

Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Directed Counseling

Includes:

Final Report

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Abstract

Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) is a mental health and youth justice organization serving children, youth and families. Over the past 3 years their programs have undergone reviews. PYS is now at a point of needing to implement program and outcome evaluation processes to ensure and maintain quality service and desired outcomes. From September 2024 to April 2025, an evaluation tool was drafted to assess the Directed Counselling Program in PYS. The core research question asked was the following: What is the most appropriate structure, form, and content of an evaluation instrument for the Directed Counseling Program offered by PYS? Research began with a literature review of secondary data regarding what components would be effective for an evaluation tool and proceeded with a consultation with the host organization coordinators. Afterwards, the evaluation tool was drafted and sent for further revision before conducting a pre-test on a subset of PYS Directed Counseling participants, who would provide further feedback on the evaluation tool drafted. The final version was submitted to PYS for their future use. This report comprises the entire process of drafting the evaluation tool.

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Directed Counseling is part of the mental health and youth justice organization, Peterborough Youth Services (PYS). This program provides counseling requested by case managers for youth to fulfill court mandated recommendations. This includes offense-specific counselling and/or mental health counseling. Over the last 3 years, many of the services offered by PYS, including the Directed Counseling program, have undergone comprehensive program reviews. For this reason, PYS is at a point of needing to implement a program and outcome evaluation process to ensure and maintain their quality service and desired outcomes. The researcher was therefore seeking to establish the most appropriate structure, form, and content of an evaluation instrument for the Directed Counseling Program offered by PYS. This included specifically delving deeper into the appropriate form and content of evaluation modules on participant experience, effectiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity. Based on information provided via semi-structured interviews with PYS stakeholders, an evaluation tool was drafted, tailored to the outcomes expected to be examined for the Directed Counseling program. Evaluation tools drafted were also revised based on further consultation with PYS stakeholders and additionally with feedback gained from current Directed Counseling program clients. The research concludes with preliminary findings for the evaluation of the PYS Directed Counseling program that were used to revise the final version of this tool. This was submitted to PYS for their future use as they see fit, considering the goal to provide feedback on the accessibility, inclusivity, effectiveness, and participant experience of the Directed Counseling program.

Introduction

Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) is a mental health and youth justice organization serving children, youth and families. They provide a range of accessible, collaborative and responsive services for the improvement of client and community safety and wellbeing. Over the past 3 years, many of the Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Child Youth Mental Health (CYMH) programs, services and processes have undergone comprehensive program reviews resulting in the introduction of new services and interventions, greater clarity of language and process definitions, program/service descriptions, service referral screeners and communication tools such as brochures and web-based media. PYS is now at the point of needing to implement program and outcome evaluation processes to ensure and maintain quality service and desired outcomes. A program requiring an evaluation is the Directed Counseling Program. The Directed Counselling Program is counselling that is requested by case managers so that young persons can fulfill court mandated recommendations. This can include offense-specific counselling and/or mental health counselling.

Research Questions and Methodology

The core research question for this project was the following:

1. What is the most appropriate structure, form, and content of an evaluation instrument for the Directed Counseling Program offered by PYS?

The subsidiary questions based on the core question were the following:

1. What is the most appropriate form and content of a participant experience study for the program?
2. What is the most appropriate form and content of evaluation modules on effectiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity for the program?

To answer these questions, this project was conducted in 4 steps. The first step included synthesizing a literature review of secondary data including academic materials and grey literature. The second component included a consultation with PYS stakeholders, specifically the host organization coordinators, Matt Sheridan and Amie Kroes. The method of data collection for this step was semi-structured interviews. The third component of the project was drafting the evaluation tools, which consisted of a short survey questionnaire. The draft and the final revised questionnaire versions, along with the semi-structured interview guidelines are included as appendices at the end of this project. Ultimately, the evaluation tool was based on the results from the semi-structured interview with the key informants, and on feedback from three Directed Counseling participants. The last component of the research included conducting a pre-test and revising the evaluation tool in question. Due to privacy concerns and to ensure anonymity, the host organization coordinator, Amie Kroes, administered the questionnaire and pre-test. Based on the feedback, the evaluation tool was revised and submitted to PYS.

This report details the evolution of constructing the final version of the evaluation tool, detailing the four main steps involved in its development. This report also includes the different versions of the evaluation tool (also attached as appendices) and any revisions made to the evaluation tool, explaining why these were made.

Literature Review

The initial version of the evaluation tool was based on the literature review conducted below. Subsequent to the consultation with PYS stakeholders, the outcome indicators part of the Outcome Data Collection Form (ODCF) shared by PYS stakeholders, were more in line with the host organization's expectations for the effectiveness module of the evaluation tool. The ODCF categories and ratings is a pre-post assessment the counselor from the Directed Counseling

program completes. Therefore, the final version of the evaluation tool used these specified indicators to guide its creation.

Context

This research is taking place within the context of Peterborough City and County, Northumberland, Haliburton, and Kawartha Lakes, specifically involving Peterborough Youth Services (PYS). This research project is addressing an overarching evaluation program for the services offered by PYS, specifically for their Directed Counseling program. PYS is a not-for-profit social service organization that has been working since 1976, with the mission of providing accessible, collaborative, and responsive services revolving around youth to engage them in a manner that is respectful, professional, therapeutic and overall fostering emotional and social health (Peterborough Youth Services, 2021). Their core values involve excellence, employee wellbeing, responsive collaboration, inclusion and equity, and dignity. The Directed Counseling service is part of their Youth Justice stream applying to youth who were found guilty of a crime that was committed between the ages of 12-17, and that live within Peterborough, Northumberland, Kawartha Lakes, or Haliburton. It's court mandated, receiving referrals from probation officers. From an ethical point of view, continuous evaluations of such programs are important to gain knowledge of the program's strengths and weaknesses, and to know how to improve weaknesses found with the end goal of better helping clients referred to their programs as part of their rehabilitation and reintegration to function within our present society and to prevent crime or recidivism.

Existing Tools and Frameworks

PYS Tools

PYS has a variety of tools already in place as part of their Directed Counseling Program. In this section we will have a brief overview of tools used and go more into depth about the more relevant ones. To begin, there is a Probation Referral form received when a client is referred. Additionally, there is a Youth Justice Information form that a worker completes when a file is received (this is a recent addition that has been in place as of May 2024). This form will include information such as client age, if prior diversions were present, what court they were referred from, and other offense-related information. PYS also uses a risk assessment for sexual offenses called Protective and Risk Observations for Eliminating Sexual Offense Recidivism (PROFESOR), and a mental health screener at the beginning of treatment called Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI).

Probation officers and counselors use a Checklist Summary to track modules worked on. This checklist includes the following modules: a) Orientation for Youth and Family, b) Self-Regulation, c) Social Skills, d) Sexuality, e) Putting it all Together, f) Making things Right, and g) Moving On. The first module focuses on what will transpire during counseling, what a sexual offense is, obligations after court, and an overview of what has happened and how one feels about admitting to their actions. The second module focuses on learning about managing emotions, thoughts, behaviors. This module also focuses on developing self-awareness, self-esteem, and coping skills. The third module focuses on learning about and managing social situations, include making friends, dating, and breakups. The fourth module focuses on learning about and managing sexual emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. This module is more extensive, focusing on being comfortable with body changes, developing independence and self-acceptance, exploring

relationships, consent, and protecting sexual health for one and others. The fifth module focuses on understanding oneself and why the crime was committed, and using knowledge and skills gained thus far to manage oneself safely in the community. The sixth module focuses on amending the situation of those harmed by one's actions, their families, and for oneself. The seventh module focuses on the first steps to a more hopeful and healthy life through pride and thanking those who provided support. The General Offense Treatment pathway and the Sexual Treatment pathway forms have similar modules (one is more specific to sexual related offenses).

The Non-Residential TPA Youth Experience Survey is used at the end of treatment where youth can provide feedback on the program and provide their experience with the program. This is a document required by the Ministry, who directly receive the results. PYS has no authority to change the content. This survey uses a 6 point Likert scale which inquired about whether or not they were respected, listened to, if they felt supported by staff, if the program helped them achieve their goals, if skills learned would help them in the future, if they understood the consequences of their actions via the program, the program's influence on the youth's involvement in the community and understanding of knowledge of resources and other services within the community, and questions of a similar nature. This survey also leaves a couple lines after each question to add any comments and a final question about any other comments or suggestions.

Lastly, ODCF Categories and Ratings is a pre-post assessment completed by counselors. The outcomes focused on are: improved functioning and positive social behaviors, increased skills and abilities, and increased youth engagement with support. The first outcome includes certain indicators of this outcome, such as increased recognition of impact of behaviors, improved functioning and positive social behaviors, and decreased risk behaviors. The second outcome includes indicators related to increased problem-solving abilities, increased skills and training and

improved life skills. The third outcome comprises indicators of improved transitions, increased youth engagement with community and family supports, and increased youth engagement with structured supports. These items are rated on 4-point Likert scale.

Similar Frameworks

The logic model is a framework that has been used in similar organizations. The logic model revolves around a theory of change and uses a visual representation of interventions and implementations along with results (Pelletier, 2022). Logic models usually have categories for inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Inputs would entail resources needed to implement an intervention, activities would describe intervention actions, the outputs would entail immediate measurements of the intervention, and the outcomes would then report changes resulting from the intervention and lastly, impacts would help represent the intervention's broader influence.

This model was applied to a mental health court program where it highlighted the importance of youth and family engagement, collaboration between members (specifically the mental health court team in this instance), use of appropriate screening and assessment tools, and evaluating factors related to treatment and rehabilitation (Davis et al., 2015). Similarly, a branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association also uses this logic model and involves participant users in aspects regarding the evaluation of mental health programs (Tremblay et al., 2017). This model highlighted methods used to achieve certain goals (from connections between stakeholders and the mental health network, exchange ideas and opinions, and ultimately promote integrated care) in relation to defining the problem to be solved by their program that was able to be gradually achieved via the logic model (Tremblay et al., 2017). In a related manner, the Public Health Center Training used logic models to create an evaluative tool for their training offered that focused on

quality and relevance (Freedman et al., 2014). The first steps in doing so relied on describing the program's current tools, identifying immediate outcomes and clearly defining goals (short, medium and long term). Lastly, Public Health Ontario also praises the use of logic models to shape program strategies, clarify and set priorities, and demonstrate these approaches to stakeholders (Public Health Ontario, n.d.). A logic model was described here as a planning tool by shaping program strategies, clarifying and setting priorities, and illustrating program approaches to stakeholders. These are adaptable to be simple or complex, but in the end they help identify gaps within a program, assign responsibilities, communicate support and the need for funding, maintain accountability for activities, but overall stay focused on outcomes. The power of logic models lies in their flexibility to be adapted to various programs and their ability to clearly identify and connect different aspects of a program, illustrating pathways to achieve each goal.

Background Information on Further Issues

Additional issues of relevance to the PYS Directed Counseling program evaluation concern accessibility, effectiveness, inclusivity, and participant experience. The following sections of this literature review pertain to each, supported by literature found.

Accessibility

Related programs or interventions for youth have looked at what makes their programs accessible or inaccessible. While it is important to reiterate that the Directed Counseling program is court mandated, meaning not a voluntary program, there could still be accessibility issues in relation to this program. At times, some barriers to accessibility can be what is categorized under organizational barriers, which would include overbooking staff, designing phone systems in a poor manner, lengthy intake procedures, repetitive paperwork, complicated family dynamics which can also impact transportation, or time intensive documentation (Rieckmann et al., 2011). When it

comes to court ordered interventions, as is the case of the Directed Counseling program, one should also consider the referral process for court-ordered youth and examine how long it takes to process this, as similar research has found it can take up to several months, posing another barrier.

Inclusivity

It is important to note that Indigenous youth are overrepresented in Canadian prison populations, and the same applies to Indigenous youth being overrepresented in the Canadian youth justice system (Cesaroni et al., 2019). This is important when considering the inclusivity of programs offered to youth, such as the Directed Counseling program as part of PYS. This overrepresentation is a complex issue due to various factors, including the aftereffects of colonialism, socioeconomic impacts and both attitudinal and institutional racism. It is also imperative to note that historically, research has used samples that may not be applicable or generalizable to diverse populations, limiting their inclusivity or the evidence-based validity of certain treatments or programs, to other populations (Wilbur et al., 2024). Today, formalized research policies are trying to promote inclusiveness and there are now policies outlining research practices where Indigenous values and traditions are being prioritized. In this way, with the use of Indigenous methods, one can look to decolonize and rebalance power. There has also been research looking into the implementation of training for mental health care providers that is both culturally relevant and based on social justice (Tenenbaum & Singer, 2018). Afterall, counseling has been founded on and taken on a Eurocentric, which some consider oppressive, approach and lens (Tenenbaum & Singer, 2018; Wilbur et al., 2024). Race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and even language have all been factors that have been agreed upon to be taken into consideration in treatment design (Rieckmann et al., 2011). This is because some research has shown how similar race and ethnicity between a client and counselor, or sharing cultural knowledge and/or

background, can improve treatment retention and overall success (Rieckmann et al., 2011; Wilbur et al., 2024; Albright et al., 2017).

Overall, it is worth taking an EDII (equity, diversity, inclusion, indigeneity) lens when it comes to interventions. This can help individuals feel welcome, valued, and respected (Wilson et al., 2020). These are necessary to meet the needs of diverse populations and can be applied in diverse situations, including occupational therapy. This can also be used as a framework to guide future research to ensure they are taking a more overall fair and inclusive approach. For example, the Canadian Institute of Health Research has an EDI self-identification questionnaire that has been used to examine shortcomings or systemic barriers from the Canadian population when it comes to accessing funding or programs (Government of Canada, 2021).

Effectiveness

Research pertaining to youth justice and their rehabilitation has focused on general preventative and decelerative measures (Myers & Farrell, 2008). Improving choice making, coping skills, interpersonal skills, or increasing academic/vocational involvement would fall under accelerative measures, whereas working on prosocial skills to combat antisocial behaviors would fall under decelerative measures. Further research has also highlighted similar important outcomes in effective treatment, such as confronting issues and moving on, finding community and support, and developing pride (Wilbur et al., 2024). Some approaches used to target the prior mentioned include multisystemic therapy (revolving around antisocial behavior), wraparound as a system of care delivery model (revolving around community, culture, family), or functional family therapy (revolving around quality interactions within the family unit) (Wilbur et al., 2024; Willingham, 2024). Similar research shines a light on focusing on social skills, moral orientations or bias, self-control, decision making, and problem-solving skills (Mathys, 2017). Other research has more

broadly taken into consideration criminogenic needs, which looks at antisocial attitudes, self-control, and self-management skills (Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). It's important to note that various research, while all overlapping in skills or behaviors focused on, have diverse approaches and terminology used to refer to these. It's also important to note that PYS, specifically through their ODCF form, also tackles certain skills or outcomes.

Participant Experience Surveys

Various research has also highlighted the importance of the participant voice and involvement for effective treatment, especially when it comes to Indigenous populations (Cesaroni et al., 2019). Youth have identified family engagement, community involvement, and diversity issues as areas of concern when it comes to the quality of services (Rieckmann et al., 2011). Indigenous youth often have a loss of identity or difficulty understanding their own history, and research repeatedly highlights the importance of incorporating Indigenous practices as a way to reconnect with their history, create strong relationships within the community, and not only to be heard but to feel understood (Cesaroni et al., 2019). Research has also shown how matching can aid in successful prevention and rehabilitation programming as it pertains to overall facilitating this need to feel heard and for the youth to take a main role within their treatment. For there to be effective treatment there needs to be a client-centered approach which involves looking into the dynamics of oppression from an ethical perspective (Tenenbaum & Singer, 2018). This research highlights the importance in taking into consideration the youth or the participant's experience with the program in question.

Findings

Prior to the consultation review and after the literature review, there were a few informal meetings held with the host organization coordinators to be on the same page about literature

review findings and the topics the evaluation tool should cover. Based on these informal conversations, semi-structured interview questions were drafted in preparation for the consultation on December 11th, 2024 (see Appendix A). It must be noted that, while this was an individual project, meetings were held in conjunction with two other researchers working on evaluation tools for two other programs part of PYS.

Consultation Findings

Following the literature review, we conducted a consultation, which consisted of a semi-structured interview with 2 key informants: PYS host organization coordinators, Matt Sheridan and Amie Kroes. This section contains the findings from these discussions, related to a few key themes: aspects of the 4 modules – accessibility, participant experience, inclusivity, effectiveness – to include within the evaluation tool. Researchers proposed aspects of each module to evaluate and finished each module with an open-ended question to get further feedback from the host organization coordinators. This consultation provided further insight into what aspects of each module to develop, remove, or include for the first draft. The original aspects proposed as well as main modifications made are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Consultation regarding aspects of each module proposed.

Module	Aspect Proposed	Consultation Result
Accessibility	Accessible Language	Kept
	Affordability/Costs	Modified (added tech. costs)
	Location/Transportation	Kept

	Availability/Scheduling	Kept
Participant Experience	Staff Engagement/Interaction	Kept
	Satisfaction	Removed
	Feedback	Kept
Inclusivity	Staff Engagement/Interaction	Kept
	Staff Representation and Cultural Competency	Kept
	Language, Practice, and Resources	Kept
Effectiveness	Improved functioning and positive social behaviors	Modified (emphasize positive relationships)
	Skills and abilities	Modified (focus on self management)
	Youth engagement with support	Removed

To preface the remainder of this section, the PYS host organization coordinators were in agreement about the core issues raised. The interview served to mainly expand upon the aspects proposed, modify a few where necessary, and remove any if necessary. There were only two

aspects removed, namely the satisfaction and youth engagement with support components of the participant experience and effectiveness module respectively. The first was because, as Matt Sheridan phrased it, “sometimes you can actually make progress and not be satisfied”. The second item changed was based on the ODCF indicators, however, Amie pointed out that these are, “in the ODCF because those are factors that impact recidivism”. The Directed Counseling program, however, does not always work with families or connect youth to the community. The remaining items were kept as the interview revealed more contextual information regarding the aspects proposed. The discussion of the effectiveness module served to steer the evaluation tool in the right direction. As this module was based on the ODCF, the interview revealed what aspects of the main outcomes listed in the ODCF should figure in the evaluation tool. For example, within the context of improved functioning and positive social relationships, communication and positive relationships were key outcomes that PYS would be interested in evaluating. Within the context of skills and abilities, despite the ODCF including job, life, and academic achievements as examples, PYS was more interested in evaluating self-management skills for the Directed Counseling program. By contrast, adaptation to change, while of interest, was potentially too abstract or difficult a topic to ask clients, therefore it should be removed. Similarly, PYS was less interested in evaluating youth engagement with support as defined in the ODCF, therefore it was removed.

Drafting the Evaluation Tool

Based on the above, the first draft of the evaluation tool was made. This draft was 7 pages in length and consisted of 32 questions (see Appendix B). The evaluation tool had space for other feedback or further explanation after each question and the answers (for non-open-ended questions) were formatted in a 6-point Likert scale. The questions were divided per module and

there was at least one question corresponding to each item appearing in Table 1 (above). This draft was submitted to PYS on January 22nd, 2025. Consequently, a meeting with Amie Kroes was held on February 3rd, 2025, to discuss next steps. The feedback provided by PYS stakeholders can be encapsulated in the following two points: a) too long, and b) too academic

To make the evaluation tool more accessible, the researchers were encouraged to adjust the reading level to somewhere between 3rd and 6th grade. Additionally, realistically, it was pointed out that PYS clients may not have the time or capacity to fill out a questionnaire 7 pages in length. The evaluation tool should be short enough to not add further strain or demand on their clients. No feedback was given on questions to remove and therefore the researcher had free reign of how to proceed with a revision. Additionally, final details about the pre-test were discussed.

Based on this meeting, and in conjunction with two other students working on the evaluation of other PYS programs, the evaluation tool was revised for a second time. The second draft of the evaluation tool consisted of 13 questions and a total of 4 pages (see Appendix C), a marked decrease in length from the first draft. The main changes made included combining similar questions that were separated in the first draft, removing less relevant questions or redundant questions, adding more space for the last open-ended feedback question, reducing the Likert scale options to an even number to avoid the “neutral” option, and lastly, rewording the content to reduce its academic level. This second version was submitted to PYS on February 16th, 2025. Due to time constraints, this version was used for the pre-test.

Pre-Test

The pre-test consisted of five questions regarding the clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and length of the questions within the evaluation tool. This pre-test included a final open-ended question for further feedback. This was administered to four current clients in

the PYS Directed Counseling Program. Although two initially chose not to participate, the final sample included three participants. The purpose of the pre-test was to gain further insight from relevant participants to revise the evaluation tool. Due to privacy and anonymity concerns, the pre-test was administered by the host organization coordinator. Feedback was then handed back to the researcher to further revise the evaluation tool. Worth noting as well is the pre-test conducted by another student working on the evaluation of other PYS programs, as there were 3 overlapping modules (inclusivity, accessibility, participant experience). Their pre-test was the same, but theirs was conducted on the Youth Advisory Committee that often provides input on similar matters, with a similar version of the evaluation questionnaire.

The feedback from the pre-tests (for Directed Counseling and the other PYS programs) led to the following main changes: a) removal of section titles, b) adding a 4-point Likert scale and a table to organize questions, c) changing wording of one question and removing two questions, d) improving consistency and formatting of the questionnaire, and e) being mindful of the language used. The final version of the evaluation tool (see Appendix D) consisted of 5 sections with 6 overall main questions, coming to a total of 3 pages. Four of these sections included parts 1-4. The section titles were removed as it was pointed out that there could be differing understandings of the meaning of accessibility, inclusivity, participant experience, or effectiveness. The 4-point Likert scale was implemented to avoid “neutral” answers from participants. The organization of the questions into tables per section was implemented to avoid confusion, improve formatting, and make it easier to understand. This also saved space, making the evaluation tool appear less lengthy — which was a key concern cited by clients who chose not to participate in the pre-test. The third part of the inclusivity section was pointed out to be confusing as to what “resource materials” meant so the wording was changed to “all communication” instead. Additionally, both the second

point of the first section and the second point of the second section were removed due to lack of relevance. The first asked about experience with the waitlist, but as this is a court-mandated recommendation, this may not be as relevant. The second asked about the client's experience being "matched" to the program, but again, as this is court-mandated and not voluntary, this question was not relevant. The questionnaire was reviewed once more to ensure it was all formatted without switching between past/present tense, and parentheses were used correctly. Additionally, all the questions were phrased in a first-person point of view to make it more "personal" – as this was also highlighted in the feedback. This final version of the evaluation tool was then transformed into semi-structured interview guidelines format in the event that PYS decides in the future to conduct semi-structured interviews in addition to, or instead of, surveys (see Appendix E).

Conclusion

The Directed Counseling program part of Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) is an important program that helps youth with their mental health and to fulfill court mandated recommendations. Therefore, it is important to evaluate said program to ensure its quality service and desired outcomes are being maintained. A short evaluation tool was created for this purpose, evaluating the program's accessibility, inclusivity, participant experience, and effectiveness. This tool has been revised after multiple rounds of consultations with PYS staff, and pre-tests with PYS clients. It is meant to be accessible to PYS clients and not too time-consuming. Ultimately, the production of a robust evaluation tool fulfills the core purpose of this research project, namely, to support PYS in its goal of "implementing program and outcome evaluation processes to ensure and maintain quality service and desired outcomes".

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Appendices

Appendix A. Semi Structured Interview Questions

GDST 4220Y – Questions for Meeting with PYS (Dec. 11, 2024)

ACCESSIBILITY MODULE

Laura: Perhaps we can begin with the Accessibility Module. There are differences between the programs but let's start with the questions in common. We would like to propose four aspects of accessibility to include namely: i) Accessible Language; ii) Affordability/Costs; iii) Location/Transportation; iv) Availability/Scheduling. Let's go through these one by one.

1. **(Laura)** In terms of accessible language, we intend to ask about the language used in the project-specific activities undertaken by PYS, in particular whether or not it is clear and non-technical. Would you consider this relevant to include in the questionnaire or not? [If not, probe – generic, could you explain why not?] Are there any other aspects of accessible language which are relevant to ask about or not?
2. **(Karen)** In terms of affordability/costs, we understand from our previous meeting that costs associated with time off work, child-care or transportation are relevant to include in the evaluation questionnaire. Are there any other aspects of costs/affordability which you consider relevant to ask about, or not?
3. **(Leon)** In terms of location/transportation, we understand from our previous meeting that physical accessibility for non-Peterborough-based residents and for those relying on public transportation are relevant issues to include in the evaluation questionnaire. Are there any other transportation-related issues to include or not?

4. **(Laura)** In terms of availability/scheduling, we intended to ask about the scheduling of services offered by PYS (for example Monday-Friday between 9-5 for some services) and wait times. Would you consider this relevant to include in the questionnaire or not?[If not, probe – generic, could you explain why not?]. Are there any other relevant aspects of scheduling/availability to consider in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

(Karen) Re. Awareness. For the Parent and Caregiver Support Program and for those participants who were NOT referred to the Crisis Response Program by a third party, we also intended to include a question on awareness of the program. For example, we intended to ask about the PYS website. Would you consider this relevant to include in the questionnaire or not? [If not, probe – generic, could you explain why not?]. Are there other ways that people become aware of PYS programming to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

(Leon) Closing Question: To recap, we proposed questions on: i) Accessible Language; ii) Affordability/Costs; iii) Location/Transportation; iv) Availability/Scheduling and v) Awareness (for the Crisis Response & Parent/Caregiver Support projects). Are there any other Accessibility-related issues to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE MODULE

(Leon): Now, let's move to the Participant Experience Module. Here we are following a set of standard questions which often appear on participant experience surveys. We would like to propose three aspects of the participant experience to include related to: i) Staff Engagement/Interaction; ii) Satisfaction and iii) Feedback. Let's go through these one by one.

1. **(Laura)** In terms of staff engagement/interaction, we intended to ask questions about feelings of being: i) respected; ii) heard iii) supported and iv) safe. Would you consider these factors relevant to include in the questionnaire or not? [If not, probe – generic,

could you explain why not]. Are there any other relevant aspects of staff engagement/interaction to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

2. **(Karen)** In terms of satisfaction, we intended to ask for client satisfaction with respect to the specific services offered by PYS along with an overall satisfaction question. Would you consider it relevant to include these in the questionnaire or not? [If not probe – generic, could you explain why not?]. Are there any other aspects of participants' experience to which the satisfaction questions should be applied or not?
3. **(Leon)** In terms of feedback, we intended to ask participants if they had any suggestions for improving their experience with services offered by PYS. Would you consider it relevant to include these feedback questions in the questionnaire or not? Are there any other relevant areas of feedback to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

(Laura) Closing Question: To recap, we proposed questions on: i) Staff Engagement/Interaction; ii) Satisfaction and iii) Feedback. Are there any other Participant Experience-related issues to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

INCLUSIVITY MODULE

(Karen) Now let's move onto inclusivity. Based on our earlier discussion, we understand inclusivity to apply primarily to issues facing groups which fall under EDI categories. Accordingly, we would like to propose applying this module only to participants who self-identify as belonging to a designated EDI group. First off, we wanted to know if this adequately captures what you have in mind or not?

(Karen) Ok. Perhaps we can give you an idea of some of the questions if they are posed to EDI-related groups. We propose three aspects of inclusivity to include related to: i) Staff

Engagement/ Interaction; ii) Staff Representation & Cultural Competency; iii) Language& Practice

1. **(Leon) Re. Staff Engagement/Interaction**, we intended to ask the same questions as in the participant experience module concerning feelings of being: i) respected; ii) heard iii) supported and iv) safe. The only difference is that we would append the clause ‘as a member of a distinct cultural group’ to the end of the question. Are you comfortable addressing inclusivity in this way or not? Are there any other relevant aspects of staff engagement/interaction to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

2. **(Laura) Re. Staff Representation and Cultural Competency**, we were interested in including questions concerning i) staff knowledge/understanding of participants’ cultural backgrounds and ii) effect of staffing composition on participant’s experience. Would you consider it relevant to include questions such as these in the evaluation questionnaire or not? [If not, probe]. Are there any other relevant aspects of staff representation and cultural competence to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

3. **(Karen) Re. Language, Practice & Resources**, we were interested in including questions addressing the effect on participant experience of i) language ii) practices and iii) resource materials used. Questions would likely inquire about ‘*level of comfort of x based on your cultural background*’. Would you consider it relevant to include questions such as these in the evaluation questionnaire or not? Are there any other relevant aspects of language, practices and resources to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

X=language, practice, resources

(Leon) Closing Question: To recap, we proposed questions on: **i) Staff Engagement/Interaction;** **ii) Staff Representation & Cultural Competency;** **iii) Language & Practice.** Are there any other Inclusivity-related issues to include in the evaluation questionnaire or not?

Effectiveness Module

I propose that the **effectiveness** module should comprise the following 3 main components: a) improved functioning and positive social behaviors, b) skills and abilities, and c) youth engagement with support.

PREFACE: These factors are based on the ODCF outcomes, however the following questions are meant to provide further clarification.

RE: IMPROVED FUNCTIONING AND POSITIVE SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

The ODCF form talks about difficulties responding to adults, difficulties interacting with peers, unawareness of others, excessive arguing or withdrawal, should all these factors be considered in the evaluation tool or not? Are there other factors that should be considered or not?

The ODCF form talks about substance use, aggressive behavior, and negative peer influences, as risk factors, should these be considered in the evaluation tool or not? Are there other risk factors that should be considered or not?

RE: SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Can you provide an example of decision managing skills that I can ask about in the evaluation questionnaire? [PROBE: the ODCF form talks about planning and self-regulation, should these aspects of skills and abilities be focused on or not?]

What aspects of academic achievement do you think are relevant to include in the evaluation questionnaire? [PROBE: For example, should attendance, grades, and ability to work independently, constitute factors of academic achievement or not?]

Should other factors be considered or not?

Can you provide an example of what aspects of life skills should be included in the evaluation?

[PROBE: the ODCF talks about money management, self-care, cooking, cleaning – should these all be included in the evaluation tool or not?]

RE: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WITH SUPPORT

What is meant by adaptation to change and what aspects of it are most relevant to include?

Should adaptation to change be included within the evaluation tool or not?

Which aspects of youth engagement with family and/or community do you think are most important to include? [PROBE: The ODCF talks about communication with these supports, long term ties, school attendance, employment – are all these factors relevant to include within the evaluation tool or not?]

Conclusion:

Are there any other issues which are relevant to include in the evaluation tool related to improved functioning and positive social behaviors, skills and abilities, or youth engagement with support? Are there any other **effectiveness**-related outcomes to include or not?

Appendix B. First Version of the Evaluation Questionnaire

PYS Directed Counseling Program

Evaluation Questionnaire (Draft, Jan 21, 2025)

Accessibility

To what extent did the following factors affect or limit your access to the Directed Counseling program offered by Peterborough Youth Services (PYS)?:

- a. Scheduling time off work to meet service hours

1- not at all, 2- very little, 3- somewhat, 4- quite a bit, 5- very much, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- b. Cost of technology for virtual services (such as internet).

1- not at all, 2- very little, 3- somewhat, 4- quite a bit, 5- very much, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- c. Cost of transportation (for example, public transportation, gas, etc.).

1- not at all, 2- very little, 3- somewhat, 4- quite a bit, 5- very much, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- d. Hours of available services.

1- not at all, 2- very little, 3- somewhat, 4- quite a bit, 5- very much, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

e. Your residential location (those outside the city limits).

1- not at all, 2- very little, 3- somewhat, 4- quite a bit, 5- very much, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

a. Communication with PYS staff was clear and easy to understand (including language used in program materials).

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

Feedback:

Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding the accessibility of the PYS Program (including suggestions for improvement)?

Participant Experience

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

a. I felt respected in the PYS Directed Counseling program.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

b. I felt heard in the PYS Directed Counseling program (for example, I could speak openly and felt understood).

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

c. I felt supported by the PYS Directed Counseling program (for example, PYS staff made me feel valued and that they were there for me).

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

d. I felt safe in the PYS Directed Counseling program (for example, feeling physically safe from harm or feeling emotionally safe to share my thoughts and feelings).

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

Feedback:

Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding the participant experience of the PYS Program (including suggestions for improvement)?

Inclusivity

In this section, we use the phrase ‘who I am as a person’ to refer to things which define one’s identity and lived experience. Examples include one’s cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability and so on.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

a. I felt respected considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

b. I felt welcome considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

c. I felt valued considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

d. I felt a sense of belonging considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

e. I felt comfortable speaking openly with PYS staff considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

f. I felt understood by PYS staff considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

g. Communication with PYS staff was appropriate considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

h. Resource materials were provided in a language or form of communication which I can understand considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- i. I felt reflected in the resource materials provided by PYS considering who I am as a person.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- j. Resource materials made me feel a sense of inclusion in the PYS program.

1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither disagree or agree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

Feedback:

Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding the inclusivity of the PYS Program (including suggestions for improvement)?

Effectiveness:

How effective do you feel the PYS Directed Counseling program was in meeting the following objectives?:

- a. Helping you recognize the impact of your behaviors (for example, how you come across to others, recognizing the effect of your behaviors, empathizing with others, etc.).

1- not effective at all, 2- slightly effective, 3- moderately effective, 4- very effective, 5- extremely effective, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- b. Improving your interactions with peers and adults (for example, communicating with others, positive feelings of interacting with others, ease being in groups, being able to relate to others, etc.).

1- not effective at all, 2- slightly effective, 3- moderately effective, 4- very effective, 5- extremely effective, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- c. Reducing potential substance use.

1- not effective at all, 2- slightly effective, 3- moderately effective, 4- very effective, 5- extremely effective, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- d. Reducing aggressive behavior or thoughts (for example, physically lashing out at others or thinking about doing so, picking fights, excessively arguing with others, etc.).

1- not effective at all, 2- slightly effective, 3- moderately effective, 4- very effective, 5- extremely effective, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- e. Reducing the influence of negative peer influences on you (for example, wanting to engage in harmful behavior because your peers do, etc.).

1- not effective at all, 2- slightly effective, 3- moderately effective, 4- very effective, 5- extremely effective, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- f. Helping you develop self-management plans (for example, plans to avoid misbehaving, engaging in bad coping skills, lashing out, etc.).

1- not effective at all, 2- slightly effective, 3- moderately effective, 4- very effective, 5- extremely effective, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- g. Improving your communication skills with others (for example, coming up with ideas of how to better express your feelings, knowing to identify when you should reach out to someone if you need to, how to express your frustration, etc.).

1- not effective at all, 2- slightly effective, 3- moderately effective, 4- very effective, 5- extremely effective, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

- h. Improving your ability to resolve conflicts with others (for example, strengthening your active listening, understanding, compromising/negotiating, clear communication, etc.).

1- not effective at all, 2- slightly effective, 3- moderately effective, 4- very effective, 5- extremely effective, 6- not applicable

Please elaborate (if relevant).

Feedback:

Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding effectiveness of the PYS
Directed Counseling Program (including suggestions for improvement)?

Appendix C. Second version of the evaluation questionnaire

PYS Directed Counseling Program

Evaluation Questionnaire (Draft, Feb 16, 2025)

Accessibility

To what extent did the following factors affect or limit your access to the Directed Counseling Program offered by Peterborough Youth Services (PYS)?:

A. Making accommodations (e.g. scheduling time off work, including childcare for youth not involved, transportation) to meet hours of service availability.

1- Not at all 2- Somewhat 3- Very much

Please share more details if there are any other factors affecting your ability to access the Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Directed Counseling program:

Participant Experience Module

Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, select if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

A. I felt heard and valued (e.g. I could speak openly and felt understood).

1- Disagree 2-Neutral 3- Agree

Please share more details (if needed).

B. I felt like I was matched with the right service.

1- Disagree 2-Neutral 3- Agree

Please share more details (if needed).

C. I felt secure (i.e. I felt secure sharing my thoughts and feelings, knowing my privacy was protected)

1- Disagree 2-Neutral 3- Agree

Please share more details (if needed).

Inclusivity

In this section, we use the phrase ‘who I am as a person’, to refer to things which define one’s identity and lived experience. Examples include one’s cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability and so on.

Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, select if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

A. I felt respected considering who I am as a person.

1- Disagree 2- Neutral 3- Agree

Please share more details (if needed).

B. I felt accepted by Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) staff considering who I am as a person.

1- Disagree 2-Neutral 3- Agree

Please share more details (if needed).

C. Program materials and communication were provided in a way in which I can understand considering who I am as a person.

1- Disagree 2- Neutral 3- Agree

Please share more details (if needed).

Effectiveness:

How well do you feel the Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Directed Counseling Program did in meeting the following goals?:

A. Helping you understand how your actions affect others.

1- Not effective 2- Neutral, 3- Effective

Please share more details (if needed).

B. Improving your interactions with others (e.g. feeling more positive about your relationships with others, fighting less with others, respecting others).

1- Not effective 2- Neutral, 3- Effective

Please share more details (if needed).

C. Improving your problem solving skills (e.g. better listening, understanding, meeting others halfway, talking clearly).

1- Not effective 2- Neutral, 3- Effective

Please share more details (if needed).

D. Helping you make plans to take care of yourself (e.g. plans to avoid bad behavior or unwanted thoughts, knowing when to ask for help, having healthy ways of releasing stress).

1- Not effective 2- Neutral, 3- Effective

Please share more details (if needed).

Overall, compared to the beginning of the Directed Counseling Program, do you feel like you learned something or that there was a change for the better?

1- No, 2- Somewhat, 3- Yes

Please share more details (if needed).

Feedback:

Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding your experience in the Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Directed Counseling Program (including suggestions for improvement)?

Appendix D. Final Version of the Evaluation Questionnaire

Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Directed Counseling Program

Evaluation Questionnaire (Mar 8, 2025)

Section 1

To what extent did the following factor affect or limit your access to the Directed Counseling program?:

<i>Circle the answer that best reflects your experience.</i>	Not at all	Very Little	Somewh at	Very Much
Making accommodations to meet offered hours of services (e.g. scheduling time off work, arranging childcare, transportation).	1	2	3	4

Please share more details if there are any other factors affecting your ability to access the program:

Section 2

Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, select the degree of your agreement with the following statements:

<i>Circle the answer that best reflects your experience.</i>	Not at all	Very Little	Somewh at	Very Much

I feel heard and valued (e.g. I can speak openly and feel understood).	1	2	3	4
I feel secure sharing my thoughts and feelings, knowing my privacy is protected.	1	2	3	4

Please share more details (if needed).

Section 3

In this section, we use the phrase ‘who I am as a person’, to refer to things which define one’s identity and lived experience. Examples include one’s cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability and so on.

Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, select the degree of your agreement with the following statements:

<i>Circle the answer that best reflects your experience.</i>	Not at all	Very Little	Somewh at	Very Much
I feel respected considering who I am as a person.	1	2	3	4
I feel accepted by Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) staff considering who I am as a person.	1	2	3	4
All communication with PYS staff is provided	1	2	3	4

in a way in which I can understand considering who I am as a person.				
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Please share more details (if needed).

Section 4:

Based on your experience, how do you feel the Directed Counseling program did in meeting the following goals?

<i>Circle the answer that best reflects your experience.</i>	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Helping me understand how my actions affect others.	1	2	3	4
Improving my interactions with others (e.g. feeling more positive about my relationships with others, fighting less with others, respecting others).	1	2	3	4
Improving my problem solving skills (e.g. better listening, understanding, meeting others halfway, talking clearly).	1	2	3	4
Helping me make plans to take care of myself	1	2	3	4

(e.g. plans to avoid bad behavior or unwanted thoughts, knowing when to ask for help, having healthy ways of releasing stress).				
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Overall, compared to the beginning of the Directed Counseling Program, do you feel like you learned something or that there was a change for the better?

<i>Circle the answer that best reflects your experience.</i>	Not at all	Very Little	Somewh at	Very Much
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Please share more details (if needed).

Section 5:

Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding your experience in the Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Directed Counseling Program (including suggestions for improvement)?

Appendix E. Final Version of the Evaluation Questionnaire (Semi-Structured Interview Format)

Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Directed Counseling Program

Evaluation Questionnaire

In this interview, we are going to be asking about your experience in the Directed Counseling program. The goal of this interview is to collect information to improve services at PYS.

Section 1

Q1: What factors impacted or limited your ability to access the Directed Counseling program, if any at all?

P1: For example, this can include making accommodations to meet offered hours of services such as scheduling time off work, arranging childcare, or transportation. Did any of these factors affect you, or not?

Section 2

Q3: Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, did you feel heard and valued, or not?

P2: For example, this can include feeling able to openly share your thoughts and feelings with PYS staff and feeling understood. Was this your experience with PYS staff or not?

Q4: Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, did you feel secure sharing your thoughts and feelings, knowing that your privacy was protected, or not?

Section 3

In this section, we use the phrase ‘who I am as a person’, to refer to things which define one’s identity and lived experience. Examples include one’s cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability and so on.

Q5: Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, did you feel respected considering who you are as a person, or not?

Q6: Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, did you feel accepted by PYS staff considering who you are as a person, or not?

Q7: Based on your experience in the Directed Counseling program, did you feel that all communication with PYS staff was provided in a way that you can understand considering who you are as a person, or not?

Section 4:

Q8: Do you feel the Directed Counseling program helped you understand how your actions affect others, or not?

Q9: Do you feel the Directed Counseling program helped you improve your interactions with others, or not?

P3: For example, did the program help you feel more positive about your relationships with others, fight less with others, or respect others more, or not?

Q10: Do you feel the Directed Counseling program helped you improve your problem solving skills, or not?

P4: For example, did the program help you become a better listener, understand better, meet others halfway, or talk more clearly, or not?

Q11: Do you feel the Directed Counseling program helped you make plans to take care of yourself, or not?

P5: For example, did the program help you make plans to avoid bad behavior or unwanted thoughts, help you know when to ask for help, help you have healthy ways of releasing stress, or not?

Q12: Overall, compared to the beginning of the Directed Counseling Program, do you feel like you learned something or that there was a change for the better, or not?

Section 5:

Q13: Are there any other comments you would like to share regarding your experience in the Peterborough Youth Services (PYS) Directed Counseling Program (including suggestions for improvement)?