

How Staff Can Best Support Youth Leadership

WELCOME! This document is adapted from Jack.org's many resources to train and equip young leaders to take action for mental health across Canada.

Objectives:

- To help adult staff understand their role in supporting youth leadership within their schools and/or community groups
- To encourage staff members to prioritize youth-led ideas and action planning
- To provide tips for supporting young team members to confidently bring their own ideas forward and lead initiatives in line with their goals
- Teach staff members how to effectively lend the power they hold to youth-led work

Thank you so much for supporting youth leaders at your school or in your community! As a staff member, your willingness to support youth leadership is incredibly helpful in maintaining a sustainable mental health promotion and advocacy presence at your high school or in your community group.

Jack.org is a network of youth leaders working to reduce barriers to help seeking in their communities. In our programs, the role of non-youth allies is to support the work youth are doing and to ensure that youth teams are well equipped to lead their own efforts in line with their own interests, goals, and priorities. It can be hard for older supports to remember their role in supporting youth voices to come to the centre of this work, and so we've created this list of tips and tricks to help out!

To effectively support youth leadership we recommend you:

- Work to create a space that supports youth ideas and encourages them to bring these ideas forward within the school.
- Provide guidance and feedback to your youth team as they design and plan to implement initiatives within your school and/or community, as required.
- Ensure all team ideas and initiatives are youth designed and youth led, and that all members of the team feel included in this process.
- Ensure that you let youth team members come to their own ideas, and are careful not to inadvertently drive your own ideas forward or overpower youth ideas in any way.
- Ensure youth team members incorporate mental health conversations into their initiatives, in line with their goals.
- Help with conflict resolution, if issues arise within your team or with external students at your school or youth in community settings.
- Help youth team members navigate your administrative policies to ensure easy booking of spaces for events, etc.

- Manage team funding account by liaising between team leaders and administration.
- Ensure your team creates a feasible budget with any funds provided, and remind youth team members to keep all receipts.
- Help your team identify and liaise with other student and/or youth groups or initiatives within the school and community.