



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

Mental Health Supports for Emerging Adults

Where they are and what they do: A practices of interest directory



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Suite 1210, 350 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON K1R 1A4

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Introduction

Emerging adults need access to the right mental health services.

Emerging adulthood is a developmental life stage that doesn't fall within a specific span of years. It's often roughly considered to occur between the ages of 14 and 25, though it can start as young as 12 and end as late as 30.

That wide variation in age ranges is part of why mental health services and supports for emerging adults need rethinking. **About 75% of mental health problems and illnesses start during childhood, adolescence or young adulthood.**¹ Yet at 18 or 19 years old, many young people “age out” of the youth mental health care system—because many policies and programs are based on age, not need. This forces a transition into adult services when an individual might not be ready for them, or a potentially long wait if those services are at capacity.

With suicide one of the leading causes of death of Canadians between 15 to 24,² limited access to the right mental health services is a pressing issue. We need to make the mental health system work better for emerging adults.

Building consensus on emerging adult mental health

In November 2015, over 200 delegates from across Canada—including emerging adults, families, clinicians, researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders—gathered at Canada's first-ever consensus conference on emerging adult mental health. The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) convened the two-day event to explore ways to improve the mental health outcomes of emerging adults.

The resulting *Consensus Statement on the Mental Health of Emerging Adults: Making Transitions a Priority in Canada* represents the collective understanding of what emerging adults need from Canada's mental health care system. The MHCC later convened the Canadian Advisory Group on the Mental Health of Emerging Adults, which worked with the Commission to identify four priority recommendations from the Consensus Statement to move forward.

Four Priority Recommendations



Recognize emerging adulthood as a developmental stage of life and base policies, programs and services on need instead of categorizing them by age.



Collaborate in joint partnership with emerging adults as experts in their own health care to define outcomes and determine the most appropriate services to meet their needs.



Remove barriers to collaboration and integration of services and sectors to ensure continuity of mental health care for all emerging adults.



Dedicate time and funds to improve evaluation, data collection, research and knowledge exchange in emerging adult mental health.

For the full Consensus Statement, including all 13 recommendations for improving emerging adult mental health, visit <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/children-and-youth>.

¹ Mental Health Commission of Canada (2015). *Taking the Next Step Forward: Building a Responsive Mental Health and Addictions System for Emerging Adults*. Ottawa, ON: Mental Health Commission of Canada, p. 5.

² Ibid.

About this directory

The MHCC drew the practices in this directory from the submissions of more than 600 people across the country who applied to be part of the MHCC Advisory Group on the Mental Health of Emerging Adults in 2017. While the following is by no means an exhaustive list, it offers service providers, program administrators, system planners and policy makers insight into ways the mental health system and programming can be improved. All the practices collected here support the four priority recommendations identified by the advisory group after the consensus conference.

How to use this directory

Practices are grouped by region and by type:

Regions

- National/International
- Territories
- Western
- Central
- Eastern

Types

- Networks
- Programs, Services and Initiatives
- Resources
- Research

Where an evaluation report has been completed, it is noted—with a link to the report if it's publicly available. If you're interested in an evaluation report that isn't available publicly, we encourage you to reach out to the organization and request to see it.

Four Priority Recommendations



Recognize emerging adulthood as a developmental stage of life and base policies, programs and services on need instead of categorizing them by age.



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Dedicate time and funds to improve evaluation, data collection, research and knowledge exchange in emerging adult mental health.

Directory


National/International

Canada-wide and international practices supporting emerging adult mental health

NETWORKS				
PRIORITY	TITLE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION COMPLETED (AS OF SEPT 2018)
	Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network ccrweb.ca/en/youth/welcome	Canada	This network gives refugees, young newcomers to Canada and youth allies a space to discuss challenges they face and work together toward solutions. Participation has helped migrant and refugee youth develop leadership skills and realize their capacity to make positive changes in their community, which both support mental health.	N/A
PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INITIATIVES				
	Headspace virtual tours headspace.org.au	Australia	Based in Australia, Headspace Centres are a one-stop-shop for young people who need help with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drugs, or work and study support. Headspace offers virtual tours of services that let a person see what the space looks like before they visit to access the service (e.g., youtube.com/watch?v=UHOPS8KTPe0). This integrated service centre model is also in use in Canada, including in British Columbia and Ontario.	N/A
RESOURCES				
	A Guideline for Transition from Paediatric to Adult Health Care for Youth with Special Health Care Needs: A National Approach ken.caphc.org/xwiki/bin/view/Transitioning+from+Paediatric+to+Adult+Care/A+Guideline+for+Transition+from+Paediatric+to+Adult+Care	Canada	The Canadian Association of Pediatric Health Centres (CAPHC) developed this guideline to promote purposeful, coordinated transfers of care from child-centered to adult-oriented health. These guidelines help ensure adolescents with chronic medical conditions are securely and properly integrated into adult services.	N/A
RESEARCH				
	National College Health Assessment acha.org/ncha	Canada	In 2016, 41 Canadian post-secondary institutions opted to participate in the American College Health Association's (ACHA's) National College Health Assessment. Canadian students completed 43,780 surveys, and the results provide insight into students' health, habits, behaviours and perceptions. For more information about the ACHA, visit acha.org .	N/A

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RESEARCH

PRIORITY	TITLE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION COMPLETED <small>(AS OF SEPT 2018)</small>
	<p>TRACK: Transitions of Care from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to Adult Mental Health Services</p> <p>bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6963-8-135</p>	United Kingdom	This UK study looked into care transitions from the country's child and adolescent mental health system to its adult mental health system. The aims were to identify factors that help or hinder effective transitions and to recommend changes to service organization and delivery that would promote good continuity of care.	N/A

Territories

Practices in the Yukon supporting emerging adult mental

PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

PRIORITY	TITLE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION COMPLETED <small>(AS OF SEPT 2018)</small>
	<p>Mental Wellness Strategy 2016-2026: Forward Together</p> <p>hss.gov.yk.ca/forwardtogether.php</p>	Yukon	<p>The Yukon Health and Social Services' 10-year mental wellness strategy aims to increase access to mental health, trauma and substance use services and make transitions between them more seamless. Part of the strategy is an innovation fund that supports mental wellness activities and learning opportunities in communities throughout the territory.</p>	N/A
				
				
				
	<p>Integrated Supports for Yukon Youth</p> <p>http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/</p>	Yukon	<p>ISYY gives youth aged 12 to 24 a single access point for government health services, social supports and resources. It is part of the Yukon's <i>Mental Wellness Strategy 2016-2026: Forward Together</i>. The goal is to identify an effective service delivery model to introduce in other parts of the territory.</p>	N/A
				
	<p>Community wellness programs</p> <p>cafn.ca/government/departments/community-wellness</p>	Yukon	<p>The self-governed Champagne and Aishihik First Nation offers community wellness programs that cater to youth, seniors and other groups. Part of the youth programming involves helping emerging adults connect with their culture, language and stories through time with elders.</p>	N/A

Western Canada







Practices in British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta supporting emerging adult mental health

PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INITIATIVES				
PRIORITY	TITLE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION COMPLETED (AS OF SEPT 2018)
	ACCESS Open Minds accessopenminds.ca/our-site/edmonton-ab	Alberta	The ACCESS Open Minds Edmonton walk-in clinic offers mental health, addictions, housing and other supports to youth ages 12 to 25.	N/A
				
	Foundry/eFoundry foundrybc.ca	British Columbia	British Columbia's Foundry centres give youth aged 12 to 24 a single place to access mental health care, substance use services, primary care, social services and peer support. The centre was co-designed with a youth advisory and action committee, which helped determine services offered, clinic hours and operational logistics and other elements.	N/A
			In partnership with BC Children's Hospital, Foundry is developing an online platform (eFoundry) to improve access to mental health and other supports for youth and emerging adults throughout the province.	
	Interdependent Living Services hullservices.ca/services/interdependent-living-services	Alberta	The Interdependent Living Services work experience program at Hull Services serves youth and young adults (aged 16 to 24) with complex needs. The program helps youth and young adults develop work and independent living skills and offers mental health services to support transitions out of care environments.	N/A
				
	Jumpstep vancouveryouth.ca/node/3814	British Columbia	This innovative early intervention mental health initiative teaches teens and adults how to incorporate physical activity into their mental wellness plans. It's based on a solid research base that suggests exercise can be an effective treatment for depression and anxiety—potentially as effective as medication or cognitive therapy.	N/A
			An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	

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	LiNKS Mental Health Clinic ihuman.org	Alberta	iHuman developed its LiNKS mental health clinic with direction from youth. The clinic has operated for four years without provincial or federal funding. Masters and PhD students work toward their required credentialing hours and help deliver counselling services under a local team of psychologists. An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	N/A
	Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre matc.ca	Manitoba	MATC offers community- and hospital-based programs and services to children and adolescents living with psychiatric and/or emotional disorders. Services range from brief interventions to intensive, long-term treatment. While the centre's services are targeted to adolescents, it partners with other centres to support transitions into adult care.	N/A
	Employment with Supports mbwpg.cmha.ca	Manitoba	This program of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Manitoba and Winnipeg helps youth and other individuals with mental health concerns enter the workforce. Advisors work with participants long-term—first to develop tailored employment plans and then to support job retention once they've found employment. A continuum of employment supports is available, from rapid access to employment and a less-rapid stream that gives participants time to prepare to longer term support through CMHA's rehabilitation and recovery service.	N/A
	Futures Forward mbwpg.cmha.ca/ programs-services/ futures-forward	Manitoba	Futures Forward works with youth aged 15 to 29 who have been or are currently in the care of Manitoba's child welfare system. It offers a range of supports, including for mental health, transitioning from child and adolescent services to adult services, employment, finances, post-secondary education and housing. The program is a partnership between the Canadian Mental Health Association Manitoba and Winnipeg (CMHA), Youth Employment Services and Community Financial Counselling Services.	N/A
	F.O.R.C.E.: Families Organized for Recognition and Care Equality coolaid.org/resource/ the-f-o-r-c-e-families- organized-for-recognition- and-care-equality-society- for-kids-mental-health	British Columbia	This initiative offers peer support to families of children or youth who are struggling with mental health issues or developmental delays. It also offers information, tools and tips to support children and youth and to help families navigate and connect with available services.	N/A
	Ranch Ehrlo Family Treatment Program ehrlo.com/family-care-program/ family-treatment-program	Saskatchewan	Ranch Ehrlo Society's residential family treatment program helps families work through challenges together rather than separating youth from their parents or caregivers. It provides housing support, counselling and opportunities for learning and recreation.	See the evaluation report at http://ehrlo.com/about-us/ accreditation/ .

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	Mental Health Capacity Building Program https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page2754.aspx	Alberta	Alberta Health Services' Mental Health Capacity Building Program (MHCB) serves children and youth under 19 and their families throughout Alberta. The program promotes prevention, early identification and intervention through a range of approaches (drawn from research and best practices literature) that reflect the needs and resources of individual communities.	N/A
RESOURCES				
	Making Resilience Happen Through Youth-Adult Partnership vyper.ca/resiliencereport.pdf	British Columbia	This resource is the product of a collaborative effort among emerging adults, adults, agencies and other organizations, communities and systems supporting Valley Youth Partnership for Engagement and Respect (VYPER). The goal behind it is to improve mental health services and outcomes in British Columbia, reduce stigma and promote resilience and partnership.	See the evaluation report at vyper.ca/evaluationreport.pdf .
	Peer-support model for gay/transgendered persons living with HIV hivcl.org	Alberta	HIV Community Link's ongoing peer-support model helps gay and transgendered persons living with HIV reduce the social stigma and isolation they face.	N/A
	Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addiction Framework healthycampusalberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mental-Health-Framework-Final-Feb-4.pdf	Alberta	Developed by the Health Campus Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health Community of Practice, this framework brings together research and best practices addressing mental health and addiction in Canadian higher education.	N/A
	Youth Mental Health Transition Protocol Agreement gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health/y2a_protocol.pdf	British Columbia	This protocol agreement aims to promote positive mental health service experiences and improve the mental health outcomes of youth aged 17 to 21. It puts forward a collaborative, coordinated and continuous planning approach to support the transitions of youth and young adults out of child and youth mental health services to adult mental health and substance use services. A key principle is the idea of "best fit", which aims to ensure services are developmentally and culturally appropriate.	N/A
RESEARCH				
	Palix Foundation palixfoundation.org	Alberta	The Palix Foundation undertakes major collaborative, cross-border research and policy work focused on early brain development, mental health and addiction.	N/A

Central Canada

Practices in Ontario and Quebec supporting emerging adult mental health








NETWORKS				
PRIORITY	TITLE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION COMPLETED (AS OF SEPT 2018)
	The New Mentality thenewmentality.ca	Ontario	The New Mentality is grounded in the belief that youth with lived or living experience of mental illness or mental health problems must have the opportunity to build and improve Canada's mental health system. This provincial network brings youth and youth allies together to amplify the youth perspective and effect positive change in Ontario's mental health system. An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	N/A
PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INITIATIVES				
	Transitional Age Youth Programs loftcs.org/transitional-age-youth-program	Ontario	LOFT's youth-directed Transitional Age Youth Programs offer case management, peer support and group programming for emerging adults living with mental health and/or substance use challenges. An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	N/A
				
	Youth Hubs Ontario youthhubs.ca/en	Ontario	Ontario's integrated mental health service hubs offer walk-in access to mental health and substance use services for youth aged 12 to 25 as well as other health, social and employment supports.	N/A
				
	Transitional Aged Youth Service theroyal.ca/mental-health-centre/mental-health-programs/areas-of-care/substance-use-and-concurrent-disorders	Ontario	The Royal's Transitional Aged Youth Service delivers community-based support to youth and young adults (aged 16 to 25) living with moderate to severe concurrent mental health and substance use problems. The interdisciplinary services are recovery-focused, developmentally appropriate and family inclusive. An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	N/A
				

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	Regional Opioid Intervention Service theroyal.ca/mental-health-centre/mental-health-programs/areas-of-care/substance-use-and-concurrent-disorders	Ontario	The Royal's Regional Opioid Intervention Service supports youth and young adults (aged 16 to 25) with concurrent opioid use and mental health disorders. It provides interdisciplinary outpatient support and treatment tailored to each client's unique needs. Training, mentorship and consultation is also available to help primary care providers and addiction and mental health professionals build their capacity to treat opioid use problems. An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	N/A
	Mental Health in Motion campusmentalhealth.ca/initiatives/mental-health-motion	Ontario	This student-led, peer-to-peer initiative out of Mohawk College aims to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of people living with or having experienced mental illness.	N/A
	Mood Disorders Association of Ontario's Youth Advisory Committee mooddisorders.ca/about	Ontario	The Mood Disorders Association of Ontario's Youth Advisory Committee aims to create and provide effective mental health programming for youth. Council members review and disseminate youth programming throughout the province. The committee is open to taking on projects from outside organizations as a means of improving the provision of mental health care for youth. An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	N/A
	SOS: Stamp Out Stigma stampoutstigma.com	Ontario	Each year, a group of Ontario secondary school students help reduce stigma and improve understanding of mental health issues in an urban school. The ultimate aim is to develop peer-to-peer strategies to support others living with mental health problems and illnesses.	N/A
	Flourish utsc.utoronto.ca/projects/flourish	Ontario	A program for University of Toronto students, Flourish promotes intellectual, social and emotional growth that students can translate into action, habit and purpose. It helps students develop stress management skills, boost their academic performance and improve their overall wellbeing.	See the evaluation report at hive.utsc.utoronto.ca/public/iits/flourish/Flourish_Final%20Report_2018.pdf .
	Stella's Place stellasplace.ca/about-us	Ontario	Stella's place is a Toronto-based organization that provides hang-out spaces, fitness programs, drop-in counselling, medical services and more to people aged 16 to 29.	N/A
	Sheena's Place sheenasplace.org	Ontario	In Toronto, Sheena's Place runs support groups for people affected by eating disorders. The organization offers services for all ages, but the young adult drop-in service (ages 17 to 29) and the support group for parents that runs simultaneously are the most popular.	N/A

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RESOURCES

	Mindyourmind mindyourmind.ca	Ontario	mindyourmind works with young people aged 14 to 29 and community partners to co-create interactive tools and innovative resources that build capacity and resilience.	N/A
	My _____ Journal mindyourmind.ca/involved/printouts/my-journal	Ontario	Youth participants of the Toronto Housing Outreach Program Collaborative (HOP-C) created this toolkit for emerging adults who have experienced homelessness and/or mental health challenges.	N/A
	Everyday Mental Health Classroom Resource smh-assist.ca/emhc	Ontario	This free online resource was developed by the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario. It offers educators evidence-based strategies that support skill development around stress management and coping, emotion identification, relationships, self-confidence and more.	N/A
	McGill University Institute for Health and Social Policy Student Internship Award mcgill.ca/ihsip/studentprograms/internship	Quebec	The Institute for Health and Social Policy's student internship award is an opportunity for undergraduate students in any program of study to develop skills in health and social policy research. The goal is to train the next generation of leaders to support solutions that benefit population health and welfare.	N/A
	Transition Aged Youth Mental Health and Addictions Protocol lutherwood.ca	Ontario	The aim of this protocol is to ensure smooth transitions from child and youth services to appropriate adult services for youth who are living with mental health and/or substance use problems and need specialized, complex care.	N/A
	Donald Berman UP House uphouse.org	Quebec	Quebec's Donald Berman UP House is based on the international, evidence-based Clubhouse Model, which supports people living with mental health issues with wellness, housing, employment and other areas.	N/A
	Transitions to Post-Secondary Education Program georgebrown.ca/programs/transitions-to-post-secondary-education-program-a107	Ontario	Based out of Toronto's George Brown College, this program helps people living with a mental health disorder and/or substance use problem transition into post-secondary education, find employment or volunteer and create a more balanced life. An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	N/A





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RESEARCH

	<p>Longitudinal Youth in Transition Study</p> <p>2017.camh.ca/en/research/research_areas/studies_and_recruitment/study-websites/Pages/LYITS.aspx</p>	<p>Ontario</p>	<p>This project explores how transitions from child/adolescent to adult mental health services affect the mental health and functioning of youth aged 16 and 17. The results could help identify factors that contribute to effective care transitions, inform delivery models and reveal opportunities to improve current practices.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
	<p>Evaluating Postsecondary Support for Ontario Students with Learning Disabilities</p> <p>heqco.ca/en-ca/Research/ResPub/Pages/Evaluating-Postsecondary-Supports-For-Ontario-Students-With-Learning-Disabilities.aspx</p>	<p>Ontario</p>	<p>Over the course of two and a half years, researchers measured the effects of a summer transition program and enhanced services on students' engagement, academic performance and ongoing success throughout post-secondary education. The study took place at the Centre for Students with Disabilities serving students at Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.</p>	<p>See the evaluation report at heqco.ca/SiteCollection/Documents/EvaluatingPSESupportsForStudentsWithLearningDisabilities.pdf.</p>
	<p>Mental health and transitions from adolescence to emerging adulthood: Development and diversity considerations</p> <p>cjcmh.com/doi/10.7870/cjcmh-2014-007</p>	<p>Ontario</p>	<p>This research paper explores mental health and developmental issues in adolescence and emerging adulthood. The authors highlight the need to take a developmental perspective when planning support, prevention and intervention services, and recommend changes to improve the system of care for emerging adults.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Eastern Canada

Practices in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick supporting emerging adult mental health

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES				
PRIORITY	TITLE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION COMPLETED (AS OF SEPT 2018)
	Choices for Youth choicesforyouth.ca/home	Newfoundland and Labrador	This program helps youth who are homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness get housing while addressing their mental health needs. An evaluation report has been completed but isn't publicly available.	N/A
	Go-to Educator Training teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Go-ToTeacherTraining_InterimReportforNovaScotia-2.pdf	Nova Scotia	Through a two-day “train the trainer” program, secondary school teachers develop skills to support students living with a mental health disorder. That includes understanding when and how to direct youth to more advanced supports.	See the evaluation report at onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/camh.12056 .
	Integrated Service Delivery www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/isd.html	New Brunswick	New Brunswick's Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) model streamlines access to services for children and youth experiencing emotional, behavioural and mental health issues. The model integrates public service interventions for children and youth that address mental health, education, child protection and justice and public safety.	N/A
RESEARCH				
	Student wellness surveys nbhc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/sws15-16_immigrants.pdf	New Brunswick	As part of the New Brunswick Wellness Branch's provincial wellness strategy, the provincial government surveyed students about mental fitness, physical activity, healthy eating and tobacco-free living. Researchers applied students' answers to the mental fitness questionnaire—based on the three core psychological core needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy—to their academic performance and behaviour.	N/A

Accelerating change for emerging adults

Emerging adults are passionate about improving Canada's mental health care system to better help people navigate this complex developmental stage. But it will take everyone working together to make it happen. And it's critical that everyone does – because early intervention into mental health problems and illnesses through appropriate services changes lives for the better.

We hope you will use the practices in this directory to further support emerging adult mental health—by building on them or using them to inform your own work. Learn more about the practices that interest you by exploring the links or reaching out to the organizations behind them.

For more information

- Read the **Consensus Statement on the Mental Health of Emerging Adults: Making Transitions a Priority in Canada**, which includes all 13 recommendations for improving emerging adult mental health: mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/consensus-conference-mental-health-emerging-adults-making-transitions-priority-canada
- Watch the **Emerging Adults Seek Change in Mental Health Services** video series to hear first-hand accounts of what it's like to access mental health services in Canada as an emerging adult: youtube.com/watch?v=5ArSz3OXpew&list=PL2Nu-APXp8ohbUt1WW0ga4afMYMmRSr7WZ
- Check out **How Emerging Adults and Service Providers Can Co-Create Mental Health Services**, a one-hour panel discussion with perspectives from three emerging adults and service providers: mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/children-and-youth
- Get **Take it forward: Maintaining momentum on emerging adult mental health**, a two-page resource with information about emerging adult mental health and tools that can help drive implementation of the Consensus Statement priority recommendations: mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/children-and-youth
- Download **Taking the Next Step Forward: Building a Responsive Mental Health and Addictions System for Emerging Adults** for insight into the policies and practices around emerging adult transitions from youth to adult mental health and addiction services: mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/issues/child-and-youth/taking-next-step-forward
- Watch **Food for thought: A youth perspective on recovery-oriented practice**, developed by MHCC's Youth Council, to learn what young people see as the core principles of recovery-oriented mental health and addiction services: youtube.com/watch?v=kJnE2nuDsmE
- See the **Mental Health Strategy for Canada: A Youth Perspective**, an adapted version of MHCC's Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada: mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/initiatives/11849/mhs-youth-perspective



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Mental Health Commission of Canada

Suite 1210, 350 Albert Street
Ottawa ON K1R 1A4

Tel: 613.683.3755
Fax: 613.798.2989

mhccinfo@mentalhealthcommission.ca
www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

[@MHCC_](https://twitter.com/MHCC) [f/theMHCC](https://www.facebook.com/theMHCC) [▶/1MHCC](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1MHCC) [@theMHCC](https://www.instagram.com/theMHCC)
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