

Title:

Does Stigma Towards Mental Illness Decrease for Youth 13 to 18 Years Old After Participating in School Based Youth Net Hamilton Focus Groups?

Principal Investigator:

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Research Team:

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Community Partners:

Public Health and Social Services Department, City of Hamilton and Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

Funding Source:

The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO).

Project Timeline:

2007 – 2008

Abstract:

Youth Net Hamilton is an organization of adults and youth partnering to promote the mental health and well-being of youth. It reaches out through focus groups to find out what issues affect the lives of youth and how youth deal with these issues. Focus groups for youth (ages 13 to 18) are led by older trained youth (ages 19 to 30) in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board secondary schools and other community settings. If facilitators are concerned about survey or discussion responses, they follow-up with individuals immediately following the group to assess the level of risk and help the youth connect with supports.

Although a lot of data is collected, recorded, and analyzed, no formal evaluation of the program has been done during its 8 years of operation.

This randomized control trial will take place in six schools within the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board with about 300 student participants, over the course of one school year. Students will fill out two questionnaires, one month apart. The intervention group in each school will participate in a focus group the day after the first round of data collection; the control group will be able to participate in a focus group after the study is completed. The effectiveness of the focus groups on decreasing stigma associated with mental health among students will be measured.