

An Evaluation of Youth Health Centres in Nova Scotia

Appendix B: Evaluation Interview Guides

Prepared on Behalf of:
**Youth Health Evaluation Steering Committee
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1. OVERVIEW OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

The Youth Health Centre (YHC) Evaluation Steering Committee — a subcommittee of the Public Health Enhancement Core Services Committee and under the direction of the Department of Health — is evaluating YHCs in Nova Scotia. The two-year evaluation has three phases; Phase III is underway.

Phases I and II were interested in understanding how YHCs are structured and organized, what kinds of services and activities they provide to youth, and what kinds of changes occur as a result of the YHCs. Phase I included the development of a model for evaluating YHCs. Phase III is concerned with management and administration issues, results and recommendations to improve YHCs.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FOCUS GROUP?

Many of the questions developed in the evaluation plan will benefit from the knowledge and experience of youth and other informed observers of YHCs — funding partners, community leaders, educators, health professionals and others with a direct interest and/or involvement with YHCs.

The focus group is meant to provide forum for a moderated or guided group discussion to respond to the range of evaluation topics and questions related to the YHC in your school or community. It is meant to be interactive — we want diverse views and discussion. Each focus group will last about 1.5-2 hours.

We're conducting 11 focus groups with youth, YHC staff and coordinators, and other YHC stakeholders. Four YHCs will be part of a more in-depth case study analysis of the evaluation issues.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE FOCUS GROUPS?

We are looking for your help to recruit 10-14 persons for each of two focus groups: youth and other YHC stakeholders. We need to have the following characteristics represented at the focus groups:

YOUTH FOCUS GROUP

- Female and male participants
- Ranging in age from around 15-19 years of age
- Representing the mix of cultures and ethnicity in the community
- May or may not have used the YHC in your school
- May or may not have participated in the Phase I workshops in 2001
- Not necessarily active in school affairs — we don't need to have students' council representatives, for example

- Good communicators who are generally outgoing enough to express their ideas and who will participate in the discussion.

BOARD/OTHER STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP

The kinds of participants that could be invited to the Stakeholder Focus Group include the following. These persons should have some familiarity with the YHC, its activities and purpose:

- YHC Board members
- Youth leaders in school or community
- YHC Coordinator and/or staff
- Representatives from CHB and/or DHA
- YHC funding organizations or other partner organizations
- Education representatives: school board, school principal
- Public Health nurse.

WHY SHOULD WE PARTICIPATE?

The YHC evaluation will provide important information on YHCs to decision-makers within the government agencies represented on the YHC Evaluation Steering Committee. We need the participation of a range of stakeholders to ensure that we have a strong understanding of the development issues facing YHCs in the province. Information gained at the focus groups will be invaluable in preparing recommendations about YHCs.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE INFORMATION?

The evaluation of the YHCs has a well-defined evaluation plan that describes the kinds of issues and questions that this evaluation needs to answer. Focus groups provide a means of capturing information to address some questions. The information obtained in this focus group will be grouped with the results of other focus groups and to address the evaluation questions. We will not identify individual responses in the report; the information you provide will be kept confidential.

The focus group information will be analyzed along with the results of other focus groups, interviews and other methodologies to address the evaluation questions. The evaluation report will inform decision-making for the Department of Health, other health-related organizations and partners, and the YHCs themselves. The evaluation will help the YHC Steering Committee determine the linkages between the YHCs and the youth-related health standards and targets identified in the 1997 Nova Scotia Health Standards. In particular, the evaluation will help the Committee determine how the Youth Health Centres contribute to the achievement of youth-related health standards and targets.

WHAT DO WE (YHC COORDINATORS AND STAFF) NEED TO DO?

We need your help in recruiting participants for both the youth focus group and the Board/Stakeholder focus group. This assistance includes helping us by providing a room for the meeting. We'll need flip charts and markers as well.

WHO DO WE CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS?

For questions about:

The Interview Process:

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2. STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our focus group! This focus group is an important part of Phase III of the evaluation of Youth Health Centres in Nova Scotia.

Phases I and II were interested in understanding how YHCs are structured and organized, what kinds of services and activities they provide to youth, and what kinds of results are anticipated. We also developed a model for evaluating YHCs. Phase III is concerned with operational issues, results and recommendations to improve YHCs.

We're interviewing about 35 key informants and conducting 10 focus groups with youth, YHC staff and coordinators, and other YHC stakeholders. Four YHCs will be part of a more in-depth case study analysis.

(Additional details were provided in the Focus Group Overview document.)

SOME PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Facilitators should provide some basic guidelines for participants. These might include:

- Each participant will be given a chance to voice his or her opinion.
- The facilitator may limit discussion by an individual so that all might have a chance to participate in the discussion.
- Respectful of each participant's opinion and experiences.
- And so on...

INTRODUCTION

1. Please tell us who are you and what is your involvement with YHCs?

RESULTS OF THE YHCs

Measuring the success of the YHCs in Nova Scotia is challenging for several reasons: timelines for longer term impacts; differences in delivery approaches; easier to measure outputs than outcomes.

2. In your experience, what kinds of short and longer-term results are YHCs trying to achieve?
3. Are the YHCs generally successful in achieving these results? How do you know this?
(Can you provide us with any results/reports?)
4. What characteristics of the YHCs — or other factors — are most important in producing positive results for YHCs?

5. What challenges do YHCs face that limit their ability to achieve results? Are these challenges within the control of the YHCs, or external to them? Which of these challenges are the most important?

GOVERNANCE

6. Is there now an organization, department or agency that is responsible for ensuring that YHCs in Nova Scotia produce results? If not, should there be such an organization?
7. What kind of “results” measurement or accountability model should be developed, if it does not exist now?
8. Who is responsible now (within your YHC) for making sure that the YHC meets the needs of its clients and stakeholders? Who should be involved in making sure that the YHC meets these needs?
9. Which organization, department or agency is responsible for addressing various YHC development and delivery issues? Which should be responsible?
10. What do you see as the merit, if any, in YHCs adopting provincial operating guidelines or standards?
11. What kinds of topics should these standards include? What about standards for staffing YHCs (education, occupation and so on?)

SUSTAINING YHCs

YHCs receive funding from a variety of government departments and agencies, as well as limited private sector funding. The amount of funding varies considerably.

12. Are you aware of any situations where YHCs have identified important activities related to results, but have not been able to undertake these because of funding difficulties?
13. Based on your understanding of partnerships, what are the characteristics of a successful partnership for YHCs? For its partners? (What do partners offer to YHCs?)
14. How important are these partnerships to YHCs?

YHC ACCESSIBILITY

YHCs are found in about 25 senior and middle high schools in the province, as well as about five community-based centres.

15. Should YHCs be located in a particular type of place to be “youth-friendly” (school or community-based)?
16. What are the challenges for youth related to accessing YHC services?
17. Should there be any specific support mechanisms or approaches for establishing a YHC? What should these be?
18. Should the number of YHCs be increased? Why?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, we would like your input into the process of developing recommendations for improving YHCs to meet the needs of youth and other stakeholders.

19. What are your recommendations to improve the success of YHCs? (*Can we organize these along the lines of the four themes in this guide?*)

THANK YOU!

3. YOUTH FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our youth focus group! This focus group is an important part of Phase III of the evaluation of Youth Health Centres in Nova Scotia.

Explain:

- What's the evaluation about? What is it trying to find out? Why?
- What is a focus group?
- How does a focus group work?
- What will you do with the things we tell you?
- Who decides what is going to happen with what you find out?
- What difference is this all going to make?
- When will any changes take place?
- How will any changes affect me? Our YHC?

SOME PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Facilitators should provide some basic guidelines for participants. These might include:

- Each participant will be given a chance to voice his or her opinion.
- The facilitator may limit discussion by an individual so that all might have a chance to participate in the discussion.
- Respectful of each participant's opinion and experiences.
- And so on...

INTRODUCTION

1. Please tell us who are you and what is your involvement with YHCs?

RESULTS OF THE YHCs

2. What do you think your YHC is trying to do on behalf of youth?
3. What is the best thing about your YHC? The worse?
4. What would you change to make it better?

5. Has the YHC changed your knowledge about your own health? Are you comfortable giving me examples?
6. Has the YHC changed your relationship with your doctor or others in the health profession?
7. Is it generally successful in meeting the needs of youth: in this school? In the community? In groups with different needs?
8. What characteristics of the YHCs — or other factors — are most important in producing positive results for YHCs?
9. What challenges do YHCs face that limit their ability to achieve results?
10. What services should your centre provide now that it is not providing?

YHC ACCESSIBILITY

11. Where should a YHC be located to be friendly to youth?
12. What are the challenges for youth related to accessing YHC services?
13. Should there be any specific support mechanisms or approaches for establishing a YHC? What should these be?
14. Should the number of YHCs be increased? Why?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, we would like your input into the process of developing recommendations for improving YHCs to meet the needs of youth and other stakeholders.

15. What are your recommendations to improve the success of YHCs? (*Can we organize these along the lines of the four themes in this guide?*)

THANK YOU!

4. YHC EVALUATION INTERVIEW GUIDE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Youth Health Centre (YHC) Evaluation Steering Committee — a subcommittee of the Public Health Enhancement Core Services Committee and under the direction of the Department of Health — is evaluating YHCs in Nova Scotia. This two-year evaluation has three phases; Phase III is underway.

Phases I and II were interested in understanding how YHCs are structured and organized, what kinds of services and activities they provide to youth, and what kinds of changes occur as a result of the YHCs. Phase I also included the development of a model for evaluating YHCs. Phase III is concerned with YHC management and administration issues, results achieved and recommendations to improve YHCs.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW?

Many of the questions developed in the evaluation plan will benefit from the knowledge and experience of informed observers of YHCs — funding partners, community leaders, educators, health professionals and others with a direct interest and/or involvement with YHCs. The interviews with these key informants are designed to obtain qualitative information and insights to answer the evaluation questions. The interview will last about one hour.

We're interviewing about 35 key informants and conducting 11 focus groups with youth, YHC staff and coordinators, and other YHC stakeholders. Four YHCs will be part of a more in-depth case study analysis.

WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?

The YHC evaluation will provide important information about YHCs to decision-makers within the agencies represented on the YHC Evaluation Steering Committee. As a person with experience and insights into aspects of YHC environment, we need your participation to ensure that we have a strong understanding of the development issues facing YHCs. This information will be invaluable in preparing recommendations about the future of YHCs.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE INFORMATION?

This YHC evaluation has a well-defined evaluation plan that identifies the issues and questions that this evaluation needs to answer. Interviews provide a means of capturing information to address some questions. We will not identify individuals in the report; the information you provide will be kept confidential.

The interview information will be analyzed along with the results of other interviews, focus groups and other methodologies to address the evaluation questions. The evaluation report will inform decision-making for the Department of Health, other health-related organizations and

partners, and the YHCs themselves. The evaluation will help the YHC Steering Committee determine the linkages between the YHCs and the youth-related health standards and targets identified in the 1997 Nova Scotia Health Standards. In particular, the evaluation will help the Committee determine how the Youth Health Centres contribute to the achievement of youth-related health standards and targets.

Who Do I Contact For More Information Or Questions?

For questions about:

The Consultation Process

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The Evaluation: Plan, Expectations & Context

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5. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

OVERVIEW

Details on the purpose of the YHC evaluation and the interview will have been provided to the interviewee in the document: **YHC Interview Overview**.

INTRODUCTION

1. Please tell me about your involvement with YHCs.

RESULTS OF THE YHCs

These questions will likely be most relevant to YHC coordinators and others with a direct involvement with YHCs.

2. In your experience, what kinds of short and longer-term results are YHCs trying to achieve?
3. Are the YHCs generally successful in achieving these results? How do you know this? (*Can you provide us with any results/reports?*)
4. What characteristics of the YHCs — or other factors — are most important in producing positive results for YHCs?
5. What challenges do YHCs face that limit their ability to achieve results? Are these challenges within the control of the YHCs, or external to them? Which of these challenges are the most important?

GOVERNANCE¹

6. Is there now an organization, department or agency that is responsible for ensuring that YHCs in Nova Scotia produce results? If not, should there be such an organization?
7. What kind of “results” measurement or accountability model should be developed, if it does not exist now?
8. Who is responsible now (within your YHC) for making sure that a YHC meets the needs of its clients and stakeholders? Who should be involved in making sure that the YHC meets these needs?
9. Which organization, department or agency is responsible for addressing various YHC development and delivery issues? Which should be responsible?
10. What do you see as the merit, if any, in YHCs adopting provincial operating guidelines or standards?

¹ All interviewees — YHC coordinators and other stakeholders — will be asked the remaining questions.

11. What kinds of topics should these standards include? What about standards for staffing YHCs (education, occupation and so on)?
12. What services should YHCs provide to youth? What process is used to decide what services to provide? Is this a one-time process or ongoing?

SUSTAINING YHCs

YHCs receive funding from a variety of government departments and agencies, as well as limited private sector funding. The amount of funding varies considerably.

13. Are you aware of any situations where YHCs have identified important activities related to results, but have not been able to undertake these because of funding difficulties?
14. Based on your understanding of partnerships, what are the characteristics of a successful partnership for YHCs? For its partners? (What do partners offer to YHCs?)
15. How important are these partnerships to YHCs?

YHC FUNDING ISSUES: ASK ONLY TO STAKEHOLDERS FROM FUNDING AGENCIES

16. What criteria are used when your organization decides to fund YHCs?
17. What kinds of information do you require a YHC to provide to you as a condition of funding? (How the funds were spent? What are the outcomes? What type of outcomes are you interested in?)
18. *Specific to DHAs:* What resources – human and/or financial — do you need to make the decision to fund YHCs? (Supports to oversee your investment)

YHC ACCESSIBILITY

YHCs are now found in about 25 senior and middle high schools in the province, as well as about five community-based centres.

19. Should YHCs be located in a particular type of place to be “youth-friendly” (school or community-based)?
20. What are the challenges for youth related to accessing YHC services?
21. Should there be any specific support mechanisms or approaches for establishing a YHC? What should these be?
22. Should the number of YHCs be increased? Why?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, we would like your input into the process of developing recommendations for improving YHCs to meet the needs of youth and other stakeholders.

23. What are your recommendations to improve the success of YHCs? (Can we organize these along the lines of the four themes in this guide?)

THANK YOU!
