

The ROC: Youth Inclusion Program

Year 1 Report - 2020



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Social Program Evaluation Group, Queen's University
511 Union Street, Room B164, Kingston, ON, K7M 5R7
Tel: (613) 533-6255, Fax: (613) 533-2556
Email: spegmail@queensu.ca, URL: <http://orgs.educ.queensu.ca/speg>



**The Students
Commission**
*Centre of Excellence for
Youth Engagement*

The Students Commission / Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement
23 Isabella Street, Toronto, ON, M4Y 1M7
Tel: (416) 597-8297, Fax: (416) 597-0661
Email: info@studentscommission.ca, URL: www.studentscommission.ca

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Origin Story

Growing up has challenges for everyone no matter who they are or the family they come from. Since 2000, The ROC has worked to create safe and inclusive spaces for all youth in Prince Edward County.

The ROC began with a group of volunteers and a simple idea: Run free and accessible programming for young people. The organization has run summer camps, school programs, structured groups and drop-ins. In all of their programs, the ROC provides a safe welcoming space to youth. At the ROC there are adults who care about the youth and structure that allows for positive interactions between peers. The ROC uses diverse programming to emphasize mentorship, build relationships, and create opportunities for youth that they may otherwise miss. The ROC offers universal programs at no cost to participants with the intention of including youth from different socio-economic and other backgrounds. The goal is to create long-lasting, supportive relationships that help transition youth to a successful adulthood where they excel at the life they have chosen.

In January 2017, the ROC proudly opened the doors of the Prince Edward County Youth Centre, as a safe space to support youth success and contribute to a healthy and vibrant PEC. The youth centre for grades 7-12 now operates in the most populated area of the county and within walking distance of the high school. As the centre continues to become established, more youth are accessing the space and contributing their ideas for emerging and exciting programming.

In the fall of 2019, the ROC launched the Youth Inclusion Program (YIP) as a pilot. This evidence-based program aims to reduce youth crime and antisocial behaviour by creating a safe place where youth can go to learn new skills, take part in activities with others, and receive educational support. Originally, YIP was developed in 2000 by the Youth Justice Board (UK) as part of a national strategy for proactively tackling youth crime in England and Wales. Since its inception it has spread globally and is offered in a variety of communities worldwide. The ROC's YIP program has taken the framework of the international model and adapted it to a local context. Based on the original program, the ROC's YIP is centered on conflict resolution; leadership and youth development; skills training; social emotional learning; substance prevention/treatment; and truancy prevention. In the program, youth receive up to 500 hours of individual case management with a supportive staff person who helps them to set positive individual goals, develop their social emotional skills and encourages youth to participate in structured group activities, such as life skills training, mentoring, recreation, tutoring, volunteering, arts based projects and more.

In all of their programs, the ROC's commitment to support youth to realize their potential remains consistent. As the organization grows and responds to emerging needs in the community the focus is clear: long-lasting supportive relationships help transition youth to a successful adulthood and a life they have chosen.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to gain a greater understanding of how youth participating in the ROC's Youth Inclusion Program are able to maintain and form healthy, close relationships. It also aims to explore the potential impacts of the program in terms of social emotional competence. And to highlight what youth themselves identified as the greatest impacts of the program. Youth shared their voice through a quantitative survey and through individual interviews. The quantitative surveys were post-retrospective which explores participant's self-reported change. In May, youth were invited to fill out the questionnaire, rating their agreement to each statement for the beginning of the program and now. Program staff also participated by completing journals documenting changes they observed in youth participants and adult allies who work in community agencies also participated through one-on-one interviews.

Here are the highlights of the results:

Healthy, Close Relationship Module: Overall, youth reported feeling like they had stronger and healthier relationships in May than when they started the program. Statistical tests revealed statistically significant increases on all the components of this module. Here are some details about their results:

- Youth reported feeling more supported in May (4.20) than they did at the beginning of the program (2.40);
- Youth reported feeling more connected to the other members of the program and a greater sense of belonging in the program in May;
- A higher connection to the program was associated to a higher connection to the community, suggesting that youth are seeing the ROC as being an important part of their community.

These results suggest that the ROC's YIP played a meaningful role in helping youth to form, improve and maintain healthy relationships, which also impacted their feelings of safety and belongingness in other aspects of their lives.

Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire: Overall, youth reported feeling like they gained knowledge and skills as they participated in YIP. They scored higher all dimensions of social emotional competence in May than they did at the beginning of the program, except for the relationship management which they kept high.

- They were able to understand better their thought processes, behaviors and emotions, not only within themselves, but also within others;
- They were able to manage their emotional responses more efficiently and learned some coping mechanisms to face stressful situations;
- These strategies helped them to take better decisions;
- Higher self-awareness was associated with higher self-management, which in turn was associated with more responsible decision-making, suggesting that

understanding one's own emotions, thoughts and behaviors is likely to help manage them and results in making better decision.

Overall, it seems like the ROC's YIP program successfully increased youth's knowledge and skills regarding social emotional competence and taught them efficient strategies to deal with different situations.

Youth Interviews: Through the interviews, youth shared many ways in which they experienced personal growth in terms of social emotional competence, relationships, and other skills. They notably reported meaningful outcomes such as an improvement in grades, in mood, and a decrease of self-harm and antisocial behaviors. The interviews not only highlighted the important change that youth went through, but also key characteristics of the program that facilitated these changes such as:

- The supports provided by staff members,
- The safe environment favourable to growth,
- The appropriate structure balancing emotional reciprocity and challenging negative thought patterns to help youth learn and try new things.

Overall, the results suggest that the ROC's Youth Inclusion Program is well structured and leads to meaningful outcomes.

Adult Interviews: According to the adults who were interviewed, youth are experiencing positive social and emotional growth. The adults reported improved self-regulation of emotions, increased positive affect, and meaningful connections between youth and their peers as well as youth and the ROC staff. Youth are also showing these positive changes outside of the program, applying their learning and growth to everyday life.

Change Journal: In the Change Journals, adults reflected on the same set of questions over a period of three months. Generally, the reflections were positive and similar to the adult interviews. The youth are positively impacted by their participation, as seen through physical and verbal cues, increased participation, academic achievement, goal achievement, and positive reflections. Youth are also forming positive connections with their peers and with influencers and engaging within their communities.

Process and Tools to Date

The ROC chose two quantitative survey modules to identify trends and measure outcomes of their Youth Inclusion Program (YIP). 10 participants filled out the two modules used to evaluate the program after several months of participation. It is important to note that not all youth started at the same time. Therefore, the length of participation varies from one participant to another.

- The Healthy, Close Relationships tool examines the extent to which youth form and maintain healthy, close relationships, including skills and connectedness with peers more broadly, people in the program, people in their school, and members of their community.
- The Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire explores the extent to which participants have acquired key competences required to have effective responses in various social contexts, including the ability to identify and manage emotions in the self and in others, which helps developing caring relationships, and making conscientious decisions.

Youth in the ROC program also filled out a demographic module to share more about themselves.

Program	Quantitative Sharing the Stories Tools	Qualitative Tools
The ROC's YIP – Youth participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthy, Close Relationships Module (n=10) - Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (n=10) - Demographics (n=10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth Interviews (n=6)
The ROC's YIP – Adults referring to the program		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews (n=3) - Change journals (n=3)

Each module consists of 10-20 questions.¹ All of the questions within the Healthy, Close Relationship module used a 5-point scale (1= Strongly disagree, 5= Strongly agree) to determine how much participants agreed or disagreed with the statements. All of the questions within the Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire used a 6-point scale (1= Not at all true of me, 5= Very true of me) to determine how much the statements applied to the participants.

The ROC also chose to conduct individual interviews with their participants. The interviews provided a space for youth to reflect on their experiences, share ideas for improving the program, and share impacts that participation has had on their lives. Six youth were interviewed individually between March 6 and April 6, 2020. Three adult allies who refer youth to the ROC were interviewed individually between March 2 and March 27, 2020. The interviews were guided by questions based on the youth engagement framework. The interviews were facilitated by SCC staff and was recorded and transcribed to be analyzed for significant themes with counts of how many times each theme was mentioned. Significant quotes were drawn from the analysis to support the numbers with participants' thoughts, feelings, and personal

¹ Questions are grouped into statistically reliable sets. Reliability is a measure of internal consistency of a set of questions. In other words, each set of questions is good at measuring the related, but different aspects of what is being studied.

experiences. Names or identifying information have been removed from the quotes and replaced with denotations such as “[name]” or a letter in place to insure anonymity.

Three adult staff members completed Change Journals, which are a series of open-ended prompts that are intended to be filled out multiple times in order to show change over time. The purpose of the Change Journals is to collect participants’ experiences and to identify changes at the individual, social, and system level. The ROC Change Journals were filled out in February, March, and April of 2020. In March and April 2020, a number of questions were no longer relevant due to programmatic changes that came into effect as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organization of the Report

This report will be broken down into six sections. The sections will be as follows:

1) Demographics: This section will give an overview and breakdown of the various demographics who took part in the program. The information in this section will be displayed as an infographic to allow for a visual representation of the data.

2) Healthy, Close Relationships Module: This section is a quantitative analysis of how youth answered the healthy, close relationships module and is graphed to provide a visual representation of the data.

3) Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire: This section is a quantitative analysis of how youth answered the social emotional competence questionnaire and is graphed to provide a visual representation of the data.

4) Qualitative results – Youth Interviews: The analysis of the interviews is organized based on the youth engagement framework²:

- **Individual Outcomes:** Outcomes youth experience as a result of the program that improve them as individuals.
- **Social Outcomes:** Outcomes youth experience due to the program that affect their social networks and relationships such as friends and families.
- **Community Outcomes:** Outcomes youth experience due to the program which have an even larger reaching impact such that it affects their communities or organizations.
- **Program Qualities:** Various features that characterize the atmosphere and structure of the Program.

[and where applicable]

- **Initiators:** The reasons for youth joining the Program.
- **Sustainers:** Why youth continue engaging in the Program.
- **Community Level Barriers:** A category of theme that illustrates the barriers these youth face and gives context to the program qualities and outcomes by illustrating a stark comparison of what they receive through the program as compared to their daily lives.
- **Community Level Supports:** A category of theme that illustrates the supports these youth are receiving within their daily lives, and gives context of how the program often supports, or improves these support systems.

² The initiators, sustainers and qualities of engagement are all associated with outcomes of engagement; having strong initiators, sustainers and qualities can lead to a more effective youth program (e.g., Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lawford, Ramey, Rose-Krasnor & Proctor, 2012; Pancer, Rose-Krasnor & Loiselle, 2002; Rose-Krasnor, 2009).

5) Qualitative results – Adult Allies Interviews: As the focus of the interview related to youth impacts as identified by the adult allies, this section is also analyzed using the youth engagement framework.

6) Qualitative results – Adult Allies Change Journals: This section is a quantitative analysis of the Change Journals completed by adult allies. The results are presented in a frequency table, with short discussions of each section.

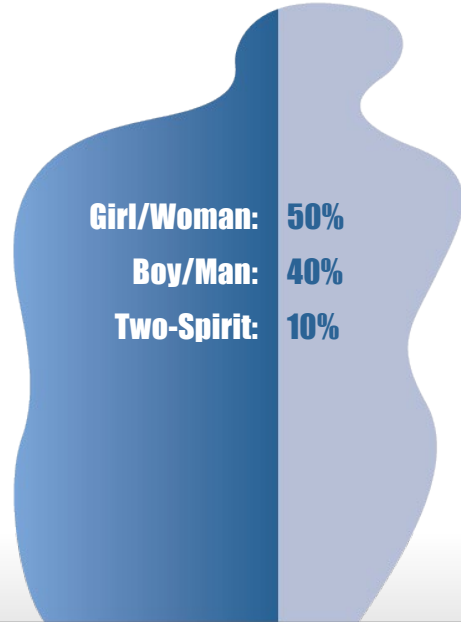
Demographics

15.3

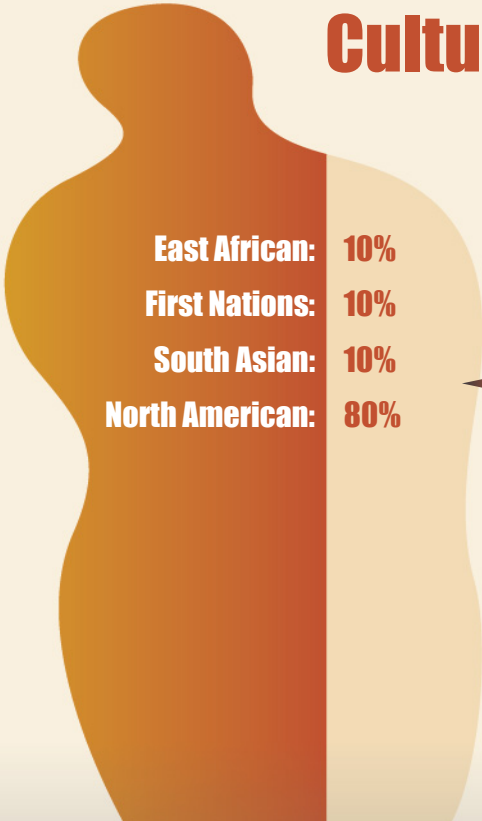
Average Age

This section outlines the demographic breakdown of the youth who participated in the ROC's Youth Inclusion Program.

Gender



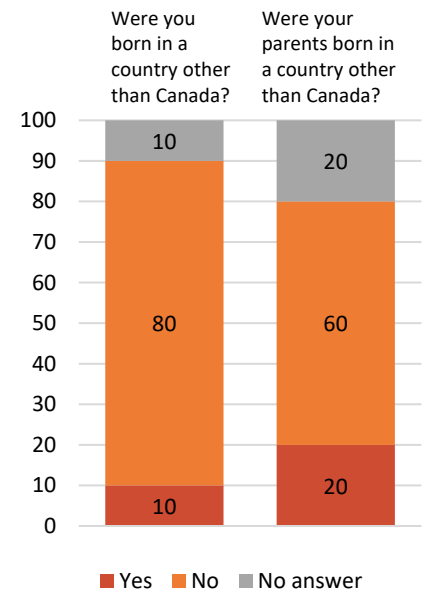
Cultural and Racial Backgrounds



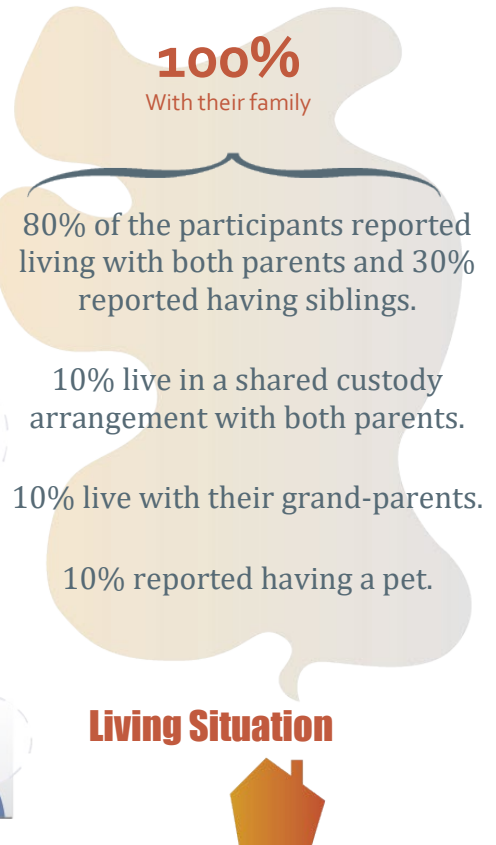
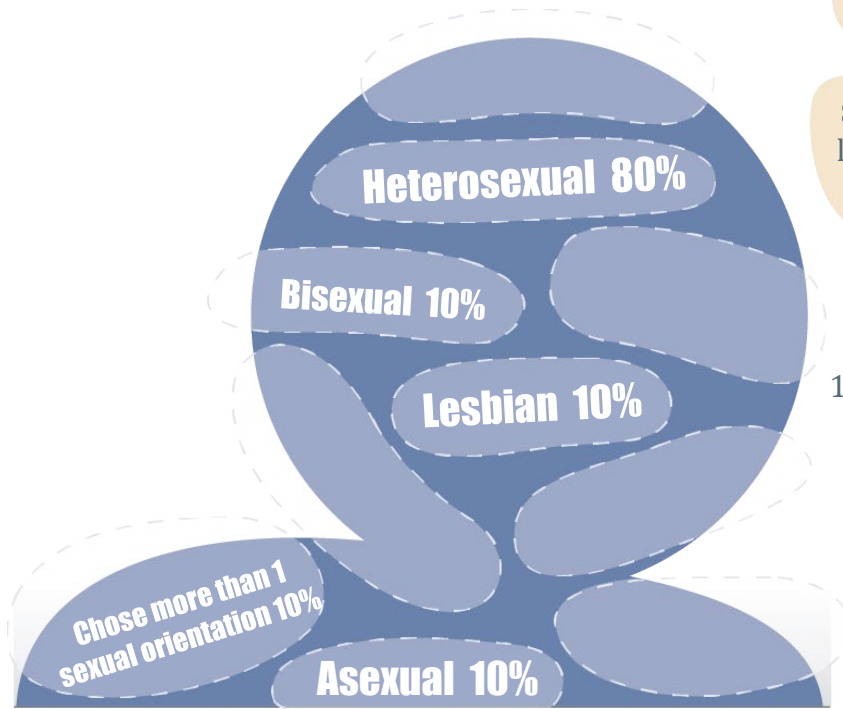
10% identified to more than one background.

Country of Origin

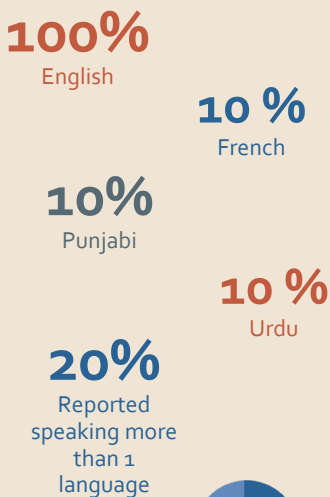
Participants were asked two questions to determine their country of origin.



Sexual Orientation

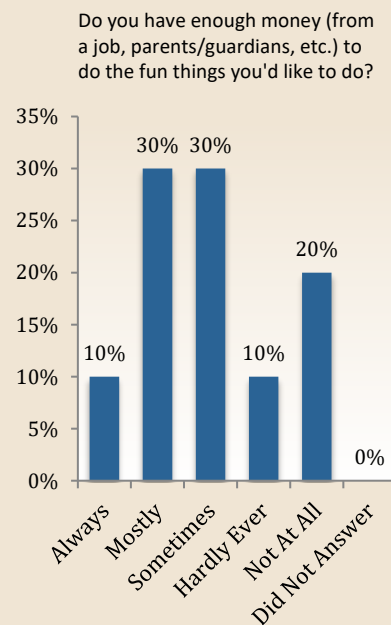
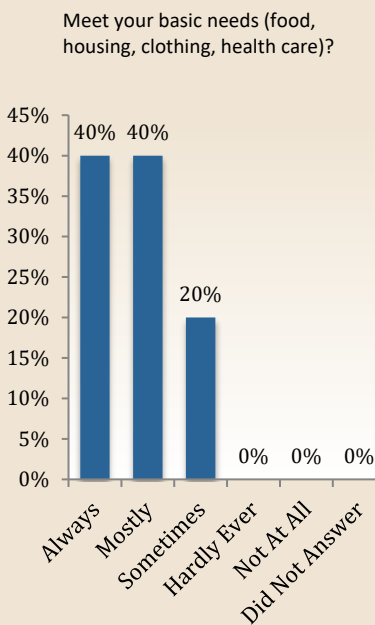


Languages spoken at home



Money for Basic Needs & Fun Activities

Finally, participants were asked the degree to which they had enough money to meet their basic needs and participate in fun things



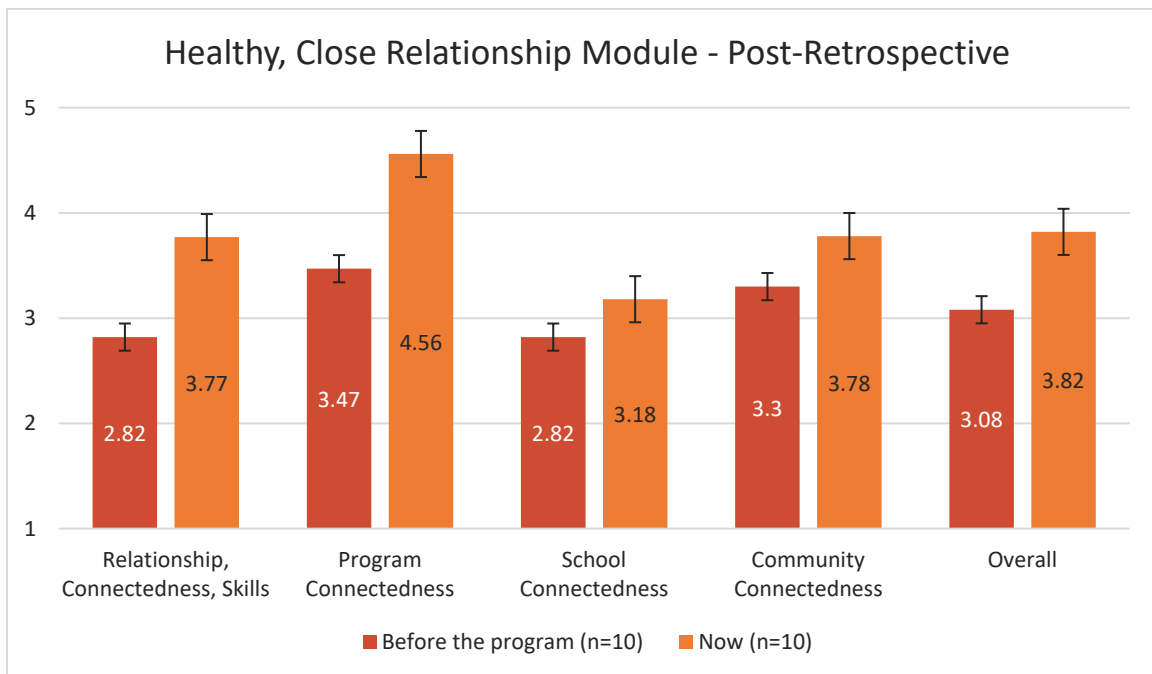
Results: Youth voice

Healthy, Close Relationship Module

The Healthy Close Relationship Module contains 21 questions divided into 3 components: relationship, connectedness and skills (their relatedness to people in general), program connectedness (their relatedness to people in the specific program), school connectedness (their relatedness to people at their school), and community connectedness (their relatedness to the members of their community). In the first component, participants were invited to rate the extent to which each statement applied to them on a 5-point scale (1=Not at all, 5=Completely). For the rest of this module, questions used a 5-point scale (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree) to assess the level of agreement to each item.

This module was post-retrospective. This method allows exploration of participants' self-reported change during and/or after a program. Youth were invited to fill this module after several months of participation in the program. For each statement, they rated their agreement at the beginning of the program, and at the moment, in May (see Appendix A for the results on each question).

The overall average as well as the average of each component was statistically analyzed. The "before" answers were compared to the "now" answers to capture meaningful change. The following graph presents the results after several months of participation.



Takeaway: Overall, it seems like youth felt an improvement in their relationships through their participation in YIP. They reported moderate quality of relationships at the beginning of the program. Their scores on the Relationship, Connectedness, and Skill and the School Connectedness components were the lowest at the beginning of the program, suggesting they felt a lack of support, unsafe in their school, and weak connections to the other people of their

age group. However, they seemed to be able to connect to the other members of the program quite quickly. In May, it seems like all these scores increased.

T-tests³ comparing youth's scores at the beginning of the program and "now" revealed statistically significant increase for all the components. This suggests that youth felt like they were able to form new relationships or to improve existing relationships in the different spheres of their lives. This increase was particularly strong for their connection to the program. It seems like, as they engaged in YIP, youth were able to feel a greater sense of belonging and to create strong bonds with the other participants and the staff members of the ROC.

When looking at the results on the individual questions, it was possible to see increases on specific aspects of their relationships. Youth reported feeling much more supported in May (average answer = 4.20) than they did at the beginning of the program (average answer = 2.40). They seemed to feel like the program offered meaningful help and resources they did not access before their involvement in YIP. They also reported an important increase on the two following statements: "I feel close to people in this program" and "I feel like I am a part of this program." Their ongoing participation in the program seemed to increase their connections and their sense of belonging.

There is a potential link between the new support youth received and their connection to the program. As they were creating strong bonds and trusting relationships with the staff members, people who truly want to help them, youth developed a better support system. Once they realized this support and the help they could get, it reinforced their trust and strengthened the relationships they were establishing. These elements are certainly connected and played an important role in helping youth developing and maintaining healthy relationships.

Finally, a correlation analysis⁴ revealed a statistically significant link between Program Connectedness and Community Connectedness. It seems like youth who reported higher connection with the program also reported higher connection to their community. This was equally true before the program and in May. This could suggest that youth are considering the ROC as being an important factor in their community. Therefore, if they experience a meaningful engagement in the program, they are likely to feel more connected to the community.

All these results suggest that the ROC's YIP is playing a significant role in helping youth to form, improve and maintain relationships, not only with their friends, peers, and the other members of the program, but also with their community at large. By feeling supported and having healthy relationships, youth are also feeling safer and more included in their community.

³ A t-test assesses whether the means of two groups or two time points are statistically different from each other. The larger the t-score, the more difference between the two means.

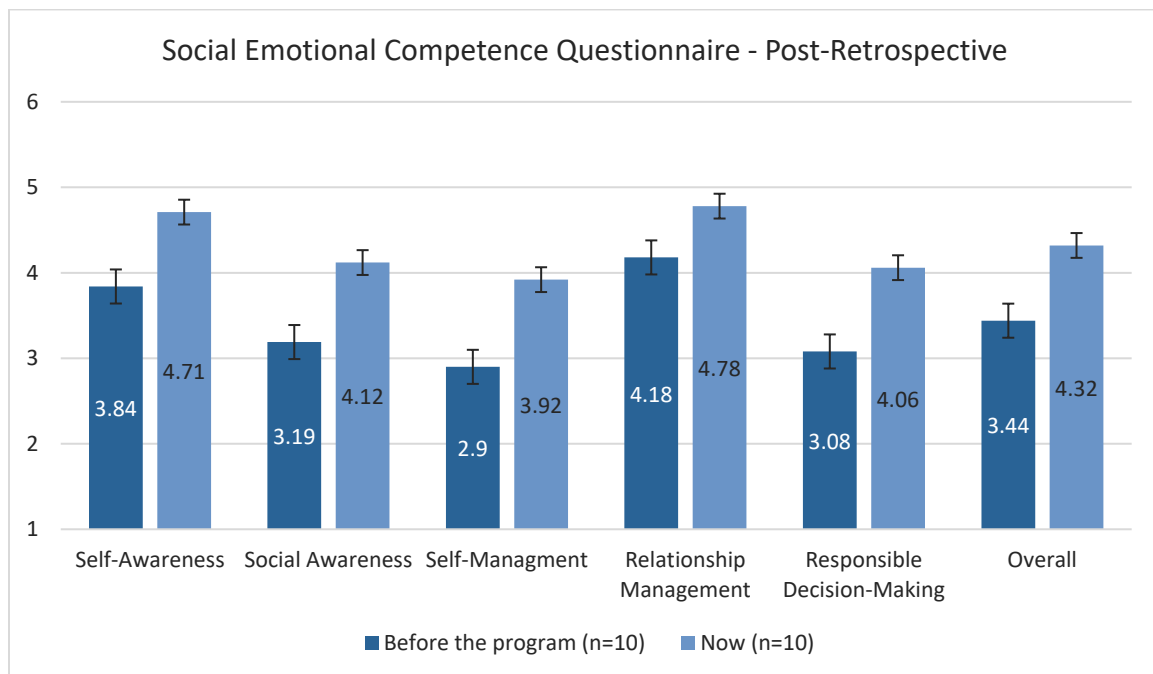
⁴ A correlation assesses the extent to which two elements are related to one another. A correlation is not a causal relationship, but rather a parallel fluctuation; if one element increases, does the other one increase or decrease similarly to the first one?

Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire

The Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire explores participants' knowledge and skills regarding effective responses in different social contexts. Effective responses include the ability to identify and manage emotions in the self and in others, which can also help developing caring relationships, and making conscientious decisions. This questionnaire is composed of 25 statements which are divided into five dimensions of social emotional competence: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. Participants were invited to rate the extent to which each statement applied to them on a scale of 1 (Not at all true of me) to 6 (Very true of me).

This questionnaire was post-retrospective. This method allows exploration of participants' self-reported change during and/or after a program. Youth were invited to fill this module after several months of participation in the program. For each statement, they rated their agreement at the beginning of the program, and at the moment, in May (see Appendix B for the results on each question).

The overall average as well as the average of each dimension was statistically analyzed. The "before" answers were compared to the "now" answers to capture meaningful change. The following graph presents the results after several months of participation.



Takeaway: Overall, it seems like youth felt an improvement in their social emotional competence. Although they scored moderately positively the different dimensions at the beginning of the program, they seemed to experience more challenges in managing their emotions and responses. The relationship management was the highest at the beginning of the program, suggesting that youth valued their friendship and tried best to maintain these relationships. In May, all scores showed some increase.

T-tests⁵ comparing youth's scores at the beginning of the program and "now" revealed statistically significant increase for all the dimensions, except Relationship Management. Youth seemed to gain a lot of awareness about emotional responses within themselves as much as within others. They also seemed to be better at managing their responses and, therefore, taking better decisions. Although not statistically significant, youth seemed to maintain the care they give to their relationships with their friends.

When looking at the results on the individual questions, it was possible to see increases on specific aspects of their social emotional competence. Youth reported gaining a better understanding of thought processes, behaviors and emotions. It seems like the YIP allowed them to acquire more knowledge and skills regarding their social emotional responses. Young participants also reported a better understanding of others' reactions to a situation. Finally, youth reported better ability to stay calm and overcome anxiety in stressful or new situations, which suggest they successfully learned coping strategies through their participation in YIP.

Finally, all the dimensions of this questionnaire are unequivocally related to social emotional competence. Nonetheless, a correlation analysis⁶ revealed a statistically significant link between self-awareness and self-management, which in turn was linked to responsible decision-making. Thus, participants who reported more self-awareness of their emotions, thoughts and behaviors tended to report better self-management, and those who reported better self-management tended to report taking more responsible decisions. These associations suggest that, through the Youth Inclusion Program, youth were able to gain knowledge and skills that help them improve their social emotional competence, which plays an important role in effective and healthy functioning.

Overall, the results presented above suggest that the ROC's Youth Inclusion Program successfully increased youth's knowledge and skills regarding emotional responses, thoughts and behaviors. It also taught youth some valuable strategies to help them cope with stressful situations and to make better decisions.

⁵ A t-test assesses whether the means of two groups or two time points are statistically different from each other. The larger the t-score, the more difference between the two means.

⁶ A correlation assesses the extent to which two elements are related to one another. A correlation is not a causal relationship, but rather a parallel fluctuation; if one element increases, does the other one increase or decrease similarly to the first one?

Qualitative results

Youth Interviews

The youth individual interviews were qualitatively analyzed to find the most frequent themes. The following chart presents all the themes that appeared in the conversations. These themes will be discussed further below with relevant quotes to illustrate the different themes.

Category	Theme	Frequency
Program Qualities	Positive experience	16
	Appropriate structure	12
	Safe environment	9
	New opportunities	2
	Youth engagement	1
Individual Outcomes	New skills and knowledge	6
	Personal growth	13
	Academic achievement	8
Social Outcomes	Program connectedness	7
	Relationship skills and knowledge	11
	Adult support	4
	Support/monitoring	14
System Outcomes	Navigating resources	2
	Access to resources	1
	Community involvement	1

Initiators

Most of the youth came across the ROC's Youth Inclusion Program through someone who connected them with the program such as a teacher, a counsellor, or even a staff member from the ROC. After hearing what the program was about, youth felt like it was the right fit for them.

"I go to counselling so the girl there said it would be good for me to come and socialize. So I came here and I was doing a tour and they talked about YIP. It seemed so good, I told them I would like to join."

"One of the staff told me about it. They said it was a good way to get involved in the community and a new way to get to my goals."

"I heard it through the Roc. [staff name] took me and my sister aside and told us the benefits."

"I had a little problem with stuff at home and [name] told me it would be good to join."

"I was involved at the ROC a couple of times throughout the years. I had an idea of their programs. Some of my friends were in YIP. My teacher asked me if I wanted to do it. I thought it sounded cool and helpful."

"The Intersections program pointed me towards YIP."

Program Qualities

Positive experience (16)

All of the participants seemed highly satisfied with their experience with the Youth Inclusion Program. They shared many examples of the help they got from the staff members and the impact it had on their lives. The dedication of the staff members seemed to be an important aspect of this experience. Each youth received a specific support that was adapted to their needs and their goals. However, one aspect was mentioned in all of the interviews: the positivity of the staff. Youth discussed the fact that their mentors were always smiling and so positive that it influenced the participants to adopt this positive attitude.

"They are very positive and cheerful and very supportive. Even if it's just [name] walking out the smile. It's a very positive space, it makes me more happy, probably anyone more happy."

"A lot. Thousand percent yes. People could finally put out real smiles who are depressed. I can be one of them. Many people if they came here they could socialize and be more positive. If they came here they would become more positive."

"Whenever we come in they ask us how we're doing so I can't think of what they could do better."

"Yes [the program is positive]. The way they act. Always so positive and happy. The way the staff put themselves out there."

"The staff show a lot of care for others and they always try their best."

"Yeah. It makes a positive space. They help. For me, they helped me get back into school. I was having trouble with mental health and I talked to them about it. They explained it to me that it would set me back not to go to school, I'm dyslexic so it would set me even more back. They talked to me so I understood what would happen if I didn't do school."

"How kind they are and welcoming. It's the type of place you feel really at home. It drives me back how welcoming they are."

"I really enjoy the activities we do. Once a week we go to the gym. And it's nice having one on one conversations with [name]."

Appropriate structure (12)

Throughout the conversations, youth shared different instances suggesting that the structure of the YIP was appropriate. First, youth had to set personal goals as they started the program. The simple fact of setting goals and to have someone checking in every week holds youth accountable and kept them motivated.

"I've always wanted to be louder and more talkative. I made it one of my goals at YIP and when we meet each week to review that goal it reminds me what I want to improve and drives me to do that."

"Me setting my goals has been positive."

Second, each youth received a specific action plan personalized for their needs, which ensured that they were able to get the most out of the program, efficiently targeting their individual goals. It appeared that the youth and the staff members developed a reciprocal collaboration. Staff members seemed to genuinely care about the youth, which played a role in creating a strong trusting relationship.

"Getting your school done is possible here. [Name] helps anyone. I really love this program so much. I don't think there are any other programs like this."

"They really get to know the youth instead of just observing you. They put the work in to know you and they know what's going on personally."

"They are just like...They share a lot of emotion to the kids. They want them to be better and they show it."

"During the Pandemic I've talked to [name] over the phone. He keeps in touch. I'm still working on goal setting. I'm working on things even though we can't be together. It's not ideal but it works. I can talk to him whenever. We talk once a week at a set time but I call him if something comes up. It varies week to week how much I talk with him. On average we chat 3 or 4 times a week."

Finally, the program focused on the learning process which created space and even normalized mistakes and challenges. Youth were encouraged to try new things while respecting their limits. Instead of being a new source of stress, errors were seen as an opportunity to grow.

"[YIP is different from the cadets because] We don't have to follow commands, we can relax and have a level headed discussion instead of panicking if we get something wrong."

"I honestly think it's better than other programs. You don't really see other people try their best to reach out and help as much as they can. They show so much effort and respect. If you're not comfortable they don't make you do it. They are really respectful about peoples decisions and opinions. It's better than other programs."

Safe environment (9)

The Youth Inclusion Program was, according to youth, a safe space. They felt welcomed to talk about various topics and to share their honest opinions and emotions. They were able to have heart to heart conversations and to feel supported regardless of what they were going through. It is also reassuring for parents to know that The ROC is a safe space as they do not have to worry about where their child are going after school. This safe environment played an important role in the process of the program as it allowed youth to try new things, to create new relationships, and to learn new knowledge and skills.

“It has been the best thing ever. I love it so much. I can’t believe it. It’s amazing. The staff here is so nice and it is just so open. I can talk about whatever I want and I’ll be comfortable. I find this more better than counselling. Here I can get everything done. In counselling it’s a different process, you have to figure it out. Here you have someone with you helping to figure it out, helping to support you.”

“I can talk about anything. Everyone is so nice and supportive. And I never have to be embarrassed to say anything. I’m very comfortable.”

“A lot of people here the mom and dad go to work. And afterschool there is nobody for them. They can come here. I really love that you can take a cab home. If your mom and dad trust the place and the staff they are relieved for you to be here. I feel it’s a bonus for families.”

“It’s a good way for youth to stay connected and get the support they need. The ROC acts as second home for people because it’s a place we feel comfortable and there are good snacks.”

“Yeah. I used to think that everybody hated me but now that I go there it’s a little different because these people don’t judge.”

New opportunities (2)

Some of the participants mentioned that their involvement in the Youth Inclusion Program allowed them to try new things such as getting involved in their community or going on a field trip. However, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the plans of the program: some activities had to be canceled and the lockdown limited the ability to organize activities.

“I like getting involved in the community more. I like finding new activities and it’s a good way to try new things.”

“[Something new I tried is] I study now.

I never usually go on school trips. So trips. You don’t miss class work and we don’t learn when we go here. With school it’s not a break. When you go here it’s a break and you talk about other trips you could do.”

Youth Engagement (1)

One youth shared how YIP is not only helping youth, but also engaging with them, welcoming their feedbacks to improve the program.

“[YIP] lets youth voice be heard. It offers help and support. More people to talk to. There is a group that you can make friends in.”

Individual Outcomes

New skills and knowledge (6)

Youth mentioned learning a variety of skills and knowledge during their participation in YIP. These skills varied from social emotional competence to hard practical skills, and depended greatly on the personal goals of the participants. Some participants learned studying strategies

and organizational skills, whereas in other case it was breathing and meditating technique, and self-management. Staff members supported youth by broking down, step by step, processes that would seem overwhelming at first. They approached the challenges in a positive way, which kept youth motivated and increased their feeling of competency.

"I got to go to the pottery class, I got to make plates for my mom, she liked them. I've been interested in pottery so that was nice. That and getting to talk to people and getting more involved."

"I've learned to go to school more and good study tactics. Like how long you should study for to remember and to make things constant. Like what would pop up in a test."

"Definitely. They make me think of the tough decisions in a positive way. They make things more easier. Before I joined I thought everything was so complicated. But they have made it easier. Like resume writing, I thought that would be so hard but they broke it down for me."

"I would have to say I've learned more organizational skills. With the whole organizing my goal setting for school. And I've applied it into other things outside school."

Personal growth, Self-Awareness and Self-Management (13)

Personal growth was a major theme throughout the interviews, but this growth was also different for each youth. In general, it was possible to capture an increase of self-awareness and self-management in terms of emotions, stress and anxiety. Many youth reported being able to cope with their stress more efficiently since their involvement in the program. They also talked about an increased confidence and a better understanding of what they were feeling and its possible roots. For some youth, learning about emotion management and self-awareness even resulted in decreasing self-harm behaviors. For others, YIP allowed to decrease social anxiety by offering a favourable environment for the creation of new relationships. Finally, some youth even shared that their participation in YIP helped them to experience a better mood, and to feel more positive and happy, which led them to be more motivated in general.

"Taking risks and socializing. So I'm trying to start a conversation, I was dying but I did it. And I made a friend. Saying things in a positive and nice way. Asking in a positive way. I used to struggle with asking questions and now I can kind of. I'm not totally there but getting there."

"[I learned] How to talk to people more. I'm a pretty shy person but I'm starting to come out of my shell. One of my goals was to get to talk to people more."

"I get to meet more people and learn more about others. It's helping my social anxiety a lot."

"I learned how to control my emotions a little more. I used to cut a lot and it's changed since they've talked me through a bunch of stuff. They've talked me through what I should do when I feel like cutting."

"I would say being more confident about things. Like with school and with daily life. If I'm stressful about it, they help me realize things aren't as hard. They make me feel confident and comfortable. If I'm in a tough spot, they make me feel good about it. Boost my confidence, try and make me think in good ways and help me to see the best in a situation."

"My general mood is improved. Which does a lot of good. Even waking up in the morning is not such a drag. It impacts more than I realized. Ever since I started the program, I started being able to focus, have motivation to be in school and I'm doing better."

Academic achievement (8)

Amongst the positive outcomes that young participants talked about, academic achievement was mentioned a few times. It was possible to notice important improvement in grades, school attendance, and motivation. Staff members played an important role in helping youth develop studying strategies and making learning fun. They showed the importance and interest in learning knowledge. Staff members provided a meaningful support to complete homework, and find appealing college programs and other courses.

"It's a good program. It's good to get out and get a break from little sisters and family. Have people to look out for me, and look over my school work before it gets handed in. They help out all the time."

"My grades are in the 80s now instead of the 60s. Before I did the program I didn't want to go to school. But now [name] makes something fun to do after school but you can only do it if you go to school. And through that I'm learning more fun things to do in school. Like I've never liked history before but now I love it. I didn't know cause I didn't go."

"My attitude about school has changed a bit. Before I hated it. I didn't like it because I couldn't do it because it was hard. But now that I do it with them at The Roc they break it down and help me. I go in 10:30-2:30 and they help me the whole time. Now I can do it."

"Like my driver's test, I'm studying with [name]. I told her I'm bad at keeping up on studying. She helped me by saying that if I make a plan of when I want to get a g1 and helped me lay out how to study. Now it doesn't seem so complicated. I am looking at it more positive."

Social Outcomes

Program connectedness (7)

Through their participation in the Youth Inclusion Program, youth were able to create new relationships with the staff members and the other participants. For some of them, the program was a meaningful opportunity to meet new people. The environment feels safe and youth were more comfortable to socialize with others.

"The second time I came I made a friend. I don't get all socializing because of homeschooling."

“Talking to new people and making new connections.”

“Being at The Roc builds friendships. There are peoples I can talk to. I can also talk to staff a lot. It gives me clarity on how to be welcoming. And it’s completely safe there.”

Relationship skills and knowledge (11)

In addition to the personal growth around socializing, every youth reported gaining relationship skills and knowledge. Youth reported learning how to make connections with other people, how to start conversation, and slowly gained confidence in talking to others. A youth shared that they also learn to see other people’s perspective in a situation, decreasing the feeling that everyone is against them. It also allowed them to have a better understanding of what a healthy relationship should look like, which changed their perspective on some of their friendships.

“Relationships are a bit different. Normally in an interview like this I would be whispering and looking down and you wouldn’t hear me. But now I’m doing this.”

“I used to be really anti-social but now I go to The Roc more and I know I can make friends and talk to more people.”

“I would say yes [I feel differently about others]. A lot of people are not as bad as they seemed. There would be some people that I would be eerie about and wouldn’t know if we could talk to them, but they turn out to be really nice. It makes you think about them differently...in a good way.”

“With my friends who don’t go there [to The ROC], it makes me think about difficult situations in a different way and think about different ways to have a good friendship. Difficult spots can be dealt with differently. I can approach things differently.”

“[Now] I sort of look at things through a different perspective. I try and look at things and be mindful and see how other things don’t....hard to explain. For example, someone is being pissy and I’m not sure why. It might have nothing to do with me, and I’m getting the outcome of their fight with a close friend. Now I look at why they might be pissed off. Now I’m like, they might need some space and I leave them alone as opposed to like: ‘Hey Bro what’s your problem?!?!’ Now I realize it’s not about me. Now I try and think about their perspective too.”

Adult support (4) & Support/monitoring (11)

The support youth received from the staff members was unanimous. It was also a key characteristic to the program. Every young participant shared how they were supported by the staff members. The latter showed their support in different ways, depending on the youth’s personal goals: calling cabs to drive youth back home, going to school to reenrol one of the participants, or simply being available to listen to youth. The staff were dedicated to help youth and showed genuine care, which helped strengthening the relationship of trust between the staff and the participants.

“[The most important characteristic about the program is] That you can share things. They help you. Any problem that I ever had [name] helped me. She

supported me, brought more ideas. She brings ideas. She has encouraged me to get more information. It made me feel like I'm in control and it calms my anxiety down. She talked to me about breathing and meditating. That's usually the counsellor's job but [name] is a supporter."

"They did everything for me. They went to the school and talked to them. From past stuff I couldn't go in there because I was bullied and teachers didn't like me. They did the legwork to get me back in."

"They are really supportive for rides. If people are out of town, the Roc will call Cabs. That is really kind to try and get people there and back safely."

"She helped me by saying that if I make a plan of when I want to get a g1 and helped me lay out how to study. Now it doesn't seem so complicated. I am looking at it more positive."

"[The leaders/staff are] Super supportive, respectful, generous and kind."

"Absolutely. They really care about the teenagers and children that come in. They are super super supportive. They will do anything to help and guide them. They are REALLY good at trying to get people as much help as they possibly can."

"The staff are always available. They are always looking for solutions for my issues. They are always looking out for me."

System Outcomes

Navigating resources (2) & Accessing resources (1)

The Youth Inclusion Program also played a role of bridging youth with different resources. To help youth achieve their personal goals, staff members sometimes redirected them towards support groups, counsellors, or alternatives they did not know. The program also helped youth developing some strategies about how and where to get the help they needed.

"They are helping with an addiction program for people who are friends or family of people with addictions and hooked me up with a support group."

"Now I'm doing all school online. I don't really enjoy it but it's doable. The school gave out chrome books. I've been okay with school in this time. I'm doing well. I'm doing well enough that I don't need help. But I know where to get it if I need it."

Community involvement (1)

For one particular participant, the Youth Inclusion Program offered an opportunity to get more involved in the community. The program was opened to hear new ideas from youth and one of them suggested to do an activity in a nursing home. This can be evidence that youth gained or strengthen their sense and care for others as an outcome of the program.

"I've offered ideas for both YIP and the Youth Advisory group here. I was thinking we could do a program like the Christmas Angels but with nursing homes. Lots of people get put in nursing homes and left there. It's sad. My aunt works in a nursing

home and people run out of stuff. My mom and I have bought stuff for people who have run out of pjs and spread it out to the residents there. It's kinda just getting my ideas and voice out there. Talking to new people and making new connections."

Recommendations

Youth shared some recommendations for the future of YIP. All of them would like to see the program expand. They would like more staff, more funding, a greater space, being able to come more often, etc. They want the program to help more youth like them. A participant suggested to partner with a school so there would be in-school activities during lunch time or after class. And another suggested that youth could refer other youth. Some also suggested to increase advertisement for the program; they shared that if more people knew about YIP, the program could help more people and have a greater impact on the community. Finally, many youth mentioned they would like more field trips and activities in the community such as hikes, going to the movie theater, to museums, and even activities in which you can invite friends and families.

Qualitative results

Adult Allies Interviews

Adult allies who work in community agencies and are often responsible for referring youth to programs participated in one-on-one interviews throughout March 2020. The adult allies individual interviews were qualitatively analyzed to find the most frequent themes. The following chart presents all the themes that appeared in the conversations. These themes will be discussed further below with relevant quotes to illustrate the different themes.

Category	Theme	Frequency
Program qualities	Safe/positive environment	5
	Flexibility	5
	Addresses a gap in services	1
Individual Outcomes	Personal growth	6
	Hierarchy needs addressed	2
	Academic achievement	1
Social Outcomes	Program connectedness	3
	Adult support	2
System Outcomes	Positive community impact	3
Challenges/Barriers	Confidentiality/consent	5
	Access to technology	2
	Contacting youth	2
	Waitlist	2

Initiators

Adult allies (3)

Of the three adults interviewed, two became involved with the ROC when they were approached by the program as potential referees. The other adult became involved with the program through a mutual connection, after they had heard from a colleague about the program.

“The Roc came to a team check in at our office. They were advertising it and gave us the eligibility and referral. The Roc came to us directly”

Youth referrals (10)

The adult allies reported referring an approximate total of 10 youth to the ROC, some being formal referrals and some informal referrals. The allies reported no formal criteria for referrals, but felt comfortable referring youth they knew to be at-risk. They identified certain risk factors that they use to identify youth at risk, including: few social connections, substance abuse at home (their own or family members), food insecurity, issues with the law, risky behaviour, and not attending school. One of the adults reported that they had not formally referred any youth

yet because the ROC has a waitlist, and they preferred to refer the youth to a program that had the space right away.

“Hearing the roc talk about it, I left that meeting thinking about a youth and reviewed what they gave us. She meets all of this. Risky behaviour, not in school. She hit every one of the referral points. I thought it would be fit. They said YEP send it over, sounds perfect.”

Program qualities

Safe/positive environment (5)

The allies identified that the ROC is a safe, welcoming environment for youth. Other positive descriptors used included “tactful”, “natural”, and “non-intrusive”. As well, the fact that ROC provides youth with food and snacks was discussed twice as a positive aspect of the program.

“The way that [staff name] approaches her and the whole space is very understanding and creates an environment where she can tell us anything and it’s a safe place to say anything, she’s not forced to do anything. It opens up the potential options and they can create a space of comfortability for her. She can get food she takes with her. It is also other supports that makes it inviting. Like we can’t give her homemade meals here.”

Flexibility (5)

Throughout the interviews, the flexible nature of the program was highlighted five times as a positive program quality. As one of the adults explained, many of the youth who are referred to the ROC need urgent help at unpredictable times. The ability to receive care without an appointment can be life-saving. As well, the flexible nature of the program allows youth to receive personalized care that identifies the challenges they face and helps them to create solutions.

“The environment really meets her where she’s at.”

“They have been so flexible and they just drop what they’re doing and talk to her. Anywhere else we would have to have appointments for her. There she just walks in. And this helps to keep her going and keep her talking and connecting. That could be life or death. If she is walking by and she gets turned away who know what the hell will happen to her. I don’t know what would happen.”

Addresses a gap in services (1)

One adult expressed that the ROC is an important program because it identifies and addresses a gap in available services to youth, and helps youth who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

“It addresses a gap. The program fits the kids who would have trouble finding services and falls through the crack with other organizations. Like with us, she would fall through the crack but this addresses the gap.”

Individual outcomes

Personal growth (6)

The adults have witnessed extensive personal growth among the youth they work with who are involved with the ROC. Most frequently, the adults highlighted improved self-regulation of

emotions and behaviours. Other areas of personal growth that were discussed included increased self-awareness, application of strategies learned from the ROC/counselling, and improved problem solving.

“Taking the time to process things as opposed to react is a nice change with some of the students I’ve referred. In the past things have gone south quickly. Now they seek different ways to resolve what’s troubling them and self-regulate. Including one on one conversations so they come to me to talk before it escalates.”

Hierarchy needs addressed (2)

According to the adult allies, one of the ways that the ROC is helping youth is by addressing hierarchy needs, beginning at the bottom with physiological needs followed by safety needs. One example was highlighted by an ally who reported that one of their students has had improved hygiene and health behaviours as a result of their participation in the program.

“Through the connection with the Yip program we have started to addressing hierarchy needs like food, shelter, security and they’ve supported him with courses.”

Academic achievements (2)

One adult ally felt that the ROC has had a positive impact on their students’ academic achievements, namely by increasing school attendance.

Social outcomes

Program connectedness (3)

The adult allies felt that youth are experiencing high quality connection to the program and to their peers as a result of participating in the ROC.

“She does not engage in the personal supports available through our agencies or others. BUT she initiates all supports with the ROC. As opposed to any engagement with agencies that have been involved and there have been a lot. She just hasn’t connected. But she goes there every day. And she won’t even call me. For someone who doesn’t reach out to anyone, a big difference I see is that she reaches out there. Something makes her feel comfortable there.”

Adult support (2)

The allies highlighted positive youth-adult partnerships in the ROC. The youth trust the ROC staff and feel supported by the adults there.

“The ones I’m talking about were so desperate for someone to care beyond the school day. In highschool its’ just 70 minutes with a teacher they may connect with. Over there, at The Roc, they are building relationships.”

“I would say when youth have an advocate or when agencies support employees going above and beyond to be a youth advocate and use their professional judgement to do that, that’s missing a lot of place.”

System outcomes

Positive community impact (3)

The ROC’s potential to have a positive impact on the community was discussed three times, with one of the allies stating that there would be an impact “for the greater good”. Another adult ally felt that the program will help youth develop into community members who feel “safe and secure” and are able to give back to the community.

“In a best case scenario it would work with at risk youth to work as a community instead of these at-risk behaviours and it would contribute to the Greater Good.”

Challenges/barriers

Confidentiality/consent (5)

The most common barriers to youth participation in the ROC identified in the interviews were issues surrounding confidentiality and consent. The ROC covers sensitive topics and works with youth who are vulnerable, so there are layers of protection for youth that need to be in place. As the allies refer youth to outside programs, including the ROC, there are confidentiality and liability issues that must be addressed through the referring agency. The allies stated that this is much easier to overcome if they have supportive management and directors who see the benefit in these referral programs. As well, one adult explained that if a youth is experiencing problems at home, sending home forms to ask for consent for the program is not a realistic solution.

“We try and act with confidentiality but a lot time the conflict and turmoil is from home. It doesn't really work to ask for consent and signed forms from home when that's where the problem is.”

Access to technology (2)

The allies discussed how access to technology can be a barrier for youth. Some of the youth involved in the program do not have access to reliable phones, internet, and computers. This affects their ability to get into contact with programs, but also to participate in programs from home. This has been especially relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“[...] there are certain little barriers, a lot is on google classroom and sometimes it's not easy to navigate. The people who are the most impacted, the people who are most impact are those without access to technology. And it's a socio-economic thing.”

Contacting youth (2)

Another related barrier to participation is that contacting youth is often a gap in the service. Many of the youth that the allies work with do not have reliable access to phones, which makes it difficult to stay in contact with the program. The allies suggested that using social media as an alternative means of communication may be beneficial. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ROC has begun to explore alternative means of communication, and has provided staff with work phones so that they can better access youth.

“It would be great to be able to email them to talk about their progress[...].”

Wait list (1)

One of the adult allies had not formally referred any youth to the program because there is a waitlist for the ROC. As a result, they have been sending youth to other programs.

“The last time I talked to The ROC they said they had a waitlist, so we send them to [other program] because we don’t want to send people to a waitlist.”

Recommendations

The adult allies had a number of suggestions for improving the program. One suggestion was to establish more connections with schools and improve communications with school staff. Another suggestion was to find alternative methods of communication with youth because some youth do not have access to technology, as discussed in the barriers section of the analysis. One ally suggested that the ROC expand its available programs and resources, explaining that since the youth trust the ROC staff, they would likely feel safe to go there for other resources. Another ally suggested having case conferences to check in with students. Finally, there were several recommendations to connect more youth and raise awareness of the program, which may be addressed by the previously listed recommendations.

“They may not graduate but it’s about more than that. It’s about keeping people safe.”

Qualitative results

ROC program staff completed a reflection activity called Change Journals over the course of three consecutive months. Change Journals are a series of open-ended, journal-style questions that the program staff answered repeatedly. Each Change Journal entry reflects on the previous month. Together, the Change Journals document changes that the staff observed in youth participants over the past few months. Results from the Change Journal are summarized in this section, with questions grouped together by content. See Appendix C for tables summarizing key themes and frequencies of themes.

Change Journals

Youth Participants

The Youth Participants section of the Change Journals asks five questions related to youth impact. In terms of changes, the staff identified a number of ways they recognize that a youth has changed as a result of the program. These included physical and verbal cues, increased connection, increased participation, goal setting and achievement, and academic achievements.

“I can tell a participant is experiencing a change when they are more apt and willing to open up about their feelings and what they are experiencing at home or in their day to day life.”

“As a staff member, you can tell that a participant is experiencing positive change through their willingness to participate (as the YIP program is a voluntary program) with staff through goal setting, keeping scheduled appointments with staff and working towards their goals that they chose to set for themselves.”

In all three Change Journal entries related to learnings, staff identified similar themes of personal growth, self-awareness, applying learning to everyday life, and participation. For both changes and learnings, the themes were generally similar between months; however, while the entries did not directly make comparisons to previous months, the staff discussed how many of the changes are part of long-term, continuous change.

“They critically view their past way of thinking and acting and talk about how they would do it differently.”

[The participant] is starting to recognize some of their behaviours which lead to specific events (conflict, low grades, getting fired, relationship troubles) and realizing they could have changed the outcome with different behaviour, reaction & attitude

They have tried to use new tools and techniques learned in workshops during times of stress, anxiety, conflict, etc. regardless of the outcome (were the tools successful or not).

We use a narrative, solution-focused approach and you can see how the youth have started externalizing themselves from the “problem”. For example, a youth now says, “drugs have done x, y and z to my life” instead of before they would have said, “I hurt my family, stole from friends, lied, dropped out of school, etc.”

In terms of community involvement, in February and March, youth participants in the YIP were very active through volunteering, participating in activities, seeking employment, and brainstorming ideas for community programming. In both March and April, the staff highlighted that youth are giving back to the community by social distancing.

"I have observed socially isolated individuals begin to become more interactive and to the point they are creating friendships which initially just the thought of that brought up many feelings of anxiety."

"Youth contribute to the program through their participation + commitment. They provide feedback (both positive and how it can be improved)"

"But they are showing leadership to other youth by abiding by the quarantine rules, staying home and not interacting and hanging out with friends not in their immediate home/circle"

Peer Engagement

The Peer Engagement section asked five questions related to group dynamics, peer and influencer interactions, and conversations with peers. This section was only completed in February and March, as social-distancing was in full effect by April. In February, the peer interactions and group dynamics were generally positive and supportive, with youth forming positive connections with their peers and with the program.

Youth who wouldn't speak with other youth are now more extraverted, talking with peers, playing pool with peers, video games with peers, playing dodgeball together, etc.

Youth were interested in and motivated to take on leadership roles and peer influencers were generally a positive influence on youth and were seen as supportive. One staff member did mention that some youth can be a bit shy around the influencers. In terms of conversations, youth connected with each other on a wide variety of topics, both positive and lighthearted as well as more serious conversations. Youth also enjoyed discussing the YIP activities.

"I have seen these youth stand up for each other."

"More participants feeling inspired + encouraged to take on more leading role."

"Comfortable sharing personal (within reason) feelings and information with others in a group setting."

"A lot of youth like to talk about what YIP events are coming up, meaning field trips, typical youth centre programming, PEFAC fitness Tuesday, help they've received, what has helped them, what they would like to do with YIP in the future, their goals and achieving them."

In March, fewer peer engagement interactions were discussed as the pandemic began to affect the programming. Despite this, a common theme was that youth were still experiencing positive connections, even as the connections moved mostly online.

Youth-Adult Partnerships

Across all three months, staff report strong relationships with youth. In February, the staff discussed developing deeper connections with youth as trust and comfort builds, which allows

them to cover more in depth support. One staff member also discussed trying to be flexible as they work with youth; this was a common theme during the adult referee interviews.

“As you work with people this closely you get to know them well. You get to know what works with the youth and what doesn’t. What would motivate them and foster change. Changing techniques to help ignite interest, motivation change in their lives. Knowing how to address them, what pushes them out of their comfort/safe zone so they can continue to grow and flourish.”

The program has also been a way for youth to have their voices heard.

“Participants have also discussed feeling their voice doesn’t always get heard + how this can be discouraging in some settings. The YIP program has given them a platform to be heard and taken seriously.”

In March and April, the journals discussed how their connections with youth have changed due to COVID-19. While most of the interactions now take place online, staff still report overall strong relationships with their youth. In one staff member’s experience, the youth who have remained connected have developed a more trusting relationship with staff and are comfortable feeling vulnerable. Staff has also been helping to support families and caregivers through the pandemic.

“I believe the YIP participants who have remained connected have developed a more trusting honest and engaging relationship. They appear to be more comfortable with sharing vulnerable things about themselves or views on the world.”

“My interactions with youth changed: you are still talking to me about their conflict with family, friends, school, academics, relationships. Not all of those are conflicts but could be exciting news, updates, stressors or day to day stories relating to those topics. Mental health is also always discussed.”

System Changes

In February and March, the staff discussed changes to the program that might be beneficial. These included hosting small break out groups for youth who are uncomfortable in larger groups, and an interest in more private office spaces for one-on-one conversations.

“The nature of the YIP program is that we need offices for staff so these sensitive conversations can be had in a more confidential space/setting. Our youth centre is all open concept, which is not ideal for conversations of a sensitive nature.”

The staff also discussed how the program has helped youth in terms of personal growth, engaging with community, applying knowledge, and sharing their voices. The Youth Advisory Committee was specifically highlighted as a positive way that youth are participating in the community.

“Feeling inspired themselves, building confidence, friendships and healthy peer to peer and peer to adult relationships.”

“It has empowered participants to not only use their voices but to engage in various initiatives even if they don’t directly impact them.”

Finally, the staff also discussed some barriers affecting youth programming, such as funding, time, mental health, and resources. Additional barriers identified in March included social distancing and COVID-19.

“Based on my observations of the young people, I would like for youth to be more a part of the planning of workshops and training opportunities they would like to see. I would also like to see more peer mentorship roles for them as I believe this helps connect them to each other + build more empathy for “humans”. I believe when youth take on roles of leaders, there is so much great opportunity and creativity that happens. This also helps build on confidence and gives youth a sense of autonomy.”

In April, the journal entries were different due to the effects of the pandemic. The program has had to change because of social distancing, but staff continues to check-in virtually by social media and phone with youth. Youth have been making a positive impact on their communities by continuing to practice social-distancing. Finally, the barriers identified in March all centred on COVID-19: mental health, lack of socialization, and limited information available.

Discussion: Making meaning of the findings

The ROC's Youth Inclusion Program has been demonstrated to be very impactful.

In the Healthy, Close Relationship Module youth reported having significantly better relationships in May than they did when they started the program. More precisely, they felt more supported, and their ongoing participation allowed them to create strong trusting relationships with the other members of the program. This resulted in a greater sense of belonging to the program. Interestingly, a higher connection to the program was associated with higher connection to the community, suggesting that the ROC is viewed as an important aspect of the community. Overall, these results suggest that the ROC's YIP played a meaningful role in helping youth to form, improve and maintain healthy relationships, which also impacted their feelings of safety and belongingness in other aspects of their lives.

In the Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire, youth reported having more knowledge and skills in May than they did when they started the program. In May, they were able to understand better their thought processes, behaviors and emotions, not only within themselves, but also within others. They were also able to manage their emotional responses more efficiently and learned some coping mechanisms to face stressful situations. These strategies also helped them to take better decisions. Finally, they did not improve their relationship management, but rather maintain it throughout the program. Higher self-awareness was associated with higher self-management, which in turn was associated with more responsible decision-making, suggesting that understanding one's own emotions, thoughts and behaviors is likely to help manage them and results in making better decision. Overall, it seems like the ROC's YIP successfully increased youth's knowledge and skills regarding social emotional competence and taught them efficient strategies to deal with different situations.

It is important to raise the fact that the post-retrospective method for the two quantitative modules is, in itself, evidence that youth developed or improved their self-awareness and their abilities to reflect on themselves. Using the post-retrospective method was a good exercise for them and their results show they were able to notice change within themselves and to acknowledge their journey.

Furthermore, through the interviews, youth shared many ways in which they experienced personal growth in terms of social emotional competence, relationships, or hard and soft skills. Not only did they grow as individual, but they also reported meaningful outcomes such as an improvement in grades, in mood, and a decrease of self-harm and antisocial behaviors. The interviews not only highlighted the important change that youth went through, but also key characteristics of the program that facilitated these changes. Primarily, the staff members played an important role in supporting youth through their journey and by establishing a safe environment favourable to growth. They also created an appropriate structure by balancing emotional reciprocity and positive rationales to help youth learn and try new things. Overall, the results suggest that the ROC's Youth Inclusion Program is well structured and leads to meaningful outcomes.

Three adult allies also participated in interviews, providing overwhelmingly positive feedback. According to the allies, youth are experiencing positive social and emotional growth. The adults reported improved self-regulation of emotions, increased positive affect, and meaningful connections between youth and their peers as well as youth and the ROC staff. Youth have

begun to apply their learnings to their everyday lives. The flexibility of the program was highly praised; as one adult explained, the youth who need the ROC are often vulnerable and may be dealing with a lot of challenges. For some of these youth, the ability to walk into the ROC and get help from an adult they trust in the moment they need it can be the difference between life and death. The program is helping to fill a gap in available services to youth in need. Some suggestions for the future were made, such as expanding to reach more youth and finding alternative means of contacting youth (ex: by social media or email). The means of communication has been temporarily addressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; keeping these lines of communication open in the future may also be beneficial.

In the Change Journals, adults reflected on the same set of questions over a period of three months. Generally, the reflections were positive and similar to the adult interviews. While the journals did not make direct comparisons between each month, the adults often noted continuity and ongoing growth. From the adults' perspectives, the youth are positively impacted by their participation, as seen through physical and verbal cues, increased participation, academic achievement, goal achievement, and positive reflections. Youth are also forming positive connections with their peers and with influencers, as well as giving back to their communities in a variety of ways, from volunteering to planning activities to social distancing.

Taken together, the evidence from the quantitative youth evaluations as well as the qualitative youth and adult evaluations suggests that the ROC'S YIP is having a positive impact on youth and the community. Youth are experiencing personal impacts and growth while establishing connections and gaining access to support and resources in the community. The youth's responses to both the Healthy Close Relationships module and the Social Emotional Competence questionnaire indicated that youth are forming positive connections and experiencing social and emotional growth, including improved self-management and self-awareness. These results were echoed throughout the youth interviews, the adult interviews, and the adults' Change Journals. The consistency of the results indicates an overall positive impact.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to gain a greater understanding of how youth participating in the ROC's Youth Inclusion Program are able to maintain and form healthy, close relationships. It also aims to explore the potential impacts of the program in terms of social emotional competence. Youth shared their voice through a quantitative survey and through individual interviews. The quantitative surveys were post-retrospective which explores participants' self-reported change. In May, youth were invited to fill out the questionnaire, rating their agreement to each statement for the beginning of the program and now.

Some adult allies also participated in the evaluation. Three adults who refer youth to the ROC participated in one-on-one interviews in March 2020. Another three adult staff members completed Change Journals, which asked them to reflect on the same set of questions each month.

The results suggest that youth felt more supported, and their ongoing participation allowed them to create strong trusting relationships with the other members of the program which resulted in a greater sense of belonging to the program. Youth also felt like they gained important knowledge and skills in terms of social emotional competence. In addition to these changes, youth reported different outcomes such as improvement in grades, in mood, and a decrease of self-harm and antisocial behaviors. The youth interviews also highlighted key characteristics of the program that facilitated these changes, suggesting that the ROC's Youth Inclusion Program is well structured and leads to meaningful outcomes.

According to the allies and staff, youth are experiencing positive social and emotional growth. The adults reported improved self-regulation of emotions, increased positive affect, and meaningful connections between youth and their peers as well as youth and the ROC staff. Youth are also showing these positive changes outside of the program, applying their learning and growth to everyday life.

Youth voice gathered in this report can help to better understand the reality of these youth, the impact of such a program, and can help to develop and improve similar programs that are beneficial for youth.

Additional opportunities for youth to share their stories of the program will offer a deeper examination of the individual, social, and system level changes that may be occurring as a result of the program and the process. Adult allies and staff also shared in-depth experiences that are useful for understanding the programmatic side. Our recommendation is to discuss the present results with youth in the community to see if this data lines up with what they are experiencing, and continue to include youth voice as a means of evaluating the program.

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Appendix

A – Healthy, Close Relationship Module (post-retrospective)

Results per questions – Healthy, Close Relationship Module (post-retrospective)		
Questions	Before the program	Now
1. How well do you get along with other people and make friends?	2.70	3.80*
2. Do you have help or support from people when you need it?	2.40	4.20*
3. How aware are you of prejudices being expressed around you?	3.30	3.50
4. How comfortable are you interacting with people who have different values and ideas than yourself?	3.00	3.80
5. Do you get along with people your own age?	2.90	3.90*
6. How well do you feel connected to your friends and peers?	2.60	3.40*
7. I feel close to people in this program.	2.90	4.30*
8. I feel I am a part of this program.	2.70	4.40*
9. I am happy to be at this program.	3.30	4.70*
10. The adults in this program treat youth fairly.	4.50	4.80
11. I feel safe in this program.	4.00	4.56
12. I feel close to people at my school.	2.00	3.00*
13. I feel I am a part of my school.	2.80	3.10
14. I am happy to be at my school.	3.00	3.30
15. The teachers in this program treat students fairly.	3.40	3.30
16. I feel safe in my school.	2.90	3.20
17. I feel close to people in my community.	2.80	3.70*
18. I feel I am a part of my community.	3.22	3.78
19. I am happy to be in my community.	3.50	4.00
20. The people in my community treat me fairly.	3.60	3.90
21. I feel safe in my community.	3.40	3.70

* These scores were statistically significantly higher than before the program.

B – Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (post-retrospective)

Results per questions – Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (post-retrospective)		
Questions	Before the program	Now
1. I know what I am thinking and doing.	3.10	4.40*
2. I understand why I do what I do.	3.33	5.00*
3. I understand my moods and feelings.	2.90	4.20*
4. I know when I am moody.	4.50	5.00
5. I can read people's faces when they are angry.	5.22	5.33
6. I recognize how people feel by looking at their facial expressions.	4.30	4.80
7. It is easy for me to understand why people feel the way they do.	3.80	4.80*
8. If someone is sad, angry or happy, I believe I know what they are thinking.	2.10	2.80*
9. I understand why people react the way they do.	2.70	4.10*
10. If a friend is upset, I have a pretty good idea why.	3.11	4.33*
11. I can stay calm in stressful situations.	2.90	4.00*
12. I stay calm and overcome anxiety in new or changing situations.	2.90	4.10*
13. I stay calm when things go wrong.	2.90	3.60
14. I can control the way I feel when something bad happens.	2.60	3.60
15. When I am upset with someone, I will wait till I have calmed down before discussing the issue.	3.20	4.30*
16. I will always apologize when I hurt my friend unintentionally.	4.80	5.60
17. I always try and comfort my friends when they are sad.	4.90	5.40
18. I try not to criticize my friend when we quarrel.	3.70	4.20
19. I am tolerant of my friend's mistakes.	3.90	4.30
20. I stand up for myself without putting others down.	3.60	4.40*
21. When making decisions, I take into account the consequences of my actions.	2.90	3.70*
22. I ensure that there are more positive outcomes when making a choice.	2.50	3.80*
23. I weight the strengths of the situation before deciding on my action.	2.80	3.80*
24. I consider the criteria chosen before making a recommendation.	3.50	4.40*
25. I consider the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy before deciding to use it.	3.70	4.60

* These scores were statistically significantly higher than before the program.

C –Change Journal Themes, Frequencies, and Examples

Each question is analyzed by key themes and accompanied by an example or quote. If a key theme was mentioned more than once, the frequency is noted.

Youth Participants

When a participant is experiencing positive change, it make look like (from my observations):

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Participation	Less reluctance to participate (willing to participate) in activities they disregarded or declined before
	Verbal/physical cues	An increase in their expressiveness and interest level in addressing their goals and how to achieve them, seeing staff, being with peers (socializing), participating in activities
	Increase in attendance	An increase in their attendance at school, at YIP meetings and events
	Positive interactions	Doing something positive that is new to them without being prompted.
	Participation (4)	As a staff member, you can tell that a participant is experiencing positive change through their willingness to participate (as the YIP program is a voluntary program) with staff through goal setting, keeping scheduled appointments with staff and working towards their goals that they chose to set for themselves.
	Academic achievement	Increased school attendance
	Connection	Increased peer to per supports
March	Openness (2)	I can tell a participant is experiencing a change when they are more apt and willing to open up about their feelings and what they are experiencing at home or in their day to day life.
	Accepting/looking for help (2)	I know they are going through change when they are willing to accept the help that was offered to them by staff.
	Physical/verbal cues	Change is noticed when their expressing how much happier they are doing or that they are no longer struggling with mental health.

	Positivity/confidence	For YIP participants who have been active, I have observed them to be relatively more positive and being open to leaving their “comfort zone” to try something new they hadn’t before
	Goals	The change happens when the youth is taking steps to achieve their goal
April	Physical/ Verbal cues	Staff notice fewer anxious traits, either verbally or physically
	Self-reflection	They critically view their past way of thinking and acting and talk about how they would do it differently not
	Positivity/confidence	More confidence in their selves, how they think, act and their school/academics
	Communicating	Youth are opening up and reaching out to us for advice during self-isolation and disclosing self-harm, loneliness, and family conflict.
	Connection	As a staff member, I know that this program has an impact on youth as they remain committed to staying connected + engaged through a virtual call means. This demonstrates not only the youth’s ability to be adaptive but their openness to receiving support. This speaks to the program and the benefits they see in the program as they would like to continue engaging with staff.

Change that I have seen in participants in the past month include:

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Participation (6)	Expresses interest in being involved in the community and volunteering – and is involved now when they were not before
	Positivity/confidence (2)	She is now proud of who she is becoming.
	Setting/achieving goals (4)	Is thinking about their future
	Open to receiving support (7)	Asks for help when they need it. Not afraid to receive help. Increased interest in meeting on a one-to-one context

	Academic achievements (3)	Hands in assignments and completes tests at school
	Self-reflection	Is starting to recognize some of their behaviours which lead to specific events (conflict, low grades, getting fired, relationship troubles) and realizing they could have changed the outcome with different behaviour, reaction & attitude
	Sharing experiences (3)	Open to sharing about themselves + their needs
	Vocabulary changes	Learning to use more descriptive language to help express how they're feeling vs. avoiding conversation just stating "I don't know".
	Communication skills	At-risk of having to move out of the home due to poor communication. All members of the household worked on better communication and now report a better living situation and no longer at risk of being kicked out.
March	Positivity/confidence (3)	more positive self-talk
	Setting/achieving goals (5)	The change happens when the youth is taking steps to achieve their goal.
	Participation (2)	excitement to partake in community, youth centre and school activities
	Academic achievements	excited to share news of academic success
	Independence	independence-being more independent than their typical self
	Interpersonal interactions	less conflict with family
	Commitment	I have seen youth who were non-committal to the program become committed and attend their meetings.
	Connection	I have observed socially isolated individuals begin to become more interactive and to the point they are creating friendships which initially just the thought of that brought up many feelings of anxiety.
	Vocabulary changes	I have also noticed an awareness around their language and the effort to make changes to language that is

		hurtful to helpful.
	Openness (2)	I see youth opening up about challenges in their lives
April 30	Physical/verbal cues	More positive responses to generic everyday questions like, 'how are you?' how's your school work coming along, 'how are you doing at home?'
	Self-reflection (2)	Participants viewing past experiences and thinking/saying how they could have responded better/differently to the situation.
	Positivity/confidence (3)	More confidence in self, academics. The way they think, their actions and who they are becoming/want to become More positive. – in thinking, feeling and expressing
	Solutions-oriented mindset	When a challenge arises (school at home) coming up with solutions with staff to overcome it
	Accepting help (4)	Youth are remaining in contact and asking for help navigating other services such as children's aid.
	Setting/achieving goals	He has stuck to his goals and was really excited about his progress. He shared that when he's been frustrated at home he now goes outside to jump on his trampoline, instead of vaping and playing video games. He's reported feeling better and sleeping better.
	Alternative communications	Since this conversation we have now gotten her own cell phone with 4 months' work of pre-paid time on it, so she can call for help whenever she needs too. She has reported doing very well.

As a staff, I know the program has had an impact by noticing:

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Achieving goals (2)	When youth achieve some of their goals
	Positivity/confidence (3)	When YIP youth talk to community members, family, peers and teachers about their experience with YIP and it's all positive
	Supporting other youth (3)	When they tell other youth who are struggling to join YIP because it has helped them.
	Physical/verbal cues	When the youth smiles, laughs and talks more than they

	(2)	did before – noticing a difference is their affect
	Behavioural improvements	When they haven't been in trouble at school in 5 weeks or more when it used to be a weekly occurrence
	Social and emotional growth	I also know that they are developing new skills that will support their social and emotional growth.
	Access to resources	The youth are disclosing food insecurity at home and keep coming back to take home frozen meals, canned food and other food to their family's regularly.
March	Personal growth	I get to see how much they have grown in the last few months
	Positivity/confidence (2)	I see their positive, happy and excited affect while they tell me about their day or what has been happening day to day for them. When they wouldn't talk before.
	Setting/achieving goals (3)	I see them working hard to achieve the goals they set for themselves
	Physical/verbal cues	I know because they verbally tell me how much I/we help them and how they don't know how/where they would be without the YIP program.
	Applying learning	They use learned tools to help them
	Accessing resources (2)	[A youth] is now living in a safe environment and her family was given further resources to her further support.
	Seeking support	When youth members get into trouble at school, at home, or with peer, they come to speak with YIP workers to talk it out. This shows the developed trust and support they find in their YIP workers/mentors
	Feedback from parents	Parents also tell me the positive impact this program and I have on their child.
April	Personal growth	I know this is having an impact from their motivation to be better; strive for their goals, how they are now doing better in school, with family and peer interactions and at work.

Participation	As a staff member, I know that this program has an impact on youth as they remain committed to staying connected + engaged through a virtual call means. This demonstrates not only the youth's ability to be adaptive but their openness to receiving support. This speaks to the program and the benefits they see in the program as they would like to continue engaging with staff.
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Signs that learning has stuck

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Personal growth (2)	When a certain behaviour is changed for the better and the youth has not reverted to their older tendencies
	Setting/achieving goals (3)	When they continuously try new things or ways to reach their goals
	Academic achievements (2)	Continuously works on school assignments after school and hands them in on time
	Applying learnings (2)	They have tried to use new tools and techniques learned in workshops during times of stress, anxiety, conflict, etc. regardless of the outcome (were the tools successful or not).
	Positive social interactions	Show a great deal of leadership – using skills and techniques they acquired during YIP – use these skills to help others
	Self-awareness (2)	Gained self-awareness they may have not had before
	Participation	Join a group or activity when they have feared to do so due to their social anxiety
	Vocabulary changes	We use a narrative, solution-focused approach and you can see how the youth have started externalizing themselves from the “problem”. For example, a youth now says, “drugs have done x, y and z to my life” instead of before they would have said, “I hurt my family, stole from friends, lied, dropped out of school, etc.”
March	Apply learnings (3)	They use the tools/techniques that were taught to them and use them in their day to day lives. This would often be conflict with family, friends, social media, school and teachers as well with how they are feeling and thinking
	Positivity/self-confidence	Less negative self-talk and more positive self-talk

	Vocabulary changes (2)	She has begun to change her language to separate herself from the program and to start seeing herself as part of the solution
	Participation	She continues to attend youth advisory committee meetings, county care kids meetings, Youth Inclusion Program one-on-one meetings, PEFAC (fitness) Tuesday groups etc.
	Setting/achieving goals	Is still excited for future and education
	Self-reflection	Is admitting poor choices, knowing right from wrong
	Seeking support	Continues to ask for help when needed
April	Applying learning (2)	When they consistently use the tools/strategies learned/practiced
	Self-reflection	When they reflect on previous situations and cringe at the way they behaved or responded.
	Social growth	They are dealing with family and peer pressures and disagreements differently

Community and program contribution

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Volunteering (5)	All of my YIP participants have decided to join the youth advisory committee willingly because they want to be involved in making a positive difference, interest in making a positive difference, interest in community engagement, youth having a voice and to socialize and get out of their comfort zone.
	Employment	We have YIP Youth that have also expressed getting a job in the community. We have then set them up with career edge to help refine their interview skills, resume writing etc.
	Various YIP activities (20)	YIP youth are also participating in skill building workshops like WHMIS training, communications workshop, distress workshops, mental health, resiliency and bullying workshops.
	Counselling	Many are also participating in our weekly Children's Mental Health walk in clinic here they have access to a counsellor.
	Participation	Youth contribute to the program through their participation + commitment. They provide feedback (both positive and how it can be improved)

March	Volunteering (4)	All of my youth inclusion program participants have been heavily involved in the County Care Kits project. Volunteering many of their own hours to purchase items, pack them, organize, promote etc.
	Employment (2)	I had two youth seek resume writing and interview preparation skills workshops with career edge so they can learn new skills to get and keep a job
	Participation (2)	partaking fully in YIP
	Brainstorming ideas (3)	-has started coming up with her own initiative project that she wants to present to the youth at the next youth advisory committee meeting.
	Social distancing (1)	At this time, participants are contributing to their community by social distancing due to COVID-19
April	Participation	These youth are still participating in program meeting regularly with staff via online, phone calls or texting.
	Social distancing	But they are showing leadership to other youth by abiding by the quarantine rules, staying home and not interacting and hanging out with friends not in their immediate home/circle

Peer Engagement

Changes in program interactions:

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Support (3)	I have seen these youth stand up for each other. Participants demonstrate compassion to one another when sharing
	Connections (7)	Over the course of 5 months or so I have seen youth who would not regularly mingle or hangout, hangout with one another. Youth who wouldn't speak with other youth are now more extraverted, talking with peers, playing pool with peers, video games with peers, playing dodgeball together, etc.
	Sharing knowledge	Teach other YIP youth something they don't know – could be through conversations or musically.
	Teamwork	Work together on community projects together
March	Connections (2)	I would say that it is consistent with talking and interacting with people they normally would not have.
	Support (2)	The changes I have seen in the interaction among program participants are relatively positive in that there is more comfort with speaking to one another.

Influencer interactions:

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Positive influence (2)	More participants feeling inspired + encouraged to take on more leading role
	Support system (3)	Asks in depth questions to the peer influencer if they were talking about something. So they had a better understanding or wants to know their point of view
	Shyness	BUT I have also seen the opposite where the YIP youth became shy in 'influencer' presence etc.
	Leadership	More participants feeling inspired + encouraged to take on more leading role
	Connections	The YIP youth take part and work with other youth who they otherwise wouldn't have been able to interact with

March	Leadership	I did observe an afternoon in which one of the participants actually became the leader in the group she was hanging in and establish respectful conversation among them. This was a very big change for them as they are constantly consumed with fear as what other individuals think of them.
	Connection	Influencers and participants have built relationships where they now know each other's name and will ask when the others aren't around when they might see them next.

Group dynamic changes:

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Comfortable (7)	Comfortable sharing personal (within reason) feelings and information with others in a group setting.
	Supportive (2)	Remind youth about resources they have found helpful in the past that could be helpful to the other's particular situation.
	Connections (6)	Various + diverse workshops + field trips are offered and bring participants together who may have not hung out with each other
	Independence	Participants also observed being able to be independent + work amongst themselves (i.e. art mural project) where they were asked to draw what their county means to them.
March	Online interactions	The only dynamic/interaction change that is observed is that a lot of the interactions are not face to face anymore but through social media and text messaging due to closure. YIP youth have still been engaging with staff online (social media) and messaging but are unable to have fact to face interactions at this point in time. Youth have sent photos of themselves doing activities or just themselves (to show new hairdos and colours) etc.
	Connections	However, the times that they are at the youth centre, I have witnessed them either coming much earlier to their appointments to have some time to engage with peers and/or staying at the youth centre after our meeting. This previously did not happen as they did not want to engage with peers.
	Personal growth	In those moments, I have observed them to present with more confidence, less anxiety and practice their assertiveness.

Comfortable	People seem more comfortable in groups, making jokes with one another.
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Observed Conversations

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Conversations on a broad range of topics (4)	I've heard YIP participants talk about school, peers, politics, family situations, relationships, things they want to be involved in, their future, dreams, things they are confused about, their feelings and everything in between. (general dialogue)
	Supportive conversations (4)	Helping one another with their stressors, or what has helped them in the past
	Debates	Debating points of view – explaining why they like what they like, when they feel a certain way about something.
	YIP activities	A lot of YIP youth discuss the PEFAC program. This talk is usually excitement for upcoming activity/program. Who is going? Asking them to help them workout. What they like doing when they go. What works best for them? Helping them achieve a fitness goal. Inviting/inquiring others about the cardio kickboxing class that runs on PEFAC evening (part of program). Youth Advisory Committee specifically the County Care Kits has had a lot of traction. It's been a big project they have all been working on together. So the ins and outs of the creativity, executing and how they hope people find it helpful has been discussed often
	Brainstorming (3)	Sharing new ideas how they can support their community
March	Conversations on a broad range of topics	Positive talk about YIP, talking about school struggles, talk about recent events and news (COVID-19 etc.)
	Supportive conversations (2)	Youth congratulating other on their successes and reaching their goals.
	YIP activities	A lot of youth like to talk about what YIP events are coming up, meaning field trips, typical youth centre programming, PEFAC fitness Tuesday, help they've received, what has helped them, what they would like to do with YIP in the future, their goals and achieving them.

Youth-Adult Partnerships

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Developing stronger connections (3)	As you work with people this closely you get to know them well. You get to know what works with the youth and what doesn't. What would motivate them and foster change. Changing techniques to help ignite interest, motivation change in their lives. Knowing how to address then them, what pushes them out of their comfort/safe zone so they can continue to grow and flourish.
	Increased comfort (2)	The interactions with youth in the program have become deeper in nature. Covering topics of addiction, abuse food insecurity, trauma, self-harm, poverty, grief, mental health, FASD, involvement with the law and the criminal justice system, domestic violence, LGBTQ, sex/birth control, gang violence, human trafficking, harm reduction, self-esteem, body image, consent, drugs/alcohol, etc. These topics come up in one-on-one meetings with YIP program coordinators
	Flexibility	My approach is to be flexible, meeting youth where they're at and always ensure that their goals + individualized plan are led by them. By supporting them to be a leader in their own life, my hope is I am encouraging and demonstrating that they can have control over their own lives and be a part of decision making over the things that directly impact them.
	Platform for youth voice	Participants have also discussed feeling their voice doesn't always get heard + how this can be discouraging in some settings. The YIP program has given them a platform to be heard and taken seriously.
March	Connections	My interactions with youth changed: you are still talking to me about their conflict with family, friends, school, academics, relationships. Not all of those are conflicts but could be exciting news, updates, stressors or day to day stories relating to those topics. Mental health is also always discussed.
	Increased comfort (2)	For youth I have been working longer with there is an increased comfort in our meetings they are more open and honest about where they're at in comparison to the beginning when they first started the program. They are sharing more vulnerable topics such as fear and challenges in finding and securing employment and how to create boundaries in the different relationships they have in their life.

	Increased trust	Interactions with youth have gotten deeper as we've established more trust in the relationship.
	Adapting to COVID-19	These interactions have now all been done through social media and messaging since mid-March when schools and Youth centre were closed due to COVID-19.
April	Adapting to COVID-19 (3)	There are huge changes with how I have to interact with youth now due to COVID 19. I have had very few face to face interactions with these youth. I communicate with these youth through social media – Instagram, Facebook, phone calls, texting and facetimeing/video messaging with youth
	Providing resources (2)	I have also dropped off food, hygiene products, school supplies and other materials that they need to be able to participate in our online programming
	Increased trust	I believe the YIP participants who have remained connected have developed a more trusting honest and engaging relationship. They appear to be more comfortable with sharing vulnerable things about themselves or views on the world.
	Support for parents/caregivers	Parents/caregivers are discussing financial stress due to the pandemic with YIP staff and we continue to work to provide food to these families.

System Changes

Day	Key themes	Example
February	Smaller groups	I have some YIP youth that are still struggling with large crowds and social anxiety. In the future I hope to host more small groups so they feel comfortable attending and learning.
	More office space	The nature of the YIP program is that we need offices for staff so these sensitive conversations can be had in a more confidential space/setting. Our youth centre is all open concept, which is not ideal for conversations of a sensitive nature.
	Create new opportunities	Based on my observations of the young people, I would like for youth to be more a part of the planning of workshops and training opportunities they would like to see. I would also like to see more peer mentorship roles for them as I believe this helps connect them to each other + build more empathy for “humans”. I believe when youth take on roles of leaders, there is so much great opportunity and creativity that happens. This also helps build on confidence and gives youth a sense of autonomy.
	Engaging with community (2)	I think their efforts to volunteer have been great as well. Helping others and organizations by volunteering shows great efforts as well.
	Youth advisory committee	Feeling as though they belong to something, they have a purpose, giving back to the community Feeling inspired themselves, building confidence, friendships and healthy peer to peer and peer to adult relationships Giving the YIP youth something productive to focus on.
	Applying learning	After a one-on-one session of brainstorming and practicing scenarios, this youth felt she had new tools + was empowered to communicate her needs in a respectful way to ensure she could be supported by her counsellor in a way that would better suit her.
	Personal growth	Increased feelings of self-worth
	Youth voice	Youth feeling heard + that they're are valuable and matter
March	Barriers	Time, resources, funding, mental health, commitment, motivation, opportunities, lack of goals
	Programmatic changes	Yes, since all of our programming is now through social media, text messaging and phone calls I am hoping to schedule specific check in days that will be hosted weekly. These will be through phone

		conversations or video chatting. Text messaging will continue to occur throughout the week as a casual how are you doing. Phone conversations and video chatting will feel more personal and will be easier to talk in depth about how they are doing.
	More office space (2)	We need more spaces to conduct our on-on-one to ensure privacy and confidentiality.
	Engaging with community (4)	At the beginning of the month youth finished up County Care Kits which helps families in the community.
	Sense of belonging	Sense of belonging/helpfulness
	Partnership with school	We are seeking and working on creating a partnership with the school.
	Support	I did have a youth express that they have been trying to cheer up family members during this time with motivating them to go for walks and making them special recipes.
	Youth empowerment	It has empowered participants to not only use their voices but to engage in various initiatives even if they don't directly impact them.
	Barriers	Social distancing, lack of motivation, complicated processes to make change , funding, COVID-19, communication barriers
April	Checking-in	Staying consistent with check ins, updates virtually or phone calls
	Community safety during COVID-19	One change and effort they are hanging out with friends so spread of this virus lessens and stops. So they are making change in their community in that sense, the safety of themselves and others
	Barriers	Mental health, lack of socialization, limited information