



**Le Centre d'excellence pour l'engagement des jeunes**  
**Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement**

A PARTNERSHIP

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**ALL MY RELATIONS: DECONSTRUCTING AN EVENT** by Stoney McCart

The purpose of this document is to analyze an event, called All My Relations, held by the Students Commission in the summer of 2002. The event had two major components, a six-day youth conference



which concluded with a Presentation Morning when the youth delegates met with invited adult guests. The deconstruction will show how research and evaluation techniques from The Centre of Excellence for Youth

Engagement are being integrated into the Students Commission youth programming. It will show how and why we chose and structured activities. A second purpose is to examine whether an event which is fun, also has substantial value and impact. How is that impact achieved? Does engaging youth, academics, programmers and policy makers as partners in applying research produce positive health and developmental outcomes for youth? Does it produce attitudinal and behavioural changes in adults?

POSITIVE HEALTH  
 O U T C O M E S

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# All My Relations... A National Youth Conference

AUG 14 - 18

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To provide a venue for youth to build their knowledge and capacity to make healthy decisions around values, self-image, self-esteem, sexuality and healthy relations of all kinds
- To experiment with embedding research in a youth program on multiple levels
- To experiment with academic / youth partnerships in health research at an event
- To facilitate a diverse group of young Canadians sharing their knowledge and expertise



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- A 6 day national youth conference examining issues pertaining to self image and esteem, sexual and mental health, safe and healthy relations.
- Theme of conference selected by delegates voting on range of topics prior to event
- Youth responded in discussion groups to research gathered
- Youth gathered data at conference, worked with academics on site to process, analyse and report back on it
- Youth facilitators experimented with creating interactive large group activities to transfer research knowledge and gather data

50-75% of teen sex does not occur within the context of an ongoing relationship

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

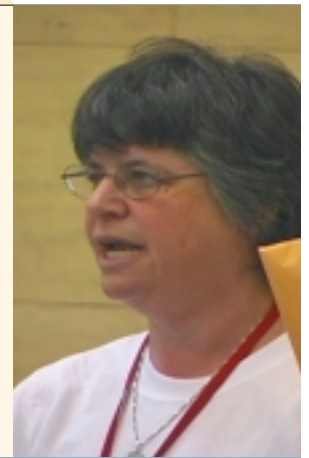
- Materials and tools from a core partner: Youth Facilitator Training Project, Saskatoon Action Circle on Youth Sexuality
- Research data gathered by out-of-school youth who prepared backgrounders and discussion questions from data for event
- Academics collected articles from our Literature review and sent to youth team to support their preparation in designing the program. Examples:

"First...the majority of these teens have not acquired the skills to help them stay safe. In most cases, when it comes to sex, the parents are not talking, the schools are not talking, and teens are

not talking to each other. The teens usually begin a sexual relationship before they begin to talk about it. Setting sexual limits seldom occurs.... Failure to communicate leads inevitably to poor contraceptive use...." <sup>1</sup>

"Teens reported that 50-75% of sex does not occur within the context of an ongoing relationship, but at parties or in other high-risk situations." <sup>2</sup>

"Weaker school connections also appear to be related to risky behaviour.... Only 14% of students reporting high levels of connections with school have had sexual intercourse, compared with 39% of those reporting lower connectedness." <sup>3</sup>



## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



- Phase Two of a formal Process Evaluation of the conference by the Centre: field notes, video interviews, letters to self. Evaluation is connected to a formal longitudinal study of youth attending
- Head, Heart, Feet sheets from delegates each day: What I learned, How I'm feeling, What I will do with what I learned. Examples: "I will use it to make better decisions." "I'm going to think more about my thoughts and opinions on sexuality, intimacy and relationships. I also want to talk more about this kind of stuff with my friends." "I will try to recognize more values that I have, how they are connected and what they mean. I will put the ones I have now into work in my community."
- Letters to Self from delegates written on the final day are being coded and analyzed with the writers consent and then will be mailed back to them in 6 months. Excerpts are quoted here, by gender and age. M16, F17.

1. Joe Fay and Jay Yanoff, What are Teens Telling Us about Sexual Health?, Results of the Second Annual Youth Conference of the Pennsylvania Coalition to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Journal of Sex Education and Therapy, Vol. 25, No. 2 &3, p 176.

2. Fay and Yanoff

3. Healthy Connections: Listening to BC Youth, Highlights from the Adolescent Health Survey II, The McCreary Centre Society 1999, ISBN 1-895-438-14-4, page 27

# Presentation Morning: Adult-Youth Mini Conference August 19

140 CANADIAN YOUTH<sup>1</sup> & 40 INVITED GUESTS<sup>2</sup>

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To provide an opportunity for youth to communicate their achievements of the preceding four days
- To establish a vibrant atmosphere conducive to healthy, substantial dialogue between adults and youth
- To provide and test an experiential model of adult/youth engagement which could be used for future conferences, and share results with other researchers ( see background research)
- To further develop links with interested adult stakeholders



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- A morning session wherein youth participants of the All My Relations national youth conference (Kemptville, Ontario, August 14-20, 2002) are joined by invited adult guests
- Presentation of conference work by delegates, planned by a team of youth during preceding days
- Energizing activities both in plenary sessions and in smaller groups

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

“Second, it is important to emphasize that conferences using a listening format are extremely worthwhile. The design of this conference helped us gather important information, straight from teens, about what is happening in their lives. All too often, adolescent sexual health interventions are determined more by adult assumptions than by adolescent reality. The information gathered at this conference provides us with a rare glimpse into their world, and can be used by parents, educators, and policymakers to design more effective programming.”<sup>3</sup>

“But more important, beyond the policy implications, this conference was beneficial to the teens themselves....They experienced an environment, perhaps for the first time in their lives, where the ground rules said that sex is something that can and should be talked about. They learned that sexual health is dependent on openness, not silence.”<sup>4</sup>

“In conclusion, our work shows that even though many adults contend that teens do not want to talk with them about personal matters, if you listen, they will speak. We encourage others to replicate this model....We would be interested in the results....”<sup>5</sup>

## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



- Process Evaluation: field notes and video footage
- Letters to Self from invited adult guests were also written at the end of the morning they spent with the youth, at the same time as the youth. Letters where consent was granted will also be analyzed and then mailed back in 6 months. Excerpts here are quoted : G for guest, M or F for gender.

<sup>1</sup> Please see a document entitled Youth Profile for more detailed information regarding the various youth populations involved with the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement.

<sup>2</sup> Attendees included representatives from the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, National Youth In Care Network, Big Sisters / Big Brothers, Assembly of First Nations, Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne française, Church Council on Social Justice, Queen's University, Metis National Council, Children's Aid Society, Exchanges Canada, Child Welfare League of Canada, YouCan, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Health Canada, United Nations Association of Canada, Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa, Vanier Institute, RCMP deal.org, Church Council on Social Justice, Canadian Public Health Association, National Association of Friendship Centres, Save the Children, and the Canadian Teachers' Federation

<sup>3-5</sup> Fay and Yanoff

# Arrival of guests

9:00 AM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To establish atmosphere of openness and respect
- To execute an activity planned by youth delegates
- To demonstrate invited guests' trust of youth
- To model elements of healthy risk-taking (to genuinely get "outside of the box")



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- Youth Greeters facilitate trust activity: As the guests enter Conference Centre, teams of delegates receive and warmly greet them. Once registration is complete, youth introduce Blindfold Exercise. Upon consent, guest is blindfolded and led to the plenary room whereupon they join their teams. This demonstration of their willingness to trust and to feel vulnerable is appreciated by the youth and in turn allows the element of intimidation to be lessened
- Teams welcome guests as honorary delegates

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

Research from our Centre (Literature Review, Program Scan, key informant interviews) indicates that "adults" need to experience youth engagement in order to become effective practitioners and advocates for youth engagement policies and practices.



TODAY I WAS A GUEST IN A WORLD I RARELY ENCOUNTER. AND I DISCOVERED WARMTH, JOY, ENERGY, AND RESPECT.

## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



"Today I was a guest in a world I rarely encounter. And I discovered warmth, joy, energy, and respect."

"I was reminded that our youth carry many adult concerns and yet they have not lost the pleasure of play. The collective was welcoming...The policy issue is also a cultured one – how do we, as adults, encourage the young in our midst? The division of activities by age and gender and interest has made strangers of us and has nurtured an unhealthy fear of each other." - G8M: Letters to Self

# Delegate Emcees (Chris and Tanya) open mini-conference

9:20 AM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To welcome all delegates and provide context for morning's activities
- To (re) introduce SC's 4 Pillars as values framework for morning's activities: respect, listen, understand and communicate
- To share conference perspectives
- To model healthy risk taking ("Ok to make mistakes!") and to provide an opportunity for interested delegates to host an event
- To model respect for both official languages
- To showcase youth leadership



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- Delegate emcees open morning events in French and English
- Successfully use humour and enthusiasm in the place of polished emceeing skills
- Lead series of large group warm-up activities
- Recount events of past conference days – anecdotal stories, reflection

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

Adolescent Empowerment Cycle, "in which adolescents are engaged in a process to develop a stable, positive identity by experimenting with different roles and incorporating the feedback of significant others." <sup>1</sup>

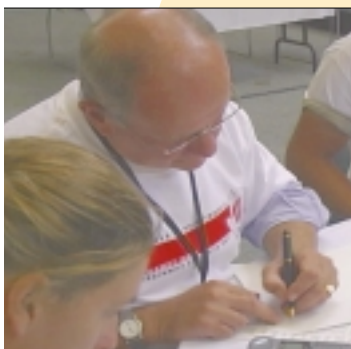
"When researchers examine what people believe friendships to be, or what constitutes a friendship, reciprocity is always involved." <sup>2</sup>

"Social capital does not reside merely in having friends, but rather resides in having socially competent friends...." <sup>3</sup>

"Whether friendships are developmental assets or liabilities depends upon several conditions, especially the characteristics of one's friends and the quality of one's relationships with them." <sup>4</sup>



## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



"I can clearly understand why youth enjoy coming to the conferences. As an outsider, I can feel higher self-esteem and confidence levels among youth who, I suspect, would normally not feel comfortable speaking in such a large group." - GF Letters to Self

"As an adult, I think it would have been much more advantageous to have us around for a least a full day or two if there is to be real examples of youth and adults working together. Coming in

late certainly was a strong example of how youth must feel when they get used to sit on committees with adults – after the fact. You can get off on the enthusiasm but it is officially to be a full partner...." P.S. Next year I'd like my daughter to attend. - GM: Letters to Self

1. Chinman, M.J. & Linney J.A.(1998), p. 398. Toward a model of adolescent empowerment: Theoretical and empirical evidence. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 18(4).

2-4. Friendships and Adaptation Across the Lifespan, Willard W. Hartup and Nan Stevens, Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota, Blackwell Publishing, Inc.

# Icebreaker

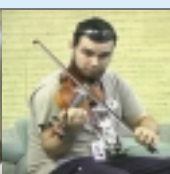
9:22 AM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To provide the opportunity for adults and youth to meet and interact
- To provide some physical activity
- To stimulate reflection on adult /youth relationships



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- Walkabout: Fiddle plays while adults and youth walk about the room. Music stops. MC says: "Turn to the person on your right and tell them about..."
- The 7 statements used related to effective youth /adult partnerships, relationships and were created by youth planning team

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

Learning Structure of Conference:

"It's not what we do, but how we do it," Process Evaluation of a National Youth Engagement Conference, Loisel, L., 2002, thesis, Brock University

David Lazear's four-stage teaching process:

1. Awaken, 2. Teach, 3. Amplify, 4. Transfer



IT'S NOT  
WHAT WE DO, BUT  
HOW WE DO IT

## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



**"Another thing that really touched me is that there were people at this conference who couldn't afford to buy a pop from a pop machine, but despite this, their values and aspirations were very similar to my own."**

- F18: Letters to Self

# Panel Discussion: “Monday Morning: Talking Sex with Barb”

9:30 AM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To engage young people in discussion on a topic which they have identified as important and interesting
- To continue discussions had by delegates earlier in the week introducing adult participation
- To generate honest, thoughtful discussion among the delegates
- To provide an example of a “youth friendly” atmosphere in order to stimulate subsequent small group discussions
- To demonstrate how an adult /youth discussion of a “taboo” topic can integrate information, safety, humor, candor, and acceptance of different values and behaviours



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- The topic was chosen by the youth planning team as the best of the previous week. A panel of youth discussed issues of sexuality with the discussion moderated by an adult with extensive experience in support and working with youth around issues of sexuality. Youth asked questions of the panel from the floor.

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

The choice of topic and panel for morning was based upon Head, Heart, Feet evaluations of previous four days, and input of Youth Program Planning Committee. The evaluation showed that the panel most enjoyed by the delegates in the conference so far was the “Sex with Barb Panel,” and it was decided to repeat it. The comments were:

“It’s not like sex education classes. It was more about relationships and experience.”  
“Research statistics don’t change our behaviour. We know that unprotected sex = HIV /Aids.” “What motivates us to be safe? What’s special here is the atmosphere that lets us talk. We want to know how to create the same atmosphere in other places. What’s the role of parents and teachers in sex education. Let’s show the adults the ideal atmosphere, how to do it.”

“We come together to teach and learn in a social context. We design an environment in which learners experience success and challenges through activity. We work toward common understandings of teaching, learning and child development among staff, students and parents. We create links with our wider community. <sup>1</sup>

“ ...for the first two days I was upset and confused of what was going to happen next. ...Now, when I look back it has truly been an experience of a lifetime. ...We all shared our differences from opinions of values, places we lived, cultural backgrounds and much more.... I have truly established my values. I know for sure what my values stand in. I suppose through the activities, I have searched for something I’ve been trying to find and have been asking myself for a few years.” - F16: Letters to Self

“I admit, I was a little shocked and even weirded out when I realized that the conference was on sexuality. I was under the impression that we were dealing with teens issues and concerns in the world! Which sexuality is a concern, but I didn’t realize just how much of a concern. I was weirded out because I have never met an actual lesbian or gay guy or a bisexual.... This has made me become a lot more open with myself. And gave me a little bit of an insight on how many non-heterosexuals there are in the world and the real life stories you hear about their struggles dealing with society and their families.” - G18: Letters to Self



## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

“From my experience this morning + the experiences they shared with me from the 4 days previous, I gather that this conference was a bit eye opener to some, a confidence booster to others, and generally a chance to talk about issues they may not have had a chance to talk about in day-to-day life, in a constructive way.

“I also left the morning conference less as a professional and more as a new parent thinking down the road to my own daughter’s future, to her sexuality and to



the way I may choose to bring these issues into her life. Many of the youth had no idea before coming here that the theme was sexuality. As a young person and /or parent I think that should have been basic information provided to delegates. Parents should know what their kids will be immersed in for 4 days, youth should be able to prepare themselves and discussions at the conference might be

richer as a result. There are young people here from a variety of cultures who do not discuss sex. This is a sensitive topic to be addressed and could have been highlighted more in the morning discussions. G19F: Letters to Self

“I liked how open and honest people were especially when talking about their experiences with sex. My parents never discussed the topic of sex and I think that you need more knowledge but not just youth, young children as well.” F20: Letters to Self

1. Smith, W. J., et al, Student Engagement in Learning and School Life: National Project Report, The Executive Summary, Ed-Lex, On Line Publications, Research Network on Education, Law and Policy, Faculty of Law, originally published by OREP, McGill University for McConnell Family Foundation, with support from Vancouver Foundation

# Small group discussion

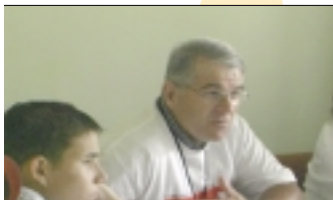
10:15 AM - 11:00 AM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To engage youth and adults on a personal level, and to facilitate the dialogue between young Canadians and Government and non-governmental officials
- To allow for reflection on ingredients of effective partnership
- To allow delegates to share discussions previously begun earlier in week at their conference
- To develop a concrete product from the discussion which will be used in a follow up activity



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- Facilitated discussions use the panel session to generate an exchange of ideas, opinions, feelings and experiences, to reflect and examine what was said and share in the group
- To develop a provocative statement about youth engagement to be used in a later activity

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

"Hands-on activities, small group work centering serious thought and discussion about ideas, and practices grounded in approaches that connected students' lives and the curriculum were widely cited as engaging." <sup>1</sup>

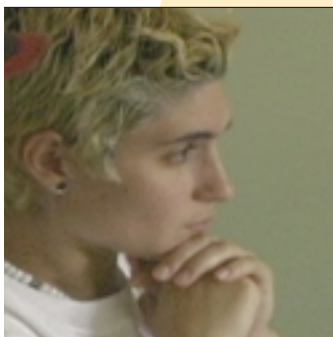
"Surprisingly, student participation in activities was not as compelling an aspect of student engagement as we originally believed. This is not to suggest that involvement and participation are unimportant, but rather to indicate that student engagement is not primarily activity-based, but rather that it is primarily associated with deep and complex relationships and inter-relationships among people, activities, and ideas. We found that the more students are permitted to take responsibility for themselves and their own activities, the more likely they are to be

engaged in a deep sense, not just be participating in an enjoyable activity." <sup>2</sup>

"Our case reports suggest that, when all school personnel see children and communities as dignified, responsible, capable, and rich in "social capital" (Coleman, 1990), schools become engaging places for students. Attitudes of caring and respect are central to representations of students that convey adult confidence in their abilities to share meaningfully in the creation of engaging school communities." <sup>3</sup>



## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



"What did I like? I like the theme. I feel that sexuality / values / community's effect on sexuality is an under developed, under explored topic, especially for young people..."

"I liked the small group discussions / activities, they're where I learned the most (about myself and others). The things I learned about my values / what I look for in a partner / what my community means to me (if I like it or not..?) are what I will take away and use in my every day

life. The panels were neat because they were composed of delegates.

"...I've learned about and will take home values (principally intelligence, openmindedness, individuality). I learned what I look for in a partner. I learned that I do have a community (because a community isn't just your neighbours!) and that there are some that I like, some that I'm not happy with." - F17: Letters to Self

1. Smith, W. J., et al, Student Engagement in Learning and School Life: National Project Report, The Executive Summary, Ed-Lex, On Line Publications, , Research Network on Education, Law and Policy, Faculty of Law, originally published by OREP, McGill University for McConnell Family Foundation, with support from Vancouver Foundation

2. Smith, OREP, McGill study

3. Smith, OREP, McGill study



# Plenary

AFTER A 15 MINUTE BREAK FROM 11:15 – 11:30 AM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To briefly communicate results from the small group discussions
- To demonstrate the diversity of thought and opinion in the room (and to encourage thought around the inherent challenges in reconciling them)
- To employ an alternative form of communicating learning: physical representation of a diversity of opinion, and a different method of self-expression



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- An Opinion Activity: Statements from the previous small group activity are read aloud. Participants stand or sit to indicate the degree of their approval or disapproval with the statement, ranging from Totally Disagree to Totally Agree.
- Concrete results from discussion are shared with the whole conference
- Statements generated from discussion groups ranged from “Youth conferences are a waste of taxpayers money” to The value of abstinence is under represented in our society.”

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

This activity was adapted by the Program Planning Committee from activities during the week when delegates actually moved from their chairs into a long line. The space at this Conference Centre was not suitable for this kind of movement, so there was some confusion as the activity was introduced to do it standing at the tables.

In fact, the previous “Walkabout” Activity in the morning had disconnected the translation microphones for the front tables. Learning for next time: think about impact of movement on microphones and sound system.



## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



“This conference was different from other conferences I have been to because instead of talking about some abstract idea known as “leadership” or “involvement”, there was a specific topic. Other conferences have been exciting and made me want to go home and do something big, but they didn’t really help me decide what the thing should be. This conference has really opened my mind to important issues that are out there in my country and filled me

with ideas of how I could work to change some of what has always bothered me about the world I live in. I like how everyone was open and ready to discuss things that people are sometimes uncomfortable talking about, and how many people were willing to share pieces of themselves and personal stories. I hope I will remember everything that I’ve learned here and apply it to my life at home.” - F16: Letters to Self

# Short speeches from Stoney & Eric

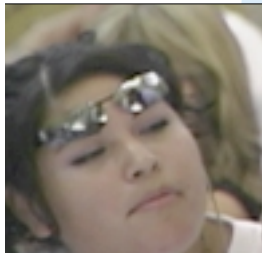
11:30 AM - 11:45 AM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To further contextualize the morning
- To formally introduce the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement to the group
- To be brief, falling in line with the agenda and atmosphere of the morning (few speeches, more action and interaction)



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- Short speeches
- Visuals in background (photo montage of youth delegates from the previous week, of Centres Research – youth in action)

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

The Students Commission has had extensive experience in engaging youth in planning and executing youth events. Now with the other partners of The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, particularly the researchers from Brock University and Wilfrid Laurier University, the Centre has the opportunity to explore with rigorous research and evaluation measures the impact of conferences on youth development and engagement. The learnings from this event will also be used to help plan future youth /adult events.



## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



“I want to go around my community and educate young students like me. I do remember the conference. I really liked it. I learned lots of things and I want to share with everybody. I want to do small workshops at my school and other schools too. I want to write articles for magazines and news papers about racism and other things.” F18: Letters to Self

# Letter writing activity

11:45 - 12:15 PM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To measure effectiveness of event
- To sustain the energy by forging stronger links between participants, with the Centre of Excellence, with each other
- To provide reflection time for participants
- To analyse responses and to build next event upon the feedback



## 2 ACTIVITIES



- Letters to Self activity lead by Dr. Linda Rose-Krasnor, Brock University: Participants are to write themselves a letter which will be mailed to them in 6 months. Letters can be sealed for privacy, or left open for researchers to read, but identities will be kept confidential.
- A youthful staff member plays the fiddle again, while everyone writes.

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

The Process Evaluation, Longitudinal Study interviews, Letters to Self, and video interviews conducted at this conference were part of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement research program. The study was approved by the Brock University Ethics committee. The results will be used to add to the scant body of literature on the impact of youth conferences and the development of youth engagement over time.

We are particularly interested in the role of adults in youth engagement and the impact of youth engagement on adults and systems. Also of interest is to provide models, process guides, and evidence to support anecdotal reports which suggest that these events are of significant value in initiating and sustaining youth engagement.



## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



"As a parent I leave this experience wanting to ensure I nurture an open dialogue with my children.

"As a professional I leave valuing the importance of educating foster parents and adoptive parents about the importance of listening, respecting and communicating with young people.

"Six months from now, I hope I will have taken concrete actions." - GF: Letters to Self

"6 months from now, I would like to be in my group home still, and well on my way to XXX (school graduation). Also, I would like to be involved in volunteering at XXXX-with XXXX (a school for the disabled). Another thing would be that I'm well on my way in many of my aspirations. Have fun." - F16: Letters to Self

# Emcee's closing remarks & participants' departure

12:15 PM

## 1 OBJECTIVES

- To thank participants
- To thank event funders, Health Canada, Exchanges Canada
- To close mini-conference with enthusiasm and originality



## 2 ACTIVITIES



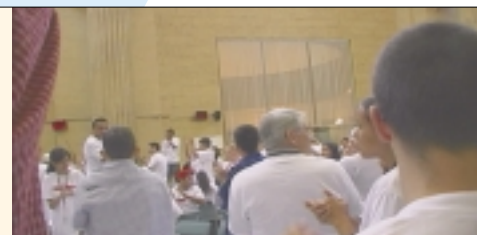
- Emcees motivate the audience to raucous demonstrations of thanks
- Music begins, participants crowd around impromptu dancers. Media capture "spirit" of morning. A fitting end.
- People exit building; youth to celebrate with some sightseeing and shopping...

## 3 BACKGROUND RESEARCH TO SUPPORT ACTIVITY

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement has underway a longitudinal study called Pathways of Engagement, and many of the youth delegates attending this conference chose to become part of it. They are now part of Cohort Two. The study is investigating many of the questions raised in the Letters to Self. The "long" study is linked to a Literature Review, a Narrative Study, and an on-going process evaluation. We expect to find out and measure whether the changes observed and written about in the Letters to Self and the Field Notes are there in six months, and how they look in another year, and the year after. We expect to find out whether the action plans result in action and behavioural change.

"So many discussions in such little time, will take many more days for me to really feel the difference they've made. Yet even before they've sunk in, I can sense the differences in me. I feel very inspired to help my community embrace youth, I have plans to develop an educational sex program in my school, and I hope to start a support group for gay /bisexual youth." - F17: Letters to Self.

"I have attended the conference of commission and I have found that it had an incredible impact on my life. But the most incredible thing happened to me. I found myself as soon as I came in touch with other people with the same problems as me. That made me feel like I wasn't all alone. I never travelled this long in my



little life but now I know that there is a whole world out there to see, all for me. So in six months I will be on the top of the world. Like they say it's a long way to the top but man what a view." - M18: Letters to Self

We are grateful for the participation and support of those joining us on our journey, with their questions, their willingness to experience, reflect and evaluate.

## 4 EVALUATION ACTIVITIES



"I am less certain, however, about the broader impact on this event – and other events like this – in strengthening the process of youth engagement in Canada. The follow-up aspect is unclear to me at this point, and I'm not sure that the partners who should be involved with the Centre and this type of initiative are represented.

"My conversations with delegates have also indicated that while people have "had fun" they were unsure about the substantial value of the conference. It seems to me that for actual advancement in the excellence of

youth engagement, something more is needed." - GM: Letters to Self

"This experience has re-kindled a fire inside me, one that I thought was lost. The best of me has surfaced and soared. In 6 months, I hope to be doing well in school, hopefully. I have gained this incredible urge to get involved not only in youth oriented programs and organizations, but to get more involved in my life, with life in general. I sincerely hope that if I'm not, that this letter will serve as a reminder." - M16: Letters to Self

The Centres of Excellence are a Health Canada-funded program. The opinions expressed in this brochure do not necessarily reflect those of Health Canada.



Health Canada Santé Canada

The Government of Canada, through Exchanges Canada, a part of the Department of Canadian Heritage, provides financial assistance for the Students Commission conference.

Canada