

Principles

Engaging young people has been integral to our office since the OCYA's creation. We continue learning and growing in this area of practice, and these principles are the next step in this journey. Developed in collaboration with the OCYA Youth Council, OCYA staff, community stakeholders and consultations with organizations across Canada, these principles are grounded in current best practices. They are an extension of the OCYA's Advocacy Framework, reflect our values and are intended to guide and strengthen meaningful, ethical engagement with young people.

Understanding our process

The seven guiding principles form the foundation of our strategy. Building upon this foundation, members of the OCYA Youth Council collaborated closely with us to create a **logic model** showing how the outcomes we hope to achieve interconnect and contribute to the larger societal impact the OCYA strives towards. This logic model was then instrumental in designing a new principle-based evaluation framework aimed at facilitating continuous learning as we gather data on how the principles are being implemented, whether our desired results are being achieved, and where our efforts may need to be refocused. We commit to refining and updating these documents based on the experience of our teams and feedback from those who interact with our initiatives.

Planting Seeds

Meaningfully engaging young people in our work also serves to plant seeds of inspiration and leadership, nurturing their potential to positively impact their lives and communities. Our hope is that by fostering these connections, they are empowered to carry forward ideas and values through which they can continue to drive meaningful change beyond their interactions with the OCYA.

"To us meaningful means we can see what we said influenced the outcome. That you heard us and it made a difference in what you thought mattered and what should be done about it."

Youth Council



Engaging young people

Guiding Principles

Intergenerational partnerships

Collaborative efforts between different age groups to address issues affecting young people, leveraging the wisdom, experience, and resources of older generations to support and empower youth in achieving their goals and fostering positive societal change.

Engagement vs Participation

Engagement involves a deeper level of involvement, commitment, and active contribution from individuals or groups towards a shared goal or activity. Participation, on the other hand, refers to the mere act of being involved or taking part in an event, initiative, or process, which may vary in terms of the level of interaction and impact.

Humility

We actively seek feedback from young people and the circles that surround them, engage in meaningful reflection, and make adjustments as we constantly strive to be better.

Equity

To provide equitable access, we reduce barriers to participation, provide opportunities to be involved in decision-making, and create avenues for adults to listen and learn alongside young people.

Inclusive

We engage an inclusive community of young people of varying ages, abilities, identities, and perspectives and we work with young people to accommodate their needs and create safe (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) spaces.

Rights-focused

We respect, uphold, and raise awareness about the individual and collective rights of young people and how they can assert their rights.

Purposeful

We co-create, provide, and match young people to a variety of engagement opportunities based on their unique knowledge, skills, abilities, interests, and level of preferred commitment.

young people

Our inclusive term referring to children, youth and young adults ages 0-24 years.

Partnership

Through intergenerational partnerships with young people and those who surround them, we promote young people's skills, capacity and potential as advocates, leaders, and decision-makers.

Reciprocity

We show accountability by elevating young people's voices, sharing the impact of their contributions, providing opportunity for skill development and self-advocacy tools, and ensuring they benefit financially or otherwise.