

## TIPS: HOSTING EVENTS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY MEMBERS

### PLANNING PHASE: Before the meeting

- Co-create the agenda with youth and/or family members whenever possible, and give them the opportunity to review, revise and approve the plan for the session.
- Craft the agenda to include relevant and interactive elements for each segment (small group conversations, world café).
- Determine a clear purpose for the event and ensure all participants understand the goals in advance.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for the facilitation and coordination team and ensure they are well understood.
- Proactively identify and address potential barriers to participation (meeting time, location, accessibility, child care, refreshment).
- Provide all youth and family members with the opportunity to connect in advance of the event to prepare and answer questions.
- Establish and communicate an honorarium process.
- Identify clinical support for the event.



### DOING PHASE: During meeting/event

- Co-facilitate the event with youth and/or family members
- Include an Indigenous land acknowledgement in the agenda
- Allow all attendees to introduce appropriate pronouns
- Consider framing the day with a personal story or stories
- Set the stage by establishing community agreements for the event (consider a safe/brave space activity)
- Make a real-time feedback mechanism open to youth and family members. For example, provide a phone number they can text a note to at any time)
- Ensure that clinical support person(s) identify themselves and clarify the process to access support if required.
- Use flip chart paper to set up a *parking lot* on a visible wall.
- Identify a *chill* or *safe* space and make sure attendees know it's there.
- Provide fidget items on the tables and explain them during the introduction to the day.
- Provide evaluation forms for all attendees, either on the table or an electronic survey distributed promptly after the event.
- Create opportunities for youth to connect with youth and family members to connect with family members.
- Bring a jargon jar, or some other way to recognize that attendees are using language not everyone understands.
- Pay attention to an appropriate closing or check-out for the day.

**EVALUATION PHASE:** After the event

- Debrief with all planning team members
- Debrief with youth and families who attended to get a sense of how they felt it went and what could or should be done differently (e.g. perhaps to complement the evaluation forms that they may or may not have taken the time to fill out)

**CREATING A SAFE SPACE**

At the start of each event, take the time needed to create agreement on what constitutes a safe space, documented on a flip chart at each table/space. It is also recommended that flip charts are reviewed at the end of the day, to bring things full circle and to determine if the needs of all participants were met.

Examples of what some participants have highlighted that they need to create a safe space\*:

- Comfort food, drink, busy hands
- Safe space where toys, pens and doodling is OK
- Honesty - being open, honest and speak about success and challenges
- Dreaming out loud
- Open minds
- No jargon or acronyms
- Understanding of pronouns
- Everyone feels included and has an opportunity to speak
- Love, wisdom, humility, honesty/truth, respect, bravery, courage
- Curiosity (we are still learning and developing too! We won't know all the answers)
- Listen to others/be listened to
- Feeling accepted/accept others – not interrupted
- Respect for all walks of life and work
- Non-judgmental
- Representation
- Hear the voice of youth
- Solution-focused
- Clear communication among partners
- Have a sense of humour
- Active listening
- Respecting perspectives from different lenses
- Bring an open mind without being guarded



\*Verbatim responses from participants at a Youth Wellness Hub Ontario Network Meeting (October 25, 2018, Chatham-Kent, ON)