



## Introduction

PARticipating in My Mental Health Care toolkit is an informative, empowering, and actionable resource that was co-designed by mindyourmind and a group of youth and caregivers in Ontario. The concept and contents of this toolkit were based on a research project led by the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) Research Institute and Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions and funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The project focused on understanding how the COVID-19 pandemic changed how young people learn about supports for mental health and addictions and how they access those supports. For more information, see An Overview of the PAR Research Project.

The project used a participatory action research (PAR) approach, which involved people whom the research was about as important leaders and "PAR-tners" in the project team. Thank you Alisha, Ellen, Elora, Erin, Raissa, Sara, and other PAR-tners for your valuable contributions to the project and the toolkit you see here.

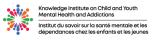
**PARticipating in My Mental Health Care** was designed to help young people in Ontario and across Canada find and access mental health and addiction services and support best suited for them. This toolkit includes a variety of information, reflective activities, and fillable worksheets that can be personalized to support youth as unique, active participants along their mental health or addiction care journey.

Terms used in this toolkit: We use the terms young people, young person, or youth to describe people between childhood and adulthood (the exact ages can vary). Related terms include adolescents, teens, or young adults.

#### The toolkit includes:

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# What Type of Support Am I Looking For?

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Now that you've thought a bit about some of your current challenges or the questions you have about your mental health and/or substance use, you might be wondering where or who to turn to for support.

There are many ways to categorize the types of support that exist for mental health and substance use issues; throughout PARticipating in My Mental Health Care, we use three categories that are each represented by a colour: **urgent support**, **coping support**, and **informational support**. Learn more about these categories below, so that you can get a better idea of the type of support you might be looking for:

### **Urgent Support:**

You may notice big and sudden changes in your mood or behaviour, which may include being in a state of crisis. You may also have urges and/or plans to hurt yourself or someone else. You may see or hear things that others do not. You may have had either an accidental or deliberate overdose with substances. You may feel like your current way of managing stress and challenges is no longer working.

In this case, you may consider getting help from a healthcare provider or service that specializes in mental health or addictions and who can see you now or very soon, someone to guide you through the first steps needed for your health and safety and plan for what to do next.



### **Coping Support:**

You may notice that parts of your daily life, including relationships, are strongly affected by your thoughts, feelings and mood. You may be going through, or have gone through, a major life change or event or feel smaller stresses piling up. You may feel like it is getting harder to manage challenges.

In this case, you may consider getting help from a professional, someone who may or may not specialize in mental health or addictions, for ongoing support that isn't needed urgently. You could also look to people and places in your community for support, including clinics, groups, or people who have gone through something similar. Coping support could involve talking about your feelings and experiences to better understand them and learn strategies to help.

### **Informational Support:**

You may consider your overall well-being to be good but you could use some tips for managing stress, would like to build healthier relationships, or have questions about mental health or substance use.

In this case, you may consider talking to someone you are comfortable with who will listen and not judge you based on what you say. A person you trust might also be able to provide ideas or suggestions of where you can go for coping support, if you decide you would like to seek that out next. You could also find information about available resources, such as services or professionals in your community or online, learn more about a particular issue that you're struggling with, or tips for taking care of your well-being.

Conversations
about our feelings
and mental health
can be difficult, but they
are important.
You are important.





## Creating My Support Network

We all need help at some point, whether it's needed urgently, for coping, or for information. Some of your supports might specialize in mental health or addictions, and others might be alternative or non-professional. Having variety in your support network can help you meet your different needs. It can also be helpful to talk with the people you see as part of this network to learn what ways they feel able to support you.

Here are some options of services or supports you might like to include in your support network, depending on the type of support you are looking for. Many services are not accessible 24/7, and some may not be available where you live, or require a referral, usually from a family doctor, before they can be accessed. Some options may be helpful for specific concerns (e.g. anxiety, alcohol use), and groups or communities (e.g. 2SLGBTQI+, People of Color, Newcomers), so explore what's available or ask if a service can meet your preferences or needs.

There may be other options for your support network that are not listed here. To learn more about your options, try asking an adult in your life who is informed on local health and social services or try a resource like <u>211</u>, or <u>ConnexOntario</u>° that can give you this information.

Struggling with mental health or substance use can be lonely, especially when it feels like you do not have many people, services, or tools to turn to. You do not have to go through this alone!

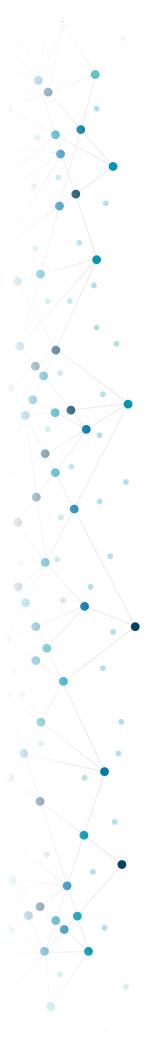
Note: The options below are listed alphabetically. Links to options available only in Ontario have a superscript "o". Links to options available across Canada do not have a superscript.

#### **Urgent Supports:**

- O Emergency services (e.g. 911, emergency department, <u>Ontario Mobile Crisis</u> Rapid Response Team<sup>o</sup>)
- O Helplines and crisis support across Canada (e.g. <u>Black Youth Helpline, Hope for Wellness, Kids Help Phone, Naseeha, Talk Suicide Canada, Trans Lifeline</u>
- O Helplines and crisis support across Ontario (e.g. <u>Crisis Line</u>°, <u>Good2Talk</u>°, <u>LGBT Youthline</u>°, <u>Ontario Distress and Crisis Services</u>°)
- O Family doctor (find a doctor in Canada, in Ontarioo)
- Inpatient hospital programs

### **Coping Supports:**

- Addiction rehabilitation services
- Community organizations (e.g. <u>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)</u>, <u>Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)</u><sup>o</sup>, <u>Youth Wellness Hubs</u> Ontario (YWHO)<sup>o</sup>)
- Counsellor
- Family, friends, or loved ones

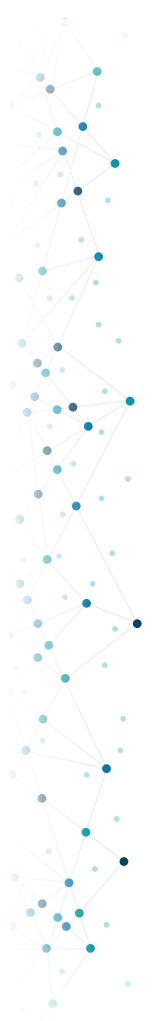


- O Helplines and crisis support across Canada (e.g. <u>Black Youth Helpline</u>, <u>Hope for Wellness</u>, <u>Kids Help Phone</u>, <u>Naseeha</u>, <u>Talk Suicide Canada</u>, <u>Trans Lifeline</u>)
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- O Mental health centres (e.g. <u>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)</u>, <u>Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)</u>, <u>Children's Mental Health</u> Ontario (CMHO))
- O Mobile apps (e.g. Be Safe by mindyourmind, MindShift CBT, PocketWell)
- Nurse practitioner
- Outpatient hospital programs
- O Peer support and community groups (e.g. <u>One Stop Talk</u><sup>o</sup>, <u>Peer-to-Peer Community by Kids Help Phone</u>, <u>Togetherall</u>)
- Psychiatrist
- O Psychologist (e.g. find a psychologist in Canada, in Ontario<sup>o</sup>)
- O Religious and spiritual communities
- O School (e.g. club, guidance counsellor, teacher)
- Social worker
- O Therapist (e.g. <u>find a therapist in Canada</u>, <u>in Ontario</u>°)
- O Trusted adults or community members (e.g. coaches, elders, mentors)
- O Walk-in clinics (e.g. Integrated Youth Services, One Stop Talko, Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO)o)

## **Informational Supports:**

- Mental health websites and resources (e.g. mindyourmind.ca, YouthSpeak, Youth Mental Health Canada)
- Miscellaneous resources (e.g. books, magazines, podcasts)
- O Service information websites (e.g. <u>eMentalHealth.ca</u>, <u>Mental health support-Canada</u>, <u>Settlement Service Providers across Canada</u>)
- Service information and navigation supports (e.g. <u>1Call1Click.ca</u>°, <u>211</u>, <u>ConnexOntario</u>°)
- O Social media accounts (e.g. <u>Kids Help Phone</u>, <u>mindyourmind</u>, <u>Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO)</u>°)
- O Webinars or skill-building courses (e.g. <u>BounceBack</u>, <u>Kids Help Phone</u>)

Whatever your experience is, it's important to reach out for help.



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Service or Support

It can be hard to know where to start when evaluating whether a service or support is a good match for your needs. When asked what details were helpful for them to know, the youth involved in this study shared the points listed throughout this section. We hope it can help you gather important information to figure out if a service or support is good for you.

Everyone is different, so there may be points on the checklist that don't apply to you or some you think are missing. You also might not be able to get answers to everything listed or have control of the services available to you, this tool can be a way to take a more active role in your care. You deserve to have your preferences and needs heard, so we hope this tool can help empower you to speak up about them (and you never know when it could inspire change)!

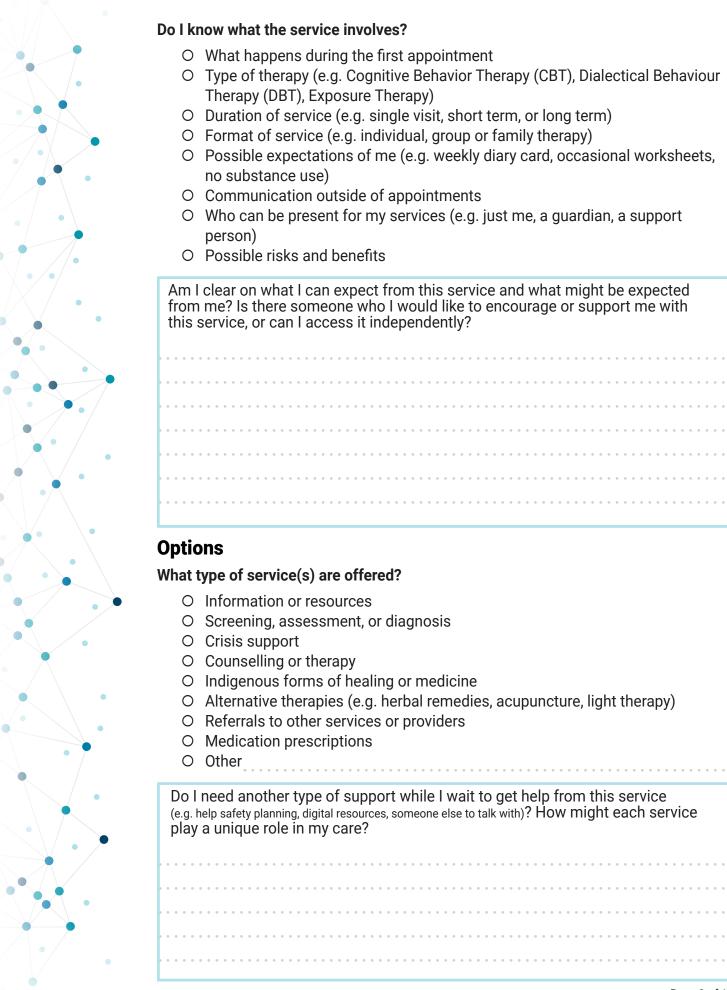
#### **Details**

#### Do I know their basic service information?

- O Contact information
- O Location
- O Hours of operation
- O Wait times
- O Costs (including if they do a free consultations)
- O Privacy and confidentiality policies
- O Eligibility criteria (i.e. requirements for using the service)

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Remember to breathe.



	O In person
	O Online O Phone
	O App
	O Other (e.g. text, email)
	Is this form of communication doable for me? What do I need in order to feel more comfortable with this type of communication?
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#### Is this service accessible for me?

- O Options for scheduling an appointment
- O Referral is/not required; Possibility of getting a referral
- O Options for transportation or parking
- O Payment options (e.g. insurance coverage, credit card, e-transfer)
- O Communication outside of appointments
- O Physically accessible
- O Safe and inclusive environment
- O Language translation services available

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It's more than okay to ask for help.



I can reach out to

## Pause, Reflect and Act

Thinking about our mental health or substance use and the help we might need can be difficult and overwhelming. Try to pause for a moment and show yourself some compassion.

The prompts in this section are meant to help you think about the supports and tools that you already have, and the steps you can take to add more. Sometimes it helps to write out the people, places and things that can support us because it can be hard to remember them in a crisis.

Look at the <u>Creating My Support Network</u> tool to help you think about which options you can currently reach out to and when (e.g. when you need validation or help to calm yourself).

for support when

I can reach out to	for s	upport when	
My current support	s provide me with		
What I still need hel	p with is		
I can ask	or go to	for more info	ormation or suppor
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Service or Support:	
Pros:	Cons:
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Next steps (e.g. talk to a trus	ted peer or relatives about your concerns with this service or su
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Service or Support:	
Pros:	Cons:
	,
Next steps	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	
Service or Support:	
Service or Support: Pros:	Cons:
	Cons:
	Cons:
Pros:	Cons:
	Cons:
Pros:	Cons:
Pros:	Cons:

NOT READY		UNSURE		
What would help me	feel more read	ly?		
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	,			• • • • •
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •			• • • • • • • • • • • • • •	
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	,			
		• • • • • • • • • • •		
What actions can I to	ake in the short	term (e.g. today, to	omorrow or this week):	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	,	• • • • • • • • • •		
	,			• • • • •
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		• • • • • • • • • •		• • • • • •
	,	• • • • • • • • • •		
What actions can I to	ake in the long	term (e.a. next wee	k. this month or semest	er):