

Project: SUMMIT Mental Well-being Website  
Team name: Trillium  
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### Highlights from your experiences so far

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, we held our first fundraising event. We organized a bake sale during our school's Open Mic Night. Though it was small-scaled, we got a lot more adolescents and parents in our community to get to know our project and we raised 40 dollars.

Another highlight is unusual: we had made a lot of arrangements for our original plan of holding a mental health conference. However, the spreading of COVID-19 forced us to cancel the plan and find another way to achieve our goals. During spring break, we started over and built an online platform to present our progress. Even though our website is not finished due to the little time we had, we are still proud that we did not give up and overcame challenges collaboratively.

### The aim of the project

The lack of support for mental well-being, especially amongst the adolescent community, is impacting us directly in our daily life. Some of the teenagers around us, including our close friends and fellow schoolmates, are troubled by mental health problems. Seeing the peers around us struggling was truly heartbreakingly, and thus powerfully motivated us to help solve this problem. We wanted to raise awareness of adolescent mental health issues and help those who need support to share their experiences. By publishing original articles and videos, gathering helpful and professional resources, and providing a forum for free discussion, we hope to enhance the adolescents' knowledge on mental health, and encourage them to seek help actively when they are in need of it.

### The Sustainable Development Goals that your project addresses

The Sustainable Development Goal that our project addressed is the third one: Good Health and Well-Being. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, around 10-20% of Canadian youth are affected by mental health problems/illnesses. Such a high rate of mental disorder drives us to offer as much help as we can to encourage teenagers seek help and to inspire them with our own writings, creations, and research.

### The outcomes and impacts of the project (see judging criteria). Include any successes or failures

As part of the final product, we managed to create a complete website for youth wellness, including useful pages such as resources, coping with COVID-19, a forum, and many more. We have also made an Instagram account for our organization, which currently has 50+ followers who are willing to support our organization and visit the website. We believe that this website will be sustainable as we will keep posting awareness posts on our social media accounts so that people are aware of this resource. We have also been advocating the purpose of our website at Meadowridge School's assemblies and on the school's mental health page. Our team strongly believes that if we keep promoting the importance of mental health to others, they will start to gain awareness and visit our website to help others cope or discuss issues anonymously. Overall, the project was a success as we managed to create a complete mental health website despite the sudden change due to

COVID-19 (we were originally going to hold a conference). To improve our project, we can target advertising the website on social media pages more with the help of our sponsors and speakers to emphasize partnerships and attract more people who are willing to learn about it.

#### **The knowledge/ learning you gained through the project**

We learned a lot about our community through the project. When we were researching potential organizations that we could partner with, we found that there are not only a lot of Vancouver-based mental health organizations out there but also youth organizations in general. For example, The Global Spotlight is an organization we are partnering with that is founded by 17-year-old David Yang who lives in Vancouver. This knowledge that there were so many people like us in our community, young people wanting to make an impact on the issues they care most about, really warmed our hearts. We felt immensely proud and connected to our community.

Another thing we learned through the project is to embrace failure. We initially wanted to host a mental health conference, which - in fact - is one of the reasons we named the project SUMMIT - because the term summit refers to a meeting, or conference. However, we made the difficult decision of cancelling our conference in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Suddenly, we - the founders of an organization for mental wellness - too, faced disappointment. This was a reminder of how easily we all can get put down by the negative events in our lives and how important it is that we can control our emotions so as to let them get the best of us. We were reminded of our mission and have never been more determined to keep our cause alive. The idea to create a website spawned then. We are glad that we challenged ourselves to keep going even in times of setbacks, and we realized that as long as we retain the determination to attain our goal, there will always be a way in which we can achieve it - no matter the circumstance.

#### **The skills you gained through the project**

The most prominent skill we gained through the experience is no doubt project management skills. This was the first time we were responsible for a project this large. From research to planning to action all we had were ourselves. We had to make sure that we were following our action plan carefully and that we met deadlines.

Another very important skill we gained is collaboration skills. When brainstorming ideas, we learned to be open minded and to respect the opinions of others, as well as to contribute our own. When building our website, we recognized the benefits of teamwork and split the work into smaller tasks that we subsequently assigned together to each of the group members. We were able to specialize in the things that we were good at and maximize our efficiency. Finally, the most advantageous thing about working in a group is unarguably the support and motivation that groupmates provide. It was easy to consult each other about things we did not understand and we never lost momentum as a group, given that there would always be at least one person who reminded everyone else to stay motivated.