

PLEX Engagement in Research Community of Practice

November 2025: Collaboration not Consultation: Learning from the Digital Action Youth Advisory at Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario

This document provides a summary of engaging youth with lived experience (PLEX).

Key Presentation Points

- Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO) provide integrated youth services to support the well-being of young people including mental health, substance use supports, primary health care, and community supports
- The Digital Action Group (DAG) is an advisory group of 14 youth from across Ontario that are passionate about digital advocacy in the mental health space and co-develop digital tools

What did we discuss?

- **Build trust and visible accountability:** Involve youth early in the planning of initiatives and build ways to gather feedback frequently. Collaborate with youth to not only define accountability, but to make it visible to others (e.g., real-time tracking sheet).
- **Invest in relationship building:** It takes time and effort to build strong relationships, but by investing that time it creates an environment where youth can provide honest feedback and feel supported.
- **Embed youth leadership opportunities:** Provide opportunities for youth to lead initiatives and projects, as this not only leads to services that are better-aligned with youth needs, but also promotes youth self-development.
- **Balance goals with flexibility:** Ensure that you communicate with youth regarding their needs and remain flexible on ways to engage. Check-in often with youth to ensure their workload is manageable and adjust accordingly.
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Relevant Resources on PLEX Engagement in Research:

1. [Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario \(YWHO\)](#): A link to the YWHO website which provides a description of youth services provided through the hubs.
2. [Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario Virtual Hub](#): A link to the YWHO virtual hub website which provides a directory for the right services, at the right time, in the right place for youth and families.