



Evergreen:

Towards a Child & Youth Mental Health Framework for Canada

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BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

- Canada is the only G-8 nation without a national mental health framework.
- In response the Child and Youth Advisory Committee (CYAC) of the *Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)* is creating the Evergreen Framework.
- Evergreen will complement and may provide child and youth context to the *Mental Health Strategy for Canada* also being developed by the MHCC.
- In addition to being used by the *MHCC*, Evergreen can also be made available to responsible policy makers and planners as a tool to inform and guide the creation, development and/or adaptation of child and youth mental health strategies, policies and plans.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Committee Recruitment

- A multi-stage recruitment process was utilized.
 - a) Initial nominations via systematic search of institutions, programs, organizations, policy documents and research projects relevant to child and youth;
 - b) Secondary nominations from project lead and the *MHCC's* CYAC;
 - c) Final nominations from existing Evergreen committees.
- Special emphasis was taken to include youth and parents who are interested in, or who have lived experience with mental illness, as well as voices of vulnerable populations and the seldom heard
- Evergreen committee structure: Drafting Committee (DC), National Advisory Committee (NAC), and International Advisory Committee (IAC).

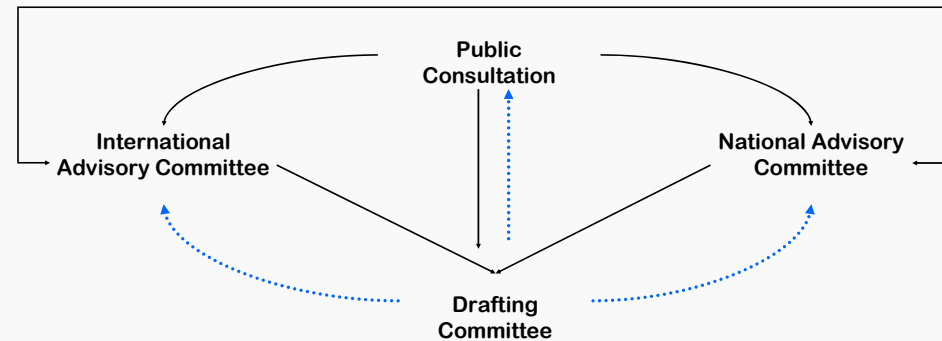
Committee Structure

- **Drafting Committee**
 - 30 member committee
 - Youth and parents with interest in, or who have lived experience with mental health
 - Individuals with nationally recognized expertise in the areas of child and youth mental health and health care including specializations in policy, clinical care, and research.
- **National Advisory Committee**
 - 90 member committee
 - Youth and parents with interest in, or who have lived experience with mental health
 - Individuals with nationally recognized experience and expertise across a wide variety of child mental health, mental health, child health, health, education, justice, social service and other domains.
- **International Advisory Committee**
 - 25 member committee
 - Members are individuals with recognized expertise in child and youth mental health policy and research services outside of Canada

Public Engagement and Consultation

- Input from the general public is being sought using online public consultations
- National public awareness process utilized:
 - a) conventional media (e.g., radio, newspaper)
 - b) unconventional media (e.g., *Facebook*) to draw awareness to public consultations
- The first online public consultation (July 1st to September 31st, 2009) received over 1000 participants, representing all regions of Canada
- Evergreen's *Facebook* group "**Help Create a Youth Mental Health Strategy**" contains around 1000 members
- The use of online technologies is believed to enhance the accessibility and participation of the general public

CONSULTATION PROCESS



ONLINE COLLABORATION

- The Evergreen Framework is being written collectively by the DC using Wiki technology contained within Socialtext, a web-based program well suited to online collaborations.
- The NAC and IAC reviews and provides critical commentary on the various stages of the document under creation by the DC
- An extensive online library, created through rigorous systematic process, has been created using seminal research and policy documents relevant to child and youth mental health. This online library is a key resource to inform the work of the DC, NAC and IAC
- Socialtext enables DC, NAC and IAC members to easily interact online and read all commentary posted by other committee members
- A rich iterative process is created online whereby the ideas of one member build on those of other members resulting in a document believed to be of much higher quality than one written independently using traditional means
- DC, NAC and IAC members are also able to review the input from the public and synthesize this knowledge directly into their comments and contributions to the Evergreen Framework document
- Materials created by the DC are made available to the NAC, IAC and the general public to ensure transparency
- 3 major revisions of the Evergreen Frame will be produced through this collaborative process

PROJECT STATUS

- The final draft of Evergreen's values and principles, which will form the nucleus of the full framework document, will be ready in the late fall 2009
- The draft Evergreen Framework document will be posted online for the 2nd public consultation in the early 2010
- Evergreen's development team will continue to actively engage the general public, including youth, individuals experiencing mental illness and the seldom heard members of society to include their voice in Evergreen
- The final Evergreen Framework document will be presented to the MHCC for review and distribution, Spring 2010
- The resources and networks created to build the Evergreen Framework will be preserved after the completion of the document so that they can be used in 3-5 years cycles to enable Evergreen to incorporate new research, new evidence and new perspectives on child and youth mental health

FURTHER PROJECT INFORMATION

- Visit www.mentalhealthcommission.ca, www.teenmentalhealth.org or email evergreen@iwk.nshealth.ca

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