

# Youth Engagement Toolkit Pilot Report



## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOOLKIT BACKGROUND</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>HEAD HEART FEET AND SPIRIT</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>FUNCTIONALITY</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PILOTING SURVEY</b>	<b>16</b>

## Introduction

This report summarizes the process of developing the Pan Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health's Youth Engagement Toolkit and the feedback that was received during the piloting phase. This information will inform any future updates to the toolkit and gives insight into how the toolkit will be used and the impact it will have.

**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION:  
A HOW-TO GUIDE**

OVERVIEW OF  
HOW-TO GUIDE

- A) "The Motivation:" Initiating Youth Engagement  
Key Steps to Initiating Youth Engagement
- B) "I Felt Heard:" Qualities of Youth Engagement  
The Eight Key Qualities of Youth Engagement
- C) "Keep It Going:" Sustaining Youth Engagement  
Key Steps to Sustaining Youth Engagement
- D) "When the Going Gets Tough:" Addressing Challenges  
Shared Challenges to Youth Engagement
- E) "So What?" Evaluating the Impact  
Evaluation of Youth Engagement Projects

By this point, you likely have a good understanding of what youth engagement is all about and why it's so important. This "how-to" section describes the hands-on process, offering tools and evidence-based practices to effectively engage young people. The How-to Guide is organized by the CEYE Conceptual Model of Youth Engagement and provides tips and techniques to initiate, sustain and deliver meaningful youth engagement programs and activities.

Remember, integrating youth engagement at the system or organizational level requires conditions of readiness and change.

*"I try to help the decision makers understand that in order for young people to be engaged, they need to be brought into the process. Sometimes it's just a teaching opportunity. I ask them: What's our real outcome, and how are we going to get there? Usually involving young people is key."*

—  
Joyce Sunada, Ever Active Schools,  
School Coordinator, AB

20 / JCSH Youth Engagement Toolkit

JCSH Youth Engagement Toolkit / 21

## Toolkit Background

The Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH) is a partnership of Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments, except Quebec. Established in 2005, it brings together key representatives from each jurisdiction's health and education ministries/departments, and helps them to work more closely together to support Comprehensive School Health (CSH). The JCSH addresses its efforts to advance Comprehensive School Health through six topic areas – areas that are important in any school: Positive Mental Health, Physical Activity, Healthy Eating, Substance Use, Injury Prevention, and Healthy Relationships.

Recognizing youth engagement as a culture and practice that can enhance Comprehensive School Health, the JCSH approached the Students Commission of Canada to develop a Youth Engagement Toolkit. The Students Commission was



founded in 1991 with a mission to support young people to put their ideas for improving themselves, their communities, and their world into action. In 2000, the Students Commission established the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, which networks academics, youth organizations, and young people to provide research, evaluation and training to improve youth programs and youth engagement in Canada.

The primary objectives set out for the Youth Engagement Toolkit are to:

- Help communicate the importance of youth engagement as a key approach to implementing comprehensive school health;
- Provide research and rationale for practicing youth engagement in schools, school boards and districts, government ministries, health regions, and community organizations;
- Provide a “how-to” resource of effective practices to support youth engagement in these contexts.



## The Development Process

Since the spring of 2013, the Joint Consortium and the Students Commission have been working in partnership to develop a youth engagement toolkit in the form of an eBook. While the Students Commission was responsible for the research, content development, and design, their process was guided by ongoing feedback from a JCSH advisory committee made up of 10 JCSH members from across the country. The development process involved four distinct phases:

- 1) **Consultations with Key Informants on Toolkit Scope and Design:** This involved interviews with key informants/experts in youth engagement from across the country who shared their insight regarding what was important to include in a toolkit about youth engagement. In total, the Students Commission connected with 14 key informants that had been recommended by members of the JCSH advisory committee. Of the 14 responses, 9 were conducted through telephone interviews and 5 were submitted over email. The following provinces were

represented: BC, AB, NS, NB, PEI, NU, SK, NT. The feedback collected through these interviews helped shape the development of the toolkit and identify gaps in existing resources.

The Students Commission also worked closely with the JCSH advisory committee throughout this phase to update a literature review on youth engagement, develop an outline for the toolkit, create an indicator framework for the toolkit and begin mapping out the design and layout.

- 2) **Toolkit Draft:** This phase took place primarily over the summer of 2013 and involved writing and developing the main content of the eBook. In addition to developing body text, resources, and evaluation tools, this phase also involved conducting video interviews, storyboarding and editing videos, and designing the eBook layout. Modeling youth engagement in action, this process was done in partnership with youth co-op students who took the lead on collecting and editing videos for the toolkit. Their hard work, advice and input were an invaluable contribution to the final product.

Throughout this phase various versions of the text, videos and resources were shared with the JCSH advisory committee for feedback and development.



- 3) **Finalization of Toolkit and Design of Pilot Phase:** A completed draft version of the Toolkit was shared with the JCSH advisory committee during mid-October 2013. After feedback from the committee and a few updates, the final version was uploaded at the beginning of November 2013.

The Students Commission and JCSH advisory committee then began setting out plans for a piloting phase in order to gather feedback on the completed toolkit. With no one agency or ministry able to take on sole piloting of the toolkit within the timeframe, it was decided that both the JCSH and the Students Commission would reach out to their partners with a request to review the toolkit and provide feedback through a brief questionnaire or through a phone interview.

4) **Piloting Phase:** The piloting tools and communications were developed in November and the dates for the piloting phase were set for early December 2013. Emails requests to participate in the pilot were sent to all of the key informants who helped design the scope of the eBook during the consultation phase. Additional requests were also sent to partners of The Students Commission and the Pan Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health. Participants were requested to review the toolkit and either complete a short survey on their experience or participate in a telephone interview about their experience (please see the Appendix for survey/interview questions). In total 6 responses were collected from individuals who took the time to review the toolkit and provide feedback. The primary objectives for the piloting process were to:

- To better understand the impact of the toolkit on its users
- To better understand how the toolkit can be applied
- To assess the functionality of the toolkit design
- To identify areas for improvement

The results from the pilot are detailed in this report.



## Demographics

In total, 6 individuals participated in piloting the eBook on Youth Engagement – four completed the piloting survey, one participated in a telephone interview, and one

respondent simply emailed in some notes. Most respondents said that they had skimmed the entire toolkit and viewed some, but not all of the videos. One respondent only reviewed half of the Toolkit and one did not view any of the videos.

***It succinctly describes the key factors of youth engagement - complete with research and evidence, and most importantly - the experiences of youth participants. ~ Pilot Participant***

Respondents represented four different provinces and territories (PE, NT, NV, ON) and ranged quite broadly in their respective job positions. Two respondents worked primarily with adults, two worked with both youth and adults, one worked with primarily with youth, and one did not share specifics about their daily interactions. The following positions were identified:

- Senior decision maker (policy maker, board member, school principal, executive director...)
- Teacher / Youth Worker / Support staff
- Program Manager / Coordinator
- Government Worker
- Other (Social Worker)

## Application

In order to understand how the Toolkit would be used, respondents were asked to rank what they were looking for in a youth engagement toolkit (*1 being the most important and 5 being the least important*). The results are captured below.

Reason	Ranked as most important/important (1 or 2)
Research and rationale to help promote youth engagement	60%
A resource to facilitate conversation and a deeper understanding of youth engagement	60%
Practical “how-to” tips and examples for engaging youth	40%
A better understanding of youth engagement and how it applies to my context	20%
Other	0%

Although it is clear that reviewers were primarily interested in a resource that could help them explain and promote the important work of youth engagement, each of the four reasons had value for readers. This is important given the broad audience that the Toolkit is intended to engage, ranging from policy makers to practitioners.



The expectation was that readers would jump around and use the Toolkit for different purposes depending on their role. Given that only one of the respondents works primarily with youth, it is not surprising that the “how-to” tips and examples for engaging youth was ranked lower. And although a better understanding of youth engagement and how it applies to my context received the lowest rating, it’s worth noting that most individuals who were contacted to participate in the pilot already had considerable understanding of youth engagement within their field.



## Impact

### Head Heart Feet and Spirit

Head, Heart, Feet and Spirit (HHFS) questions are a unique and open-ended way to collect responses from participants on their engagement experiences. The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement<sup>1</sup> defines engagement as the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a person in an activity which has a focus outside of her or himself<sup>2</sup>. HHFS questions can be used in many different contexts to understand experiences of engagement. Specifically, the following aspects of participants’ experiences:

**Head:** *what they learned from the experience (cognitive aspect)*

**Heart:** *what they felt about their participation in the experience (affective aspect)*

**Feet:** *what they intend to do as a result of their participation (behavioural aspect)*

**Spirit:** *how their experiences relate to who they are and/or connect them to something outside of the self*

---

<sup>1</sup> Please visit the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement website for more information:  
[www.engagementcentre.ca](http://www.engagementcentre.ca)

<sup>2</sup> Pancer, S. M., Rose-Krasnor, L., & Loiselle, L. (2002). Youth conferences as a context for engagement. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 96, 47-64.

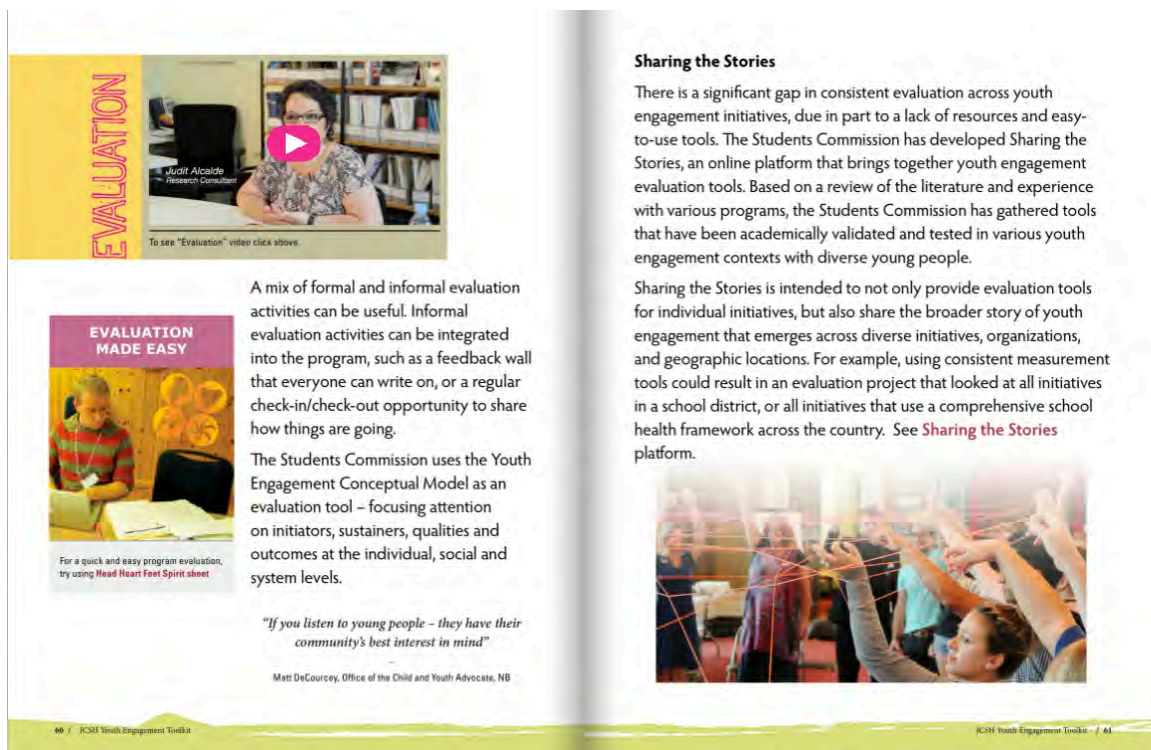


According to the CEYE’s research, full engagement consists of all of these aspects. In order to understand how pilot participants engaged with the Toolkit, we asked them to answer Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit questions.

### **HEAD: What were the most important things you learned from the toolkit?**

Pilot participants were particularly interested in the tools, resources and templates that were made available in the Toolkit. They were interested in using the evaluation resources and planning tools within their own work, and found the “how-to” section helpful. The other area of learning for participants was the conceptual models and frameworks within the Toolkit (Youth Engagement Model; Qualities of Youth Engagement; Spectrum of Youth Engagement; 4 Pillars of Comprehensive School Health). These models proved to be a helpful way to break down and understand the process of youth engagement. This was seen as valuable both for practicing youth engagement and for explaining its importance to others.

*The evaluation section and resources will be of utmost benefit. ~ Pilot Participant*



### **HEART: What feelings were generated by the toolkit? What generated those feelings?**

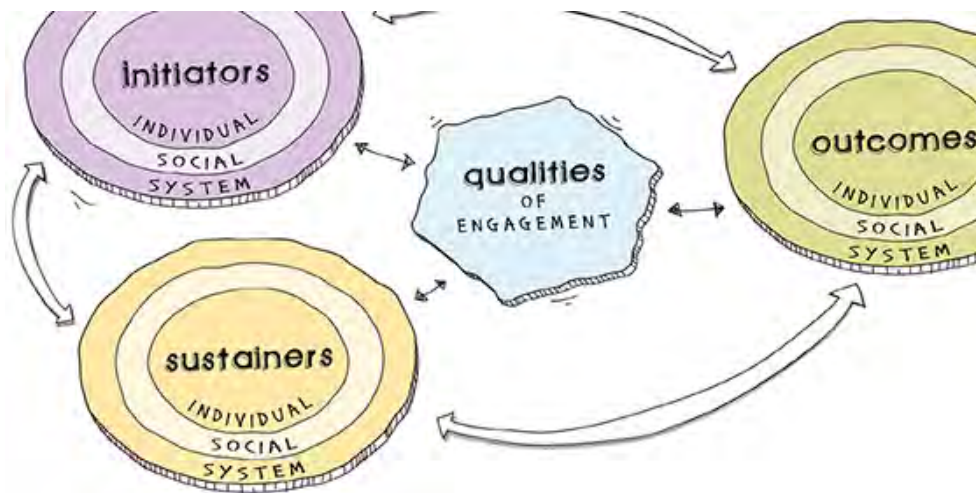
In general the Toolkit elicited very positive feelings from its viewers. Respondents found the eBook welcoming, easy to use, and enjoyed the pictures and graphics. More than half of the respondents mentioned feeling validated in their work, explaining that the Toolkit renewed their sense of purpose. “Excitement” was also a

term that was used multiple times, in reference to sharing the toolkit, seeing youth empowered, and seeing other adults and policy makers recognizing the value of youth voice. One respondent mentioned feeling frustrated by the same group of adults speaking in the videos, and believed that the messaging should be coming primarily from youth.

*A renewed sense of the importance of the work we are doing...so in a nutshell - excitement and pride. ~ Pilot Participant*

**FEET: What will you do with what you learned and felt?**

Most respondents were eager to share and promote the Toolkit to their colleagues and community partners. They mentioned “getting it in people’s hands” and sharing the resource at learning seminars and meetings. Some participants also spoke of applying the Toolkit to their own practice and continuing to seek out and advocate for youth voice.



Every respondent that participated in the survey answered, “yes” to the question: *Do you intend to share the Toolkit?* Most discussed using it as a guide for research and practice – including direct work with youth, policymaking, and in partnerships with other organizations. One respondent described that the toolkit actually helped fulfill their mandate of providing practical resources for community partners, and saw the Toolkit as a potential common reference point within the field.

*I recognized that a conscious effort was made to ensure that the youth voice was heard and reflected in this resource. This was done well in my opinion...Great work. ~ Pilot Participant*

## **SPIRIT: How did you connect with the toolkit?**

When asked whether participants *connected with the toolkit*, and whether *the content/materials connected to other projects and initiatives*, the answer was 100% “yes” to both questions. They found the Toolkit easy to navigate, connected to the literature in the field, and well related to other projects and initiatives. They connected with how youth engagement was explained and described through research, evidence, and through the experiences of young people themselves. They also felt connected to the toolkit through their desire to share it with others that are interested in youth empowerment.

***I really liked the videos as they helped tell a story  
and bring the concepts to life while amplifying  
the youth voice. ~ Pilot Participant***

## **Functionality**

When participants were asked what they found *the most useful about the toolkit*, all but one mentioned the visuals. Respondents found the visuals engaging and a helpful tool for understanding the steps associates with youth engagement. This included the visual models of youth engagement and the youth engagement spectrum. In addition to helping explain the content, the visuals and layout also aided in drawing people in, keeping them engaged, and making the resource more readable and accessible. The hyperlinked resources, evaluation tools, and templates were also valued for their ease of access and broad application.

***I liked that the resources were hyperlinked both  
within the document and at the end... as I feel that  
I was more likely to reference this material when  
I was reading about it vs. after reading the full  
document ~ Pilot Participant***

Four of the six respondents gave feedback on the videos. Three found the videos excellent and a very useful way of bringing the material to life and highlighting youth voice. One respondent was frustrated by seeing the same adults appear in multiple videos, and found the messaging was often repetitive. This respondent also believed that more youth should be represented in the videos, and that in general the videos should be from a youth perspective.

Only one respondent commented directly on the pages that had embedded Flash content (pages 10, 44, & 48). They found the Young Decision Makers Model on page 48 was most effective and truly added to the experience, however they believed the other Flash elements (pg. 10 & 44) could have been just as effective as regular pages.



## Recommendations

Most participants could not find anything missing from the toolkit and had no recommendations about improvements. Only two of the six respondents provided feedback regarding missing elements, and one of which emphasized that they “struggled to find improvements.” The recommended changes are captured below:

- In the discussion about Partnerships and Services (one of the 4 Pillars for Comprehensive School Health), include more about referrals and early interventions (working with police, connecting to agencies and programs that may be better equipped to support a young person with a particular issue). Emphasize that it is adults’ responsibility to seek out support from others when they are not equipped to do so individually.
- Although there was a good reflection of diversity – include greater visual representations of physical disabilities
- Add a feedback page/survey to the end of the toolkit to gather long-term feedback on how the Toolkit is being used and what impact it is having in different communities.
- Include more young people in the videos that speak to their experiences of youth engagement
- Provide assessment tools for schools and organizations and students to use earlier on in the Toolkit

The recommended additions and changes to the Toolkit would certainly add benefit, however it is worth noting that only two respondents provided feedback. Although valid, some of the recommended changes are certainly connected to limited resources and existing archival photos and footage (greater representations of physical diversity, more youth in the videos).

***In general - more young people should be talking  
not adults ~ Pilot Participant***



Interestingly, no recommendation was made more than once, suggesting the issues may not be relevant for every viewer. The suggestion of adding an embedded feedback page is a great idea for tracking the ongoing use and impact of the Toolkit, however this will have to be a long-term evaluation that the JCSH is able undertake.



## Discussion

The feedback received through the piloting process was primarily very positive and encouraging, speaking to the value of the resource and its broad application. Although the piloting sample was not large, it represented a good mix of individuals ranging from senior decision makers to youth practitioners. This diversity offers good insight into what people are looking for in a youth engagement toolkit, and what they find useful about the resource at hand. Their feedback affirmed that the toolkit is relevant and useful to the broad audience it was designed to reach.

Almost every respondent discussed being excited to share the Toolkit with colleagues, partners and other individuals working in the field. They were also generally impressed with the eBook's ease of use, the visuals and layout, and the interactive elements. Given that the Toolkit is an online resource and there is already a desire to use and share it, there is great potential for the Toolkit to have extensive reach.

*As it is easy to navigate and the toolkit itself is engaging; I will be sharing it with colleagues to put into practice with our programming and policy considerations. ~ Pilot Participant*

# Appendix

## Phone Interview Questions

- A. Are you a:
- a) Senior decision maker (policy maker, board member, school principal, executive director...)
  - b) Teacher / Youth Worker / Support staff
  - c) Program Manager / Coordinator
  - d) Government Worker
  - e) Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. On a day to day basis do you work primarily with:
- a) Youth
  - b) Adults
  - c) Both
  - d) Neither
- C. I read and viewed:
- a) All of the toolkit
  - b) A section of the toolkit. Please list the sections or pg. numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

-----

- 1) What primary purpose does the toolkit serve for you – what does it enable you to do?
- 2) What did you find was the most useful and/or interesting aspect of the toolkit? Why?
- 3) How has the toolkit impacted your work? / How do you see it impacting your work in the future?
- 4) Have you made changes already? If no do you intend to do anything differently in the future?
- 5) How has the toolkit enhanced your understanding of Youth Engagement?
- 6) How did you find the functionality (clarity, accessibility, ease of use) of the toolkit? (Videos, Flash, Order of contents...)
- 7) Do you have any other comments or feedback (recommendations re: filling gaps, improving clarity, etc.) you'd like to give us?



# JCSH Youth Engagement Toolkit – Pilot Feedback

Thank you for piloting the new Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health's Youth Engagement Toolkit ([http://www.studentscommission.ca/jcsh\\_toolkit/](http://www.studentscommission.ca/jcsh_toolkit/)). Your feedback will help us understand how the toolkit will be used, its impact, and what improvements can be made. Once you have completed the survey, **please Save as PDF and e-mail it to Shanti MacFronton: [shanti@studentscommission.ca](mailto:shanti@studentscommission.ca)**. Should you have any question, please contact Shanti at 416-597-8297. Thank you again for your valued comments.

---

**Province:**

**1. I am a:**

Senior decision maker (policy maker, board member, school principal, executive director...)

Teacher / Youth Worker / Support staff

Program Manager / Coordinator

Government Worker

Other

**2. On a day to day basis I work primarily with:**

Youth

Adults

Both

Neither

**3. What are you primarily looking for in a youth engagement toolkit? (Rank in order of importance 1 = most important 5 = least important)**

Research and rationale to help promote youth engagement (to funders, staff, policy-makers...)

A better understanding of youth engagement and how it applies to my context

A resource to facilitate conversation and a deeper understanding of youth engagement

Practical "how-to" tips and examples for engaging youth

Other

**4. I read and viewed:**

All of the toolkit

A section of the toolkit.

Please list the sections or page numbers in field below.



## Engaging Head, Heart, Feet, and Spirit

---

**5. Head:** What were the most important things you learned from the toolkit?

**6. Heart:** What feelings were generated by the toolkit? What generated those feelings?

**7. Feet:** What will you do with what you learned and felt?

**8a. Spirit:** Did you connect with the toolkit in some way?

Yes

No

**8b.** Did the content/materials connect with other initiatives?

Yes

No

**8c.** How did you connect with the toolkit?

**9.** Do you intend to use this toolkit?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe how

10. Is there something you intend to do right away or down the road to enhance youth engagement in your context?

11. How has this toolkit impacted your work already?

*Please rate your understanding of youth engagement on a 5 point scale (1 = None; 5 = Excellent)*

	1 None	2	3 Some	4	5 Excellent
<b>12. My understanding prior to reviewing the toolkit</b>					
<b>13. My understanding after reviewing the toolkit</b>					

14. To what extent has this toolkit improved your ability to engage youth? (1 = Not at all; 5 = Greatly Improved)

	1 Not at all	2	3 Moderately improved	4	5 Greatly improved
<b>Extent of improvement:</b>					

15. Would you share this resource?

Yes

No

How?

## Functionality

---

16. What did you find the most useful about the toolkit?

17. What are your comments about the interactive elements of the toolkit? (videos, Flash on pages.10, 44, & 48)

18. What, if any, key content/element is missing from the toolkit?

19. Do you have any additional comments or feedback about the toolkit?