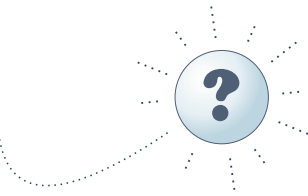


## GROWING THE MODEL

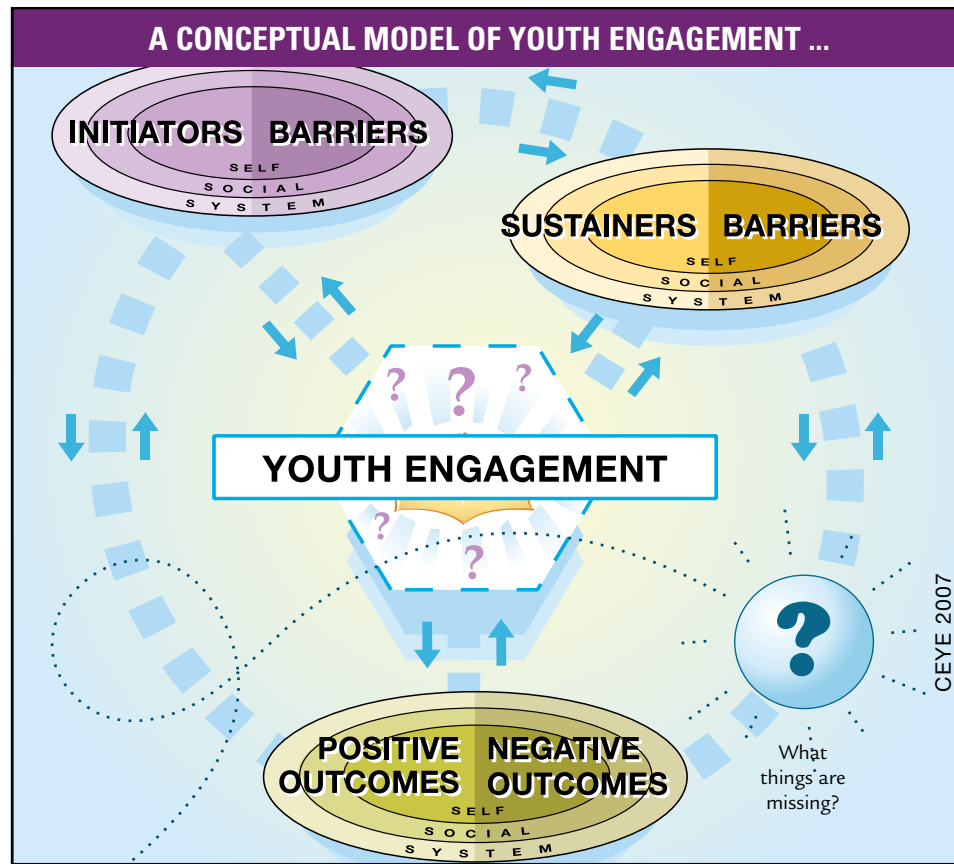
Have we really got it all? How do we know this model is correct? What is the model missing?

We don't know! But as we "grow" the model, we hope to learn answers to these questions. Until then, we can add one more bubble to remind us that the model is a work in progress...



Think of this bubble as the things the model is missing (and all the things we have yet to learn).

*So, it helps us see how we can add to the model...*



## OTHER THOUGHTS ON THE MODEL

As we mentioned at the beginning, our model is meant to serve as a framework for our projects and our research questions.

Engagement may be somewhat different for every person, for every type of activity, and for every type of outcome. So, we can't conclude that this is the only way that "engagement works."

As we conduct our research, we will be testing our model to see if it "fits" with the experiences of youth.

We also hope that the model helps people think about engagement in ways that stimulate questions, result in suggestions, and new ideas ...

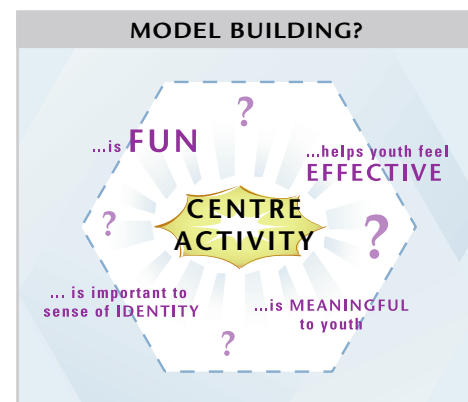
We do think that the engagement process is dynamic and fluid - it changes over time as people change and as the world changes.

Therefore, the arrows go both ways between all the bubbles, so that everything is connect-

ed to everything else - and everything influences everything else over time ...

Check out the large graphic, above, to see what the model looks like so far.

Check out the graphic below for how we are measuring ourselves.



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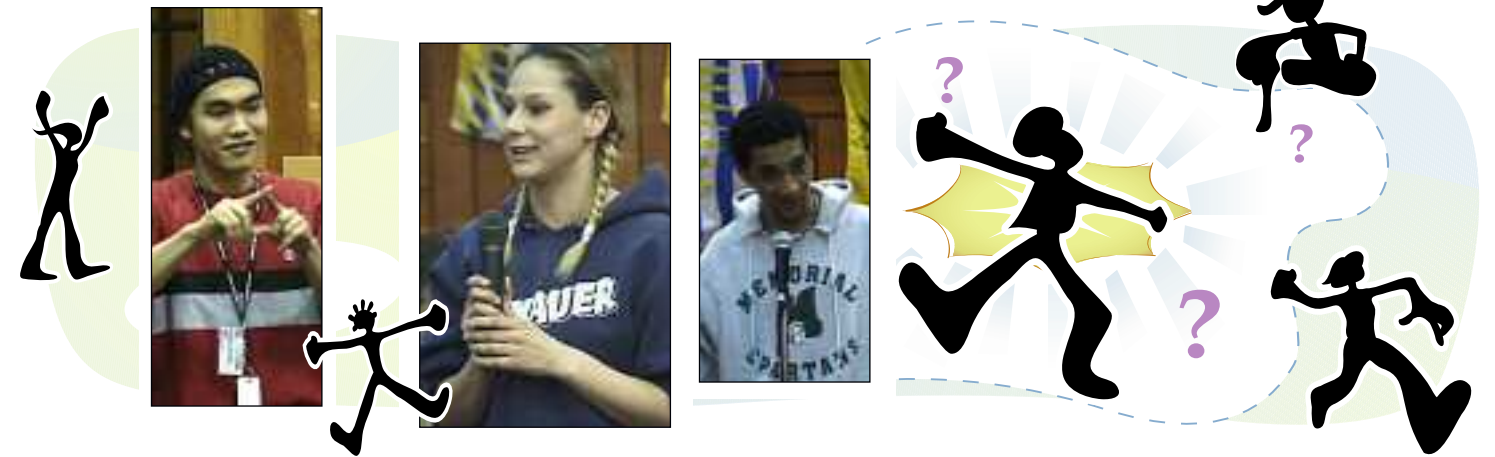
**Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement Partners:** The Students Commission • Brock University • La Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française (FJCF) • Youth Launch Saskatoon • Wilfrid Laurier University's Community Psychology Program • Youth Net / Réseau Ado (YN / RA) The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) • City of Vancouver • St. Mary's University • University of Regina • First Nations University of Canada

Funding for the Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being is provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors / researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Public Health Agency of Canada. Additional funding for this project provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.



## CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

## Youth Engagement



## Youth Engagement – A Conceptual Model

The research gathered by The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement provides evidence that youth are doing many more good things than is commonly perceived, that this involvement is good for youth, and finally that youth participation is much more than "just doing it...." The quality of the engagement, its meaningfulness, matters.

**S**till many questions remain. What are the most important factors of participation? Why is engagement linked to well-being? How does the link between involvement and positive outcomes change depending upon



the person, their environment and the activity they are engaged in? To explore these questions, and others, we have developed a model, which serves as a starting point for our research projects, and as a way to structure and organize our work.

The following information does not reflect our conclusions, but rather our questions and ideas. We are "growing" our model as we collect research findings and learn from our experiences!

### WHAT IS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?

Our working definition:

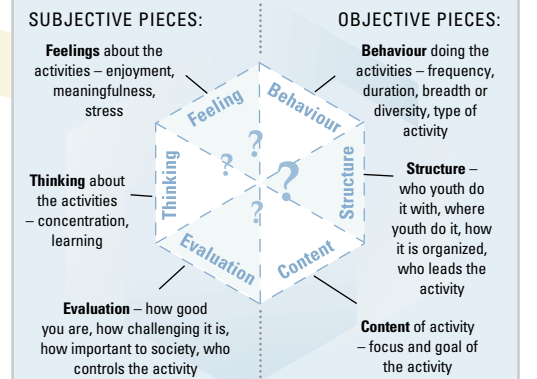
**"Youth engagement is the meaningful and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity focusing outside the self."**

– Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

### WHAT ARE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF ENGAGEMENT?

Engagement experiences are complex and vary widely in content and quality. They include both objective pieces (behaviour, structure, content), and subjective pieces (feeling, thinking, evaluation). We are interested in identifying and measuring a number of potentially important aspects of engaging experiences.

### SOME QUALITIES OF ENGAGEMENT



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# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

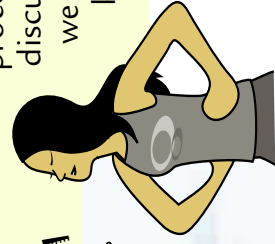
Hmm...



## THE MODEL – UNDER CONSTRUCTION...

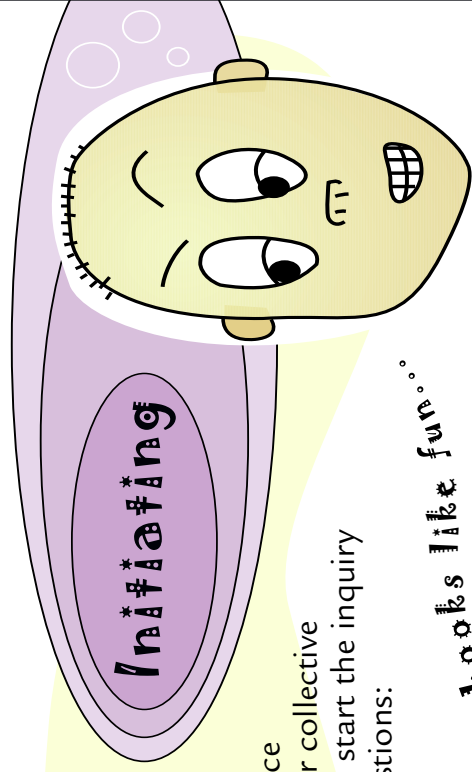
There are many ways to represent youth engagement. Our goal is to start with some key questions that invite others to share their own views about engaging youth. Through an ongoing process of inquiry, discussion, and practice we hope to build our collective knowledge. Let us start the inquiry with some questions:

*What we're doing will make a difference...*



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Initiating



Looks like fun...

## WHAT INITIATES ENGAGEMENT?

Part of our model is concerned with how youth first become involved in an activity. This initiating process may be different for each person and each type of activity or engagement.

We represent initiating process in our model with a "bubble", like this ...



fig. 1  
Some of the things that may help youth become involved include:

- 1. Individual or "self" factors.** These are characteristics such as values, temperament, and interests, and
  - 2. Social factors.** For example, some youth report that they become involved in order to be with their friends or because a teacher asked them.
- We represent these two initiating processes as a two-layered bubble. We consider that people exist as (1) individuals who (2) have important relationships with other people ...

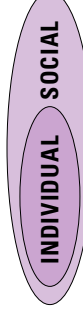


fig. 2  
A person's decision to get involved also may be influenced by

- 3. Systems.** For example, the schools, organizations, communities, and countries in which he or she lives and works.

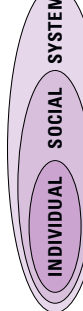


fig. 3  
We add a third layer to represent (3) system processes that may influence whether youth become involved or not.



fig. 4  
Think of the resulting bubble as what gets engagement started or hinders it – at a personal level, in terms of relationships with others, and the systems in which we live and work. We can connect the layered bubble and the engagement circle with an arrow. The arrow shows that initiating factors may lead to engagement.

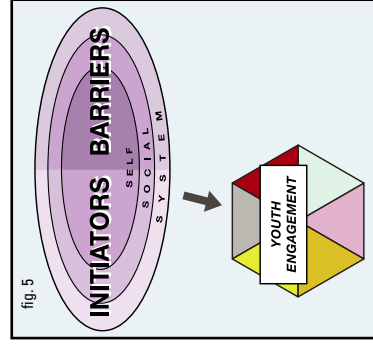


fig. 5

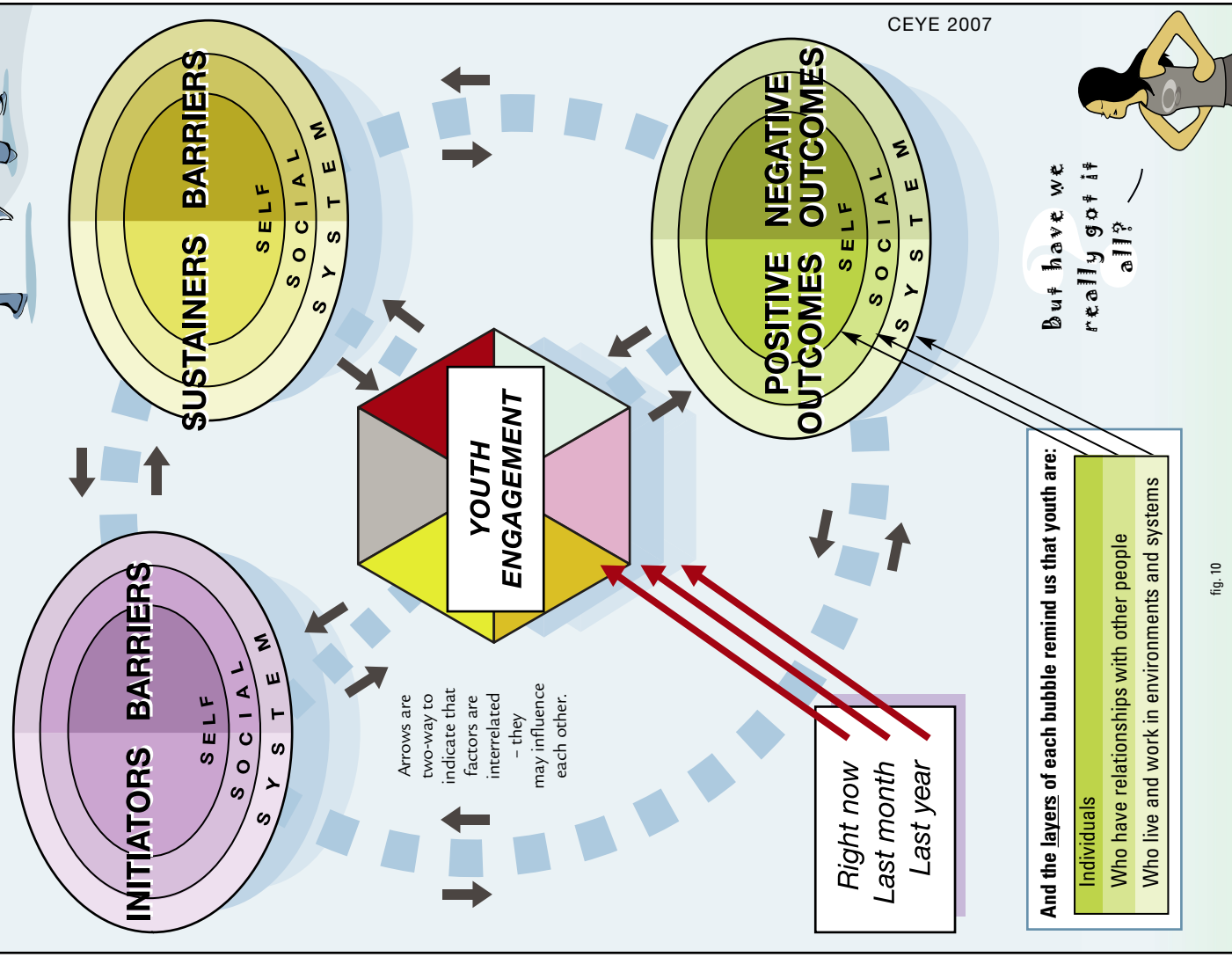
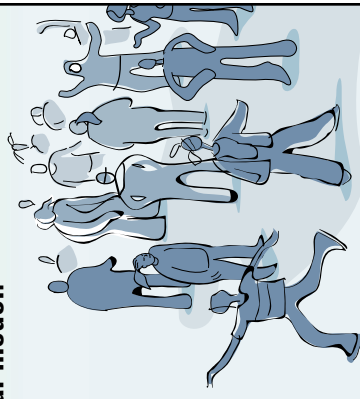
## WHAT SUSTAINS ENGAGEMENT?

Once youth are involved in an activity, they may decide to keep doing it – or to stop doing it. Similar to the initiating

## THE MAIN PARTS OF THE MODEL

Together, the bubbles capture the main parts of our model:

- What initiates or hinders engagement?
- What sustains or discourages engagement?
- What are the many different qualities of engagement?
- What are the potential outcomes?



CEYE 2007

fig. 10

We also need to consider whether engagement may sometimes lead to outcomes that are not so positive – such as frustration or stress.

Thus, in our model, engagement may lead to specific outcomes.

## ENGAGEMENT DEVELOPS

In our model, the factors and processes that engage youth or prevent them from being engaged operate over time.

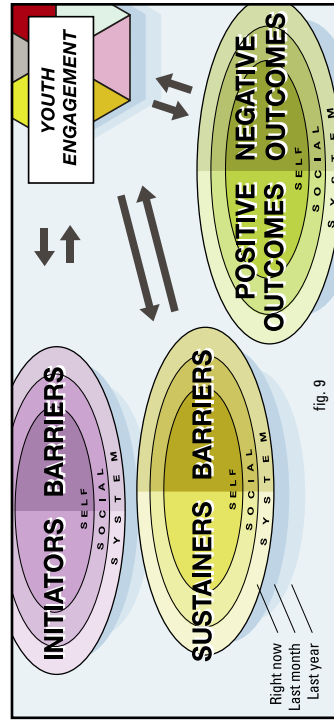


fig. 9