

Agenda Gap Community Report

Mississauga 2023–2024



Report prepared April 2025



Wellstream



Introduction: Mississauga 2024 Agenda Gap

Erin Mills Connects and The Dam collaborated to implement and co-facilitate a second launch of Agenda Gap in Mississauga. Between October and December 2023, 19 youth were recruited and interviewed. Seventeen youth were invited to participate with the remainder waitlisted. Weekly online meetings ran after school from January until program completion in July 2024.

Background: About Agenda Gap

Agenda Gap is a facilitated relationship and capacity-building program that centres the expertise of youth in identifying what fosters mental health in their communities. It is action-oriented and supports youth and their adult allies in engaging to influence **policy**. This process promotes their own mental health while also improving conditions that influence mental health among their peers, families, communities, and society as a whole.

What the Mississauga Agenda Gap Youth Accomplished:

Agenda Gap Mississauga participants identified a range of challenges and strengths in their community related to youth mental health. Key for this group were employment opportunities and limited job-ready skills. They highlighted that West Mississauga has the estimated highest concentration of youth in Canada. According to the youth, work opportunities improve youth wellbeing by building confidence and fostering independence. Moreover, employment enables them to expand their social networks and strengthen their sense of community belonging. Thus, participants unanimously agreed to focus their advocacy efforts on access to employment.

To raise awareness about youth employment challenges with local policymakers, educators, and employers to—and to equip young people with practical strategies to boost their job readiness—participants organized an **‘Empowering Young Leaders: Employment Success Strategies’ workshop**. Delivered in a hybrid format, with options to join in-person at the Mindshare Workspace in Erin Mills Town Centre or online, the event successfully engaged two dozen high school students, alongside adult allies.

After a welcome by the acting Mayor of Mississauga and an introduction to the group’s “calls-to-action”, two outreach specialists from the YMCA’s Youth for Entrepreneurship program kicked off the workshop by offering tips on how to tailor resumes for maximum impact. A facilitator from the UBC Agenda Gap team then presented the R.A.T.S. Method—Results, Action, Task, Situation for compelling resumes—a helpful framework she learned as a business student.



Opening Slide from YMCA Guest Speakers
Talk at Youth Workshop

To close the session, a youth engagement coordinator from EveryMind Mental Health Services gave tips on maintaining mental well-being during the job search process. Being overlooked or rejected is a common experience during the job search. He encouraged youth to practice self-compassion and self-care, and shared strategies to stay motivated throughout the employment process.

Attendees reported that the workshop was highly useful, and nearly all indicated they had learnt something new. Agenda Gap Mississauga participants summarized the information shared by developing a Resume Toolkit and an Interview Toolkit (see Appendix A & B). A recording of the workshop, the two toolkits, and an infographic outlining the challenge and Calls to Actions (see Appendix C), are publicly available on the Erin Mills Connects website—serving as a resource for all community youth, ensuring continued accessibility, and encouraging broader community engagement.

Evaluation Framework

To inform continuous program improvement and better understand its impacts, all participants are invited to take part in Agenda Gap evaluation activities. This includes individual interviews, pre- and post-program surveys, workshop evaluations, and Ripple Effects Mapping sessions. ***This report summarizes key findings from the pre- and post-program surveys and workshop evaluations.*** For more information about each of these evaluation tools and their objectives, please see below:

Pre- & Post - Surveys

The pre-survey, completed by participants at the beginning of the program, and the post-survey, taken by participants upon conclusion of the program, measure the following:

- Knowledge gains
- Policy-related achievements
- Personal impacts
- Positive relationships
- Changes to mental health
- Program reflections

See Appendix D for overview of survey measures.

Workshop Evaluations

Youth participants are invited to complete an anonymous workshop evaluation at the close of each session. They have the opportunity to rate their workshop experience, including what went well, offer compliments to other participants, and provide suggestions to improve future offerings. The results are shared with the youth during subsequent workshops and are used by the facilitation team to inform program refinement.

Pre- & Post- Survey Findings

Who participated?

Seventeen youth completed the program as well as pre- and post-surveys. Six months post-program thirteen youth completed a follow up survey. Youth ranged in age from 15 to 17 years. Just over half of the participants identified as girls/women (54%) with 15% identifying as East Asian and 46% as South Asian.

Reported Policy-Related Impacts

92% of participants reported that their involvement in Agenda Gap increased their understanding of the social determinants of mental health, 85% reported that it increased their knowledge of mental health promotion, and 77% reported that it increased their awareness of how policy can be used as a key tool for promoting mental health. 58% of youth reported that they plan to keep working with others to contribute to policy change following Agenda Gap.



**Mississauga Agenda Gap
Challenge Tree**

Personal Impacts

Participants reported that their involvement in Agenda Gap resulted in a variety of positive personal impacts. 55% of participants reported that since their involvement in Agenda Gap they feel more connected with their schools and that they have noticed improvements in how they relate to family. One participant reported that their involvement in Agenda Gap had led them to change their use of substances.

Youth-Facilitator Relationship

The majority of participants endorsed positive youth-facilitator relationships, which included a sense of mutual respect, trust, co-learning, and sense of shared power. Of note, 83% of participants reported that there was a high level of trust between youth and staff, 75% reported that youth and staff had learned a lot from working together in this program, and 67% reported that there was a good sense of power between youth and staff.



Opening Slide from Mississauga Participants' Workshop

Measures of Mental Health and Well-Being

A number of established scales were used to measure the indicators of mental health among youth participants, including self-efficacy, well-being, motivation, peer and adult support, among others. A list of these scales is provided on the final page of this report. Consistent with results from other Agenda gap sites, scores improved across all of the scale. (Figure 1)

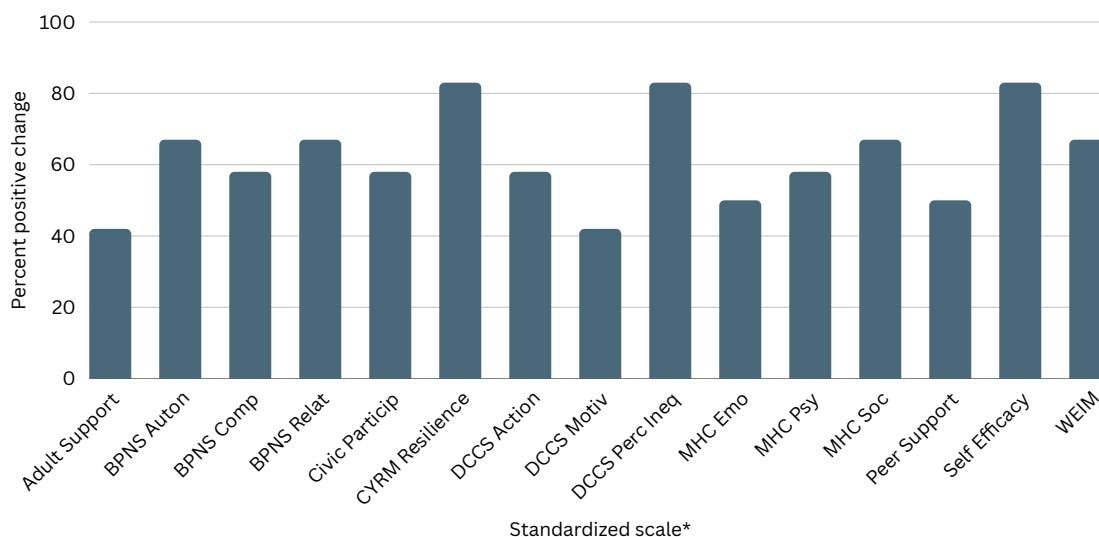


Figure 1. Mississauga Agenda Gap percent positive change pre- vs. post- intervention on standardized scales.

*See Appendix D for a description of the measures used

Workshop Evaluations

Over the course of 16 workshops a total of 57 survey responses were collected. Of the participants who rated the meetings, overall **84% found the meetings to be good/excellent**, 80% feel the meetings were productive, 70% feel they contributed, and 68% agree they learned something new.

Open-Ended Responses

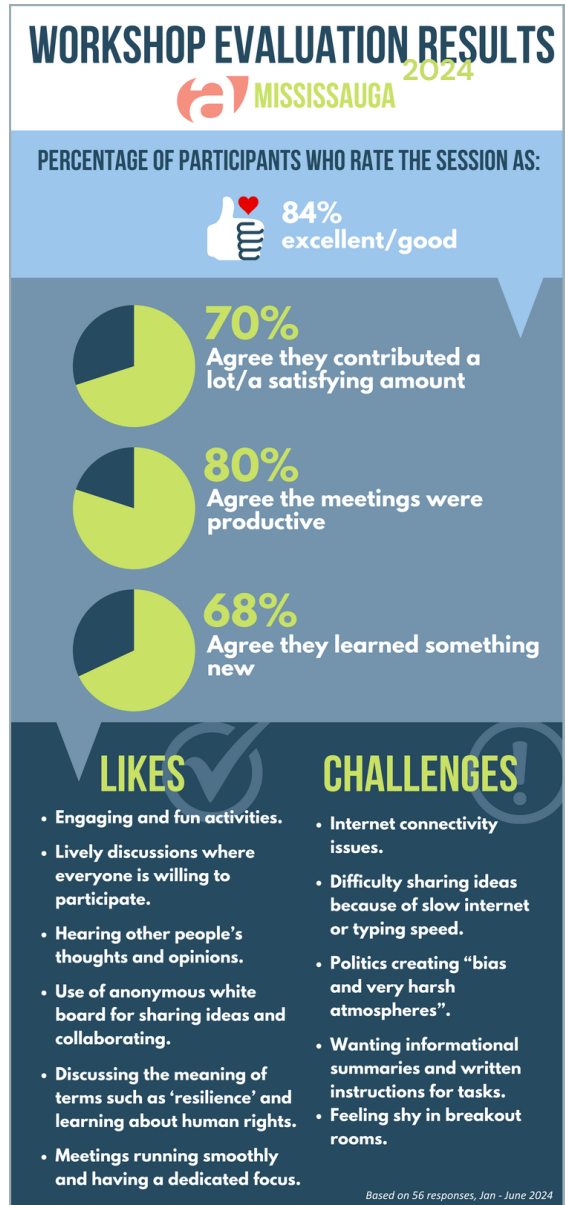
Open-ended responses collected in the workshop evaluations and post-survey allowed youth to elaborate on aspects of their Agenda Gap experience that were particularly impactful. Participants shared a variety of insights, including how Agenda Gap helped them to feel valued and as though their voices were being heard. One participant reflected:

"I enjoy talking about topics that I deeply care about and feel like other people are listening intently"

Further, participants expressed the positive impact of the program, stating:

"it has overall just given me more confidence when it comes to doing things that I don't normally do"

"I have learned to work with people I do not know that well, which helped me become less shy in situations where I do not know anyone"



This report presents highlights from the survey data collected as part of an evaluation of the Agenda Gap program delivered to youth in Mississauga, Ontario. Overall, the program was well-received and impactful. A high proportion of the youth found Agenda Gap valuable, indicated they would contribute to policy change in the future, and reported that participation improved their mental health and wellbeing.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the youth, staff at Erin Mills Connects, allies at YMCA and EveryMind, and broader community that made this work possible!



Appendix A

Resume Toolkit Developed by Youth – Page 1 of 2



EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Resume Toolkit from Agenda Gap and Erin Mills Connects Youth-centred Workshop

What is a resume?

A personal marketing document that helps a hiring manager or someone in your network gain a concise understanding of your background, skills, experience and career aspirations. It's important to tailor your resume to the job description of what you are applying.



Resume Overview

Header: name, location, contact information

Profile/key competencies: Summarize your top skills targeted to the position you're applying for

Education: list key courses, awards and grades

Work experience: paid experiences

Extracurricular experience: volunteer/clubs

Interests and Skills: Include technical, soft skills and interests to the add a personal touch.

Optional: technical projects and awards.

Formatting Guidelines

- ✓ 10-12pt font
- ✓ Margins at least 2cm wide
- ✓ White space to increase readability
- ✓ Use keywords from the job description
- ✓ Use standard fonts (Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri) to get past ATS software

1 Header

Your header appears consistent on your resume and cover letter.

JANE DOE (She/Her)

647-XXX-XXXX | Mississauga, ON | professional.active@gmail.com | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/xxx>

Includes:

1. Your Name (make it stand out by bolding, capitalizing or adding colour!)
2. Contact information
 - a. Your current city, a professional email address which you check often (ideally your first and last name)
3. Phone number with a professional voicemail
4. Optional: LinkedIn account URL

2 Profile

A profile showcases your relevant skills/experience/interest in a summary.

PROFILE Optional

Your profile is a 2 to 3-sentence description of your top skills and abilities. You could include a "Key Competencies" section instead. In this case, provide 3 to 4 bullet points that showcase your most impressive skills and experiences related to the job. List relevant languages spoken at the end. A profile and your GPA are not always needed, especially for undergraduate students without much experience.

Tips:

Stay relevant: Use language specific to the industry and employer to make a good impression early. Only include information that's relevant to the job posting.

Provide proof: Try to fit "strong leadership skills from student club executive experience" rather than just "strong leadership skills."

3 Education

Should include your current school, school name, completion date.

EDUCATION

John Fraser Secondary School

Grade 11, AP Program

Completion: June 2026

- Cumulative GPA: x%
- Awards:
- Relevant Courses:

Includes:

1. GPA (if mentionable)
2. Scholarships and awards
3. Up to three relevant courses
4. Class projects
5. Extracurriculars you can't fit in experience

Appendix B

Interview Toolkit Developed by Youth – Page 1 of 3



EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Interview Toolkit from Agenda Gap and Erin Mills Connects Youth-centred Workshop

What is an interview?

- A chance for you to learn more about potential companies and tell your story to a recruiter.
- The interviewer assesses how the role fits you, just as you assess how well the job and culture align with your personal goals and interests.



Secret Tip

Practicing and preparing before the real thing is the best way to boost your confidence and professionalism in an interview. Being prepared demonstrates that you're genuinely interested in working for an organization and will work to prove it.

What are interviewers looking for?

- Can you do the work?
- Do you have the skills required?
- Do you want the job?
- Are you motivated to do it?
- Will it achieve your career goals?
- Are you a fit with the industry, company, and team? Do you fit with the company culture and get along with others?



Types of Interviews

- 1 Phone pre-screen:** screens candidates early in the process.
- Be enthusiastic and prepared to answer the phone - they aren't always scheduled.
 - Ensure you have a professional voicemail.

Be prepared to answer:

- Are you still available for work?
- Why did you apply for this role?
- What skills do you have that match what the position is looking for?
- Can you summarize your most relevant experience for this role?
- When are you available for work?

- 2 Individual/panel:** behavioural interviews often ask questions that prompt you to expand on your experiences and tie them back to the job you are interviewing for.

- 3 Group:** A group interview screens multiple candidates at the same time. This is an opportunity to show you are open to the ideas of fellow team members. Be prepared to answer 'get to know you' or behavioural questions.

- 4 Online interviews:** dress professionally, choose a neutral background with a well-lit space, test your video and sound before, don't refer to prepared notes.

- 5 Technical:** a technical interview is designed to assess your expertise in specific job-related knowledge and/or skills. Technical interviews are commonly used in technology, finance, consulting, engineering, and healthcare industries.

Preparing for an Interview: Effective Research

Thorough research into an organization, beyond just reading the job posting, demonstrates to prospective employers that you're interested enough in the position to spend the time and effort preparing properly.

Job description	Company website
What specific skills is the company looking for?	What are their mission statement and values?
What's the tone of the job description? Professional? Encouraging? Humorous? Serious?	What's the organizational culture like?
What's it like to work at the company?	What's included in the careers section of their website?
What gets you excited about the role?	What gets you excited about the company?
Industry research	Company social media
What jargon does the industry use?	What tone do they communicate with via social media?
What's the culture of the industry?	What's the focus of their social media content?
Is the industry experiencing growth?	LinkedIn: what's the background of the company's employees (especially those in your interview panel)
Are most companies in the industry successful?	
What's been happening in the news regarding this industry lately?	



Appendix C

Event Poster Prepared by Youth



EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS: EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

Agenda Gap Mississauga Youth aim to empower youth by promoting community well-being and advocating for mental health awareness with diverse teenage perspectives. Through developing supportive workshops and resources, we aim to educate our peers and community leaders on the importance of youth mental health and its connection to employment readiness.





Youth Employment Matters

Supports well-being by:

- Developing confidence
- Expanding networks
- Enabling community belonging
- Fostering independence

All of these outcomes are known protective factors for the promotion of positive mental health.

The Challenge

West Mississauga is estimated to have among the greatest concentration of youth until 2031 (Mississauga, 2020, p. 22), **making employment opportunities for youth of particular concern**, especially following the pandemic where “Peel Region closures were among the longest in the province” (2021 Vitals Signs, n.d., p 23).

Calls to Action

Adapt the Mandatory Grade 10 Careers Curriculum

- ✓ Include at least 1 month of resume preparation for real-time job postings
- ✓ Use a youth-informed approach to drive interactive & less theory-based assignments
- ✓ Create job boards in schools to provide a pathway to low-barriers opportunities
- ✓ Lessons and opportunities for networking skill development
- ✓ Instruct on how to leverage volunteer opportunities to achieve personal goals

Expand and Promote Municipal & Provincial programs to Address Youth Underemployment

- ✓ Set standards for youth inclusion in employment sectors where possible
- ✓ Expand and promote youth employment programs (subsidies, training programs) to youth and careers course instructors in school and in youth-serving agencies

Appendix D

Pre-Survey: Overview of Scales

1. **Basic Psychology Need Satisfaction Scale (BPNS):** A scale that helps us understand whether people feel their core emotional and psychological needs are being met. It looks at three key areas: feeling in control of your own choices (autonomy), feeling capable and effective in what you do (competence), and feeling connected to others (relatedness). The scale explores both the positive experiences of having these needs fulfilled and the challenges people face when these needs aren't being met.

2. **Child & Youth Resiliency Measure (CYRM):** A questionnaire that helps us understand what supports young people's ability to bounce back from challenges. Aimed at youth ages 12 to 23, it looks at the strengths and resources they have—not just within themselves, but also in their relationships, communities, and cultures. Whether it's family support, a sense of belonging, or cultural identity, the CYRM helps identify what's helping youth stay strong and thrive, even in tough situations.

3. **Diemer Critical Consciousness Scale (DCCS):** Helps us understand how aware people are of the social and political issues around them—and how motivated they are to take action. It looks at two main things: how people think about fairness and inequality in society, and whether they get involved in efforts to make things more equal. This includes speaking up, getting involved in the community, and working toward positive change.

4. **Mental Health Continuum (MHC) – Short Form:** A short survey that helps assess overall mental well-being. It looks at how we're doing emotionally, how we feel about ourselves and our lives, and how connected we are to others. This tool helps identify whether someone is flourishing (feeling great and doing well), languishing (feeling low or stuck), or somewhere in between. It's a helpful way to check in on mental health—not just by looking for problems, but by recognizing and building on the positives too.

5. **Mental Health Promoting Knowledge:** This measure explores understandings about the key factors that support positive mental health. It focuses on mental health literacy from a strengths-based perspective, highlighting knowledge that promotes well-being rather than just identifying illness.

6. **General Self-Efficacy Scale:** Measures how confident people feel in their ability to handle life's challenges and reach their goals. It focuses on how much someone believes in themselves when facing tough situations, and whether they feel capable of making things work. In short, it looks at how strong someone's belief is that they can overcome obstacles and succeed through their own efforts.

7. **Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) – Short Form :** Assesses overall mental well-being. It looks at how we feel day-to-day—like our happiness, life satisfaction, and how well we're coping with stress. It also considers how we function emotionally and socially, including things like staying positive, having good relationships, and feeling able to handle life's ups and downs.

8. **Youth & Community Survey:** This measure gathers information about youth's experiences and perceptions about **adult support**, **civic participation** within their communities, and **peer support** to assess impact on youth development and well-being.



Wellstream

The Canadian Centre for Innovation in Child & Youth
Mental Health & Substance Use

Agenda Gap

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