



Atlantic Summer Institute on Healthy & Safe Communities

Promoting Child & Youth Mental Health: Engaging All Generations

CURRICULUM PATHWAYS 2016

Curriculum #3: Child Rights-Based Approaches to Youth Mental Health: Ensuring the Rights of Children and Youth in Policy Across Governments and Communities

Objective: To present an alternative to the dominant paradigm of health as a human need, as opposed to health as a human right. The modules of this theme will provide participants with an in-depth introduction to the discourse of children's rights, with particular emphasis on the right to adequate healthcare in the context of youth mental health.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Participants will be provided with an interactive opportunity to learn how to re-frame their youth mental health work and advocacy in a manner that is consistent with the fundamental rights of children and youth, and will be able to contribute to the beginning of a common call to action for Atlantic Canadians on child and youth mental health.

Module I: Introduction to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

This workshop will begin with a presentation on the history of children's rights, and the nature of children's rights since the signature and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Participants will then be asked to identify Atlantic Canadian challenges in child and youth mental health to form the basis of an action plan to be developed over the course of the curriculum stream.

Learning Objectives

After completing this workshop, participants will:

- Have an introductory understanding of international children's rights law; and
- Be able to draw the connections between contemporary mental health service challenges and infringements of child rights

Module II: Children's Rights as a Framework for Building Mental Health Resiliency

This workshop will present the connection between children's rights and child and youth resiliency, specifically in the context of mental health. Through the "Whole Child Framework", participants will learn about the influence of protective and risk factors on child wellbeing. The presentation will also cover the IAYMH's International Declaration on Youth Mental Health and its program of action through a children's rights lens, in order to provide the international background for the Atlantic action plan being developed in this curriculum stream.

Learning Objectives

After completing this workshop, participants will:

- Understand the connection between children's rights, social determinants of health, and childhood resiliency;
- Gain a better understanding of the benefits of a holistic approach to youth mental health;
- Have a better understanding of the international context surrounding child and youth mental health; and
- Be able to identify measurable targets for improvement in child and youth mental health in Atlantic Canada.

Module III: Child Rights-Based Approaches to Decision-Making: A few Instruments for Your Toolkit

In this workshop, participants will be introduced to several tools that may assist them with child rights-based decision-making. There will be significant focus on two tools. First, participants will explore Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIA) and examples of their use in New Brunswick. Second, participants will learn the fundamentals of authentic youth engagement in decision-making, and have the opportunity to hear about the application of child rights-based tools for decision-making in the context of ACCESS Open Minds New Brunswick project.

Learning Objectives

After completing this workshop, participants will:

- Have a general understanding of child rights-based tools for decision-making;
- Be able to apply a CRIA lens to their organizational decision-making processes;
- Gain an understanding of the principles of youth engagement; and
- Be able to conceptualize the use of youth engagement principles in practice.

Module IV: An Atlantic Canadian Promise to Children and Youth with Mental Health Challenges: The Right Approach

In the final workshop of the series, participants will work interactively to identify strategic actions based on the tools explained in Module III to address the targets identified for child and youth mental health in Atlantic Canada. The actions will reflect a cross-sectoral approach to addressing the needs of Atlantic youth by identifying the key players and necessary steps for improving mental health resiliency.

These strategic actions will be compiled into an Atlantic Canadian Child and Youth Mental Health Action Plan to be shared with all ASI participants.

Learning Objectives

After completing this workshop, participants will:

- Have a better understanding of the picture of child and youth mental health in Atlantic Canada;
- Be able to apply a rights-based approach to their own mental health initiatives.

FACILITATORS:

Christian Whalen, Deputy Advocate & Senior Legal Counsel, Office of the Child & Youth Advocate (NB)

Christian Whalen is a lawyer with over 20 years' service in the public sector in the area of human rights, children's rights and access to justice. He founded and chaired the national Children's Law Committee of the Canadian Bar Association. He is the ACCESS Open Minds-NB team lead to the national executive Committee for ACCESS Open Minds and a past recipient of the Child Rights Champion Award of the Canadian Coalition for Rights of the Child and of the CBA's John Tait award for pre-eminent service by a public sector lawyer in Canada.

Candice Ashley Pollack, ACCESS Open Minds New Brunswick

Candice Ashley Pollack graduated from the McGill Faculty of Law in 2015. During her time in law school, Candice co-founded the Canadian Student's Association for Children's Rights, which is active in four universities across two provinces. She continues to sit as the Chair of their Board of Directors. In 2014, Candice won the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children's Youth Voice Award for her passion in children's rights and her dedication to advancing the topic among the Canadian youth population. Candice is currently completing her articling requirements at the New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate's Office in order to become a member of the Law Society of New Brunswick in the spring of 2016.