Empowering young people in community change efforts to ensure youth have access to health care through school-based health centers

Youth Empowerment in Health Care

Overview

Youth empowerment in health care is ensuring youth ages 12-18 are actively involved and have a voice in what health care services they receive and how they receive them. This includes providing youth with opportunities to advocate for their healthcare and the healthcare of those in their communities.

Before engaging in opportunities, youth must become critically aware of how to go about receiving care. They also need to learn where they can receive care and what kind of care they are entitled to.

What Does It Look Like?

**Skill Development:** strengthening the skills of youth so that they know how to effectively make decisions, positively interact with their peers, and act as community advocates.

**Critical Awareness:** providing youth with the information and resources necessary for analyzing issues that affect their lives and environments as well as strategies on ways to act as change agents in their communities

**Opportunities:** providing youth with platforms for decision-making and encouraging their active participation in creating community change

Opportunities

Providing trainings and supervision to providers on how to focus on engagement in the first face-to-face meetings with youth and families

Giving input into the decision-making process of how their healthcare is acquired and received

Advocating for increased access to healthcare in their communities (possibly through school-based health centers)

Educating youth on the importance of wellness

Why Is This Important?

Youth who are not advocates for their health usually do not receive the quality of care they need.

Youth engaged in their health care are more likely to receive preventative care, which will keep healthier.

Youth who are engaged in healthcare are likely to be engaged lifelong.

For more information visit www.youthempowered solutions.org.

Sources: Youth Empowered Solutions, Youth Empowerment Model; American Psychological Association, Engaging Families in Child Mental Health Services; National Center for Biotechnology Information, Young People’s Health: The Need for Action; Youth and Access to Healthcare in BC; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999; Indigenous Youth Engagement in Canada’s Health Care