

# HALTON YOUTH AT/IN RISK RESEARCH PROJECT

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## Research Objective and Questions

**Objective:** To conduct a needs assessment in relation to services for at/in-risk groups of youth between the ages of 16-24 years of age within the Halton Region.

**Questions:**

- What are the existing services available to meet the needs of the youth in the Halton Region?
- What are the gaps within services that require to be filled through future fundable solutions?

## Background/Purpose

Since June 2016, Ferzana and Bethany have been working on behalf of Sheridan College to facilitate a process and develop a Terms of Reference for a Granter's Roundtable for the region of Halton. The Halton Granters' Roundtable is a collective of Government, Not for Profit Organizations and Corporate Foundations interested in collaboratively supporting sustainable, wrap-around community initiatives with a focus on equity which have the potential to move people from dependence to independence. At a meeting in late November, Sheridan was asked to take the lead in the first of these collaborative efforts—completing a needs assessment of programs and services for youth in/at risk in the Halton Region.

## Methodology

**Phase 1: January-April 2017**

- Compiling Secondary Data about at/in-risk groups in the Halton Region
- Focus groups/ Interviews with Program Administrators
- Focus groups/ Interviews with Front Line staff
- Analysis of thematic findings

**Phase 2: May- July 2017**

- Focus groups with at-risk youth
- Art-based focus
- Involvement of Sheridan students (pending funding approval)
- Analysis of thematic findings

## Our Journey So Far

- Ethics Approval received from Sheridan REB in Feb 2017
- Compiling Secondary Data to form the basis for the report and to inform data collection
- Identifying potential participants in collaboration with community partners
- Data collection with key stakeholders (Program Administrators and Front Line staff) is underway.

## Community Engaged Scholarship

- **Community Engaged Scholarship (CES)** is academic scholarship that “in active collaboration with participating community partners—has a positive impact on complex societal needs and issues” (Engagement Scholarship Consortium, 2015, p.1).

**CES as demonstrated in this project**

- This research emerged as a need of the Oakville Granters' Roundtable.
- The research is a partnership. The funding for one course release for two faculty members has been provided by the Halton Region Department of Community and Social Services. Sheridan College provides the faculty research expertise, and the additional time and resources to support this research.
- Community partners are involved at all stages of the research process through the formation of a Steering Committee.

## Potential Impacts

- The evidence-informed data produced by this study will inform future fundable solutions for initiatives benefitting youth at/in risk in the Halton Region.
- The research sets the basis for strong, collaborative relationship development between Halton Region and Sheridan College. This has benefits for future research as well as for student practicum and/or job opportunities.
- The knowledge that we will gain through this research about at/in-risk youth will directly benefit our course material, and our students will benefit from cutting edge knowledge about the experiences of and possible interventions for at/in-risk youth.
- Sheridan college students will be involved in Phase 2 of the data collection and in the knowledge mobilization stage of the research. Providing students with the opportunity to prepare, facilitate and synthesize data will be an invaluable experience for them.

## Considerations for Future CES

- As Sheridan College moves along its journey towards a University, it needs to consider the importance of sustaining research that is responsive to its local communities.
- How Could They Do This?:**
- Faculties could develop clear policies around setting up and sustaining research partnerships with local not-for-profit organizations.
  - Faculties could provide researchers with in-house supports to facilitate CES (examples of such resources are personnel support; or pooling institutional knowledge on doing CES).
  - Formation of substantial institutional partnerships within Sheridan to facilitate and support CES.
  - Individual faculty member's efforts to develop community partnerships for CES could be considered in the calculation of SWFs.

## References

- Engagement Scholarship Consortium. (2015). Academy of Community Engagement Scholarship (ACES). Retrieved from <https://engagementscholarship.org/initiatives/academy-of-community-engagement-scholarship>
- Halton Granters' Roundtable (2016). Terms of Reference.