

Summary of Building Safer Communities Youth Engagements

Fredericton

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The Youth Engagement Process

Who?

57 young people from across Fredericton, ages 13-19 with the following organizations:

- Multicultural Association of Fredericton
- New Brunswick African Association
- John Howard Society
- City of Fredericton, Youth Advisory Committee

When?

June 2023

What?

Young people participated in a 2 hour art-based activity to explore where they felt safe, where they felt that they belonged, what is needed to feel part of a community and what is needed to support young people to avoid crime and violence.



Key Questions and Young People's Responses

Who and what makes young people feel like they belong?

- Friends and family
- Organizations they are a part of, and the groups and clubs organized by these nonprofit organizations
- Adults who listen and don't judge them
- For racialized young people, people from their own culture
- Certain places in the city such as the Tattoo shop, Escape room, Queen Square pool, parks during the day and the Playhouse

Where do young people not feel safe?

- For racialized young people: Stores or in the mall, they felt judged or followed, and had to deal with racism and discrimination.
- For racialized young people: Sports groups, at school or in the community.
- School or at certain community-run programs.
- Group homes.



What do young people need to feel like they are safe and that they belong?

The following themes emerged from the information shared by young people:

Theme #1:

Increase and improve mental health services

- Provide more mental health services for young people that do not have long wait times.
- Offer mental health services through the schools and provide training for guidance counselors to support immigrant and refugee youth.
- Offer services outside of schools, both in-person services and online services (For example: host anonymous online support groups, it's ok if one adult knows who all the young people are, but let us participate with cameras off and no names listed.)
- Allow young people to get mental health support without approval from their parents, because not all parents understand young people's needs.
- Parents need education around mental health to help break the stigma of seeking mental health support.
- Provide access to nature and to fun activities so young people can relax.

Theme #2:

Create opportunities to build relationships with other young people and community

- Need a safe space for people from similar backgrounds to come together, but also a space for people of different backgrounds to get to know one another and share their cultures.
- Offer a space with drinks and food that is fun, where we can be ourselves, be noisy and have a good time.
- Bring young people from the 2 high schools together to build relationships and break down rivalries.
Need more services and opportunities on the North side.



Theme #3:

Address Fredericton's transportation challenges

- Transportation is a challenge because there is no service to the communities surrounding the city, service is very slow, there is no service on Sundays and many people can't afford the bus.

Theme #4:

Address the increase in drugs and drug use

- Address the increase in drug use in high schools that make many young people feel unsafe.
- Drugs are getting normalized in schools and in different peer groups and more prevention efforts need to be made.
- Young people feel like peers may be self-medicating and need better mental health services.

Other important themes for young people:

- **Basic Needs:**
 - Many young people do not have their basic needs met such as food, housing, physical and mental health care. These need to be addressed for them to feel safe.
- **Employment:**
 - Young people want access to better jobs where they can make a meaningful contribution to their community, and earn a decent income.



What did young people think of adults' ideas to create a drop in center, and provide more direct prevention services?

Drop in-center

- Generally a good idea, but maybe it should not just be in 1 location, maybe there should be different locations offered to reach more people.
- Be a safe space for teenagers, because there really aren't enough things for teenagers to do that are safe and fun.
- Create a welcoming and inclusive community for everyone including different ages, genders, abilities, or cultural backgrounds.
- Support young people to get to know others who are different from them and learn from each other. This could include things like setting up a buddy system.
- Be an alternative for young people who may be drawn to crime because of boredom, lack of role models or who need to provide for their families.
- **A drop in center needs to include:** employment services, peer-led groups, mentorship opportunities, fun physical exercise to support mental health, getting out in nature, a community garden. Be walking distance from schools or offer free transportation.
- Open during lunch time on weekdays, after school and on weekends, so more people have the opportunity to attend.
- Offer food and snacks, free laundry, and showers.



Direct Prevention Services

- A community garden with chickens.
- Emergency housing for young people that is safe, provides free laundry and has adults in the building but not in your apartment*
- Better group homes for young people that feel like home and teach young people their rights*
- Better training and resources for young people around sexual health including support for young people who experience sexual assault and/or abuse.
- Parenting classes for young parents.
- Learn skills about becoming an adult like how to file your taxes, budget and get a job.
- Learn relationship skills such as setting healthy boundaries, and learning about being a good partner and treating women and girls well.
- Help newcomer young people adjust to their environments and integrate into Canadian culture, and help them navigate different systems like the school system.

*Please note that the Building Safer Communities Fund is not able to support the development of new group homes or emergency housing, but can contribute to programming offered within these settings.

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