



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2020-2024



### OPERATIONAL PLAN

**Mission:** YOUTHLINK believes in the potential of every youth and we are dedicated to providing them with the support, guidance and opportunities they need to make positive life choices.

**Vision:** A stronger Scarborough where all youth and families thrive. YouthLink joins with youth, families and partners to highlight and develop strengths, aspirations and positive actions that improve the health and well-being of all who live, work, study and play in our community.

**STRATEGY****RESILENCY**

Youth in Scarborough are thriving within a caring community.

- A The number of youth served in our programs increases each year**
- 1 Increase internal referrals from the community teams to external resources
  - 2 Targeted outreach plan to communities in Scarborough
  - 3 Improve service coordination within YouthLink and across Youthlink programs
  - 4 Virtual Walk-in technology implemented and evaluated
  - 5 Survey youth regarding expectations regarding virtual services

- B Reduce Wait Times for counselling services**
- 1 Seek out additional funding to hire counsellors both in walk-in, shelter and to support other locations
  - 2 Investigate innovative ways to improve client services by reducing wait times

- C Measure client satisfaction and incorporate feedback into service planning**
- 1 Youth Advisory to contribute feedback regarding programs and client services
  - 2 Client satisfaction surveys completed twice a year
  - 3 Client satisfaction results shared with managers and staff twice a year
  - 4 Increase family and client narratives and data to inform services and advocacy
  - 5 Provide ongoing evaluation of our services and impacts on the community
  - 6 Ongoing evaluation of our ABR and Anti-Oppression initiatives with clients, partners, and staff
  - 7 Client satisfaction moved to a new platform from Type-form to a new software platform Simple Survey
  - 8 Implement the Back to Workplace Plan



**D Extending partnerships with other providers to improve access and provide a more holistic and specialized service to our clients**

- 1 Develop and solidify partnerships with agencies focused on serving the Scarborough community
- 2 Formalize partnerships with Radius or another provider to create specialized trauma assessment and treatment
- 3 Create pathways of care with the 5 collaborative partners
- 4 Develop the collaborative partnership in areas of service, and back office support
- 5 Work with the OHT's serving Scarborough to develop care models
- 6 Formalize ABR partner committees

**E Formal incorporation of community development principles and approaches to eliminating barriers to services and opportunities for sustainability**

- 1 Develop a holistic approach grounded in principles of empowerment, human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-determination and collective action
- 2 Consider community members to be experts in community knowledge
- 3 Provide training to staff so they understand community development approaches and principles and the significance to YouthLink programs

**F Where possible, provide accessible and inclusive services at multiple sites**

- 1 Where possible allocate staff to multiple locations to deliver services to specific client groups
- 2 Integrate services into YouthLink programs and make youth aware of what is available to them, or create community programming at their location

**G Implement innovative approaches to serving community members utilizing technologies**

- 1 Implement the appointment reminder system
- 2 Advertise the tele-psychiatry system to other agencies in Scarborough and Toronto
- 3 Utilize social media to service community members through podcasts or blogs on mental health topics
- 4 E-Virtual Services and software, selected, integrated, implemented, and continually monitored
- 5 Text, Email options for E-Virtual care investigated, purchased, implemented

**H Develop more capacity to serve clients**

- 1 Seek funding through governments, businesses, and Foundations to support YouthLink programs
- 2 Solutions to adding more space required to serve clients or to offer programs
- 3 Provide training to all staff to understand the Indigenous community and the services they need

## Measurements and Accountability Framework

Accountability Framework		Data Source	Reporting Frequency
<b>1</b>	(Baseline) Total population of Toronto and Scarborough and of sub-populations by age	City of Toronto	Annual
<b>2</b>	Total population served by YL, and by YL program	Internal	Annually
<b>3</b>	Satisfaction of youth in-service with YL service, by service	Internal, Client Voice	Annually
<b>4</b>	Average wait time for a YL service, by program (eliminate central intake services)	Internal	Annually
<b>5</b>	Rate of graduation and those entering post secondary school as a result of being in a YouthLink program	Internal	Annually
<b>6</b>	Youth who are homeless and find permanent housing as a result of being in a YouthLink program	Internal	Annually
<b>7</b>	ABR data survey	Internal	Annually
<b>8</b>	Number of formal and informal partnerships	Internal	Annually
<b>9</b>	Survey youth regarding services and service delivery options such as E-Virtual	External	Annually

## STRATEGY



## SAFETY, SECURITY AND WORLDVIEW

Youth who are marginalized are achieving personal growth, fulfillment and satisfaction through improved physical safety, emotional security and worldview gained from their involvement in positive relationships and effective use of suitable support resources

### A

#### **Improve access to service sites and hours of operation**

- 1 Complete implementation of Walk-in virtual access project
- 2 Seek funding to offer walk-in on the weekend, or extended hours
- 3 Invite different teams to sites for team meetings and sharing
- 4 Implement the back to the workplace plan that includes the use of PPEs for clients and staff
- 5 Work with the lead agency to align hours of operation with all other Toronto walk-in services

### B

#### **Employ evidence-based decision making that is data driven**

- 1 Provide ongoing evaluation of our programs and services
- 2 Investigate CYSIS to ensure the collection of data is relevant and valuable for YouthLink programs, or investigate another system to replace CYSIS that can improve data collection
- 3 Work with the collaborative partners to learn and standardize the collection of data across 5 agencies
- 4 Provide training to all staff on evidence based practices and where applicable implement best practice
- 5 LGBT needs assessment to better serve the population
- 6 Using data to drive programming for Black youth

### C

#### **Be intentional in hiring staff who represent the community**

- 1 Survey all staff to benchmark representation from the communities we serve
- 2 Job postings advertised in community spaces. Screen resumes for community involvement and representation
- 3 Investigate whether a hiring affirmative action plan may be needed
- 4 Rewrite the job posting statement to include minorities and a reflection of the community we serve
- 5 Develop a comprehensive plan for on-boarding new staff

**D Adoption of a site specific Harm Reduction Program**

- 1 Incorporate harm reduction into care and treatment plans for appropriate programs recognizing the different needs and barriers
- 2 Incorporate harm reduction into on call procedures
- 3 Complete agency-wide training on harm reduction. Develop an implementation plan for programs that have a harm reduction lens

**E Improve new supportive housing units**

- 1 596 Danforth Road Units renovated
- 2 Seek funding for the renovation of the Danforth location

**F Pathways program**

- 1 Lobby Pathways Canada to maintain or grant additional funding to enhance the Pathways program in Scarborough Village
- 2 Review the Pathways program options given the budget reductions

**G Build a more inclusive agency by developing pathways of care between programs**

- 1 Initiate case conferences for shared clients who are enrolled in more than one program
- 2 YouthLink departments to develop an internal referral system for programs that can benefit their clients

**H Encourage youth to engage in a positive path, and a healthy life style through work on their goals including education or employment**

- 1 Incorporate schools into circle of care through programming and communications
- 2 Work together to address mental health improvements with our partners in education or with employers
- 3 Build partnerships with employers

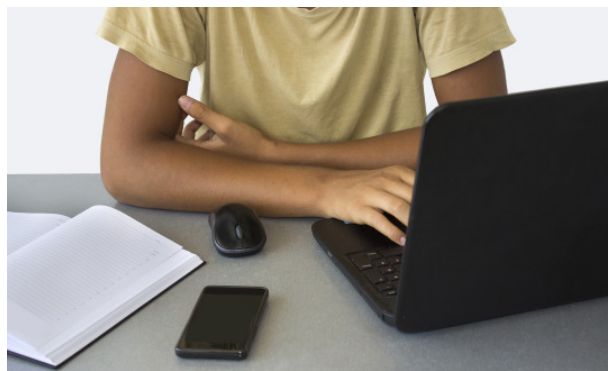
**I Adapt the workplace to ensure the safety of staff and clients**

- 1 Evaluate the environment to ensure social distancing and make changes to the office environment for public areas and working face to face.
2. Ensure that PPE's are available for clients and staff
3. Change reception desk arrangements to ensure social distancing and safety of staff



## Measurements and Accountability Framework

Accountability Framework		Data Source	Reporting Frequency
<b>1</b>	Number of youth who rely on YL for a bed over a year	Internal	Annually
<b>2</b>	Average wait time for a YL bed for co-op homes, or transitional home (not those on the central intake system)	Internal	Annually
<b>3</b>	% of youth in Pathways, or in housing programs who will as a result of their YL experience continue as a student, a high-school or post-secondary graduate, an enrollee in a training program, or a volunteer at a community group or organization	Internal	Annually
<b>4</b>	Benchmark study results for staff and board	Internal	Annually
<b>5</b>	Number of clients who are enrolled in more than one YouthLink program	Internal	Annually





## STRATEGY



## ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND TRUST

Communities who experience racism and discrimination and have encountered social dysfunction and experiencing emotional and relational stability through improved capabilities self-confidence and trust in themselves and their families

### A

#### Anti-Black racism strategy

- 1 Ask Black youth what they need to succeed
- 2 The ABR committee to develop a 3-year strategy. Involve staff and clients in preparing the plan
- 3 Make ABR a regular agenda item on the management meetings and prepare an assessment of the progress on the ABR
- 5 Continued commitment to ABR training and incorporation of ABR into the onboarding on new staff
- 6 Track race based data
- 7 Supports in place for our Black staff members
- 8 Continually train and build awareness about Anti-Black Racism among staff including new hires
- 9 Consider supports for the Black community through strategies that raise awareness and draw attention to unacceptable behaviours

### B

#### Expand outreach to diverse client populations

- 1 Develop a community engagement strategy identifying communities that we need to connect with and those in need

### C

#### Partner to develop services appropriate for the Indigenous community

- 1 Provide all staff with training to understand Indigenous people
- 2 Seek out agencies to partner with to provide services
- 3 Develop programing specific to serving Indigenous clients

## **D Offer programs that build resilience and emotional well-being**

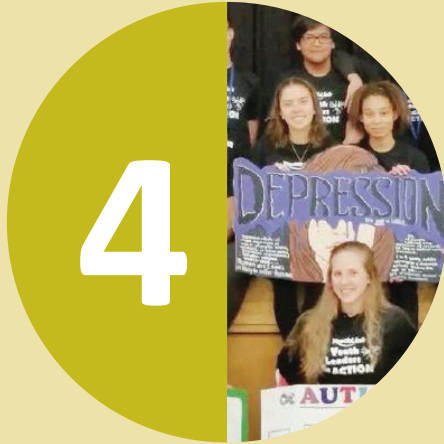
- 1 Explore different options for youth such as alternative education programs, adult education, various career options including those in the trades. Offer programs to interest youth
- 2 Supportive case management approach that works with youth and build their confidence and resilience
- 3 Work with youth to develop their future plans and goals
- 4 Help homeless youth take the next steps through intensive case management and programming

## Measurements and Accountability Framework

Accountability Framework		Data Source	Reporting Frequency
<b>1</b>	Youth in-service will end their YL experience either as a high-school or post-secondary student, graduate, an enrollee in a training program, a volunteer role, or in a job either part time or full-time.	Internal	Annually
<b>2</b>	Total number of direct counsellor services hours delivered	Internal	Annually
<b>3</b>	ABR survey results or tracking of race based data	Internal	Annually
<b>4</b>	Implement success tracking system at the shelter and prepare success reports	Internal	Semi Annually



## STRATEGY



## INCLUSION AND INVOLVEMENT

Youth who have addressed their primary issues and are prepared to contribute to the development of community-based solutions for youth mental health and wellbeing are supported

- A Youth Voice Incorporated into our planning**
  - 1 Youth Advisory Council develop an annual plan
  - 2 Youth Advisory to connect to CMHO's advocacy
  - 3 Connect with youth clients and youth in the community to gather information relevant to YL service planning
  - 4 Youth Advisory to add representation from the communities YouthLink serves
  - 5 YAC to report to the board twice a year
- B Provide youth and families meaningful opportunities to engage in planning services**
  - 1 Investigate adding a parent advisory
  - 2 Feedback from clients in programs such as Triple P, Music, or Developmental Services
- C Develop partnerships that both expand our reach, understanding or breadth of services**
  - 1 Involve specific community groups or partners to advise and give input into services
  - 2 Collaborate with partners to bring opportunities to our youth



## Measurements and Accountability Framework

Accountability Framework		Data Source	Reporting Frequency
<b>1</b>	Youth Advisory (YAC) applications received to be a member of the advisory committee.	YAC	Annually
<b>2</b>	Number of formal and informal community partnerships	Internal	Annually
<b>3</b>	Number of youth who return to YouthLink in a volunteer capacity	Internal	Annually



## STRATEGY



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

People of every age who care about young people are actively engaged through organized means in nurturing the success of Scarborough youth

- A Recruitment of Adult Allies to assist with programming and mentoring youth in our homes, shelter, Pathways**
- 1 Develop a volunteer engagement strategy that support youth
  - 2 Recruit through the website and social media
  - 3 Develop an onboarding program for volunteers and involve youth in the onboarding process
- B Develop partnerships that provide supportive services for complex cases**
- 1 Partnership with the OHT and a Pathways to access services in support of clients with complex needs
  - 2 Identify expertise in our collaborative where we can easily refer clients
  - 3 Make a connection with primary care physicians and a commitment to provide client treatment information when approved by the client to do so





## Measurements and Accountability Framework

Accountability Framework		Data Source	Reporting Frequency
<b>1</b>	(Baseline) Total annual budget overall and by program	Internal	Annually
<b>2</b>	% of revenue (including cash and gifts in kind) by category (City of Toronto, government of Ontario, other NGOs, and community (total of corporate sponsorships, corporate donations, individual donations, bequests)	Internal	Annually
<b>3</b>	Fund Development Initiatives and outcomes from events, proposal submissions, corporate donations, individual donations	Internal	Annually
<b>4</b>	Compensation and benefit levels for YouthLink staff	Internal	Annually
<b>5</b>	Total number of Board positions filled / vacant	Internal	Bi-Annually
<b>6</b>	Total number of social media posts and views	Internal	Monthly
<b>7</b>	% of all employees, managers, board members, by race, and gender identity	Internal	Bi-Annually
<b>8</b>	% of all employees, and managers trained in YL's ABR strategy and in LGBTQ and Indigenous culture	Internal	Annually
<b>9</b>	% Board members, aware of, or trained in YL's ABR strategy and in LGBTQ and Indigenous culture	Internal	Annually

## STRATEGY



## UNITY AND INTEGRATION

Scarborough's community-based system of services for youth mental health, beginning with YouthLink, is demonstrably efficacious

### **A Review core programs to ensure they remain relevant and cost-effective**

- 1 Develop a program review process that evaluates programs based on costs, clients, satisfaction. Consider populations, needs, trends, issues facing youth
- 2 Reaffirm core services
- 3 Review financial expenditures in each program to build in efficiencies
- 4 Scenario planning for any reductions in funding or fund raising

### **B Develop innovative approaches to services and service delivery**

- 1 Evaluate how IT can better support service delivery and build efficiencies. Managers to share strategies and techniques to build in efficiencies
- 2 Identify service gaps in the community. How can they be filled through innovative approaches
- 3 Investigate technologies to implement in the collaborative that will simplify services and enhance connections with these 5 agencies
- 4 Add video conferencing capability

### **C Strengthen capacity as an organization**

- 1 Review capacity in counselling, shelter, residence
- 2 Identify how YouthLink can strengthen its capacity in Human Resources, Finance, Facilities, and Reception. Investigate the Collaborative network to share back office services
- 3 Review the communications plan for internal communication improvements
- 4 Build the brand, create new partnerships, solidify existing relationships

## **D Deepen staff leadership and talent**

- 1 Offer staff development sessions that support YouthLink's strategic plan and objectives
- 2 Provide staff development opportunities for individual growth and leadership competencies
- 3 Adopt best hiring practices in the agency
- 4 All managers to understand their roles as coach and mentor
- 5 Performance Management plan is evaluated for effectiveness
- 6 Staff are given opportunities to contribute to the strategic planning goals. They are involved in its implementation

## Measurements and Accountability Framework

Accountability Framework		Data Source	Reporting Frequency
<b>1</b>	Existing YL services and the staff teams/ personnel related to them	Internal	Annually
<b>2</b>	The number of staff who attend onboarding programs, staff meetings, staff development sessions, collaborative events	Internal	Annually
<b>3</b>	Client Satisfaction with YL services, the delivery of service, locations, hours of operation	Internal	Annually
<b>4</b>	Formal Partnership through a memoranda of Understanding with at least one recognized entity for each of the sub-categories listed in the policy, for the purposes of coordinated public education, advocacy, promotion and/or delivery of youth mental health services and supports	Internal	Annually

## STRATEGY



## PUBLIC SECTOR ALIGNMENT WITH YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SECTOR

Public policies and practices are better addressing the needs of marginalized youth, particularly as these relate to racism, poverty and violence

- A Strengthen relationships with all three levels of government**
  - 1 Meet with local elected MP's, MPP's and City Councillors to provide input into government priorities that reflect the needs of clients
  - 2 Board to engage with all governments and community engagement
  - 3 Target a few key government individuals develop communication, outreach strategy
  - 4 Recruit board members who have expertise in government relations and a network
- B Respond to shifts in government and funder planning and priorities**
  - 1 Understand what are governments priorities and align to the extent possible with these priorities
  - 2 Develop strategies that respond to governments priorities
  - 3 Plan for any loss in revenue due to funder or government cutbacks
- C Strengthen relationships with funders and business leaders**
  - 1 Identify prospects and reach out to them with key and consistent messaging
  - 2 Develop a win/win strategy for YouthLink and business leaders
  - 3 Create a case of need to help develop key messages about what sets YouthLink apart
  - 4 Evolve the YouthLink brand
  - 5 Develop creative ways to recognize donors
- D Succession Planning for Executive and Board Positions**
  - 1 Succession policy for boards and executive positions
- E Improve internal process and systems that are responsive to need**
  - 1 Policy review for HR, health and safety, client policies
  - 2 KPI's shared with managers and staff
  - 3 Refresh all servers 2020/ 2021
  - 4 Facilities are inspected every three months. Repairs logged
  - 5 596 Danforth Road purchased and renovated
  - 6 Client files and HR files monitored for quality and completeness
  - 7 Reduce reliance on paper files. Client files moved to the cloud

## **F Consider mergers where appropriate and supportive of our mission**

- 1 Due diligence process when approached to merge or collaborate
- 2 Collaboration to keep the client at the centre of our plans
- 3 Develop plans for growth or improvement in our services that meet community need

## **G Grow the YouthLink Brand**

- 1 Our website is kept up to date and monitored for feedback
- 2 Social media posts are done on a regular basis for the agency and for individual programs
- 3 Annual plan to grow the YouthLink brand developed and implemented
- 4 Continue to offer special events that support brand building and fund raising
- 5 Amplify client and family narratives that support brand building
- 6 Develop a robust annual fund development plan for individual donors, corporate, government, and foundations

## Measurements and Accountability Framework

Accountability Framework		Data Source	Reporting Frequency
<b>1</b>	Membership and active participation in one or more advocacy groups focused on the youth mental health sector in Ontario, particularly as related to the effects of mental health, racism, poverty and violence	Internal	Annually
<b>2</b>	Membership and active participation in local planning tables including: Membership in Children's Mental health planning through collaborative initiatives with the Lead Agency. Ministry of Health, Hospitals	Internal	Annually
<b>3</b>	Measure social media presence, funds raised as a direct result of the strength of the YouthLink brand	Internal	Annually
<b>4</b>	Budget balanced	Internal	Annually







636 Kennedy Road,  
Scarborough, ON M1K 2B3

[www.youthlink.ca](http://www.youthlink.ca)