conversations with other youth workers, or other youth counsellors from the school board. Like I’m in a group, and we do it like once a month. We run like a child and youth worker conversation. So, we have conversations. We talk about what’s going on in the world and how we try – you know, anti-Black racism, or anti-Indigenous racism, you know? So, we try to promote that in here with the kids I’ve worked with. Because we’re relying on Zoom and being able to connect in that way, and have a forum of people who that normally haven’t met before now chime in and talk about it. And talk about a child and youth they have in their space group. Talk about how they’re coping with COVID. Talk about how they’re coping as themselves and what’s been going on, what we saw, we witnessed in this world ” (Youth Worker)*

## #4: Life During COVID: Lessons for Life After COVID

*“I think there’s now a recognition that – like, prior to COVID-19, there was some reluctance to let staff work from home. But I think now there’s recognition that, like, oh, this is actually a good thing, and it’s OK and work is still getting done. And now, there’s a lot more flexibility in terms of, like, where the work is being done, whether it’s in the community, at one of our offices, or at our home, which is kind of cool”*

(Youth Worker)

## #4: Life During COVID: Lessons for Life After COVID

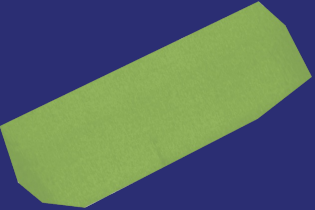
*“The kind of gifts the pandemic has been, like, technology, we’ve been able to use new platforms that we probably would never have used before. We use Discord [for] a lot of our programs. Actually, we use it for all of our programs now. We don’t even use Zoom anymore. ... It’s been bittersweet. On one hand, it’s, you know, it’s a horrible situation. On the other hand, it’s a way to keep us safe to do it virtually. Not the best, because you can’t always see the people you’re talking to, it feels like you’re talking to a wall sometimes. But there’s a lot of good things that have come out of the pandemic, as well, through our programs”* (Youth Worker)

*“I think that accessibility of, like, having both in-person and online options running at the same time has been a really great thing to come out of this. And, it responds to a number of different needs that our students might have at any given point”* (Youth Worker)



# Connecting the Findings to Action

What are Practice and Policy Ideas for:

- 
- 1/ Youth Wellbeing?
  - 2/ Youth Worker Wellbeing?
  - 3 Youth Sector Wellbeing?



# SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



Gender



Disability



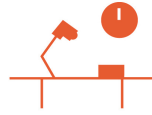
Income



Education



Employment &  
Job Security



Working  
Conditions



Early Childhood  
Development



Food Insecurity



Housing



Social Exclusion



Social Safety  
Network



Health



Indigenous  
Identity



Race

# Thank you!

[anucha@yorku.ca](mailto:anucha@yorku.ca)  
[info@youthrex.com](mailto:info@youthrex.com)

[www.youthrex.com](http://www.youthrex.com) | @REXforyouth

An Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into  
positive impact for all youth!

Learn More



YORK 

 **YOUTHREX**  
Research &  
Evaluation eXchange