



White Rock 2024 - 2025

Community Report



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Background: About Agenda Gap



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

Introduction - White Rock 2024-2025 Agenda Gap:

Alex House, a neighborhood house multi-service organization in Surrey/White Rock, launched the Agenda Gap program in 2024-25. Weekly in-person meetings ran after school from November 2024 to program completion in June 2025. Facilitation support was provided by an Alex House Youth Space worker and Agenda Gap staff.

What the White Rock Agenda Gap Youth Accomplished:

The White Rock Agenda Gap group focused on raising awareness about the importance of trauma-informed approaches in White Rock and South Surrey high schools. To better understand local needs, the group surveyed 78 youth in the community and identified a lack of youth involvement in decision-making about the classroom environment. Their findings highlighted the importance of strong teacher-student relationships and increased support for academic stress. The youth met with three community health experts to learn more about school-based trauma-informed approaches that could strengthen staff and student relationships. From this collective learning, the group developed an infographic to promote opportunities for youth voice, trauma-informed classroom environments and greater access to mental health resources for students (see pages 9-11), which was distributed by adult allies throughout the Fraser Health Region and school districts in the White Rock and South Surrey area.



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, and workshop evaluations. ***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 - & Follow-up-Surveys

Youth participants are invited to complete a survey immediately before starting the program, just after completing the program, and 6-months post-program (follow-up).

These surveys measure the following:

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

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.

Post-Survey Findings

Who participated?

Between September and November 2024, 14 youth were recruited and interviewed for the program. Of these, 13 went on to attend workshops, which were held between November 2024 and June 2025, and 10 youth completed post-surveys.

Youth ranged in ages between 14 to 17 years old. Eight youth identified as girls/ women, five as boys/men, and one as non-binary. Nearly half (46%) identified as LGBTQ2S+. Participants identified as white (6), Black (3), East Asian (3), West Asian (3), South Asian (2), and Southeast Asian (1) (note – participants were allowed to select multiple ancestries).

Reported Policy Impacts

All participants reported that, as a result of their involvement in Agenda Gap, they gained skills to work effectively in group settings with people who hold different perspectives. In total, 90% agreed that the workshops were useful and reported increased awareness of how policy can serve as a key tool for promoting mental health. Similarly, 90% reported an improved understanding of the social determinants of mental health and how these factors can contribute to inequities, leading some groups in society to experience poorer mental health outcomes. Additionally, 80% reported an increase in their knowledge of mental health promotion.

Of those who completed the post survey, 60% reported gaining skills to identify and take action on changes needed in their community and felt more prepared to create change. Notably, 70% reported that they plan to continue working with others to contribute to policy change.

Personal Impacts

As a result of participating in Agenda Gap, 90% of participants reported that **they gained relationships that support their wellbeing** and 60% indicated that they continue to use one or more of the Connect and Close techniques learned through the program.

In addition, 40% of youth reported that as a result of participating in Agenda Gap, their positive mental health improved, and they changed their use of substances in ways that support their wellbeing. Finally, 30% indicated they feel more connected to their school, and have noticed improvements in how they relate to family.

Youth Facilitator Relationships

Positive youth-facilitator relationships, which included a sense of mutual respect, trust, co-learning, and sense of shared power, were ranked highly by youth participants: 90% agreed that youth and program staff respected each other, while 80% reported that they learned a great deal from staff, that youth and staff trusted one another, and that there was a good balance of power between youth and staff.

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 other. For a list of these scales please see Appendix A. Scores improved across nearly all scales. (Figure 1).

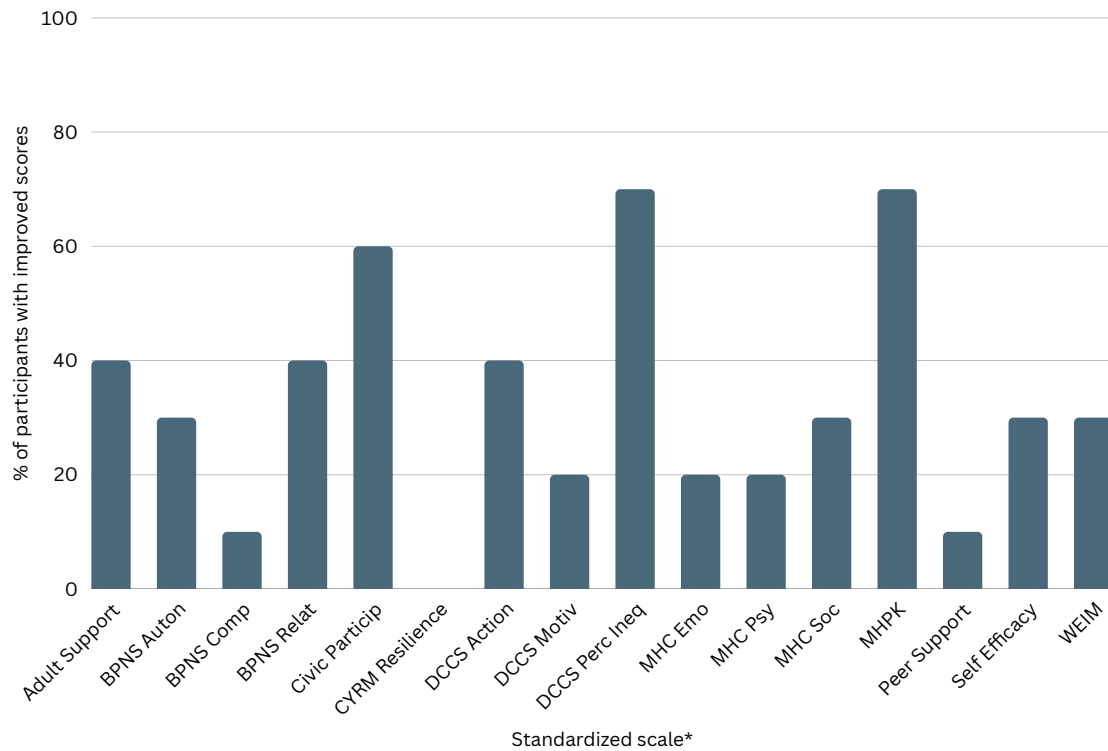


Figure 1. White Rock Agenda Gap percent positive change pre- vs. post- intervention on standardized scales (n=10).

*See Appendix A for a description of the measures used

Workshop Evaluations

Over the course of 25 workshops, 153 session-evaluations were collected from participants. Across these evaluations, sessions were rated as good or excellent in 70% of responses. Participants also agreed that sessions were productive in 73% of evaluations, and reported learning something new in 59%. Finally, participants indicated they felt they contributed meaningfully in 48% of responses (Figure 2).

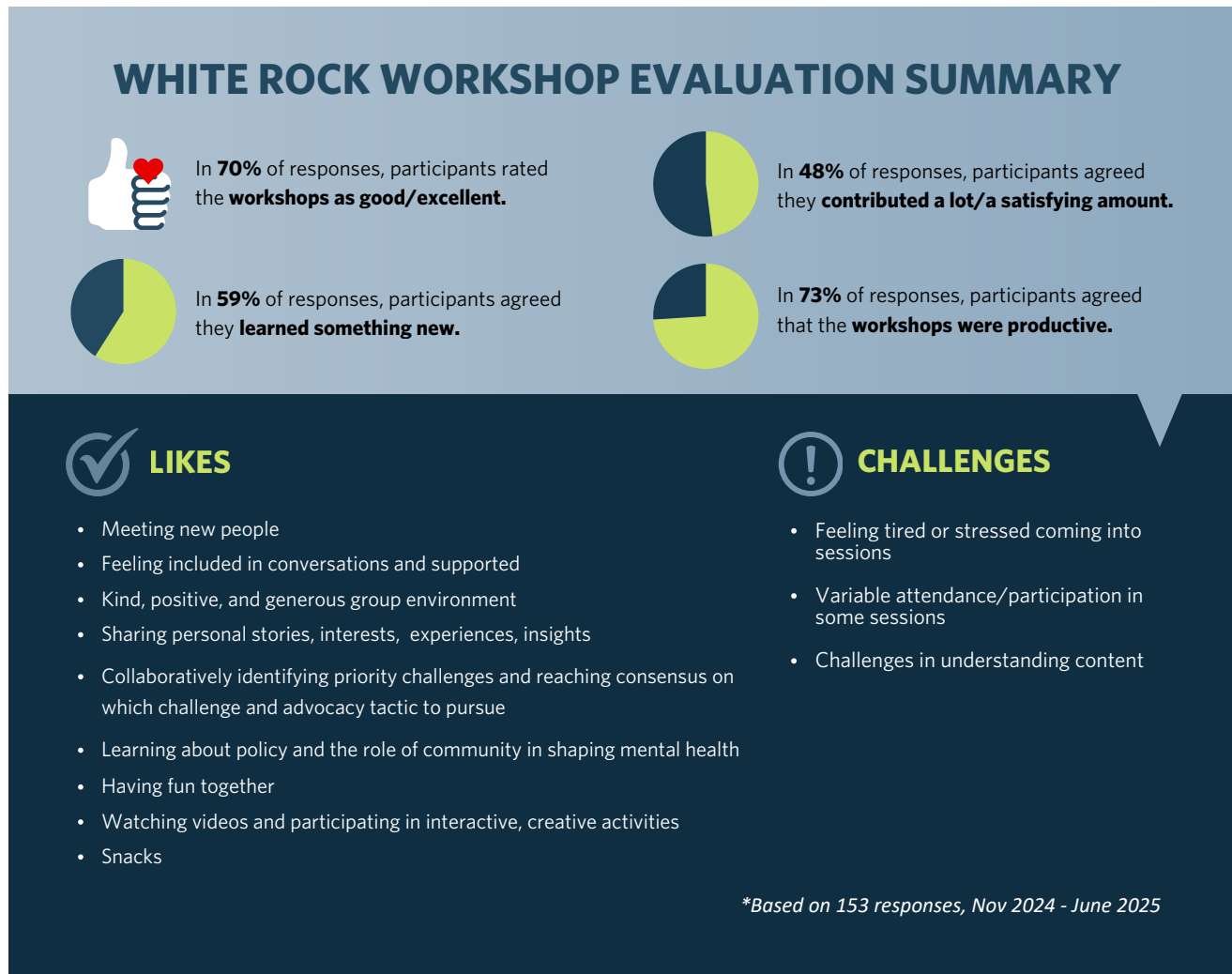


Figure 2. White Rock 2024–2025 Workshop Evaluation Findings

Open-Ended Responses

Open-ended responses collected through workshop evaluations and the post-program survey allowed youth to elaborate on aspects of their Agenda Gap experience that they found particularly impactful. Participants described how comfortable they felt in Agenda Gap workshops, emphasizing that the environment was characterized by kindness, generosity, and positivity:

“Everyone is nice as heck :)”
“Everyone in the group was really fun and interactive”
“The staff bring lots of positive energy”
“Everyone was super cool and generous and kind.”

Youth noted that they particularly appreciated being included in conversation and feeling supported by their peers:

“I appreciate everyone speaking with me and for including me in the conversation.”
“I like seeing how supportive people were when others shared stories about things they went through”

This sense of comfort and familiarity with one another lent itself to meaningful group discussions, and rewarding brainstorming sessions.

“I loved how engaging the group conversation was!”
“The group collaboration was amazing”
“[The high point of my day was] being able to discuss and talk with my peers with similar beliefs/values”
“What was most important to me about the workshops was the sense of community and learning. I loved the group discussions and getting to know people who wanted to make a change.”
“We got a lot done today and I liked the productivity.”

Indeed, participants often noted that their favorite program activities were those that included discussion or a creative components, such as storytelling. They described the importance of hearing a variety of perspectives and noted their appreciation of group members who were willing to share their thoughts and insights.

“The most important thing for me was when people with different perspectives were sharing their thoughts and challenges.”
“[Youth A] is knowledgeable and such a good resource for the group.”
“I liked how [Youth B] shared a lot of interesting ideas during the meeting”
“[Youth C] always gives positive responses and feedback”

Open-Ended Responses (cont'd.)

Youth identified specific topics they enjoyed learning about, including community influences on mental health, the role of policy and government, trauma-informed approaches, and more.

"Today's lesson was really informative about mental health and mental illness and possible ways to help."

"We learnt a lot about what impacts mental health and how a lot of issues aren't solvable from a single person."

"I heard about the different policies in the society and which level of the government is responsible for each policy."

"I like the video that showed us about how trauma informed schools connect teachers with students deeply."

Building their knowledge base—and then applying what they had learned to create positive change—proved to be a program highlight for many. For instance, participants particularly enjoyed the process of identifying key challenges facing youth mental health in their community and voting on or reaching consensus about which challenge to target and which advocacy tactics to pursue.

"[What was most important to me about the workshops was] taking part in thinking what factors contribute to the youths' stress level and coming up with calls to actions and strategies to try to let others hear our voices. / Learning about how youth can bring upon changes."

"[The meeting high point was] really conversing about our goals and narrowing down our change tactics."

"[What was most important to me about the workshops was] helping to create more mental health awareness"

Finally, upon program completion, youth shared a number of ways in which the program had a transformative impact on them:

"The workshops have helped me in understanding how to make genuine change in my community and to understand certain workings behind the actions of others within it."

"These workshops helped me gain more knowledge and understanding of mental health and stress factors. They helped me think deeper in terms of youth mental health."

"I feel as if I'm more knowledgeable about the social determinants of mental health and the community. I learnt many things about policy which i can now use to make better judgements and change in my day to day life."

"I feel more comfortable with speaking to large groups now."

"I built connections with others and I learned how to make a change."

Conclusion

This report summarizes key findings from survey data collected as part of the evaluation of the Agenda Gap program implemented with youth in White Rock during the 2024–25 program year. Feedback indicates that the program was well received by participants. Most youth reported that the experience was meaningful, increased their interest in engaging in policy change, and supported their mental health and overall wellbeing.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the youth, staff at Alex House, and the community adult allies that made this work possible!



Appendix

Overview of Survey Measures

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.

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