



Youth Service Assessment Tool

To better support youth and young
adults who use substances

· **FOUNDRY** ·
PRINCE GEORGE
WHERE WELLNESS TAKES SHAPE



Acknowledgements

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Introduction

People who use substances continue to face stigma and discrimination when accessing health and social services. Negative experiences of discrimination often make individuals less likely to return to a service or reach out for help out of fear. Substance use services also often don't take into account the needs of youth when designing or improving their services, which creates another barrier for young people accessing services. Although there is a greater emphasis on clients being involved in decision-making, youth have not been fully integrated into these efforts. This tool has therefore been developed with youth who have lived and/or living experience of substance use living in Prince George, British Columbia, in an effort to amplify youth voices in the community and create service environments that are accessible, inclusive, safe and appropriate.

This assessment tool can be used by any health and social services or programs that serve young people, including substance use services, mental health services, youth treatment services, harm reduction services, youth shelters, community health centres, social services, hospitals, emergency departments, etc. It was not created to blame or criticize services but is meant to provide insight on your organization's strengths and identify feasible solutions to improve youth experiences. This tool is meant to support an ongoing learning process that can hopefully be integrated into your organization's quality improvement process.

This tool consists of three sections:

- **Section A—Instructions for completing the assessment:** includes steps on how to complete the assessment.
- **Section B—Youth service assessment tool:** includes the assessment questions to identify your organization's strengths and weaknesses in four main topic areas: accessibility, service environment, quality of service and continuity of care.
- **Section C—Action plan:** includes instructions on how to develop an improvement plan by identifying priority areas to work on and feasible next steps.

We've also developed a set of [youth-informed recommendations](#) to address each assessment question, including resources, toolkits and trainings.

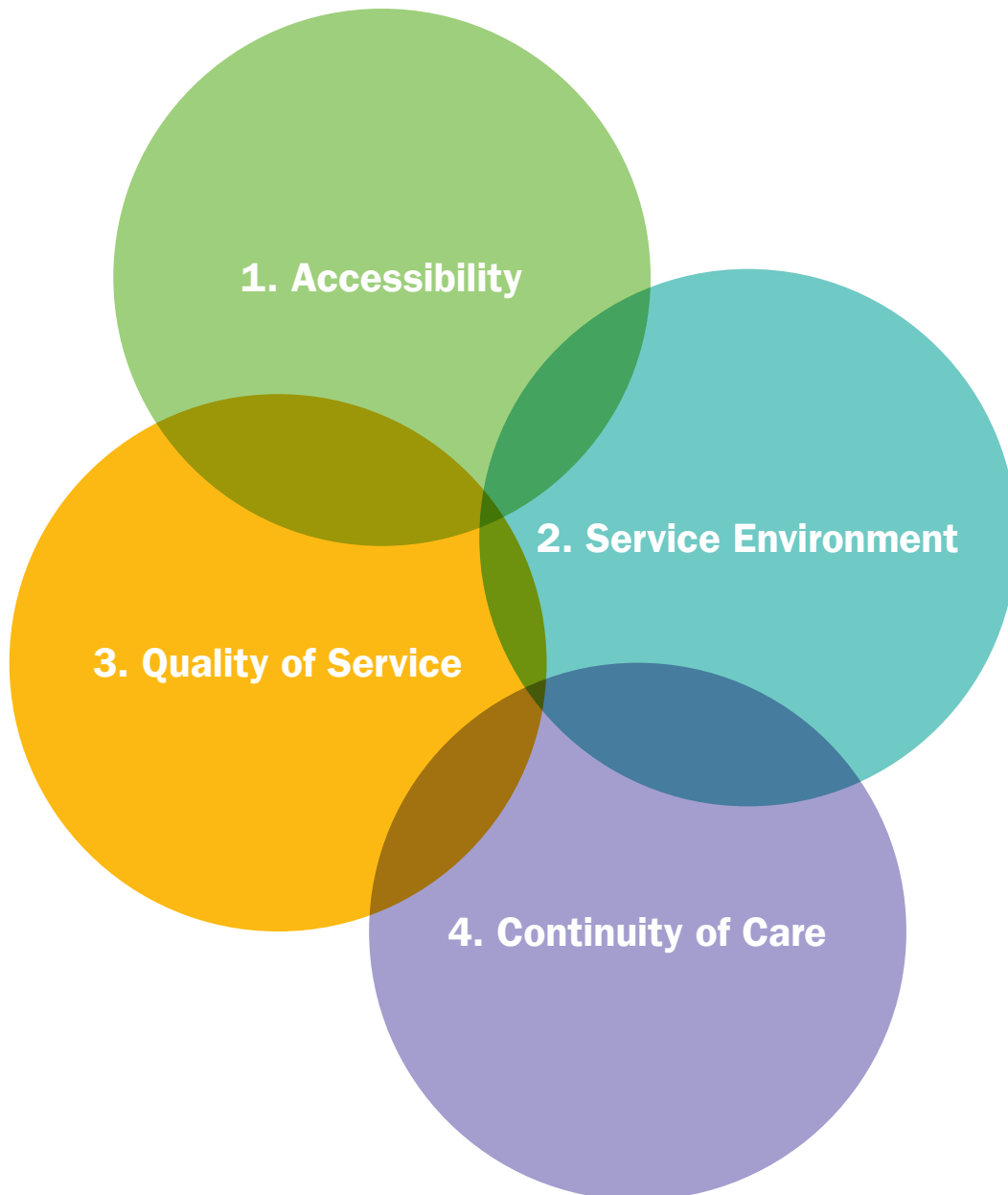
Section A. Instructions for Completing the Assessment

1. Identify who should participate in the assessment. You may choose to assess a specific service/program or assess your organization as a whole. Regardless, we recommend that you create a committee that adequately represents your staff, particularly those who interact with youth clients (including management, service providers, support staff, reception, etc.). If your organization has a diversity and equity committee, this group may be in a good position to complete the assessment.
2. Ask identified staff members to complete the assessment individually by answering the questions below. Under 'response,' staff can answer 'Yes,' 'Partially,' 'No,' 'Unsure,' or 'Not applicable.' Staff may also explain their response in the comments section.
3. Set up a meeting to discuss the responses as a group. This should be a safe and constructive environment for everyone to share and discuss the organization's strengths and challenges.
4. Fill out the assessment as a group with the average rating for each question. Include staff reflections in the comments section. Once completed, identify the priority areas you would like to work on.
5. Come up with an action plan for each priority area identified (see Section C – Part I). This may require a separate meeting with staff members who are knowledgeable of the priority issues identified and in a position to address them. To ensure youth voices are included, consider inviting youth to take part in the discussion.

Tip: You may consider reviewing the [youth-informed recommendations](#) to help answer the assessment questions. If your organization already has existing service evaluation tools, the results may also be useful for identifying priority areas.

Section B. Youth Service Assessment Tool

The tool consists of 4 main areas of assessment to improve youth service experiences:



1.0 Accessibility

Assessment Question	Response (Yes/No/ Partially/Unsure/N/A)	Comments
1.1 Is it easy for youth to find out about your organization and services?		
1.1.1 Does your organization use multiple venues for informing individuals of your service (e.g., social media, posters, pamphlets, websites, ads)?		
1.1.2 Does your organization have specific outreach strategies to reach as many youth in your community as possible?		
1.2 Is your organization approachable to youth?		
1.2.1 Are your communications using non-stigmatizing language to youth who use substances? (See recommendations for reference)		
1.2.2 Are your communications representative of diverse populations (e.g., gender neutral language, avoiding religious language)?		
1.2.3 Are your communications inclusive of all youth, regardless of their intensity or frequency of substance use?		
1.3 Is it easy for youth to access your organization and services?		
1.3.1 Does your organization provide service hours that are convenient for youth, including evenings and weekends?		
1.3.2 Do your services offer walk-in appointments or have reasonable wait times?		
1.3.3 Does your organization have mechanisms in place to support youth who may have difficulties accessing your service (e.g., virtual services, rides, flexible meeting spots)?		
1.4 Are your services affordable for most youth to access?		
1.4.1 Are your services free/low cost?		
1.4.2 Does your organization support youth in applying for funding assistance to access services?		
1.4.3 Does your organization offer bus tickets or other transit to support youth with transportation costs?		
1.4.4 If a youth requires help outside of your service, does your organization offer recommendations that are affordable?		

Assessment Question	Response (Yes/No/Partially/Unsure/N/A)	Comments
1.5 Does your organization have a supportive aging out process?		
1.5.1 Does your organization work with youth who are aging out to provide them with an exit strategy, including referrals to another service?		
1.5.2 Does your organization give youth enough time to make the transition to another service (e.g., a grace period)?		

2.0 Service Environment

Assessment Question	Response (Yes/No/Partially/Unsure/N/A)	Comments
2.1 Is your service environment welcoming and comfortable for youth?		
2.1.1 Do you regularly ask youth for feedback on the service environment?		
2.1.2 Does your organization support youth to meet their basic needs (e.g., food, housing, employment, financial support, basic amenities)?		
2.1.3 Has your organization implemented actions to increase the inclusivity of diverse population groups (e.g., different races/ethnicities, religious beliefs, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities)?		
2.1.4 Are your staff representative of diverse populations that are reflective of the community?		
2.1.5 Have your intake staff received any training opportunities (e.g., accessibility training, trauma-informed training, de-escalation training)?		

3.0 Quality of Services

Assessment Question	Response (Yes/No/ Partially/Unsure/N/A)	Comments
3.1 Does your organization take a person-centred approach to care?		
3.1.1 Has your organization implemented actions recently (e.g., past six months) to increase person-centred care, such as ensuring that youth clients are actively engaged in their care (e.g., staff training, service experience surveys, engaging a youth advisory panel)?		
3.1.2 Does your organization utilize integrated case management in meetings and planning, where the youth is recognized as the expert in themselves?		
3.1.3 Does your organization include youth's identified natural supports in meetings, care planning and harm reduction strategies (rather than strictly professional identified supports)?		
3.2 Does your organization provide staff training on providing culturally safe care?		
3.2.1 Have your staff received training on trauma- and violence-informed care? Does your organization provide follow-up training (e.g., refresher courses, reminders, information available to review)?		
3.2.2 Have your staff received any training on anti-racism and cultural safety? Does your organization provide follow-up training (e.g., refresher courses, reminders, information available to review)?		
3.2.3 Have your staff received any training on gender diversities and sexual orientations? Does your organization provide follow-up training (e.g., refresher courses, reminders, information available to review)?		
3.3 Does your organization take a harm reduction approach to care?		
3.3.1 Have your staff received substance use training, including harm reduction training? Does your organization provide follow-up training (e.g., refresher courses, reminders, information available to review)?		
3.3.2 Have your staff received training on de-stigmatizing language and substance use stigma awareness? Does your organization provide follow-up training (e.g., refresher courses, reminders, information available to review)?		
3.3.3 Does your organization/staff offer harm reduction supplies?		
3.3.4 Does your organization/staff offer youth accessible information about harm reduction, including where to get supplies (e.g., safe drug use, drug testing, naloxone, supervised consumption sites, STI/HIV testing, condoms)?		

Assessment Question	Response (Yes/No/Partially/Unsure/N/A)	Comments
3.4 Does your organization respect youth rights to privacy and confidentiality?		
3.4.1 Does your organization have policies in place that protect youth rights to privacy and confidentiality?		
3.4.2 Are there practices in place so that youth are aware of their rights to privacy and confidentiality?		
3.5 Is your organization open and responsive to youth feedback?		
3.5.1 Does your organization regularly ask youth for feedback on their service experience or have other mechanisms in place to meaningfully engage youth (e.g., advisory council)?		
3.5.2 Does your organization have a safe structure in place for youth to make a complaint if they have had a negative experience?		
3.5.3 Does your organization have a mechanism in place to ensure that youth feedback is reviewed, and an action plan put into place to address feedback?		

4.0 Continuity of Care

Assessment Question	Response (Yes/No/Partially/Unsure/N/A)	Comments
4.1 Is your organization well-connected to other organizations in the community that offer health and social services to youth who use substances?		
4.1.1 Does your organization provide staff with adequate resources and information about other services in the community that support youth who use substances?		
4.1.2 Does your organization have specific outreach strategies in place to build relationships with organizations in the community? Are these strategies evaluated?		
4.1.3 Does your organization ensure youth experience seamless transitions between services?		

Section C. Action Plan (To be filled out by organizer)

Part I—Identifying Key Areas of Improvement

1. Based on the scores above, identify 1–3 areas of improvement you want to start working on as an organization. Consider what areas seem most important and the amount of resources required to determine what areas are feasible to address within a reasonable timeline.
2. Review the staff reflections and the [youth-informed recommendations](#) to identify potential solutions for each target area. When considering the recommended resources, toolkits and trainings, we encourage you to think strategically about how you plan to share these with your staff and ways to maximize the impact within your organization. This could include planning organizational training sessions with all staff and management or holding sessions to unpack the recommended readings and trainings to ensure they make an impact.

Target Areas for Improvement

Target Area	Potential Solutions

Part II—Create an Action Plan for Each Target Goal

1. Identify individuals within and/or outside your organization who can support with the development and implementation of an action plan for each target area. To ensure youth voices are included, consider inviting youth to take part in the discussion. Please see the following [youth engagement toolkit](#) for reference. Set up a meeting to fill out the worksheet below.
2. For each target area, identify the desired outcome, actions required, person responsible, and the time and resources required. Share the action plan with relevant staff, especially those who were involved in completing the assessment so they can see how their feedback was taken into consideration.
3. Evaluate your progress and adjust as needed.

What goal(s) are you trying to achieve? What is the desired outcome(s)?

Action Items	Resources Required	Person Responsible	Due Date

