# Supporting Information

## Supplementary material

**This appendix was part of the submitted manuscript and has been peer reviewed.
It is posted as supplied by the authors.**

## Note 1. Youth Advisory Board Demographics

Nine members of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) were consulted. They were between ages 19-25, 2 were male-identifying, 6 female-identifying, and 1 non-binary person. Four of them identified as LGBTQIA+. Four were culturally and linguistically diverse, this includes 2 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. YAB were recruited via email invitations to pre-existing members and staff of The Matilda Centre. The emails outlined the expectations of the role.

## Note 2. Search terms

Database: Ovid MEDLINE(R) ALL <1946 to July 06, 2022>
Search Strategy:
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1    Mental Health/ (54137)
2    mental health.tw. (185031)
3    exp Mental Disorders/ (1380362)
4    (mental disorder* or mental disease*).tw. (48205)
5    anxiety/ or catastrophization/ or performance anxiety/ (100804)
6    (anxiet* or catastrophiz*).tw. (238070)
7    Depression/ (142060)
8    depress*.tw. (522435)
9    suicide/ or suicidal ideation/ or suicide, attempted/ (65407)
10    suicid*.tw. (88752)
11    Psychological Distress/ (3379)
12    psychological distress*.tw. (24609)
13    empower*.tw. (33228)
14    Hope/ (1611)
15    hope*.tw. (104508)
16    confiden*.tw. (638144)
17    self concept/ or body image/ or self efficacy/ or self-compassion/ (96403)
18    (self concept* or body image* or self efficacy*).tw. (53014)
19    (self esteem* or self-esteem* or Long?Term Happiness or wellbeing* or well-being*).tw,kw. (142481)
20    1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 19 (2798314)
21    Leadership/ (45894)
22    leadership*.tw. (44520)
23    decision making/ or decision making, shared/ (104008)
24    decision mak*.mp. (267694)
25    exp Policy Making/ or policy mak*.mp. (58985)
26    advoca*.tw. (83252)
27    civic engageme*.tw. (477)
28    (policy mak* or policy-mak* or advisory committee* or advisory board* or advisory group* or advisory structure* or steering committee* or steering group*).tw. (46667)
29    Agenc*.tw. (97884)
30    Political engagement*.tw. (191)
31    politics/ or political activism/ or stakeholder participation/ or (stakeholder engagement* or stakeholder participation*).tw. (54853)
32    Politic*.tw. (67847)
33    Activist*.tw. (3307)
34    21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 (461470)
35    20 and 34 (74633)
36    (Young adult participat* or Adolescent Participat* or young people participat* or Youth participat* or Teen* participat* or youth participatory action research).mp. (856)
37    (Young adult engagement* or Adolescent engagement* or young people engagement* or Youth engagement* or Teen* engagement*).mp. (317)
38    (("young adult*" or "young people*" or adolesc* or youth* or teen*) adj4 (engagement or participat* or "decision?mak*" or "policy?mak*" or leadership* or advocacy or "advisory committee*" or "advisory board*" or "advisory group*" or "advisory structure*" or "steering committee*" or "steering group*" or "user?generat*" or "activis*" or "co?design*" or "codevelop*" or "co?plan*" or "co?evaluat*" or "co?deliver*" or "co?produc*")).tw. (9506)
39    (("young adult*" or young people* or youth* or teen*) adj3 (Engag* or partcipat* or coproduc* or participatory action* or civic engage*)).tw. (2540)
40    36 or 37 or 38 or 39 (11108)
41    35 and 40 (480)
42    (experience* or reflect* or benefit* or perspective* or involv*).tw. (5151213)
43    41 and 42 (268)

**Table 1. NHMRC levels of evidence and grades for recommendations for developers of guidelines**

|   | Description |
|---|---|
| A | Body of evidence can be trusted to guide practice |
| B | Body of evidence can be trusted to guide practice in most situations |
| C | Body of evidence provides some support for recommendation(s) but care should be taken in its application |
| D | Body of evidence is weak and recommendation must be applied with caution |
| GPR | Recommended best practice based on clinical experience and expert opinion |

Source: NHMRC additional levels of evidence and grades for recommendations for developers of guidelines (1).

**Table 2. Evidence assessment for each recommendation**

| Recommendation | References | Quantity of evidence | Level of evidence | Consistency of evidence | Portion of evidence as 🔁 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Prioritise clear and respectful communication (both verbal and non-verbal) with participants from the outset | | | | | | |
| Ensure young people feel heard and listened to throughout all participation processes. | (2-8) | A (7 studies, 578 participants) | IV (7 qualitative [3 longitudinal, 4 cross-sectional]) | A | 3/7 | C |
| Be transparent about the scope and purpose of activities to be undertaken to reduce the risk of burnout and overcommitment.* | (9-14) | A (6 studies, 751 participants) | IV (3 qualitative, 3 mixed methods [1 longitudinal, 5 cross-sectional]) | A | 6/6 | C |
| Define roles, responsibilities, and expectations of activities and other forms of engagement that may be required including sharing of lived experience.* | (2, 7, 8, 13, 15, 16) | A (6 studies, 150 participants) | IV (4 qualitative, 2 mixed methods [2 longitudinal, 4 cross-sectional]) | A | 6/6 | C |
| Define how contributions will be acknowledged.* | N/A – GPR | | | | | |
| Define who young people can approach with questions, or for support during or after the participation. | (2, 3, 6, 14, 17-24) | A (12 studies, 755 participants) | IV (10 qualitative, 2 mixed methods [3 longitudinal, 9 cross-sectional]) | A | 1/12 | C |
| Offer regular opportunities throughout participation programs for young people to provide feedback and appropriately use this feedback to enhance programs. Consider allowing youth to give anonymous feedback to safeguard confidentiality. | (2, 7, 8, 13, 15, 16) | A (6 studies, 150 participants) | IV (4 qualitative, 2 mixed methods [2 longitudinal, 4 cross-sectional]) | A | 6/6 | C |
| 2. Create safe spaces and flexible practices for young people | | | | | | |
| Ensure the space is physically and psychologically safe and non-judgemental for participants by asking young people involved about their specific needs, and recognise and acknowledge any potential power | (2, 3, 6, 14, 17-26) | A (17 studies, 830 participants) | IV (15 qualitative, 2 mixed methods [4 longitudinal, 13 cross-sectional]) | A | 3/17 | C |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| imbalances. If young people under 18 are involved, abide by local regulations regarding background checks for working with children.* | | | | | | |
| At a bare minimum, consider the diversity of the group (e.g., cultural, language, lived experience) unless the program is aimed towards a specific demographic of young people, and acknowledge any potential power imbalances. Prioritise broad promotion of youth participation opportunities to ensure a diverse range of young people can apply and participate including entry-level positions that require little to no prior youth participation experience.* | (2, 10, 12, 17, 19, 27-32) | A (11 studies, 1181 participants) | III (2 quantitative, 9 qualitative [5 longitudinal inc. 1 cohort study, 6 cross-sectional]) | A | 11/11 | C |
| Ensure that participation is flexible (e.g., offering hybrid in-person/online participation). Flexibility can accommodate young people's time and availability, health and physical needs (e.g., mobility constraints or need for breaks), neurodivergence, communication preferences, and work capacity. Advise young people they can take a break or withdraw from activities at any time.* | (2, 3, 9-14, 16, 22, 23, 25, 33) | A (13 studies, 1532 participants) | IV (8 qualitative, 5 mixed methods [5 longitudinal, 8 cross-sectional]) | A | 10/13 – one study reported in both directions | C |
| Provide notice regarding content, especially that which might be emotionally triggering or distressing.* | (3, 9, 16, 25, 27, 33) | A (6 studies, 1188 participants) | IV (4 qualitative, 2 mixed methods [3 longitudinal, 3 cross-sectional]) | A | 6/6 | C |
| Where possible, offer remuneration for young people's time and expenses. | N/A – Good practice recommendation | | | | | |
| 3. Facilitate social and emotional support | | | | | | |
| Create opportunities for youth participants to foster social connection and shared enjoyment. | (2, 3, 6, 14, 17-26) | A (14 studies, 774 participants) | IV (12 qualitative, 2 mixed methods [4 longitudinal, 10 cross-sectional]) | A | 1/14 | C |
| Offer opportunities for debriefing, especially where participation has required young people to draw on lived experiences of mental ill-health, or when anticipated goals of participation were not achieved.* | (6, 33) | D (2 studies, 10 participants) | IV (2 qualitative [1 longitudinal, 1 cross-sectional]) | A | 0/2 | D |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Encourage young people to create their own wellbeing plans, including support and emergency contacts, strategies to avoid burnout, and agency for their own wellbeing during participation.* | (9-14) | A (6 studies, 751 participants) | IV (3 qualitative, 3 mixed methods [1 longitudinal, 5 cross-sectional]) | A | 6/6 | C |
| Involve adult allies to support young people during and after activities. Carefully select allies with competencies to support participants and when possible provide appropriate training. Allies may -be selected -based on their lived experiences (e.g. cultural identity) or interests of the group. | (19, 25, 26) | C (3 studies, 64 participants) | IV (3 qualitative [1 longitudinal, 2 cross-sectional]) | A | 0/3 | D |
| Where appropriate and feasible, consider providing access to external psychological support, and cultural or pastoral resources. | N/A – Good practice recommendation | | | | | |
| Consider an alumni system where former participants can continue to engage with facilitators and peers. | (2, 6, 17, 19-22, 24) | B (8 studies, 231 participants) | IV (7 qualitative, 1 mixed methods [2 longitudinal, 6 cross-sectional]) | A | 0/8 | C |
| 4. Empower young people to feel heard and participate in meaningful and impactful ways | | | | | | |
| Update young people on program progress and any impact resulting from their participation.* | (2, 3, 10-12, 16, 18, 19, 21, 25-29, 31-36) | A (20 studies, 2091 participants) | III (16 qualitative, 2 quantitative, 2 mixed methods [13 longitudinal inc. 1 cohort study, 10 cross-sectional]) | A | 0/20 | C |
| Where original goals have not been sufficiently achieved, debrief participants on what *has* been achieved and opportunities/potential for future impact. | (6, 9, 16, 20, 33) | A (5 studies, 666 participants) | IV (3 qualitative, 2 mixed methods [1 longitudinal, 4 cross-sectional]) | A | 3/5 | C |
| Support youth decision-making where possible. If a program is adult-initiated, where appropriate, create and support avenues for youth-led aspects through which young people can engage in shared decision-making with adults.* | (2, 3, 13, 14, 18, 22, 23) | A (7 studies, 554 participants) | IV (5 qualitative, 2 mixed methods [2 longitudinal, 5 cross-sectional]) | A | 3/7 | C |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Create opportunities (with appropriate support and mentoring) for young people to directly advocate to and engage with relevant stakeholders. | (7, 8) | C (2 study, 60 participants) | IV (2 qualitative [1 longitudinal, 1 cross-sectional]) | A | 2/2 | D |
| **5. Support young people to <u>develop skills</u>** | | | | | | |
| Consider what skills, personal, and professional development opportunities can be offered to young people. Provide relevant and supported opportunities for young people to learn and practise skills in a safe, equitable, and empowering way (e.g., rotating opportunities for leadership, delivering training programs, public speaking workshops, online safety training). | (2, 8, 10, 17, 21, 25, 26, 30, 35-40) | A (14 studies, 331 participants) | IV (14 qualitative [3 longitudinal, 11 cross-sectional]) | A | 0/14 | C |
| Where possible, provide mentoring and training to build young people's skills. Link participants with further opportunities for continued skill development and networking, by utilising organisational networks. | (6, 19, 25, 26, 39) | B (5 studies, 154 participants) | IV (5 qualitative [1 longitudinal, 4 cross-sectional]) | A | 0/5 | C |

Table key:

A, B, C, D = Strength of evidence from strongest to weakest based on the modified NHMRC 'levels of evidence and recommendation grading system' (see Methods)

GPR = Good practice recommendation, based on expert consensus between the YMHAT but a gap in evidence in the scoping review.

\* = Minimum requirement, where resource constraints prevent implementing all recommendations

🔁 Evidence suggested that not meeting the recommendation was harmful to young peoples' MHWB

## Note 3. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Mentally Healthy Youth Participation Guidelines

As highlighted throughout the Scoping Review and the Mentally Healthy Youth Participation Guidelines, organisations providing programs for young people should consider implementing practices that support youth participants to support their positive Mental Health and/or Wellbeing (MHWB) outcomes.

This supplementary material, developed by a young member of the Youth Mental Health Advisory Team, considers the responsibilities of the organisation and how the organisation can work to support young people. It explores recommendations for the program before participants have been recruited, before the program starts, during the program, and after the program concludes.

The following monitoring and evaluation framework, included below and in the following table, was created to provide suggestions for implementing the Guideline recommendations in practice. Organisations may feel free to adjust the monitoring and evaluation framework as needed to suit their program.

Recommendations for the program, **before participants have been recruited**:

- Consider providing entry-level roles in the program for young people with little to no experience.
  - Are there adequate resources and support available for young people to access application advice?
  - How can the organisation ensure that young people with little to no experience feel supported throughout the program?
  - How will the organisation advertise the program?
    - Consider advertising the program through diverse platforms including but not limited to organisational networks, partner organisations, advocacy bodies, local councils, education providers, community services that work with youth, and youth-led organisations.
  - Unless the program is targeting a specific demographic of young people, how will the program ensure adequate participant diversity?
    - Ensure the program opportunity is accessible for as many young people as possible and can reach a wide audience.

- Consider the language used across the program's promotional materials.
  - Is the language simple, easy to read and understand?
  - Is there any industry jargon used in the promotional materials? If so, has the jargon been defined for the audience?
  - Is it possible for young people with little to no experience to feel intimidated reading the promotional material?
    - Would they feel like the opportunity is accessible for them and feel empowered to apply for it? Imagine yourself in the position of this young person.

| Recommendations | Before program (after participants have been recruited) | During program | After program concludes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Prioritise clear and respectful communication (both verbal and non-verbal) with participants from the outset** | Is the purpose of the program clearly defined?<br><br>Are participants aware of the program's expectations, their tasks, and key responsibilities?<br><br>If the program includes sharing lived experiences, are the participants aware of this expectation from the start? Would participants feel pressured to share their lived experiences? Ensure that participants do not feel blindsided by this expectation and can fully consent to sharing their lived experiences. | Organisation offers opportunities for participants to undertake surveys and considers making feedback anonymous for confidentiality.<br><br>Participants feel comfortable providing genuine feedback without feeling pressured by those in-charge of the program to do so.<br><br>Organisation responds to feedback by making improvements to the program.<br><br>Organisation consults participants on the improvements they have made. Consultation is treated as an ongoing process.<br><br>Participants are engaged and active during the program.<br><br>Participants who have initially consented towards sharing their lived experiences can change their mind later. They do not feel pressured to consent to storytelling by the organisation or stakeholders. | Organisation holds a final meeting to end the program, outlining impacts, contributions and achievements of the participants.<br><br>Organisation keeps in-touch with participants by following up with participants on new developments and/or continued impacts of the program.<br><br>If desired, organisation can provide space for participants to meet again. This can be organised by participants or informally by the organisation.<br><br>Organisation surveys participants on MHWB impacts of the program and how connected they feel with other participants and allies. This can be considered by their frequency of communication with others. |
| **2. Create safe spaces and flexible practices for young people** | What psychological support resources are available for participants?<br><br>Can the organisation provide or fund psychological support for participants? At the minimum, can the organisation provide space for debriefing?<br><br>Is the program lead/facilitator confident in supporting young peoples' needs and providing a non-judgmental space?<br><br>Can the organisation define power and hierarchy within the work culture? Can the organisation identify systemic issues that may impact participants? Consider reflecting | Adult allies consistently reflect on power, their personal perceptions of young people and unconscious biases, and how they experience their organisational workplace culture.<br><br>Young people can adequately identify their needs, develop safety plans, discuss how they feel well and identify the signs of when they are not feeling well.<br><br>If young people require additional support, they feel comfortable asking for help, reducing their workload, or leaving the program<br><br>Program facilitator/adult allies can identify when participants are | Young people report lasting positive experiences from the program.<br><br>Young people report feeling satisfied by the amount of psychological support provided by the organisation.<br><br>Young people report a high satisfaction with the amount of accessibility support provided throughout the program. |

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| | on these issues through the lens of intersectionality and provide space for young people to explore these dynamics.<br><br>Consider the availability of internal and external support resources for young people.<br><br>Is the program accessible for participants (e.g. physical accessibility, support for neurodiverse participants)? Consider program accessibility, and existing factors that may pose a barrier towards youth participation.<br><br>Action ways to reduce barriers to participation within adequate means. If there are funding constraints, consider what the organisation can provide as a bare minimum.<br><br>If young people under 18 are participating in the program, the organisation is prepared to abide by local legislation regarding background checks and procedures for working with children. | under stress or may need to reduce their workload.<br><br>Organisation provides notice regarding content that may be emotionally triggering or distressing.<br><br>Organisation frequently checks-in with young people. Organisation can provide support for young people or can link young people with an appropriate support service.<br><br>There is opportunity for young people to reduce their level of participation or leave if they feel they are unable to continue participating. | |
| **3. Facilitate social and emotional support** | Can the organisation source adult allies to support the youth participants and provide mentorship?<br>If so, do the adult allies share common lived experiences with the participants and/or common interests and passions?<br><br>How can the organisation provide opportunities for participants to connect with each other? | Young people are supported to create their own wellbeing plans.<br><br>Participants express enthusiasm for social activities, and report experiencing adequately emotional support throughout the program.<br><br>The organisation can facilitate social activities for participants.<br><br>Where possible, young people meet in-person during workshops, meetings, and outings. | Youth participants continue to socialise and maintain their connections after the program ends.<br><br>Young people express that the relationships they formed during the program made a positive impression on them.<br><br>Where possible, young people return to the program as alumni to support future participants. |
| **4. Empower young people to participate in meaningful and impactful ways** | Does the organisation have experience working with young people? If so, how does the organisation typically work with | Young people are willing to actively participate and make contributions to the program. | Organisations survey young participants to gauge what they learnt from the program and if they felt it was meaningful for them. |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | young people? Consider previous feedback and observations from past programs.<br><br>Does the organisation already provide opportunities for young people to be involved in decision-making processes, e.g. co-design?<br><br>How can the organisation platform young peoples' voices? | Young people express feeling adequately supported during the program.<br><br>Young people can exercise decision-making by negotiating, making recommendations and suggesting changes to program where relevant.<br><br>The organisation supports young peoples' vision and endeavours, providing platform for their voices.<br><br>Where possible, young people can engage with and advocate directly to relevant stakeholders with adequate support and mentoring provided throughout this process. | Young people express that the program provided beneficial experiences for them.<br><br>Young people move onto other opportunities after the program ends if they have capacity or interest to do so. |
| **5. Support young people to develop skills** | What opportunities are available for participants to take on throughout the program?<br><br>Is the organisation aware of the skills that young people seek to develop?<br><br>Is the organisation adequately resourced to provide training and upskilling of participants?<br><br>Is adequate funding available for the program?<br><br>Consider contacting organisations, partners and individuals within the network that can support the upskilling, development and employment of youth participants. | The organisation provides opportunities for training, skills, and personal development and/or provides links to external opportunities for training, skills, and personal development.<br><br>Participants express content with opportunities for skills development provided throughout the program.<br><br>Young people can adequately discuss current challenges they are facing in their skills development, personal development, and training. They ask for more support where appropriate.<br><br>The organisation can identify when participants are facing challenges during skills development and provide support when needed. | Through surveying, young people report that they felt supported to develop their skillset through the organisation or through an external provider.<br><br>Young people can identify the skills they acquired during the program and/or the skills they have improved upon and how they have improved upon them.<br><br>Participants express feelings of confidence associated with their skills development through the program. |

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