



AGENDA GAP

Youth-led policy advocacy to promote youth mental health and advance health equity across socioecological domains

Agenda Gap is a research-driven program led by [Dr. Emily Jenkins](#) at UBC and funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada's Mental Health Promotion – Innovation Fund. It is a facilitated program that was co-created with youth collaborators to support young people to engage in policy decision making to enhance conditions for positive mental health for themselves and their communities. It supports youth participants in growing understandings about mental health promotion, social determinants of health, youth rights and influencing systems change, all while building peer and adult relationships and skills for policy advocacy. The program assists participants to identify factors affecting youth mental health in their community contexts and to take action to create systems change.

Youth (aged 15-19) who experience intersecting health and social inequities are engaged as Agenda Gap participants in a capacity building process that, in addition to having the opportunity to gain mental health knowledge and skills, also enables them to:

(a) identify factors in their community that impact youth mental health and are amenable to change through policy

(b) develop strategies and action plans to effect relevant policy development/change

(c) engage with stakeholders, including policymakers, in collaborative policymaking processes to promote youth mental health

The program is delivered over approximately six months through 20, two-hour engagement sessions held weekly, either online or in-person. However, there is some flexibility with timing depending on what youth prefer. Agenda Gap has been piloted in locations in Western Canada (BC and Alberta) as well as Ontario, with partnership development also underway in Nova Scotia. We are currently seeking to establish additional partnerships with communities or organizations who are interested in hosting the program. The Agenda Gap team, including our Youth Engagement Specialists, would support sites through a co-implementation cycle, to train local facilitators to deliver the program independently in future iterations.

For more information check out our [promotional video](#), [infographic](#), [research findings](#), or contact us at agenda.gap@ubc.ca!



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