

In order to provide easy support to youth in the community, New Path Youth and Family Services partnered with the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, to conduct two consultations to hear from youth from the local community. To achieve constructive feedback, New Path Youth and Family Services selected two youth to co-facilitate along side staff from the Ontario Centre of Excellence. This approach made consultations on February 18th and 19th, 2016 successful in receiving information to proceed to next steps of planning for Mental Health services.

Youth expressed major factors that impact their lives and mental health. In addition they expressed obstacles they experienced when attempting to reach out to mental health services:

- Lack of knowledge of available services
- Lack of transparency when receiving services (feel as though service providers withheld information)
- Insufficient or no help before the point of crisis: Participants identified that it often feels as though they need to be in crisis to receive service
- They felt the help they did receive didn't meet their needs.
- Age limitations: Youth were not aware of many services for youth over the age of 18.
- Limited services available in French: Participants acknowledged that there seems to be a lack of Francophone service providers

Youth expressed priorities in what they feel should change within the Mental Health Services of Simcoe County.

- Help youth learn about what's out there (and how to access help)
- Commercial: Use language that youth can relate to and understand easily.
- Build mental health awareness in the community: Talk more about mental health and mental health services.
- Offer mental health education in schools (including younger age children)
- Address wait lists: Youth agreed unanimously that the Simcoe region needs more service providers and more ways to access help fast
- Extending hours of services and offering more walk-in services, telephone help lines and online supports
- Consistent service provider available through this transition so youth don't have to repeat their story.
- Interest in having a physical place where young people could come together and connect where:

○ All youth would feel welcome, no matter their age or identity

○ Service providers would be supportive and knowledgeable of all youth identities

○ The physical environment would be welcoming, comfortable and relaxed

○ Service providers and partners would be working together collaboratively

○ A variety of services would be offered, including counseling, animal therapy, skill-building,

○ Youth would have access to meaningful activities of their choice, including art, mindfulness, community advocacy, movie nights, workshops, yoga, community meals, etc.



“I can only imagine that there are a whole bunch of services that we don't even know about.”

- Youth consultation participant