

WORKSHOP 7

CREATING YOUR CHANGE

Objectives

Following this workshop, the youth will be able to:

- Achieve consensus on the group's priority challenge.
- Map their collective network to identify resources that can inform their change strategy.

Overview

Policy change can feel intimidating, but when youth collectively identify how policy enables or hinders their mental health, opportunities to engage in advocacy emerge. Drawing on existing networks and collective expertise strengthens policy change goals, surfaces potential allies and generates momentum, all while creating opportunities for youth to lead.

Total time

2 hours

Facilitator Prep

- Gather information and policy examples relevant to the challenges identified by the youth during the last workshop. This may involve conducting an online search to look for similar initiatives or connecting with your network to explore ideas. Reach out to the Agenda Gap team for assistance, if needed.
- Ensure the completed Challenge Tree is available for reference in Activity 1: Targeting the Challenge and Activity 2: Mapping a Collective Network.
- Review and summarize AWE evaluation results to share using a modality of your choice.

Welcome

Ask the youth to choose a nearby item that brings them happiness or joy. Have them take a moment to tune into the sensations in their body when thinking about this item. Starting with the facilitators, invite everyone to share a brief story about their selected item.

Connect & Open

Review AWE survey summary and anonymous compliments from last session.

Look Back

Remind the group that during the last workshop, they began to explore and define policy. They identified how policy at various organizational and governmental levels influences daily life. Most importantly, the last workshop also highlighted how youth can contribute to policy change. The session concluded by mapping the challenges impacting youth mental health, and where policy may contribute to how these challenges play out in day-to-day life. Ask if the group has any questions or reflections about the last workshop that they want to discuss.

Look Forward

Share that during this workshop, the group will revisit the challenges they have identified during the prior workshops to achieve consensus on their priority challenge topic. They will also map the existing resources that strengthen good mental health among youth in their community. This will support them in identifying where policy change could offer promise for enhancing youth mental health.

Gauging Knowledge

Ask the group to describe a way policy operates to affect the systems and spaces that we encounter in daily life.

Frame

Play the video [*How Gen Zers Can Use Their Voice for Change*](#). This video features Canadian youth activist, Cameron Davis, who shares his inspiring story illustrating how youth are uniquely equipped to create meaningful change in their communities by using their voices to challenge and address systemic injustices.



Activity 1: Targeting the Challenge (20 minutes)

Aim

This activity supports the group in reaching consensus on their priority challenge. It also facilitates the identification of supports, including potential allies who can provide helpful guidance as they develop their advocacy plan.

Steps

1. Share a summary of the information collected by the facilitation team in response to the challenges identified by the youth during past workshops. This will support consensus building, if not yet achieved, and surface policies that might be relevant to the group's interests.

If the group remains undecided about the challenge they wish to address, start with these two steps as well as those following:

1. Refer to the Challenge Tree and ask the youth to work to collectively narrow down to one challenge they would like to target for change. Encourage consensus among the group by highlighting any connections between the challenges identified. Remind the group that opportunities to impact other priority challenges often emerge as their work progresses. If no clear priority is identified, choose two or three priorities identified and ask the group to vote.
2. Share the poll results and facilitate a discussion to achieve consensus and a commitment from the group to work toward this policy goal.

If the group has already decided on the challenge they wish to address, start here with the following two steps:

1. Referring to the Challenge Tree, let the youth know that they are going to be supported to draw from their collective network to identify potential allies who can help inform their next steps. Allies can be invited to the workshops to share knowledge, pinpoint policies related to the group's area of interest, and explore effective strategies and messaging for change. Allies can also work to generate interest in the policy goal more broadly and provide access to opportunities to take action.
2. Ask the group to identify potential allies from their collective network and facilitator-identified sources to invite to an upcoming workshop. Where possible, ask the youth to take the lead on reaching out and making introductions, with your support. Prepare the youth for the time involved in inviting, scheduling, and equipping allies to attend workshops.

Facilitator Tips

- Share updates and offer choices about potential adult allies and other opportunities that may have emerged through discussions with your network.
- It is important to achieve consensus by the end of this activity. It is necessary to be able to move forward in future workshops.



Activity 2: Mapping a Collective Network (20 minutes)

Aim

This activity facilitates the group in mapping available mental health supports, including people, organizations, clubs and other resources, while also identifying gaps that require attention. This provides a helpful backdrop as they move forward in their advocacy work. It also facilitates the identification of additional allies who can support their efforts.

Steps

1. Send the group to two smaller groups.
2. Ask the youth to discuss the question: *What people, organizations, clubs or other resources support youth to thrive in your community?*
3. Direct the youth to a shared writing space such as a whiteboard or big piece of paper that has been divided into two sections. On one side, ask the youth to answer the following questions:
 - a. What do you do in your daily, weekly or monthly routines that makes you feel good?
 - b. Who are the supportive people you encounter in your life?
4. On the other side, ask the youth to answer the following question:
 - a. What resources do you wish were available to support youth mental health in your community?
If needed, prompt discussion by asking the group to name people, activities, spaces or places.
5. Return to Circle. Ask the youth to report back on the resources that support youth mental health and wellbeing within their community. Help them to identify common themes. Past Agenda Gap groups have shared experiences related to a sense of connection with peers and/or supportive adults, opportunities for work and play, places to be active, access to community services or greenspace, etc.
6. Highlight that this list can now serve as a shared resource that the group can draw on in supporting youth mental health during this program and beyond.
7. Ask the youth to discuss resource gaps that were identified.
8. Share the Challenge Tree.
9. Ask the group to reflect on the supports and resources identified. Have them comment on how these relate to the challenges they have named, and whether there are gaps that require attention. This will also allow the group to see links between supports/resources in their communities and their priority challenges.
10. Prompt discussion with the following question: *How does the priority challenge relate to the available supports and resources?*

Facilitator Tips

- It's important for all of the youth to feel like they have something to add to the supports and resources map. Encourage everyone to contribute, even if only naming personal supports.

Connect & Close: Gratitude Expression (10 minutes)

1. Share that expressing gratitude has been shown to boost happiness, for the person who “gives” it and the person “gets” it.
2. Ask the group to think of a person in their life who they are grateful for. The person may be a friend, parent, grandparent, sibling, teacher, etc.
3. Have the group take a moment to reflect on why they are grateful for the person they identified. Offer the following prompts: *Is that person there for you when you need them most? How does this person make you feel valued? Can you be yourself around this person? Why are you glad you have this person in your life?*
4. Encourage the youth to take a few moments to prepare a thank you note, text message or a script for a quick call to this person letting them know what they are grateful for.
5. Ask the group how the activity made them feel.
6. Distribute the AWE survey and allow a few minutes for everyone to complete. If any youth doesn’t want to do so immediately, ask that they complete it before the next meeting.
7. After the group finishes the survey, thank them for their participation and close the workshop.
8. After the workshop closes send a link to the AWE survey by email for those who did not complete it during the session.

Activity adapted from inspirED Gratitude Expression available from <https://inspiredstudents.org/activity/gratitude-expression/>

