



Youth Who Thrive: Facilitation Guide

General

This facilitation guide is designed to support you to engage your audience with the results from *Youth Who Thrive: A review of critical factors and effective programs for 12-25 year olds*. This is a guide to a flexible series of activities that can be delivered based on the individual needs of you as the facilitator, the participants and constraints, such as time, and space. The full literature review and a [summary website](#) designed for accessibility and readability are available.

A key principle is to involve users in the generation of knowledge to encourage them to adapt it for their particular context. This approach values connecting different types and sources of knowledge: 1) The expertise of program designers/deliverers about their programs and the youth they serve; and 2) research evidence from the literature review. The facilitation guide's structure moves back and forth between these two types of knowledge; the workshop facilitator's role is to guide participants to make as many connections as possible. The more familiarity facilitators have with the website content, the more connections they will be able to make. Going through the entire [website](#) is highly recommended prior to facilitating a workshop.



Workshop Overview and Options

| Activity | 90 Min | Half Day | Full Day |
|---|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| Introduction and Awaken Activity | 5 | 20 | 30 |
| Why are we here? | | 5 | 10 |
| What is thriving? | 10 | 20 | 40 |
| Break | | | 15 |
| Program frameworks | | 25 | 40 |
| Critical factors: ARC | 25 | 45 | 60 |
| Lunch/Break | | | 60 |
| Effective features and practices | 25 | 45 | 65 |
| Break | | | 15 |
| Customizing programs for specific youth | 20 | 35 | 60 |
| Closing circle | 5 | 15 | 25 |
| Total Time: | 90 min | 3.5 hours | 7 hours |

**Activity time estimates are shown in minutes.*

The 90-minute short session focuses on selected key messages.

The half-day session covers the resource thoroughly.

The full-day session covers the resource with in-depth focus on application in existing programs (program improvement, development and/or evaluation).

Visuals

Throughout the workshop, visuals can help highlight the links between concepts, and between research and practice.

Wall visuals

Over the course of the workshop, participants can build a wall visual that depicts the key concepts (e.g., thriving outcomes, critical factors, and effective practices), the links between them, and on-the-ground examples from their programs. As they move through each activity, participants can add to this program model visual to gain a better understanding of the research evidence and how it connects to their programs.

The visual can be built using the signs at the end of the facilitation guide (Appendix 2) or participants can create their own. Participants can use sticky notes to add examples and practices from their programs. Whenever possible, involve participants in putting up and filling in the wall visuals so that their visual representation is relevant to them.



Youth Who Thrive Website

If possible, use a projector to share the website with participants. You can select each of the messages as they relate to each activity, modeling the use of the website and walking them through it as you engage in discussion activities.

The facilitation guide also includes suggested videos and graphics to share from the website.

Alternative processes

If there are space constraints, the wall visual and activities can be done using the [Program development tool](#) that is available on PowerPoint slides.

If the size of the group is larger (over 15), you may want to split into smaller groups with each starting at a different discussion question or wall component. Give each group a limited time at each wall component before they circulate to the next one. If time is constrained, each small group can tackle only one or two of the components/discussion questions and report back to the larger group. Ask each group to start with a different question so that they are all covered.

Materials

- Flipchart
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Pens
- Program model labels (see appendix 2)
- Tape (paint friendly)
- Blank wall
- Handouts

Optional:

- Internet
- Projector and Lap Top with Speakers
- [PowerPoint Presentation](#)
- Music



1) Introductions and Awaken

Objectives:

- Identify who is in the room
- Establish a comfortable and safe space for learning and sharing
- Awaken energy, interest and focus

Materials:

- Open space for people to move around
- Optional: music

Put some music on for everyone to mingle around in the room. When the music stops, ask groups to get into groups of 2, 3 or 4.¹ In their groups, ask them to introduce themselves and answer one question. After they are done, repeat the mingle and ask them to get into another group and answer the next question.

Mingle questions:

- Find a skill that everyone in your small group has in common
- Find a skill that is unique to you that nobody else has in the group
- Find a descriptor or title that is important to who you are (e.g., I am a parent, I am Japanese, I am a basketball player) that everyone in your small group has in common
- Find a descriptor that is important to who you are that nobody else has in the group
- Final round: Share a critical factor that helped you succeed in adolescence

This activity awakens the groups' focus on how they self-determine (autonomy), how they connect with others (relatedness), and the skills they bring (competence). By starting with their experiences of these factors, they will be better able to relate to the subsequent content.

¹ If there is no sound system or music, simply ask everyone to mingle. When participants hear you clap three times, they stop and get into a group of three.



2) Why are we here?

Objectives:

- Identify purpose of workshop
- Identify specific areas that participants want to cover

Materials:

- Flipchart and markers
- Sticky notes and pens

Explain the purpose of the workshop: To explore the findings from *Youth Who Thrive: A review of critical factors and effective programs for 12-25 year olds*. This workshop is intended to:

- a. Deepen our understanding of core concepts and recent scientific evidence about critical factors for youth thriving
- b. Identify additional effective practices to develop programs and improve outcomes for youth
- c. Connect the scientific evidence with participant's knowledge of specific programs and youth

Discussion question (optional):

- What are key areas, questions or concerns that participants want to cover in the workshop?

Record answers on a flipchart as your reminders to try to make connections to these requests throughout the workshop if possible. Circle those that you will be able to cover and let participants know if there are areas that will not be covered in the workshop. Alternatively, ask participants to write their suggestions on sticky notes and post on the wall.

At the end of the session, if any of these areas have not been addressed, direct participants to the online resource for those covered in more detail and acknowledge those that have not been covered in the online resource. Unaddressed questions may be sent to: _____. These questions will help to inform the direction of future research and capacity building.



3) What is thriving?

Objective:

- Identify adolescent thriving outcomes

Materials:

- Post Learning, Feeling and Behaving signs
- Sticky notes and pens
- Optional if not using the wall: Projector and slides 2, 3, 4, and 5

Discussion questions: With your experience and program in mind...

- What long-term outcomes are you hoping to achieve?
- What are the learning (cognitive) outcomes/objectives of your program?
- What are the feeling (psychological/emotional) outcomes/objectives of your program?
- What are the behaving² (behavioral/social) outcomes/objectives of your programs?

Ask participants to write outcomes on separate sticky notes and group around the signs on the wall. This is the starting point of demonstrating the program model on the wall.

If they are not mentioned, add some of the following example outcomes based in the literature. If they are mentioned, reinforce that these outcomes are supported by the available evidence.

Learning outcomes:

- Higher school achievement and engagement
- Increased job exploration
- Higher motivation for learning

Feeling outcomes:

- Higher self-esteem
- Less depression and anxiety
- More energy, hope and positive feelings

² Behavioural/social outcomes refer to how youth behave externally, including individual behaviours and their social interactions with others.



Behaving outcomes:

- More physical activity and better physical health
- Less problem behaviours and more active coping
- More social interaction and healthier relationships
- Increased leadership and increased valuing of diversity

Related website messages:

- [Thriving defined](#): Thriving is assisted by being physically healthy and developing the capacity to learn, the capacity to feel good about one's self, and the capacity to behave well socially and societally.
- [Youth programs can assist youth to thrive by experiencing positive results, or outcomes, in three areas: learning, feeling and behaving.](#)

Video: Thriving in adolescence



4) Program frameworks

Objective:

- Make connections between program frameworks participants are using in their programs
- Identify foundational critical factors across these frameworks

Materials:

- Flipchart and markers
- Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence signs

Discussion questions:

- What are the program framework(s) that guide your programs if at all?
- What are the key principles and components of those frameworks/your program?
- How are your program frameworks working to reach your program objectives?
- How do you explain your framework/how you support youth to others? Would a simplified way to explain it be useful?

On a flipchart, record the frameworks and principles. If the participants identify the 40 Developmental Assets™, the five Cs, Self-Determination Theory, or other positive youth development frameworks, acknowledge that these have three common critical factors.

Introduce the three foundational critical factors that summarize key youth development program frameworks: **ARC (Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competence)**

1. Autonomy: Input, voice or agency in determining one's own choices and acting upon personal interests, values and goals.
2. Relatedness: Belonging and connection with others
3. Competence: Skills to effectively achieve desired goals

Post the Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence signs to the wall program model near the outcomes components.

Discussion question:

- Do these three critical factors resonate with the program frameworks or principles/components you listed earlier? What are the similarities and differences?

Add any of the principles or components listed on the flipchart or from discussion that relate to the three critical factors to each of the signs.



Related website messages:

- [Three major approaches useful for designing youth programming have strong evidence: 40 Assets™, the Five Cs, and Self-determination theory](#)
- [Three critical factors are shared across these approaches: Autonomy, relatedness and competence](#)



5) Critical factors: ARC

Objectives:

- Share core concepts and evidence to adapt to specific youth and programs
- Share how programs are already promoting the three critical factors and what it looks like in their specific programs

Materials:

- Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence signs
- Sticky notes and pens

Preparation: If you haven't already, post the three critical factor signs near the outcomes. Group some of the example outcomes sticky notes alongside the factors.

| Examples | Autonomy | Relatedness | Competence |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased job exploration• Higher motivation for learning• Higher school achievement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased job exploration• Increased school engagement• Higher school achievement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher school achievement |
| Feeling | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher self-esteem• Less depression• Greater sense of energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher self-esteem• Less depression• More hope | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher self-esteem• Less depression and anxiety• More positive feelings |
| Behaving | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More physical activity• Less problem behaviour• More active coping | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthier romantic relationships• Less problem behaviour• More social interaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased valuing of diversity• Better physical health• Increased leadership |

(Re)introduce the three critical factors and indicate that they are strongly associated with thriving outcomes.

Split into smaller groups so that each participant will have the opportunity to share their program experience. Ask each group to start with a different critical factor in case there is not enough time for each group to explore all three.



Discussion questions:

- How does your program support young people's autonomy? What does it look like in your program with the youth you work with?
- How does your program support relatedness? What does it look like in your program with the youth you work with?
- How does your program build young people's competences? What does it look like in your program with the youth you work with?

Report back to the larger group and ask them to post a few examples on sticky notes by each of the critical factors.

Related website messages:

- [Three critical factors are shared across these approaches: Autonomy, relatedness and competence](#)

Video: Critical factors



6) Effective features and practices

Objective:

- Identify effective features and practices to refine programs and improve outcomes.

Materials:

- [10 effective features list](#) or slides 6, 7, 8, 9
- Handout: [Effective practices summary](#)

Divide into smaller groups so that every participant has the opportunity to share their experience. Consider dividing the 10 features between the groups so that they are all covered.

Discussion questions:

- What do some of these features look like in your program?
- How might you improve one of these features in your program?
- Are there features missing in your program? Would it be appropriate to add them? If so, how?

Report back to the large group and share effective practices summary handout.

Optional activity for longer session: Using the [Effective practices summary](#) handout, ask groups to take the opportunity to share with each other concrete examples of what these practices look like with the specific youth in their programs.

Discussion questions:

- What do these practices look like in your program?
- How might you improve one of these practices in your program?
- Are there effective practices missing in your program? Would it be appropriate to add them? If so, how?

Report back to the large group. For a more interactive report back, consider asking small groups to select one or two of the key examples they explored and re-enact them using theatre skits. Practices are implemented in context so the embodied demonstration may resonate in new ways. For longer sessions, this also breaks up the discussion and gives participants the opportunity to move around and shift from their heads into their bodies. This strategy can also be useful for participants to use in their youth programs.



Related website messages:

- [The research identifies 10 important features of effective youth programs and their settings.](#)
- [The research identifies effective practices associated with the development of each of the critical factors](#)

Video: Effective features



7) Customizing programs for specific youth

Objective:

- Identify the importance of tailoring programs to specific demographics
- Reflect on questions to make programs more inclusive for youth in the GTA
- Share knowledge about strategies to customize programs for specific youth in the GTA

Materials:

- Handout: [Questions to consider](#)

Share with the group that the research evidence concludes that tailoring programs to the specific youth in the program is associated with better outcomes. Demographic differences influence what young people need in terms of autonomy, relatedness and competence.

Discussion question:

- How would you describe the youth population your program is intended to support?

Capture some of the key demographics on a flipchart. Circle those that come up most frequently. Use these responses to help divide into smaller groups that have common demographics served in their programs (ex. by program, by neighbourhood, by age, by ethnicity, etc.) if at all possible. This activity of dividing into groups is illustrative of the overlapping demographics and how programs are structured. If this is not possible, divide into groups small enough that all participants will have the opportunity to contribute.

Let the small groups know that they will be requested to share 1 or 2 key pieces from their discussion with the large group.

Discussion questions:

- What are some of the key challenges/barriers facing youth in your program?
- What are some of the transitions they are experiencing (ex. independent living, school transitions, parenting, exiting care, etc.)?
- How does your program support them in the face of challenges/barriers and through life transitions?
- How is your program customized for specific youth in the GTA?
- Are there resources you are using that may contribute to the evidence about customizing programs for youth in the GTA?

Report back in the large group.

Share handout: [Questions to consider](#)



Related website messages:

- [Autonomy, relatedness and competence are affected by demographic factors.](#)
- [Autonomy, relatedness and competence can support transitions during early adolescence, mid-adolescence and late adolescence/early adulthood, as well as transitions such as moving to independent living, exiting child welfare, and parenting.](#)



8) Closing circle

Objective:

- Reflect on the workshop content to crystallize and share learnings
- Articulate takeaway messages and commitments
- Provide feedback/evaluation of the workshop
- Share the website link for further information
- Close the workshop in a good way

Materials:

- [Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit sheet](#)
- Pens

Handout the [Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit sheet](#) and pens. This will be useful as an open-ended evaluation of the workshop.

Invite the participants to reflect on their own learning, feeling and behaving outcomes:

- What they learned
- How they felt
- What they will do with what they learned
- How they connected with the workshop, with other participants, with their program

Options for sharing back:

Sitting/standing in a circle, ask each person to share one thing from their reflection.

Ask everyone to place their sheet in the centre of the room facedown. Then ask everyone to select a random sheet. Ask them to share one thing from the sheet they are holding. In this way, the sharing can be done anonymously.

As a group, make sure to decide on the method of sharing back before it begins.

Let the group know that this Head, Heart, Feet, Spirit tool can be used in their program to gain feedback in an ongoing way about young people's learning, feeling and behaving outcomes. These simple questions lend themselves to quick verbal checkouts or integration with other checkout activities if there is not enough time to do them on paper.



Appendix 1

Sample workshop agendas

| Objective: Short session focused on selected key messages | |
|---|---|
| Duration: 90 minutes | Activity |
| 5 minutes | Awaken: Why are we here? |
| 10 minutes | What is thriving? |
| 25 minutes | Critical factors: ARC |
| 25 minutes | Effective features and practices |
| 20 minutes | Customizing programs for specific youth |
| 5 minutes | Closing circle |

| Objective: Half-day session covering the resource thoroughly | |
|--|---|
| Duration: 3.5 hours | Activity |
| 20 minutes | Introduction and Awaken |
| 5 minutes | Why are we here? |
| 30 minutes | What is thriving? |
| 25 minutes | Program frameworks |
| 45 minutes | Critical factors: ARC |
| 15 minutes | Break |
| 45 minutes | Effective features and practices |
| 35 minutes | Customizing programs for specific youth |
| 15 minutes | Closing circle |

| Objective: Full-day session covering the resource with in-depth focus on application in existing programs (program improvement, development and/or evaluation) | |
|--|---|
| Duration: 7 hours | Activity |
| 30 minutes | Introduction and icebreakers |
| 10 minutes | Why are we here? |
| 40 minutes | What is thriving? |
| 15 minutes | Break |
| 40 minutes | Program frameworks |
| 60 minutes | Critical factors: ARC |
| 60 minutes | Lunch |
| 65 minutes | Effective features and practices |
| 15 minutes | Break |
| 60 minutes | Customizing programs for specific youth |
| 25 minutes | Closing circle |



Appendix 2

Wall Visuals Signs

Activity 3

Outcomes

1. Learning outcomes
2. Feeling outcomes
3. Behaving/social outcomes

Learning Outcomes

Feeling Outcomes

Behaving/social Outcomes



Activity 4 and 5

ARC

1. Autonomy: Input, voice or agency in determining one's own choices and acting upon personal interests, values and goals.
2. Relatedness: Belonging and connection with others
3. Competence: Skills to effectively achieve desired goals

Autonomy:

Input, voice or agency in determining
one's own choices and acting upon
personal interests, values and goals.

Relatedness:

Belonging and connection with others

Competence:

Skills to effectively achieve desired goals

Key program features

| Critical Factor | Program Feature |
|-----------------|--|
| Relatedness | 1. Supportive relationships |
| | 2. Opportunities to belong |
| | 3. Positive social norms |
| | 4. Integration of family, school and community efforts |

| Critical Factor | Program Feature |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Autonomy, Competence | 5. Physical and psychological safety |
| | 6. Appropriate structure |
| | 7. Support for youth to be effective and feel like they matter |
| | 8. Opportunities for skill building |

| Critical Factor | Program Feature |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Autonomy, Relatedness, Competence | 9. Diversity of experience |
| | 10. Customized youth programming |



Activity 7

Influences:

Age

Socioeconomic status

Gender

Sexuality

Ability

Ethnicity

Age

Socioeconomic Status

Gender

Sexuality

Ability

Ethnicity