

Supporting Youth Autonomy Through Art-Based Practices

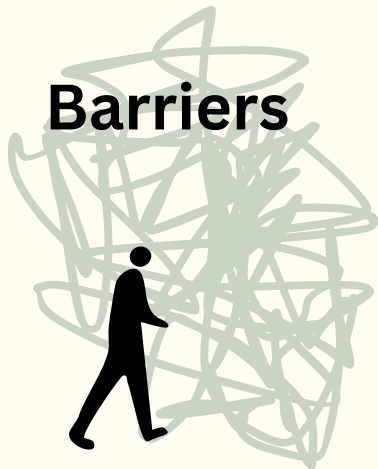
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How can youth maintain autonomy while seeking support for parental substance use challenges in mental health care spaces?



Youth who grow up in homes affected by substance use challenges and as a result, they are **three times greater risk of developing a substance use disorder, mental illness or succumbing to suicide.**¹ With so many affected by this how can we ensure they receive support?

Youth affected by parental substance use face numerous obstacles to accessing support, including barriers to asserting their agency within systems of care and stigma.



Barriers

It is often thought that youth under 18 are unable to make decisions independently of their parents, yet, it is possible for them seek medical and mental health care.

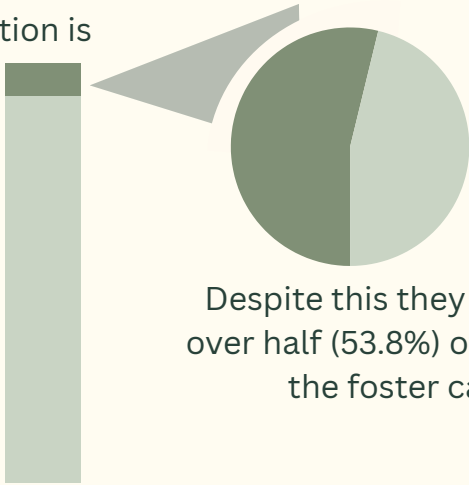


There are pre-existing supports to help at-risk-youth but there may be **underlying fear** to make use of them. This fear often stems from **prejudiced** beliefs and **discriminatory** practices.

Children that are exposed to parental substance use are **4x** more likely to experience depression and² **3x** more likely to develop anxiety related disorders³



Only 7.7% of the Canadian child population is indigenous



In many cultures and societies individuals that use substances tend to be **ostracized or criticized as weak and dangerous**

What can we do?

Art-based therapeutic approaches utilize a broad range of creative forms including visual arts, body-scanning, music and performance, digital media and otherwise expressive or written artforms that are culturally relevant and inclusive in practice.

Through using art-based practices we aim to help youth whose parents have substance use challenges to:

Regulate emotions and cope with stress

Develop hope for personal wellbeing

Improve interpersonal relationships

Explore self-identity, self-concept, and understand others