

## Youth Lead Role



### What is the YMHAC Initiative?

The **Youth Mental Health and Addiction Champions (YMHAC) Initiative** is a partnership between the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and Public Health Units across the province of Ontario. The program supports students to become mental health Champions in their schools.

As a **Youth Lead**, you will work to improve the health and well-being of youth by promoting mental wellness initiatives, helping to reduce the stigma about mental illness, and discouraging the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances.

[Health Unit/Agency] has partnered with [school board] to identify and implement the YMHAC Initiative into interested schools.

### How does the Initiative Work?

Youth will be trained and supported to take on the role of “**Youth Lead**” and “**Youth Champion**” at their school and will form the **Network of Champions**.

The **Public Health Leads** will work closely with the **School Staff Lead(s)** (i.e., Child and Youth Worker, teacher), **Mental Health Lead**, **school principal/vice-principal or designate**, **Youth Champions** and other **Youth Leads** to plan and carry out initiatives promoting mental health throughout the school year.

### What is the role of a Youth Lead?

Primary responsibilities of **Youth Leads** are in the areas of planning, implementation and evaluation support for the YMHAC Initiative, in conjunction with the local **Public Health Lead**. [# of] **Youth Leads** will be selected from each participating school from the **Network of Champions**.

- ★ Attend a local training session/workshop with Youth Champions within your school/region (date & location TBD).
- ★ Learn about mental well-being, reducing stigma about mental illness and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances.

May have membership on the local steering committee. (**A steering committee makes strategic decisions about the future actions of the Initiative**).





- ★ Co-chair **Network of Champions** meetings with **Public Health Lead(s)** and **School Staff Lead(s)** (rotate responsibility with other Youth Leads). Meetings will be held once a week during lunch hour at your school (dates and location TBD).
- ★ Work with other **Youth Leads, Youth Champions**, the **Public Health Lead(s)**, and the **School Staff Lead(s)** to assess the needs of your community/school, plan and carry out Youth Engagement activities to promote mental health and well-being within your school community. You will also learn how to get feedback about the effectiveness of your activities carried out in your school.
- ★ Mentor, motivate and be the main contact for the **Network of Champions**.
- ★ Respond in a timely manner to communications (i.e., text, email) from the **Public Health Lead(s)** or **School Staff Lead(s)**.
- ★ Be a resource to the local organization and/or local region for knowledge transfer.
- ★ Participate in evaluation activities (i.e., paper and online surveys, focus group, activity profile).

## How will you benefit from being a Youth Lead?

By being a Youth Lead, you will have an opportunity to...

Gain skills in:	Learn about:	Gain experiences with:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Public speaking</li> <li>o Communication</li> <li>o Leadership</li> <li>o Facilitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Mental health vs. mental illness</li> <li>o Stigma</li> <li>o Resiliency and coping skills</li> <li>o Supports in your community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Health promotion</li> <li>o Planning and delivering events/ activities</li> <li>o Networking and meeting new people</li> </ul>





## Is being a Youth Lead a good fit for you?

Becoming a **Youth Lead** is a good fit for you if you;

- ★ Want to further your leadership skills.
- ★ Have a keen interest in creating an environment at your school that helps promote good mental health for everyone.
- ★ Are eager to meet and work with new people.
- ★ Enjoy being creative.
- ★ Are passionate about voicing issues important to you and your peers.
- ★ Want experience to add to your resume.

If you are interested in becoming a Youth Lead, or for more information, please contact your School Staff Lead(s):

(insert name)

Or the Public Health Leads:

(insert name)

